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Church Missionary Society and Anti-Alcohol Consumption Campaigns in the Era of Herbert Tugwell's Episcopacy, 1894-1919

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Abstract

This study explores the anti-alcohol consumption campaigns spearheaded by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) during the episcopacy of Herbert Tugwell (1894–1919) in colonial Nigeria. Under Tugwell's leadership, the CMS sought to address the rising social and moral challenges posed by the widespread consumption of European spirits, which were introduced through colonial trade. Grounded in Christian moral teachings, the campaigns emphasized temperance as a cornerstone of spiritual and communal discipline while advocating for legislation to restrict the import and trade of alcohol. The CMS's efforts were driven by the belief that alcohol consumption undermined both Christian values and societal order, causing health concerns and contributing to social instability. However, these campaigns faced significant challenges, including resistance from colonial authorities who profited from the liquor trade, cultural tensions with African traditions surrounding alcohol use, and mixed responses from African communities. This study examines the interplay between missionary ideology, colonial economics, and African agency, shedding light on the limitations and legacies of the CMS's anti-alcohol efforts as part of a broader moral reform agenda during the period. Both primary and secondary sources have been utilized in the analysis.

Keywords: Alcohol, colonialism, episcopacy, resources, moralists

Introduction

Elsewhere, a scholar argued that until the arrival of colonial rule in southeastern Nigeria, people drank alcohol following their resources and sources which were controlled by certain cultural yardsticks.¹ In this paper, our emphasis is on how the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Nigeria proved with its position on alcohol importation that it was not in every circumstance that Christian missionaries were harbingers of colonialism. Alcohol was one of the major sources of revenue for the Europeans all through the era of the slave trade, colonialism, and legitimate commerce. K.O Dike in his *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* recalled that except for the period of 1840s when alcohol sales declined from 209,000 gallons to 132,000, it has always boasted the Imperial revenue.² By 1899, the importation of alcohol into the coastal area of Eastern Nigeria was already rampant.³ Before this era, Aro diplomats had exchanged alcohol for slaves and other European goods just as the use of alcohol for libation, adjudication, marriages, and burial customs became enshrined into the people's lives and culture.⁴ N.L Njoku recalls that:

Prior to the coming of Western imperialism and the peripheral incorporation of the Nigerian economy into the global capitalist system, alcohol was familiar to generations of southeastern Nigerians by which term we refer to the Ibibio, the Ijaw, the Efik, the Ogoni, and their Igbo neighbours. Of course, imported spirituous liquor was an important item of European merchandise, both in the slave trade era and the era of legitimate trade.⁵

The CMS was a product of the 16th-century Reformation, especially during the reign of Henry VIII when the Church of the Province of England jettisoned the authority of the Pope and consequently assumed an independent ecclesiastical status and the *Anglicana Ecclesia*.⁶ The Civilizing Mission of 1841 was part of the template designed to ensure that Christianity penetrated deeper into Nigeria by the British government, working in close collaboration with the CMS. Since alcohol control forms part of their moral task, the CMS missionaries, especially under Bishop Tugwell and the various synods held between 1905 and 1917 sought to reduce alcohol importation to ensure that a generation of drunks never emerged.

The anti-liquor movement in Nigeria got to its peak in 1899 following the article written by Bishop Tugwell to drive home the objectives of the Brussels conference which was targeted at reducing alcohol importation into colonized territories because of its negative effects on health.⁷ It should be recalled that the Brussels Convention was the first-ever convention summoned to discuss the liquor traffic on the basis that the spirits imported into West Africa contained poisonous and injurious substances that badly affected the health of the native population. The anti-liquor campaign was led by the Temperance societies such as the Native Races Liquor Traffic United Committee, the Aborigines Protection Society, and the Church Missionary Society (CMS).⁸ The huge gain derived from the liquor trade could not allow the colonial government to put a stop to liquor importation. Rather, efforts were put in place to raise the tariff on liquor importation, which could not guarantee a stop to importation.

The inflow of alcohol caused drunkenness and of course, the House of Commons took a debate in 1888, and by 1892 the Brussels Pact was signed to check excess alcohol. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Brussels Pact only aimed at reducing the importation of cheap spirits.⁹ This contradicts the objectives of the Brussels Pact which stipulates that: 'prohibition should be enforced except for non-natives from north latitude 22 degrees, in which distilled liquor did not exist or had not been developed, and that elsewhere a specified duty should be imposed as a minimum, subject to revision after six years.'¹⁰ However, the Brussels Pact received applause from the London-based Native Races and Liquor Traffic United Committee(NRLTUC) because they saw alcohol prohibition as part of the European civilizing mission in Africa. In addition, the Aborigines Protection Society (APS) stood by Frederick Lord Lugard not to hesitate in the prohibition of alcohol in the Northern region and some other parts of Africa.

The trade figures for the period between January to June 1899 show that out of a total of about £497,000 of imports, gin, and rum accounted for just under ten percent or about £48,000.¹¹ The imported brand was gradually replacing palm wine and *pito* (corn beer) which formed the native alcohol beverage.¹² Meanwhile European imperialists were hell-bent on suppressing the selling of palmwine even when the likes of M.D.W Jeffrey had noted that he never saw any African lying paralytic or even staggering down on the footpath as a result of *tumbo* drinking.¹³

Unfortunately, while alcohol importation was prohibited in the Northern region of Nigeria, southern Nigeria became a dumping ground for alcohol sales. This

development has been understood in two ways. First, the Uthman Dan Fodio jihad, which Islamized Northern Nigeria outlawed alcohol intake because it contradicts Islamic tenets. Second, the colonial government relied on revenue derived from alcohol in order to run the government. Simultaneously, alcohol cost was measured by the location of the liquor seller. Simon Heap in his "Transport and Liquor in Colonial Nigeria" recorded that:

'In 1909 a bottle of gin retailed at an average of 6d in Lagos, 7d in Lagos colony, 8d-10d in the Yoruba hinterland, is at Calabar on the lower cross river, 1s 3d on the Upper Cross river near Ikom and at Asaba, is 6d at Awka and 2s at Abakaliki'¹⁴.

Alcohol sales in all parts of Southern Nigeria flourished until sometime in 1915 when Garrick Braide advocacy began to yield fruit when the indigenous people of the Niger Delta began to withdraw from heavy drinking.

Herbert Tugwell and Samuel Johnson Brand of Nationalism

Tugwell was born on 15 March 1854 and was ordained in 1881 first as a curate of St Mary Petworth and later took up the position of secretary of the Yoruba Mission of the CMS in Lagos.¹⁵ His retirement from the CMS in 1919 came when the Nigeria country West and North of the Niger were cut off from the Diocese of Lagos in 1919 and later Diocese on the Niger on 5 March 1920.¹⁶ Before he was appointed Bishop as we shall see later, there was J.S Hill appointed diocesan Bishop on 29 June 1893 alongside Charles Phillips and Oluwole Isaac as assistant bishops in charge of Ondo and Lagos, Yoruba and native pastorate churches respectively, while the Niger was under Joseph Sidney Hill directly. This development was challenged and resisted by D.C. Crowther the son of late Bishop Ajayi Crowther who took over the Niger Delta Pastorate independent of the CMS in protest of the injustices directed against his father.¹⁶

J.S Hill was reported dead on 5 January 1894 and could not get to the Niger following his return from England to Lagos in December 1894.¹⁷ On the death of Bishop Hill, Herbert Tugwell who was serving as the secretary of the Yoruba Mission was called to England and presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury and was duly consecrated in the Lambert Palace Chapel on March 4, 1894. This appointment implies that he would have Episcopal control over his Bishopric fund and was to be the chairman of local governing bodies-Yoruba, Delta, Niger, and Sudan whenever he was in the area concerned.¹⁸ Under this arrangement, Tugwell was to be assisted by two Africans namely Isaac Oluwole and Charles Philips as assistant Bishops, but this was heavily challenged by the congregation in Lagos as unjust considering the qualifications of these Africans above Tugwell in the service of the CMS.¹⁹

Before this period, there was a leadership rift in the CMS. Following the removal of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther from the finance committee in 1890 set up by the CMS to oversee the affairs of the Niger Mission and his demise in 1891, led the son Archdeacon Dandeson Crowther to constitute the lower Niger Mission into a Delta Native Pastorate independent of the CMS.²⁰ The administrative high-handedness of

the CMS at that time led a group of laymen to secede from the Anglican in August 1891 and formed the United Native African Church(UNAC).²¹ The struggle continued, James Johnson was to be consecrated as an Assistant Bishop in February 1890 and was to be made a Diocesan Bishop if he could raise an endowment fund of 10,000-pound sterling. This was not possible because of the financial difficulties of that era. Instead, the CMS authorities preferred he remained a Vicar of St Paul's Breadfruit Church an idea opposed by Oluwole as the chairman of Lagos Committee.²²

From the aforementioned developments, it is clearer that the background of the formation of some of the early independent churches was the enforcement of European control on the Anglican Niger mission well into the 1880s into the Niger mission which had been exclusively an African enterprise under the leadership of the "black bishop" Samuel Ajayi Crowther. Crowther was deprived of power having been removed from the finance committee dominated by Europeans and in 1890, there was the dismissal of several African missionary agents against the will of Crowther and this prompted agitations from African elites in Lagos.²³

This development was taking place with the global rise in Pan-Africanism. The leading figure in the West African Pan-African movement was Edward Blyden who was born in West Indies in 1890 but had relocated to Liberia in 1851. In 1890, he was in Lagos to encourage Nigerian Christians to establish independent African churches. He was at the interdenominational meeting between African Anglicans, Methodists, and Baptists which was chaired by James Johnson of the CMS. The meeting was at establishing a non-interdenominational West African Church but Johnson opted out. He gave his support to the Niger Delta Pastorate which remained in the Anglican community but was led by Africans. He took this decision not to be branded a schismatic.²⁴ The conflict in the CMS in Nigeria at the time continued to grow, and a group from the church formed the African Church outside the CMS. James Johnson was appointed an assistant Bishop of the Niger Delta Native Pastorate by Tugwell in 1901 while Nathaniel Johnson was appointed his successor. The St. Paul's Church headed by James Johnson was financially independent but Tugwell wanted a more loyal person than Johnson. The few members who later seceded from the CMS approached Johnson but were told that if they were not comfortable with the decision should leave the CMS and so they did and joined the African Church.²⁵

At the height of his exercise of power, Tugwell in July 1901 announced the removal of Johnson as Vicar in charge of St. Paul's Breadfruit Lagos. The circumstances, shock, and trauma associated with his removal led to the death of Mrs. Johnson. Johnson had no option but to accept the offer of an Assistant Bishop of the Delta and this led many people to vacate from the CMS to join the African Church Bethel.²⁶ One of the leading antagonists of Bishop Tugwell, Jakob Kanyinder Coker complained that his reckless use of language and his indiscrete, unwise, and unqualified expressions complicated issues. In 1919, when Tugwell retired, he (Jakob Kanyinder Coker) congratulated him as follows:

Many Africans had lost Christian faith had God not placed you over the affairs of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa, for your straightforward and bold actions we have been led to form our own independent African church and to exercise that gift of salvation which we have obtained from God through the teachings of Bishop Johnson.²⁷

Tugwell's quest for power was not hidden. As the leader of the C.M.S to Northern Nigeria, an area dominated by Moslems, he neglected two important advice. One came from Henry Barth who warned that European intruders should not bring two things to the territory namely the Bible and liquor.²⁸ Second, was the warning given to Tugwell by Lord Lugard in 1899 during an official meeting held in London that a missionary trip to Kano was approved on the condition that the missionaries should not go beyond districts where the British administration would be able to offer protection.²⁹ The neglect by Tugwell to all these warnings was captured by Gbadamosi and Ade-Ajayi as follows:

At Kano, the Emir had not been informed of their coming, and he accordingly ordered them out within three days. Their main achievement was the permission to settle in Girku, a town near Zaria. Here they built a mission house and a dispensary. Although this Girku mission was closed down and burnt down in 1900, Walter Miller was allowed by Lugard to return there in 1902³⁰

Tugwell's quest for domination was properly defined. He had squabbles with his contemporaries over the control of the church. In 1898, he got an order of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London directing Lagos colony churches and those in Gold coast and Ashanti regions to be transferred to Bishop Tugwell as part of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa.³¹ Tugwell continued to assert power by his constant move into areas of Eastern Nigeria to assert his Episcopal influence. He used his power both on Africans and Europeans as well. Ayandele wrote about him in the following words:

He did not care whose horse was gored, whether the administrators who mistakenly thought they could placate him or the educated Africans, his wards, for whom he had the most epithets when they refused to follow him in moral question. No one could doubt the devotion of this wonderful energetic man³²

On his tour to Owerri in 1905, H.M Douglas the Colonial District Officer in charge of Owerri was lambasted by Tugwell over his despotic approach to leadership especially his intention to arrest Catechist A.C Onyeabo.³³ The said H.M. Douglas was so disliked by the people as European medical personnel Dr. Stewart in 1905 was killed while riding on a bicycle across Ahiara on his way to Umuahia thinking it was Douglas they killed.³⁴ So Tugwell was a little to the left, a little to the right on issues of great public concern.

Tugwell's Position on Alcohol Consumption and the Politics of Nationalism in the Niger Delta Pastorate

In September 1891, the Chairman of the Court of Equity at Brass reported that the Niger Company imported through the Steamer Elimina 18,000 cases of peters gin.³⁵ And between 1896 to 1897 in Nembe-Brass, gin according to Isichei accounted for 90 percent of all imports. At the same time, the Niger Coast Protectorate had an income of £151,244 from Export duties; £116,320 of this was on trade in spirits. In 1899, liquor accounted for 90 percent of its customs revenue.³⁶ By 1913, West Africa was a dumping ground of all brands of alcohol in the Southern Nigeria market as the Netherland Distilleries sent about 429,158 gallons to Southern Nigeria.³⁷ The persistent dumping of alcohol in Southern Nigeria led Professor Ayandele to opine that by the end of the 19th century, all exported to Nigeria was a concoction of potato spirits prepared in the cheapest way possible and with no attempt to clear it from impurities. This was possible in the absence of any form of regulation on the quality of imported spirits.³⁸

Foreign brands of alcohol gradually replaced Palm wine and Pito (corn beer) alcohol beverages.³⁹ The influx of various brands of alcohol into Africa was already becoming unacceptable to the missionary moralists. Four leading examples against this campaign came from Herbert Tugwell, J.J Ransome Kuti, James Johnson, and Garrick Sokari Braide. For Tugwell, he considered it as criminal neglect, an attempt to pollute the church work in West Africa, the need to kindle the pious indignation of Christian organizations and put the government in its place for failing to regulate alcohol importation.⁴⁰

Furthermore, Tugwell insists that heavy drinking was principally responsible for the death rate among the Europeans, and in 1899, he noted for example, that 75 percent of deaths among Europeans on the coast were due to the habit of drinking and drunkenness.⁴¹ Tugwell's position nearly got him into trouble. The European community in Lagos sued him for libel and the colonial government got the Queen's advocate to enter a *nolle prosequi* a sort of publishing abstracts of European deaths in newspapers and it was clear that the cases of alcohol-related deaths exceeded that of Malaria when subjected to empirical scrutiny.⁴² This was the only basis for Tugwell's vindication. Dmitri Vanden Bersselaar recorded that "when Tugwell was under attack for claiming that three-quarters of European deaths in Lagos were caused by their drinking habits, African support for his position came nearly exclusively from mission circles"⁴³

Bishop Tugwell's position on the impact of alcohol on the British colonial political economy was captured as follows:

We import spirits for the purposes of revenue. How is the railway being built? By Gin. How was the Carter-Denton Bridge built? By Gin. How is the town lighted? By Gin. And now if it be asked, how is the Town to be drained or how are we to secure a good supply of good pure water, the answer is, with gin.⁴⁴

Tugwell knew that excessive alcohol in the manner tolerated by the colonial government was not in the interest of the consuming public who were gradually being introduced into a kind of public space not known to them. Before the First World War 1, gin importation was so alarming. The reasons for the rise in the consumption of foreign liquor have elicited scholarly inquiry, as we shall examine below. First, before 1900, African rituals and festivals such as yam festivals, annual customs, and funeral rites including libations in southern Nigeria that relished previously on palm wine were gradually replaced with distilling liquor.⁴⁵

In addition, the imported brands of liquor were a show of high status and a medium for the display of wealth by highly placed chieftains such as the *Alaafin* of Oyo who around 1900 bragged about entertaining his guests with eighty cases of gin at the cost of £30 each.⁴⁶ Elsewhere, Rev. Ransome Kuti noted that people became indebted just to purchase liquor for funerals. According to him, in one instance £200 was spent on a funeral of a mother with £160 spent on spirits, and in yet another burial that gulped £128 with £80 spent on spirits.⁴⁷

If this was the case, the Brussels Conference of 1890 designed to draw the attention of the imperialists to reduce the importation of alcohol among colonized people globally was a mere rhetoric to the ears of the colonialists. The same applies to various synods of the CMS held in Lagos and Abeokuta under the auspices of the Diocese of Equatorial Africa between 1905 and 1915 which persistently warned against the importation of various alcohol brands to Nigeria. All the aforementioned moral caution to the imperialists by the Native Races and the Liquor Traffic United Committee (NRLTUC), the Aborigines Protection Society (APS), and the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) fell on deaf ears as they refused to succumb to superior arguments over the devastating effect of importing excess liquor. The role of the missionaries to suppress the importation of liquor especially trade spirits won the conviction of the people under the auspices of the Native Races and the Liquor Traffic United Committee (NRLTUC). They wrote to Bishop Tugwell in 1911 thanking him for the protection from the degrading importation of trade spirits.⁴⁸

Alcohol was already a veritable resource for the colonial economy and revenue generation. Capitalist ideology abhors the acceptance of tinkering with the colonial means of accumulating capital. The exorbitant nature of imported alcohol brands made room for alternatives to augment the drinking thirst of the people. The various cheap brands of alcohol were tagged “trade spirits” and contained too many impure particles that raised serious health questions. At Ibadan, the case was not different as 8,435 gallons were imported in 1903, 110,000 gallons in 1904 and by 1911 it was about 200,000 gallons.⁴⁹

The synod was one of the platforms used by the CMS to discuss affecting the Church as well as the state. Beginning in 1905, liquor traffic became a serious topic of discussion, especially the manner it affected the morality of Christianity. In a motion, moved in the synod of the Diocese of Equatorial Africa held in Lagos on July 1906 and May 1907 respectively, Rev G. Anyaegbunam observed that people in Onitsha adopted strategies of carrying alcohol into prohibited zones.⁵⁰ In his view,

Lord Elgin suggested that a buffer zone be established south of the frontier north and that license for the sale of liquor should be refused.⁵¹ The importation of alcohol to the zone was recorded as follows:

1905 Imperial gallon	1906 Imperial gallon
Gin-----2,129,719	2,708,855
Rum----525,842	505,627
Unremunerated 76,484	77,807 ⁵²

At Onitsha, the situation was not different as Rev. G. Anyaegbunam was told that they could not stop drinking it unless the importation was stopped and concluded as follows: “tell those that bring it to stop it”.⁵³ By 1906, Nigeria was already a dumping ground for all brands of imported liquor. This is evident by the fact that alcohol brands imported into British West Africa namely Sierra Leone, Gold Coast (Ghana), and Nigeria, amounted to 4,705,898 gallons but in 1911 alone imports into Nigeria amounted to 4,821,692 gallons as a result imports into the whole of British West Africa in 1906 exceeded that of British West Africa by about 100,000 gallons.⁵⁴ By 1910, Abeokuta’s imported trade spirits was about 400,000 gallons and increased to 570,000 gallons in 1911.⁵⁵ This development took place despite the 1909 warning from CMS synod held in Lagos that alcohol trade in Europe was scandalous as it affected the normal function of the brain, diminishes rapidity of thought, affects habits to work, perseverance and capability of thinking rationale.⁵⁶ The following year in 1910, the CMS synod held in Ibadan described as unimaginable the liquor trade in the United Kingdom and did not want the same to replicate itself in Nigeria.⁵⁷

Before this period, precisely in 1908, Rev. J.J Ransome Kuti raised alarm on the importation of alcohol brands in Abeokuta since the completion of the rail lines. He pointed out that within the space of two months; about 50,000 gallons were brought by European traders through Egba railway stations and about 17,000 gallons were sold in a village within thirty days. The cases and demijohns of liquor were seen all over Ibadan. This development in Kuti’s view was simply piteous and could affect procreation by men and women. Kuti insists that since the government had no plan to stop the importation, people should stop buying it, stop trading it, and stop using it.⁵⁸ Justifying this view further, a report has it that the volume of alcohol imported into Nigeria by 1911 exceeded the imports of alcohol made in the whole of British West Africa.⁵⁹

The importation of alcohol brands was further sustained by the economic importance attached to the community. In Port Harcourt for example, gin was used as a form of currency in exchange for goods and services. Colonial District Officer in charge of Port Harcourt Mr. Harcourt in 1912 admitted as follows: ‘Every step is being taken not only gradually but rapidly to increase the use of currency and to get rid of a currency which, naturally, we all explore’⁶⁰The nature of drinking was much that Rev. Ransome Kuti observed that: ‘80 percent of Europeans working on the rail line are hard drinkers’⁶¹ Alcohol sales in Nigeria and indeed in West Africa was a boom, but at the end of the First World War in 1918 the situation began to change. Bersselaar observed thus:

Imports of gin into West Africa peaked between 1880 and 1914. They subsequently declined, from 84,258 hectoliters in 1898 to 2,610 hectoliters in 1939 with a brief revival during the 1920s. After World War 11, gin imports stabilized at between 5000 and 7000 hectoliters, a mere fraction of the amount imported before World War 1.⁶²

The cost of import duties went high so as to make up for the cost implication of prosecuting the war. Bersselaar noted that “gin exported to West Africa was cheap in comparison to other distilled liquors, its consumption was still expensive in terms of the local African economy”.⁶³ Attention was later diverted to trade spirits but the moral question of those spirits was being challenged both by the CMS and other moral crusaders. With time, the rise of **ethopianism** a kind of nationalism that grew during this era descended against drinking liquor. One of the principal voices against the menace of liquor was Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide of the Niger Delta. According to J. N Ngoye. ‘in 1916, the British administration faced a great loss due to the fall in the sales of alcohol in the Niger Delta which was attributed to Garrick Braide’s Movement’.⁶⁴

Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide, a former evangelist with the Church Missionary Society in the Niger Delta was not as lucky as Tugwell even when he kicked against alcohol importation like the former. By 1915, the colonial government which relied on alcohol proceeds from the Niger Delta suffered a deficit of £576,000 in revenue.⁶⁵ This was at the height of the Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide movement. G.O.M Tasie captured the mood at that time as follows:

One of Braide’s major features, incidentally, had also been attack on alcoholic liquors. He condemned them as having morally depraving effects and exhorted his hearers to abstain from them in order to avoid God’s judgment. It was said that nearly 3,000,000 gallons of gin and rum were consumed yearly in the Delta towns of Brass, Kalabari, Bonny, and Opobo. One of Bishop Tugwell and James Johnson’s preoccupations was their campaign against gin and rum. But prior to Braide, the native people seemed to have paid no heed. His exhortation had an almost immediate effect. Consumption in a place like Opobo, it was noted, fell from hundreds of pounds worth to less than ten. All these were already to the discredit of Braide, when he paid the august visit to Abonnema in January 1916.⁶⁶

Surprisingly, the position of morality maintained by four religious moralists such as Tugwell, J.J. Ransome Kuti, James Johnson, and Prophet Garrick Braide was suffered by Braide alone. Available records indicate that James Johnson had an uncompromising stand on liquor traffic as well.⁶⁷ However, Johnson instigated the District Officer in charge of Degema, Dr. P.A Talbot to arrest Braide in March 1916 for agitating against British imperial rule.⁶⁸ Johnson whom scholars have referred to as Holy Johnson and a nationalist⁶⁹ was a self-centered man in the ordinary sense of it. He felt that dealing with Garrick Braide will help change the mindset of Tugwell of making him a substantial Bishop of the Niger Delta church. Until his retirement in 1917, Johnson realized that he was betrayed by those he obeyed as he remained an Assistant Bishop.

While Tugwell, Johnson, and others advocated against alcohol importation and consumption, available evidence indicates that it had little direct impact on the British political economy, especially revenue derived from alcohol sales. For example, in Lagos, the revenue derived from alcohol fell from 55.15 percent in 1906 to 4.98 percent in revenue in 1908⁷⁰ but that was not the case in the Niger Delta where Prophet Garrick Braide was in charge and commanded so much respect until he died in 1918 shortly after he was released from prison. James Coleman described him thus:

A movement that occurred in 1914 in the Delta region under the leadership of a Nigerian who called himself the second Elijah was essentially puritanical and Christian in character, but the leader became progressively anti-European and was finally convicted of sedition by the British authorities.⁷¹

The price of imported alcohol brands continued to rise from 1919 when Tugwell retired and the demise of Prophet Garrick Braide. Regrettably, in 1918 and 1919 the sum of £25 and £27 19s.8d respectively realized by the synod meetings of the CMS to support the Native Races and Liquor Committee to combat liquor importation, drinking, and awareness campaign was so insignificant.⁷² The people have been so relished in gin that the King of Oto affirms that 'their people worship gin'⁷³

From the 1930s when alcohol was distilled locally, colonial authorities enacted laws to combat native distillation industries but to no avail. Local gin distillation by the people suffered from the colonial barbaric policies on alcohol. It was called illicit gin and was widely speculated to be harmful so as to pave the way for the sale of imported brands of alcohol. Despite these attempts, the native gin (*Ogogoro*) continued to occupy a space in the social life of the people of Nigeria. The absence of Charismatic leadership from an indigenous moralist was no longer there. Braide was gone, Tugwell retired and Johnson more interested in episcopacy politics was earlier retired in 1917.

Conclusion

The colonial economy relied heavily on revenue from alcohol importation. Despite the moral consequences of alcohol consumption, the trade persisted, leading to the emergence of moral reformers such as Herbert Tugwell, James Johnson, J.J. Ransome Kuti, and Garrick Braide, all associated with the Church Missionary Society (CMS). These individuals were prominent voices against alcohol consumption; however, historical records reveal that both Tugwell and Braide, a former CMS evangelist, faced significant backlash from colonial authorities for their anti-alcohol stance. While Tugwell avoided persecution, Braide was not as fortunate, ultimately losing his life due to his vocal opposition to alcohol and his leadership in economic resistance against British imperial interests in the Niger Delta.

This paper explores the efforts of church moralists, including Bishop Herbert Tugwell, James Johnson, J.J. Kuti, and Prophet Garrick Braide, in leading the campaign against alcohol consumption and importation in Nigeria. Alcohol

importation emerged as one of the tools of oppression during colonial rule, significantly impacting the colonized people. The period between 1914 and 1930, marked by the aftermath of the First World War and the Great Depression, also reflected the global economic challenges of capitalism. From Vasco Da Gama's arrival on the East African coast to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and later colonialism, Africa became increasingly entangled in the West's political and economic struggles, driven by competing interests over resources. The colonial administration introduced a new kind of public space—one shaped by leisure activities and cultural festivals—which often normalized alcohol consumption among the population. Despite the campaigns of these church moralists, Garrick Braide's advocacy stood out, yielding significant results despite his role as a church teacher rather than holding formal positions of power like bishoprics. His charisma far surpassed that of figures such as Tugwell and James Johnson, making him a prominent nationalist with a strong commitment to protecting African interests. This was most evident in the substantial impact of his anti-gin advocacy, which was widely obeyed and disrupted the British political economy, particularly in the Niger Delta and Nigeria at large.

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