

Chapter 3

A “Purely Swiss” Missionary Society in Colonial Karnataka: Patriotism and Transnational Exchanges in the Interwar Period

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Abstract: The chapter deals with the history of the Basel Mission in South India at the end of the First World War, and of a missionary organization based in Lausanne which took over in the period from 1918 to 1928, the so-called Kanarese Evangelical Mission. The first part of the chapter looks back at the context of the Basel Mission in South India and the difficulties caused by the organization’s links with Germany during the First World War. The different stages of the creation of the Kanarese Evangelical Mission are then presented, before analysing the tense political context in which the missionaries found themselves caught up, both in Switzerland and in India. Particular attention is paid to the dissident movements that developed within the mission in India, and to the relations with the Indian nationalist movements and ideologies. The conclusion deals with the longer-term consequences of this episode, in connection with the development of international ecumenical institutions and pacifist ideologies in Switzerland.

1 Introduction

While Christian missions have often been analysed as aligned with colonial intentions, these institutions are increasingly considered as metamorphic spaces in which cultural goods have been negotiated, while of course acknowledging that not all actors have equal access to physical and symbolic resources.¹ From this perspective, it is certainly legitimate to ask in what measure Swiss missionaries and Swiss missions have contributed to the circulation of knowledge and cultural practices from Switzerland to South Asia and back again – in ways that were intended or not.² This chapter focuses on the activities of a particular missionary

1 Research for this chapter has been made possible thanks to the precious help of Dr B. Amanna (Mangalore), Rev. H. Cabral (Mangalore), Dr Paul Jenkins, Dr Parinitha Shetty (Mangalore), Dr C. Stenzl (London), as well as the friendly staff at the Basel Mission Archives. Green 2014; Becker 2015.

2 Habermas 2010.

institution based in Switzerland and almost exclusively staffed by Swiss people in South India.

One of the main missionary societies active in Switzerland, the Basel Mission (BM), has been at the centre of an important number of studies, some of which specifically focus on its activities in India.³ However, the Kanarese Evangelical Mission (KEM), with headquarters in French-speaking Switzerland, has by contrast been little studied.⁴ A definitive break away from the *ancien régime* represented by the pre-war BM, the time of the KEM is symptomatic of a general questioning of the missionary presence in India in the 1920s. This can be perceived in the different fields and activities supported by the mission, such as evangelization, schools, and the conduct of the Christian community. As soon as they set foot on Indian soil, the Swiss missionaries were immediately caught in a web of political, religious, and social movements, over which they could barely exert any control but with which they would inevitably have to cope.

This makes the situation particularly interesting for a study of cultural interactions: the case involves the role of Swiss actors as “neutral” intermediaries between the British colonial regime and the Indian freedom movement, the political position of Indian Christians in the context of colonial Karnataka, the reaction of the Swiss missionaries to the increasing politicization of their congregations, and the impact of the experience in India back on the Swiss religious scene, in particular in the context of the development of a global ecumenism rooted in internationalist Protestantism.

In our investigation it is worth keeping three general questions in mind: (1) What was the position of the Swiss missionaries towards the people they were in contact with? Through what strategies, and within which limits did they try to impress their agenda? Did the mission provide local actors with “supra-national conduits for ambition and endeavour” – as seems to be the case in the rich set of examples studied by Nile Green?⁵ (2) How did the Swiss origin of the institution affect the contacts locally? Are there patterns that could be described as typically

3 Unfortunately written from an entirely internal point of view and lacking references to source materials, the five volumes of the *Geschichte der Basel Mission (GBM)* (Schlatter 1916a, 1916b, 1916c, Witschi & Schlatter 1965 and 1970) still provide useful detailed information. Other valuable studies include Fischer 1978 (on the Basel Mission industries), Frenz 2005 (a general overview), Hofstetter 2012 (on the medical mission), Jenkins 1989 (a general overview), Köller 2017 (on the Basel Mission and ecumenism in South India), Konrad 2001 (on women), Prabhakar 1988 (on the Basel Mission and its effects on the Indian context), Schär 2017 (on philanthropical practices), Sebastian 2013 (on missionary scholars), Shetty 2008 (on education), Stenzl 2010 and 2012 (on Basel Mission industries), Valiamparambil 1996 (on the medical mission), Tucher 1980 (on mission and nationalism), and Wendt 2005 (on Kittel).

4 There are a few exceptions: Sargant 1983; Sargant 1987, pp. 109–128; Jenkins 1998, pp. 48–49. The *GBM* only devotes a few pages to the KEM (*GBM*, vol. 5, pp. 47–57).

5 Green 2014, p. 111.

Swiss? (3) In what measure were the missionaries themselves durably “affected” (or not) by their time in the field? What consequences did this have on the cultural and scholarly landscape of Switzerland?

1.1 The Basel Mission in South India

Before analysing the specificities of KEM’s period of activity, we need to give a brief historical overview of the BM’s work in South India. The BM was founded in 1815 as an institute to train missionaries based in Basel on behalf of other religious societies before “sending them to various regions of the heathen world.”⁶ It started sending missionaries to Russia and to the Gold Coast in 1828, and to India in 1834. Other locations – China, Cameroon, Borneo – followed in later decades. In India, it started with three German missionaries arriving in Mangalore: Johann Christoph Lehner (1806–1855), Christian Leonhard Greiner (1810–1877), and Samuel Hebich (1803–1868). If Mangalore was then relatively isolated – it was not served by railway until 1907 – it was also located at a crossroads of different cultures and languages because of its strategic position on the Malabar coast.

Besides more classical missionary tasks such as building a church, evangelizing, or organizing a Christian education, several missionaries developed a pronounced scholarly interest in local traditions. The BM had an important number of such missionary scholars in Karnataka: the first was the German Herrmann Friedrich Mögling (1811–1881) who arrived in Mangalore in 1836, wrote thirty-six works in Kannada and coordinated the edition of a collection of non-Christian Kannada literary works, the *Bibliotheca Carnatica*.⁷ Next to Mögling, Hermann Gundert (1814–1893) joined the BM and arrived in Mangalore in 1838.⁸ Proficient in Malayalam, he published an important number of works in that language including a famous Malayalam–English dictionary (1872). With similar scholarly interests, Ferdinand Kittel (1832–1903) arrived in India in 1853. He quickly learned not only the Kannada language, but also Kannada classical literature and Carnatic music.⁹ Because the history of Orientalism in Germany and Switzerland was very much connected with Indo-German linguis-

6 *GBM*, vol. 1, p. 28.

7 In 6 vols., pp. 1848–1853; see Sebastian 2013. This collection includes the *Karnataka Śabdānuśāsanam* of Bhaṭṭākalaṅka Deva (a grammar of Konkane, 1604), the *Chennabasava Purāṇa* (a hagiography of the Liṅgayat “saint” Chennabasava) and the *Karnāṭa Bhārata* of Kumāravyasa (a Kannada adaptation of the *Mahābhārata*).

8 Gundert was married to the Geneva-born Julie Dubois (1809–1885) who shared his time in India.

9 On Kittel’s scholarly works see Wendt 2005.

tics,¹⁰ these works had a limited reception in German and Swiss academic circles. However, they enriched the general knowledge about South India in the broader circle of people following the activities of the mission.

In the opposite direction, the mission organized educational activities which included, besides religious matters, secular topics and physical education. In the first stage, primary and secondary schools were opened – in Mangalore as early as 1836.¹¹ This was followed by the opening in 1847 of a seminary (today the Karnataka Theological College, Mangalore) to teach the indigenous staff, from catechists to future school teachers.¹² In 1909 a university-level institution was founded in Kozhikode: the “Malabar Christian College.”

Along with these scholarly and educational activities, the mission contributed to the development of print and the production of printed books in Kannada script. A first printing press was functional in 1841 and texts could be printed in Kannada fonts a few years later. The press printed a wide selection of books in Kannada and Tulu, ranging from the Bible – first Tulu translation in 1847, by Johann Jakob Amman (1816–1864) from Schaffhausen¹³ – to educational books for the government and “secular” novels. This all had a lasting impact on the literary culture of Karnataka (and Kerala), with not only a standardization of the written language through Kittel’s dictionary, but also a selection of Kannada (and Malayalam) works to be printed and diffused to a large audience, in particular in schools.

As other missionary societies had also done, the BM implemented measures to closely monitor the activities abroad and to ensure that both its employees and congregations were following the direction set by its board of directors. Improved communication and transport made it progressively easier to exert a periodic control, at least from the second part of the nineteenth century onwards. This was achieved by intense correspondence, by regulations (first introduced in 1840) and by the periodical visit of the “inspector” (actually the executive director of the mission) from Basel. The first inspector, Joseph Josenhans (1812–1884), inaugurated a regime that would, it was hoped, “bring order”¹⁴ to a situation perceived as chaotic. Visiting South India in the years 1851–1852, Josenhans created district committees led by Western missionaries and designed rules to control the way in which the information was passed hierarchically, from the

10 See Régamey 1966 for Switzerland.

11 *GBM*, vol. 2, p. 19.

12 *GBM*, vol. 2, p. 128.

13 On its effect on Tulu culture see Fernandes 2006; Brückner 2009, p. 4.

14 See the description of his visit in 1851–1852 in *GBM*, vol. 1, pp. 227–231.

local fields to the committees and then all the way up to Basel. He insisted that preaching, not dialoguing, should be the missionaries' main activity.¹⁵

Soon after beginning its activities on Indian soil, the BM launched various industrial projects such as weaving workshops.¹⁶ The stated reason was to provide new employment to Indians who had either lost their caste by conversion or who had grown up in the congregation. This reason was probably hiding deeper motivations such as to “train Christians among the heathen in a Christian conduct of their secular occupation,”¹⁷ to give toddy tappers (a high proportion of early converts) new work that would keep them away from alcohol and, of course, to provide cheap labour for developing profitable economic activities.¹⁸

While the missionary scholars were usually German, the people supervising the industries were generally Swiss. Developed in parallel with the industrialization of the Basel region, these industries provided substantial financial support to the mission, which was not dependent on the government. By 1870 these industrial activities had become important factories specializing in weaving, brick and tile manufacture, and were embedded in global transnational networks, with, for example, the export of bricks for building railroads in Uganda or textiles woven and dyed in the colour khaki (a local invention) exported back to Europe. This transnational dimension was itself boosted with the possibility to navigate through the Red Sea (1837) and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

Attempts at developing other activities were not as successful: projects to cultivate coffee and to make sugar out of toddy palm trees both failed, for a lack of a precise estimation of production capabilities and costs. Another aborted project consisted in introducing watchmaking, a skill brought in 1846 by two German missionaries with a handcrafting background, Jakob Böisinger (1823–1905) and Christian Müller (1819–1896).¹⁹ According to the missionaries, it did not succeed because of the difficulties involved in teaching such precise skills to local staff, and because there was no local interest in the product. In a report published in 1853 the failure is explained in the following terms:

It should be seen as an impossibility to introduce to a pagan population which in addition lacks the intelligence and energy that is usual to us, an activity the learning and conduct of which would require, for example by us in Switzerland, an entire life as a local business. We should not ignore that a converted Hindu is still no European, and not

¹⁵ See Josenhans 1852 for criticism expressed towards a missionary active in Betageri, Johannes Conrad Hiller (1811–?), for engaging too strongly with the local culture.

¹⁶ On the history of the industries in the pre-First World War context see Stenzl 2010, 2012.

¹⁷ “Protokolle der Industriekommission, 1846 bis 1873,” pp. 150–151, Basel Mission Archives (BMA) Q-08.3.1, quoted by Stenzl 2012, p. 49.

¹⁸ Stenzl 2012, pp. 48–49.

¹⁹ *GBM*, vol. 2, pp. 156.

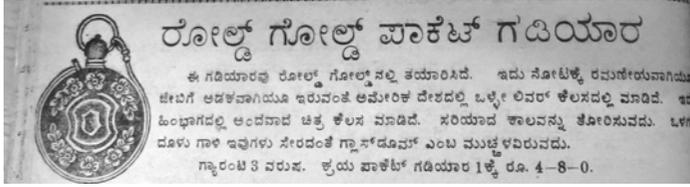


Figure 3.1. Advertisement for watches. Source: *Christa Hitavadi* 8, 1927, p. 116.

forget that our civilization, produced with the Gospel, established for one and half thousand years, is a gift from a special divine grace, which also grants us a rarely measured advantage in the skills of business.²⁰

Anticipating Max Weber's theses on the genesis of capitalist societies and inspired by a Hegelian conception of world history, this text attributes success in industrial business as a gift from Providence, bestowed on Germany and Switzerland but not on India. Commenting on the failure of watchmaking, Schlatter adds: "In the country of inertia, watches are not popular"²¹ – certainly a very mistaken statement, at least if one is to judge by the number of advertisements for watches published in the official journal of the local Christian congregation, the *Christa Hitavadi*, in the 1920s (Figure 3.1). In any case, this perspective was legitimizing the superior position of the German and Swiss employees in the administration of the industries. This example shows the putative connection between economic success and Providence, and the BM's ambition to develop industries in the region of Mangalore on the model of what had been done in the Basel area. This project to bring modernity had concrete local implications, since an impressive industrial activity was developed in the region around Mangalore, related or not to the BM.²²

In 1881, 834 workers were employed in two tile works and four weaving workshops,²³ with another major tile factory and cotton factories opening around 1900. In 1913, before the war's outbreak, 196 persons were in the service of the BM in its four zones of activity (the Malabar coast around Calicut, the region of Mangalore-Udupi, the region of Dharwad and the Nilgiris), in addition to ten large industrial societies, employing about 100 persons each.

20 1. Jahresbericht der Indischen Kommission, 1853, quoted in *GBM*, vol. 2, p. 156 (my translation).

21 *GBM*, vol. 2, p. 156.

22 Schär 2017.

23 A missionary, E. G. Halbrock (1856–1924), criticized the development of industries, saying that "it isn't a mission industry required for possible jobless candidates for baptism, but a purely commercial speculation," quoted by Stenzl 2012, p. 53.

2 The Kanarese Evangelical Mission

2.1 Difficulties of the Basel Mission during the First World War

Considered as a loyal foreign society until the First World War, the BM had generally enjoyed positive appreciation from the colonial government. Unlike other German missionary societies, such as the Lutheran Gossner mission,²⁴ it does not seem that the label of “German” or “Swiss” was connected with any anti-colonial agenda or image in this case. On the contrary, British authorities regularly praised the society for the educational activities it was providing, and admired its success in handling the industrial activities. The situation changed radically with the outbreak of the war, with German societies active on Indian soil systematically considered as enemy bodies. This threatened the very existence of the BM, since its fields of Cameroon, Ghana, and India were all parts of the British empire. In India, German missionaries were either interned in camps located in Ahmednagar and Madras or sent back to their home country. For the thirty-six remaining Swiss employees who had escaped internment on the grounds of their nationality, preaching was prohibited and left to Indian catechists or evangelists.²⁵

In December 1915, a “Swiss missionary delegation” (Schweizerischer Missionsausschuss) was founded in Bern under the leadership of the theology professor and pastor Wilhelm Hadorn (1869–1929).²⁶ The main goal of the group was to help missionaries who had stayed in India by providing advice, sending new missionaries and liaising with political authorities – in particular, the British embassy in Bern. Since its very creation, this delegation was “between the anvil and the hammer: while the British government was demanding that any German element should be removed from the mission, the BM, on its side, was considering to give up its activities in India rather than jeopardizing its organization in Europe.”²⁷

In June 1916, the committee of the BM was forced to note that the British government would no longer issue visas for mission workers with “German sympathies.” It communicated its disagreement with this policy to the British government and received an answer in November 1916 from Sir Edward Grey, the foreign minister: “The government arrived at the conclusion: in its current

²⁴ Liebau 2010, pp. 267–270, referring to the perception of Germans as allies in the anti-colonial struggle in Chota Nagpur (Oriya). On the national specificity of German societies and the complicated collaboration with British societies, already visible in the organization of a German Missionary Conference in 1885, see Clark and Ledger-Lomas 2012, p. 39.

²⁵ See *GBM*, vol. 4, p. 206; Zimmermann 1930, p. 21. The remaining staff was only composed of Swiss nationals and included people working for the mission industries.

²⁶ For a short biographical notice on Hadorn see Noth 2006.

²⁷ Zimmermann 1930, p. 25.

activities, the Basel Mission is so German in its sympathies that the continuation of the work in British colonies cannot be allowed.”²⁸ This was certainly not entirely a British-centered *vue d’esprit*, since one missionary to the service of the BM, Gaston Rosselet (1887–1968), described the situation in quite blunt terms. In a 1916 letter sent to leaders of the BM, he complained about the lack of true internationalism in the society and its clear German identity:

Entering in your society, I was not expecting to find perfection in all domains, but between a perfect realization of this concept of Christian internationalism and what I found, there is an abyss. [...] I will limit myself to tell you that I was terribly disappointed; everything in your society in India is the contrary of international. We are known as the German mission, because as long as it was not dangerous, it was wanted and the committee allowed this. During a conversation that I had about it in Mahé with the governor of Pondicherry, I was told: do not say that your society is Swiss, go read what is written on the frontispieces of your schools, on your registers, and tell me if you can say that your society is Swiss. He could have told me to add the initials B.G.M [Basel German Mission] painted on tables and school benches.²⁹

Meanwhile, Dr. Pierre de Benoît (1884–1963), a native of Bern belonging to a family that already had ties with British India³⁰ and who had freshly (1914) graduated with a doctorate in medicine from the University of Zürich, joined the delegation. He played a key role in the negotiations between the Swiss and British authorities from 1916 to 1925, and offered to travel to India to negotiate directly there. With the British ambassador in Bern, Sir Evelyn Mountstuart Grant Duff (1863–1926), firmly opposed to the BM, de Benoît had a difficult task to even get authorization to travel to India. Invited by the secretary of the International Missionary Council, J. H. Oldham (1874–1969), he first travelled to London before leaving for Marseilles, where he embarked in January 1917 with his wife on the *Medina*, destination Bombay.³¹ The couple arrived safely one month later, moved to Bettageri, Mangalore, and finally reached Calicut, where they would be staying for the next two years.

²⁸ *GBM*, vol. 4, p. 89.

²⁹ Rosselet, Gaston, BM BV 1849, letter from Nettur, Tellicherry, to pastor Amstein, February 9, 1916.

³⁰ His great-grandfather had been an officer to the service of the British forces in India. See also Oldham’s note (1920), WCC 26.14.06/5, which emphasizes this relation to the British: “The great grandfather distinguished himself as an officer of the British forces in India, and several of his close relations did also hold high positions in the Indian army. The uncle of Dr. de Benoît (his mother’s brother) married Miss Ella Delamain, the sister of two living British officers in India, General Walter Delamain, who are both knowing well Dr. de Benoît.”

³¹ Letter of January 15, 1917, WCC 26.14.06/5. The *Medina* was to sink on its way back from India from a torpedo attack in the Mediterranean.

In a letter sent to Oldham before departing from Marseilles, de Benoît optimistically expressed his confidence that a new missionary society was about to be created, that it would easily be recognized by the British and that the transfer of property from the former BM was well under its way. In Switzerland as in India, de Benoît did his best to rebrand the mission as pro-ally and to remove its German reputation by working his way through high-level diplomatic relations – this against the advice of the BM committee, which wanted to keep the mission (or at least, its public image) as “apolitical” as possible. De Benoît wrote then, very assertively, that “I think that we have as far as possible eliminated all pro-German elements, as those Swiss who have German sympathies, strongly disapprove our action, saying that we are simply serving the political purposes of Great Britain.” He added:

We have also put the British consul at Lausanne in the society, and on the Board of Managers, Prof. Edouard Naville of Geneva, member of the International Committee of the Red Cross, very well known in the highest circles in England, and very strongly pro-Allies, like several others of the managers, for instance Rev. Martin (son-in-law of Me. Gustave Ador, chairman of the International Red Cross), Rev. Gustave Secrétan etc.³²

This all demonstrates that the composition of committees dealing with missionary topics was extremely strategic at this time. People from sectors such as diplomacy, industry and higher education were actively recruited and accepted to participate.

In May 1917, Naville received a letter from the British embassy in Switzerland, signed by Sir Horace Rumbold (1869–1941). The ambassador insisted on keeping a mission on the Gold Coast (Ghana), since only few other missions were present there and since the departure of the BM would mean the “fall-back of the natives into fetishism” (*sic*).³³ The letter added that: “In India, a mission would be welcome, to the condition that the composition of its executive committee in Europe would be irreproachable.” The irreproachable character was to be gauged with the following criteria: it should (1) be devoid of any German influence and appoint a *purely Swiss* committee; (2) the mission’s committee should include a chaplain from the Free Church of Scotland; (3) any new appointment to the missionary staff was to be submitted for the approval of the British government; (4) the mission should only use funds coming from Switzerland; (5) the “industrial mission” (the former BM industries) would need to be in “safe hands;” (6) a Geneva school for missionaries should be reopened.³⁴

Picturing itself as thoroughly apolitical and exclusively oriented towards a religious goal, the BM committee replied that it could not accept the first two

³² Letter of January 15, 1917, WCC 26.14.06/5.

³³ *GBM* vol. 4, p. 90.

³⁴ *GBM*, vol. 4, p. 87.

conditions. This was followed by a decision from the British government to ban the BM from India entirely in February 1918³⁵ and by the dissolution of the “Swiss delegation” that had been mediating between the BM and the British authorities.

It is striking that in all of this troubled period, the communities in India and the mission’s Indian employees had no say and were not even mentioned as partners in the negotiations – despite the fact that they greatly outnumbered their German or Swiss colleagues and were directly affected by the decisions. Indeed, and despite good intentions, the pre-War BM showed much caution in implementing the doctrine of the “three selves” formulated by Henry Venn (1796–1873) in the nineteenth century (that is, the goal of self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating local communities), especially for where political decisions and finances were concerned.³⁶

In this first period, and despite its relatively minor size, the case reveals the institutional connections between Christian missions and the global political environment of the time: with the First World War in the background, the project of a Swiss missionary society in India involved complex transactions on a diplomatic level between Switzerland and Great Britain, an integration in a transnational network of Protestant missions (with the help of the Scottish missionary J. H. Oldham) as well as transactions between missionary societies in the Swiss context itself.

2.2 Genesis of the Kanarese Evangelical Mission (KEM)

In 1914 a committee to help the cause of evangelization in India in these adverse circumstances was formed in Lausanne, under the lead of pastor Gustave Secrétan (1867–1945), the then “agent” of the BM in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, and soon joined by Albert de Haller (1897–1951), a pastor of the “National Church”³⁷ and a relative of the better-known native of Bern, the poet Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777). Developed out of this committee, the KEM was founded as an independent entity in February 1918.³⁸ It organized a public meeting in June 1918 with the goal of advertising the new society to possible

³⁵ Ibid., p. 98.

³⁶ See *Report of the Basel German Evangelical Missionary Society in South-Western India for the Year 1912*, pp. 34–37: “We know that the branch of the Indian Church, connected with the Basel Mission is still in need of the Mission, not only of her money, but also of her representatives.”

³⁷ On the distinction between the “Free Church” and the “National Church” see Bastian 2016.

³⁸ Zimmermann 1930, p. 29; “Minutes of the Mission committee in the Canton Vaud, Nov 1915–Oct 1927”, BMA CC-2,1.

sponsors, branding it as a providential opportunity offered to Switzerland, and disseminating a “call” through the network of state churches. The project can be conceived of as an extension of a patriotic religious ideology that was further developed in the aftermath of the First World War: indeed, the national, Swiss, origin of the institution had to be emphasized to a measure that had previously been unusual.³⁹ This narrative entailed not only a process of identity building by opposition to a yet-to-be-civilized and non-Christian India, but also notions of “Swissness” and neutrality officially validated by the external arbitrator of the British administration.

In India, the Swiss missionaries who had been working for the BM were of course in favour of such a development. A telling example is a letter sent in 1918 by the Swiss BM missionary David Berli (1855–1944) to Rev. Rees (a Wesleyan missionary) in Hubli, saying the following:

I hope fervently [that the] Government will make us end very soon, 4 years we have been kept in uncertainty, I am longing for the final decision. After 33 years of service, I have to see the end of the mission by the Christian Government to whom we all have been of more use than many Government officials, but we do not blame the Government, we blame the old committee which opposed the formation of a Swiss mission.⁴⁰

Indeed, the creation of the KEM did not mean its *de facto* recognition by the British government. However, the British had an economic and political interest in having an organization continue the work of the BM in India: it was a good opportunity to outsource work that would otherwise be a financial burden to an institution whose loyalty could be controlled, while at the same time legitimating its seizing of industrial work so far managed with success by the BM. To concretize the plan, the British government issued “memoranda” in 1919 to ensure that all the foreign workers “engaging in philanthropic, educational and medical work” would be loyal to the British.⁴¹ The situation was however a delicate one and in many domains, the government privileged a non-interventionist policy in religious matters. This seems to have been especially the case in the aftermath of the Mapilla revolt of 1921, but other earlier signs equally show that certain cir-

³⁹ A parallel development was also visible in the economic context, as shown by Dejung & Zanger 2010, p. 213: “After the outbreak of the war, even firms operating multi-nationally were forced to subject themselves to the cultural concept of a distinct national origin, even though – or precisely because – their actual operations and the constitution of their staff or their associates were often at odds with this concept. Such a heightened awareness of the nationality of enterprises had not been customary prior to the war.”

⁴⁰ Letter of July 9, 1918 (UTC Archives Bangalore).

⁴¹ Prabhakar 1988, p. 222: “In due course, the original purpose was lost of sight of and the memoranda came to be used to check any perceived pro-Indian nationalist tendencies among non-British missionaries and their Indian associates.” and “Memorandum ‘C’” reprinted in Prabhakar 1988, pp. 344–346.

cles within the government wanted to reduce interference in religious questions as much as possible.⁴²

2.3 The Kanarese Evangelical Mission's Transnational Framework

As a result of all this, the activities of the new missionary society were authorized under the condition that it was supervised by the National Missionary Council (NMC) and its German Missions Committee, presided by the bishop of Madras, Henry Whitehead (1863–1947).⁴³ The main concern of the time was, quite predictably, the industries' fate. Even if officially registered as a Swiss enterprise in Basel and administrated by Swiss personnel, the British government assimilated the business to trade operations run by an enemy country on its soil. While de Benoît wanted the new mission to retain control over the industries, the British government had other intentions. Tellingly, this is the only situation in which the issue of local workers' own interests was raised – and this in a highly paternalist way, suggesting that only a Swiss management could safeguard decent working conditions for its workers. Despite de Benoît's efforts, the Basel industries were transferred to the British-managed "Commonwealth Trust." It continued to give a part of its revenues to the mission, but in a smaller proportion than had been the case previously.

To this was added the difficulty of collecting funds in Switzerland, a task made even more precarious because of the negative propaganda from the BM itself. The KEM had to cope with a scission among mission supporters in Switzerland: while some transferred their donations to the KEM, others could not easily accept the creation of a concurrent society and compared it – with

⁴² Prabhakar 1988, p. 222.

⁴³ See the correspondence between Oldham, de Benoît and Maclean, 1918–1919, in Oldham 1920, WCC 26.14.06/5.

again characteristic paternalist undertones – to a “nurse usurping the role of the mother.”⁴⁴

2.4 The Organization in India

In India the new organization revolved around the two former “districts” of the BM: (1) the South Kanara zone around Mangalore on the west coast (Dakshina Kanara), and (2) the South Mahratta zone around Dharwad (Figure 3.2).⁴⁵ These zones, attached to the colonial British government – respectively to the Madras and Bombay presidencies – neighboured the princely states of Mysore and Hyderabad. In 1919 five missionary stations, all from the former BM, were active in South Kanara, with thirty-seven annexes: Mangalore, Udupi, Mulki, Karkala, and Kasaragod. In the South Maratha region, the stations were located in Dharwad, Betageri, Sumaddi, Hubli, and Bijapur.

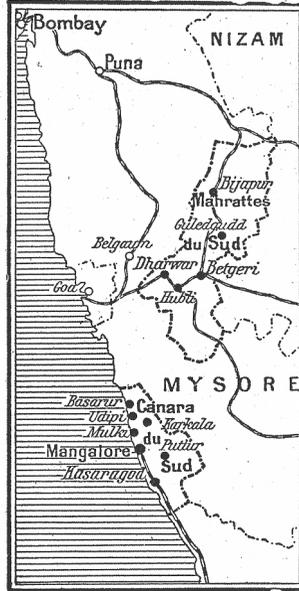
Several of these locations correspond to major religious sites. Important centres for the Liṅgāyat tradition are the Tontadarya *maṭha* (monastic complex) in Gadag, the Murusavira *maṭha* in Hubli, and the Murugi *maṭha* in Dharwad – in addition of course to the powerful Liṅgāyat *maṭha* in Chitradurga founded in the seventeenth century. Udupi is home to an important and popular vaiṣṇava centre: a large temple dedicated to Krishna and its eight adjacent *maṭhas*, thought to have been founded by Madhva (thirteenth century). Routinely described in the missionary literature as the “main seat of the worship to the Demon,”⁴⁶ the Udupi *maṭhas* presented a serious opposition to the mission-

⁴⁴ Sargent 1987, p. 122. A summary of incomes published in November 1928 (*Mission aux Indes* 1928/4, p. 29) gives the following figures (in Swiss francs):

Easter 1918–30 June 1919:	134,890.19
1919–1920:	151,423.89
1920–1921:	226,780.47
1921–1922:	278,143.61
1922–1923:	341,005.45
1923–1924:	308,523.22
1924–1925:	373,703.78
1925–1926:	411,087.42 (including 50,000 from the BM)
1926–1927:	441,443.37 (including 50,000 from the BM and 70,168.44 from donations and bookstores)
1927–1928:	221,928.84
Total:	2,888,929.84

⁴⁵ In the designation of these regions, the nomenclature used in the sources has been kept. Both regions are nowadays within the state of Karnataka, corresponding respectively to South and North Karnataka.

⁴⁶ *GBM*, vol. 2, p. 93.



Carte du Canara du Sud et des Mahrattas du Sud.

Figure 3.2. “Map of South Kanara and South Mahrattas.” Source: *Ténèbres et Lumière* 1 (1922), p. 13.

aries. The mission house was burned down in 1856, and the swamis of the *maṭhas* “opposed any type of preaching in the fairs and festivals.” However,

[B]y 1880’s their attitudes had softened. This change of attitude is not easy to explain. It was not certainly, due to any success of the Missionary in impressing upon the orthodox Hindus the virtues of the new faith. Perhaps, at a later stage, they must have felt that the Missionary endeavours were not so productive as to warrant any serious apprehension about them.⁴⁷

The evolution shows that the swamis had found a *modus vivendi* with the missionaries – a point to which we will return in the next chapter, when discussing the founding of a missionary hospital in Udupi. Another location overlapping with an important religious site was Karkala: it is a place of pilgrimage with a major ritual, the *Mahāmastakābhiṣeka* taking place every 12 years and gathering

47 Prabhakar 1988, p. 93.

Jains from the whole subcontinent.⁴⁸ This general context as well as the fact that these traditions were by then undergoing powerful revivalist processes represented particular challenges to the evangelization activities.⁴⁹

The KEM was organized on two different levels: it had a yearly “general meeting” in Mangalore and monthly meetings in each district (South Kanara and South Mahratta). There were also occasional contacts between missionaries and the authorities in Madras (since the bishop of Madras was the head of the NMC’s German Missions Committee), as well as with missionaries of other organizations, particularly during the summer which many Westerners spent in the cooler Nilgiri hills (Kotagiri, Ooty).

In all of this, if we trust the official censuses (largely problematic in themselves), Christians (all denominations included) in South Kanara were a small but significant minority: 78.6 per cent of the population reported their religion as “Hindu,” 12.1 per cent as “Muslim” and about 8.5 per cent as Christian, counting both Protestants and Catholics.⁵⁰ Christians were scarcer in the South Mahratta region, where an average of 86 per cent of the population reported as “Hindu,” 10.8 per cent as “Muslim,” 0.56 per cent as Jain and 1.61 per cent as Christian.⁵¹

At this point, the size of the field of action was enormous, about the size of Switzerland itself, with a population of three million people. For the whole area, the Western staff was composed of seven missionaries and their wives (P. de Benoît, J. Fritschi, J. Rochat, P. E. Burckhardt, J. Fleury, E. Schaetti and J. Urner), one printer (R. Baer), two doctors (W. E. Stokes and E. Lombard), six younger women working as teachers (M. Meyer, L. Staempfli, M. Greyloz, B. Martin, G. Jatton and N. Gruffel) and one nurse (R. Décosterd). Against this backdrop, the number of Indian workers was as follows: two missionaries, 19 pastors, 66 catechists, 19 Bible women, 240 Christian and 150 non-Christian school teachers, 7,500 students, and about 13,000 community members: about 9,500 in the South Kanara region and 3,500 in the North Kanara region.⁵² This imbalance already suggests a series of difficulties: with their limited resources,

⁴⁸ For a description of encounters between Jains and missionaries see the journal of a missionary from Neuchâtel stationed there, Rosselet 1929.

⁴⁹ See Rosselet 1929 for concrete examples.

⁵⁰ According to the official census of 1901, Mangalorean Catholics accounted for 76,000 out of a total of about 84,000 Christians in South Canara, making the Protestant community a minority within the minority (Burn, Cotton, Meyer and Risley 1908, p. 360).

⁵¹ Boag 1922, pp. 65–66 (Part I, General Report); Sedgwick 1922, pp. 76–77 (Part I, General Report).

⁵² See KEM report 1922 (*4e rapport annuel*, 1922, pp. 10–11). It is worth comparing this to the situation before the First World War: In January 1914, the BM had 157 missionaries in India, 1,112 Indian Christian workers (teachers, pastors, etc.) and 342 Indian non-Christian workers (Zimmermann 1930, p. 16).

the missionaries were not only unable to do the same work as the BM had done before the war, but the organization had also to rely heavily on Indian employees and could not exert a strict control over their actions.

As to publications, different periodicals published out of Mangalore targeted local Indian Christian communities. A first periodical, the *Krista Hitavādi*, “The Christian well-wisher,” was the official voice printed on the mission’s press. Mostly in the Kannada language, it reflected the life of the local congregation. The other periodical (*Satyavrata* “The truthful”), which was bilingual Kannada and English and printed outside of the mission,⁵³ was the mouthpiece of a group that had dissociated itself from the mission, but still claimed to be part of the local Indian Christian congregation (see section 3.3 for details on this group). We do not have data for the number of copies of these two periodicals, but we get a general idea by looking at the size of the local community, about 4,000 members.

2.5 The Organization in Switzerland

In Switzerland the KEM had its headquarters in Lausanne. Its general secretary was the pastor Gustave Secrétan and its president the pastor Albert de Haller – neither of them had ever set foot in India. If the KEM was not formally associated with other missions in Switzerland, some of its members were also active in other related committees, such as the Mission Romande⁵⁴ or the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). In a typically federal fashion, different “cantonal” committees were added to this central organization. Each of them, located in regions of the country that are traditionally Protestant (Geneva, Neuchâtel, Bern, Jura and Zurich), appointed one delegate to the central steering committee.⁵⁵

Developed out of Lausanne for strategic reasons, the KEM soon extended its reach to the German-speaking part of the country, in particular in Aarau, Basel, Chur, Glaris, St. Gallen, Schaffhausen, and Zurich. The committees were raising funds at the local level, striving to retain the supporters who had given to the BM and trying to develop public sympathy from other people as well. The budget was about half a million Swiss francs a year, the equivalent of what was spent yearly by the Mission Romande in South Africa, the other major Swiss missions active at that time. Moreover, the KEM developed an impressive programme of propaganda. In its 10 years of existence, it sold 140,000 books and brochures and published periodicals in large numbers, namely: the *Mission aux*

53 It was printed on the press of Saraswati Printing Works Ltd., Mangalore (Fernandes 2008, p. 825).

54 On which see Harries 2007.

55 Zimmermann 1930, pp. 100–102.

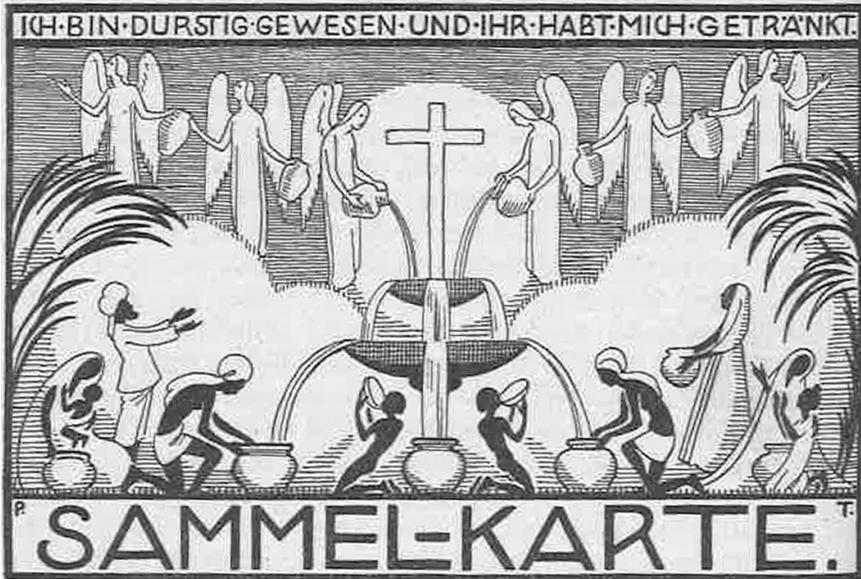


Figure 3.3. “Sammel-karte” [collection card] in *Mitteilungen* 4.2, March 1922, p. 12.

Indes: Bulletin du comité suisse de secours (1918–1928), published every two months and given for free to the mission’s sponsors, about 35,000 copies per issue⁵⁶ and its German twin, the *Mitteilungen der Kanaresischen Mission in Indien* (1919–1927) published out of Zurich, probably in a similar volume judging by the amount of donations.

As classical missionary propaganda, these periodicals published articles by the missionaries in the field, reports and encouragements for sponsors, as well as a fair number of photographs. Patrons would receive the French *Bulletin* or the German *Mitteilungen* for free. In one issue of the German *Mitteilungen der Kanaresischen Mission in Indien*, readers were told to put aside 50 cents every week, and then to remit the equivalent of two months (four Swiss francs) to the collector using the ad hoc “collection card” (Figure 3.3). The chosen design is very suggestive: it depicts white angels pouring water to oriental dark-skinned people, begging and thanking for what they receive – inviting the sponsors to project themselves in the role of the white angels. In addition, the KEM organized various “events” and exhibitions, and could rely on a network of churches which relayed the propaganda and collected donations.

In addition, a French yearly periodical, *Ténèbres et Lumière* (1922–1927) summarized the mission’s main results. In it, the reader could find long articles

56 Zimmermann 1930, p. 111.

on evangelization in India, written by both missionaries in India and Swiss pastors. The KEM started a collection entitled “Silhouettes de chrétiens indiens,” with monographs precisely dedicated to these figures of Indian Christianity. Lal Behari Dey (1824–1892), Narayan Vaman Tilak (1861–1919), Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922) and Theophilus Subrahmanyam (?–1933) were presented as the emblematic signs of the development of a quickly developing native Christianity – and hence largely used in the propaganda material.⁵⁷ Writings of and about Sadhu Sungar Singh (1889–1929) were largely diffused and even comprised a large part of the mission’s book sales.⁵⁸ The KEM also published various books or booklets written by its missionaries: two books by Jonas Meyer, one on mission and nationalism⁵⁹ and the other on low castes; letters by Eva Lombard and Renée de Benoît, as well as Gaston Rosselet’s diary.

3 Mission and Politics

3.1 Patriotism and Religion among the Swiss Kanarese Evangelical Mission Workers

With the “Swissness” of the institution being a geopolitical necessity, periodicals did not miss any opportunities to report about connections between mission and nation. An article published in the German journal of the mission expressed the providential and patriotic undertones in explicit terms: “As the call came from India, God has bound German and French-speaking Switzerland together and blessed their cooperation in an extraordinary way.”⁶⁰

Probably stronger in the propaganda than in actual practice, the patriotic and providential aspect was also expressed in a few “traditions” and rituals of the KEM, some of which had been taken over from the BM. An important ritual was the “consecration” of staff members about to leave for India: a rite that can be considered a “rite of passage” of its own, deeply changing the identity of the

57 This is very similar to the situation Županov describes about the Madurai Jesuit mission: “Until the end of the mission in the eighteenth century, the missionaries in Madurai cultivated similar stories. These stories continued as a sequel to a kind of ‘missionary soap opera,’ from letter to letter and from missionary to missionary. Some characters would be followed from the day of their conversion until their death, for ten and more years. Others disappeared without notice, leaving us to suspect apostasy or, perhaps, their Christian biography lacked exemplary qualities or deeds. [...] The impulse behind these life stories was to provide a Utopian refuge for European imagination, and to re-territorialize the Madurai mission as a geographical space.” Županov 2001, p. 215.

58 The KEM sold 10,000 copies of his biography by Mrs Parker in French (Parker 1923) and 13,000 copies of his speeches (Singh 1922).

59 Meyer 1924.

60 “Stimmen zur Lage” 1927, p. 37 (my translation).

persons undergoing it, and permanently making them into members – brothers and sisters – of a family that considers itself specially elected.⁶¹ In the period examined here, however, it was often associated with patriotic symbols. Thus, a farewell ceremony for missionaries about to leave for India was reported as follows in the French *Mission aux Indes*:

The pastor de Haller, in his capacity as board chairman, had the privilege of introducing each of the missionaries to the assembly, giving some details of their past and future activity; they rose one after the other and the assembly was able to recommend them to God: Mr and Mrs Schwab of Bern, Dr B. Schenkel of St. Gallen, Mr Emery and his fiancée Miss Henriette Dubois of La Chaux-de-Fonds and Neuchâtel, Mr J. Denking of Geneva, and Mr H. Monnier and E. Noverraz of Vaud. *We were around the cross of Christ, but also, as Mr de Haller said, "around the federal banner," since so many regions of Switzerland were represented.*⁶²

In addition, from 1922 onwards, a “missionary week” was established in the whole country. The week was an occasion for lectures about the mission and the presentation of its activities to a larger public. The main ritual, however, was the “federal fast,”⁶³ observed in both India and in Switzerland, “so that in Switzerland as in India, this day would be spent in contrition, prayer and praise.”⁶⁴ The date coincided with that of the KEM’s annual general conference in India.⁶⁵

A patriotic element was also conveyed by photographs reprinted in the propaganda publications. For example, a photograph printed in the German *Mitteilungen der Kanaresischen Mission* depicts a wedding in Betageri, 1925, with bride and groom surrounded by a group of people dressed up, in which no Indian is present, posing in front of a Swiss flag (Figure 3.4).

Thus a patriotic narrative about Switzerland as a neutral nation could merge with a providential narrative about the global spread of Christianity.⁶⁶ In this discourse, a united, organized and Christian Switzerland is bringing progress and order to a divided and messy India, with the help of God and his human

61 For an analysis of one of these “consecration rituals” in the perspective of rites of passage see Konrad 2001.

62 *Mission aux Indes* 1924/6, p. 83 (my translation, emphasis mine).

63 The Swiss federal fast is a day of fasting and prayer which dates back to the nineteenth century: it was officially promulgated in 1832 and further with the founding of the modern federal state in 1848 after the divisive Sonderbund War, as a ritual of reconciliation to be observed by the whole country.

64 Zimmermann 1930, p. 48.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 112.

66 Promoters of the Mission Romande in South Africa shared a similar patriotic and providential framework. On this, see Harries 2007, pp. 59–61, with the idea that “through their actions in Africa, the Swiss could claim to be a chosen people carrying God’s message, as well as bearing a transcendent morality that distinguished them from other European nations.”



Figure 3.4. Wedding of Monnier-Gruffel in Betageri. Source: *Mitteilungen der Kanaresischen Mission* 7/5, 1925, p. 76.

instruments. The recurring depiction of missionaries as living a “humble life,” adapting to the challenges of India and taming its wild and disorderly nature, echoed the Swiss ideal of a “simple” life in a hostile natural environment. Explicitly expressed in A. von Haller’s poem, “The Alps” (1729),⁶⁷ this ideal revolves around the notion of a superior morality, as opposed to the decadent customs of richer European metropolises. The evangelization work seems to have conveyed a similar message, at least through projections (magic lantern) that were shown in various open-air settings.⁶⁸ Among the slides used, some depicted Swiss lands-

⁶⁷ For example, the following stanza: “Ye sons of Nature! still with you abide / Those goodly days; for ‘mid your barren soil, / Estrang’d from tinsel vanity and pride, / Want is your happiness, your pleasure toil. [...] Then praise high Heav’n, that to your land denied / Riches, true source of ev’ry vice and ill; / While torrents wait on luxury and pride, / The heart of unaspiring want is still.” (Haller 1795, p. 25)

⁶⁸ On the appeal of the magic lantern at this time, see Trivedi 1984, p. 41: “According to the records of the Bombay Presidency’s Education Department, the lantern slide was quite effective for drawing a crowd, almost regardless of the subject being depicted, in large part because of its entertainment value. For this reason, the government maintained a collection of not less than twenty thousand slides that were used in district schools across the region administered. [...] At the beginning of the 1920s, lantern slide shows could lure viewers in rural settings in particular, according to one official, because the technology was less familiar and



Figure 3.5. “Basler Mission 1815–1915, Jubiläumskarte”, reproducing the painting of Eugène Burnand, “Go forth into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures,” 1915. Source: Basel Mission Archives QS-30.026.0171. <https://www.bmarchives.org/items/show/82721>.

capas “which however did not have a great success, since people had trouble to imagine snow and ice.”⁶⁹ Other slides depicted scenes from Jesus’s life, using illustrations by the Swiss painter Eugène Burnand (Figure 3.5). These represented Jesus in his original setting, using a naturalist and realist pictorial idiom that was again suggestive of a connection between simplicity and individual piety.⁷⁰

movies were still unknown.” Importantly, the same technology was used for nationalist propaganda.

⁶⁹ *Mission aux Indes* 1922/3 (May), p. 42; Lombard, “Letter to her family,” 2 January 1922, BMA CC-1, 4.

⁷⁰ On Burnand’s paintings of the life of Jesus, see Kaenel 2006, in particular page 117: “The emphasis on the physical reality of Christ, his actual presence, is the expression of a reformed theology infused with the writings of Alexandre Vinet (1797–1847) and his disciples. Under these authors’ pen and Burnand’s brush, Jesus appears as an *exemplum virtutis*. The Vaud painter is indeed active in the circles of the Free Church that was created in 1845, against the tutelage of the state on religious affairs, a church which encourages individual piety, each and every one having to measure his or her conduct to that of Christ.” (my translation)

After tumultuous negotiations, the BM merged with the KEM in 1927 and progressively sent new missionaries, some with German citizenship. This meant that the specifically “Swiss” element in the mission was not anymore emphasized, and there is even some evidence that the BM was again perceived as more German than Swiss on the field. The local context, however, had radically changed since 1914, and congregations had new expectations in line with the political developments of the time.⁷¹

3.2 The Development of Nationalism in Karnataka

Founded in 1885 the Indian National Congress (INC) party demanded the progressive participation of Indians in different government bodies. The reticent responses given by the government and unilateral decisions, such as the partitioning of Bengal in 1905, were additional reasons for civil unrest and calls for *svarāj*. Even if the movement had started in Bengal, with strong centres in Maharashtra and in the north, people from Karnataka also started to develop sympathies for the nationalist cause. A Karnataka branch of the Home Rule League was created in Hubli and its pamphlets were translated from Marathi into Kannada.⁷² Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920) himself had visited Karnataka in 1905–1906 and his daily *Kesari* was read in Karnataka. His fourfold programme of *swadeshi*, boycott of Western goods, *swaraj* and national education was brought into action through various initiatives. Independent schools were started in Hubli, Dharwar, Navalgund, Naragund, Bagalkot, Agadi, Hanagal, and elsewhere, competing with government and missionary schools.⁷³

In 1909 the Morley–Minto Reforms legitimized the election of Indians to legislative councils (instead of mere appointments by British officials). In 1919 the substantial Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms represented the furthest concessions the British were willing to make, introducing new regulations that formed the basis of the Government of India Act, which received royal assent in December of that year. This allowed the principle of provincial borders overlapping with linguistic limits. It also stated that elected ministers of the different provinces could rule over areas such as agriculture, education, health, and the supervision of the local government. Other areas remained under the direct supervision of the viceroy: army, communication, finances, and foreign affairs. This division of remits was judged unacceptable by the leaders of the independence movement and produced more civil unrest, subsequently repressed by the Row-

71 See Sargant 1987, p. 123–127 and the report of A. Schosser, the first missionary of the BM to return to Mangalore, for the years 1927–1928, BMA C-11.11, for details about this transition.

72 Mugali 2005, p. 120.

73 Ibid., pp. 119–120.



Gandhi wird in Bettgeri von der begeisterten Menge auf dem Bahnhofs verabschiedet

Figure 3.6. “An enthusiastic crowd says farewell to Gandhi at the Betageri station.” Source: Meyer 1924, p. 20.

latt Act of March 1919. The Rowlatt Act legitimized a situation of state emergency in India and effectively extended the emergency measures of arrest, detention, and incarceration without trial enacted during the First World War.

Another important association was the movement for the unification of Karnataka along the linguistic lines of Kannada. Already in 1890 a society called Karnataka Vidya Vardhaka Sangha was established in Dharwad, pursuing the promotion of the Kannada language and working towards the political unification of Karnataka (*ekikarāṇa*). Intensifying these efforts, the Karnataka Sabha was founded in 1916 in Dharwad. In 1920 a committee of the INC led by J. Nehru gave support to the cause of the unification of Karnataka and the same was defended in a major conference organized in 1920 in Dharwad. There was a special “Karnataka train” to bring 800 delegates to the INC congress of 1920 in Nagpur and they managed to obtain a special status for all Kannada speakers within the INC.⁷⁴ The headquarters of this Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee were located in Gadag – yet another important location for the KEM. The founding of an INC party branch in Bangalore in 1920 equally encouraged the development of such a regionalist rhetoric.

Gandhi inaugurated the non-cooperation movement in August 1920 and visited Karnataka in 1920–1921 with the Ali brothers from the Khilafat move-

74 Ibid., p. 122.

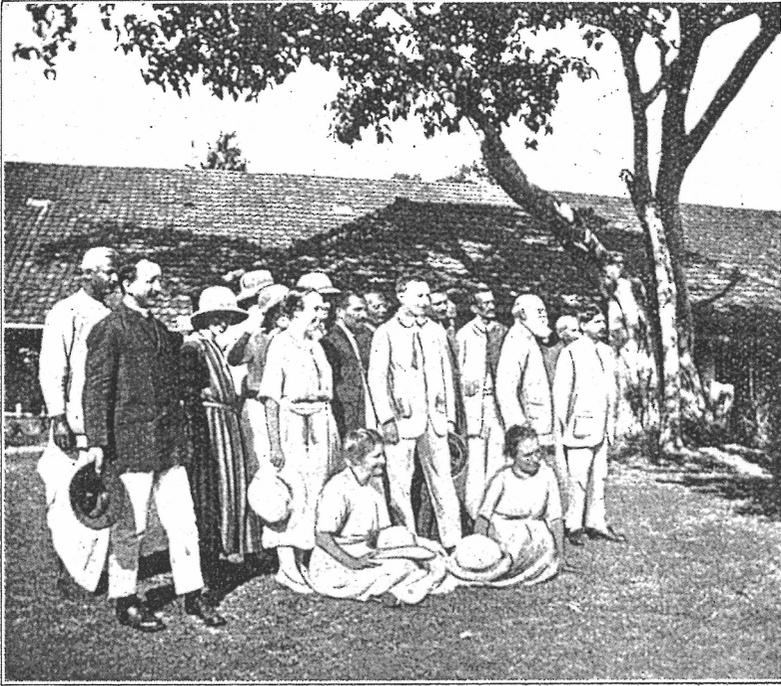
ment. This encouraged Muslims of Karnataka to join the INC and promoted the ideology of non-cooperation. An incident that occurred in Dharwad in July 1921 – when the Faujdar of Dharwad opened fire on people at a local liquor shop – reinforced social troubles. Gandhi's speeches – for example in Betageri, in 1923 (Figure 3.6) – repeatedly suggested that foreign missions should limit themselves to purely humanitarian activities and give up the prospects of evangelization entirely.

In Hubli, an important location for the mission, the intellectual N. S. Hardikar (1889–1975) had founded the Hindustani Seva Dal in 1923 after returning from a stay at the University of Michigan in the USA. This organization, related to the INC, was known for not compromising with the colonial power and for organizing an efficient campaign promoting civil disobedience in the entire country.

3.3 Nationalism and Religion in Indian Christian Communities

This general context had important consequences for the congregations managed by the mission, which were being progressively politicized. Echoing political reforms passed at a national and regional level in the missionary microcosm, radical changes were introduced in a new constitution prepared under the supervision of the Anglican supervisor of the KEM, W. Tomlinson (1877–1944). This text was enforced in August 1922, not without some resistance from the congregations.⁷⁵ It designed new committees with a better representation of Indians: district church boards (church affairs), with mostly Indian representatives; district committees (mission affairs), composed of an equal number of designated members of the district church board and (European) missionaries; and district synods (administration of the church and its staff), composed of the whole district committee, of pastors, evangelists and elders. The district church board administrated issues that actually went much further than just church affairs. This was the place where the community itself was supposed to settle individual cases, much as in a Hindu *pañcāyat* or a Muslim *jamāt*. A general conference gather-

⁷⁵ Kanarese Evangelical Mission 1922. Tomlinson's interventions went in the direction of "indigenizing" the mission as much as possible, following the goal of the "three selves," while still keeping some control in financial matters. Echoing the political turmoil of the time, the §25 of the Constitution reads: "Christians are not only members of the body of Christ, they are members of the great human race, and they are citizen of India, their native land, and brothers of all other Indians. By becoming Christians, they are not denationalised. Just as Paul was supremely a patriot, so love of country should reign in the heart of every Indian Christian." Aspects of the new Constitution concerning the conduct of church were received with much ambivalence within the congregations (in Mangalore, for example, the congregation stuck to the old hymns). I thank C. Stenzl for drawing my attention to this.



Les délégués à la conférence générale de Mangalore, du 4 au 6 février 1924.
 De gauche à droite: Utangi, Rosselet, M^{lle} Stæhelin, M. Urner,
 M^{me} Bürckhardt (presqu'invisibles), M^{lle} Lombard (sans chapeau),
 Schætti, Sangiva Rao, Marigauda, D^r Burckhardt, Karunakara, Ma
 ben, Joshua, Aaron, D^r Prabhakara, Furtado. Assises: M^{me} Rochat
 et M^{lle} Meyer.
 (Photographie de M^{lle} Greyloz.)

Figure 3.7. The general conference of Mangalore, 1924, depicting an equal number of Indian and Swiss delegates (nine each). Source: *Mission aux Indes* 1924/3, p. 38.

ing collaborators from both districts was organized every year and there too equal participation of Europeans and Indians was sought, as reflected in a photo of the 1924 conference (Figure 3.7).

The KEM had two Indians appointed to the rank of “missionaries,” responsible for schools in and around Mangalore, and for some evangelical work: Mark Sanjiva Rao (1883–1955) and K. R. Karunakara (1888–1965). The former was a Saraswat Brahmin born in Karkala who had joined the mission and converted

with the German missionary Gottlieb Fischer (1868–1940).⁷⁶ The latter had been converted by a German missionary, Alfons Schosser (1869–1950), and was appointed a missionary in Mangalore in 1918 under the auspices of the KEM. The appointment of Indians as missionaries did not mean, however, that full equality was ever achieved. Their salaries were a sensitive topic and remained significantly lower than those of their European colleagues.⁷⁷ This was a major point of contention, particularly when the KEM had to take unpopular decisions to save money, such as lowering salaries or closing schools.⁷⁸

At the same time, the KEM had to cope with the prospect of dissident congregations in Mangalore and Hubli. In Mangalore, the founding of a dissident group, called the “Church Union Party,” was at least partly due to the controversial figure of missionary Oskar Wüthrich (1885–1945), a former Swiss employee of the BM who was to leave Mangalore as early as 1920. Convicted of falsifying the press’s accounts during the war for personal purposes, he had himself accused an Indian colleague, George Herbert, of a similar deed and refused to ratify his election to the newly constituted district church board.⁷⁹ This was enough to create a feeling of mistrust towards the KEM European staff. The group had its own journal, *Satyavrata* (monthly from 1925 to 1928), publishing texts in

⁷⁶ On Mark Sanjiva Rao, see Sargant 1987, pp. 132–133, and the biographical note in Subrahmanyam & Rao 1924. His reports dating from the time of the KEM are available in the file BMA CC 1,4. In one of them translated into French (!), he emphasizes the need to address the intellectual needs of Hindu elites, because of the competing influence of the Rationalist Press Association and Theosophy. In 1932, he published a booklet comparing Christianity to local forms of Hinduism (Rau 1932). In 1938, after further studies in Bangalore, he married a Swiss nurse working in Udupi, Pauline Müller – a marriage that forced him to relocate to the region of Hubli before retiring in 1950 and moving to Switzerland. Karunakara had studied and taught at the Bangalore United Theological College from 1921, and later took up an important role in the administration of the Basel Evangelical Mission Seminary in Mangalore when it reopened in 1929.

⁷⁷ Unmarried, Sanjiva Rao obtained Rs. 80 per month as a starting salary; married, K. R. Karunakara obtained Rs. 125 per month (Minutes of the February 1924 Conference, Mangalore. Karnataka Theological College Archives, KEM File 77). In the same period, single Swiss missionaries received on average Rs. 100 per month and married Swiss workers, Rs. 200 per month (not counting various allowances that could add up to an additional Rs. 100 per month).

⁷⁸ See an article in the journal *Satyavrata* 1, no. 11, 1926, pp. 5–6, about the KEM accounts of 1926: the journal compared the 74,000 rupees spent on Indian staff (more than 100 people) with the 70,000 rupees spent on 7 or 8 “white missionaries” (noted by Fernandes 2008, p. 829).

⁷⁹ See Sargant 1987, p. 118 and p. 120. The correct name is Oskar Wüthrich, not Hans, as Sargant has it (Sargant 1987, p. 158).

Kannada and in English that reflected the opinion of lay members.⁸⁰ At least two voices can be discerned in those publications: (1) those who wanted the return of the former, German, missionaries;⁸¹ and (2) those who wanted to do away with Western missionaries altogether, complaining about racist and paternalist attitudes. The journal published sensitive documents that cast a negative light on the KEM's administration.⁸² For example, a historical overview of the period 1914–1927 by Herbert first complains about the Basel Mission's failure to trust the local communities to continue the work, particularly when it had to stop its activities with the First World War. He writes: "The German Missionaries while leaving us in 1914 abruptly, committed a grave blunder which I feel sure, they must have sincerely and sorely regretted later on. They would not and did not trust their Indian Colleagues and therefore did not confide their affairs in them."⁸³ He continues harshly criticizing the Swiss KEM staff for its lack of competence – linguistic, but also human and spiritual.⁸⁴ Appropriating a Swiss cul-

⁸⁰ See Fernandes 2008. There was another similar case in 1905, in the person of Thomas Roberts, an Indian Christian from Mangalore. In a "resolution" sent to the committee in Basel, he complained (among other things) that the Mission was racist, mentioning articles in the *Christian Patriot* journal about Churches in Uganda and Sierra Leone that were entirely administered by natives. As a result, he started his own journal, the *Indian Christian Journal* in English and Kannada, published outside of the mission's press (see BMA C-1.155, docs. 63 and 83–84).

⁸¹ See Sargant 1987, 122, about a letter written by P. W. Leslie, the then president of the Church Union Party, assuring the BM president, Wilhelm Burckhardt (1865–1943), of the support of the dissident group for the former missionaries. The goal, of course, was more about undermining the authority of the current missionaries than asking for the restoration of the former, pre-war, situation.

⁸² Herbert 1926: "Certain irregularities [were] deliberately committed for purposes of securing the Government grant, by the authorities of the K.E.M. Boys' Secondary School Balmatta, Mangalore."

⁸³ Herbert 1927, p. 9.

⁸⁴ Herbert 1927, p. 10: "This auxiliary committee was most unfortunate in its selection of men for work in India. Its very first accredited representative [de Benoît] exchanged the surgeon's knife and the physician's pillbox to clergyman's robes was not designed to be at the helm of affairs of any large institution such as the Basel Missionary Society. Throughout his regime there was discord and discontentment everywhere. [...] Both these gentlemen [de Benoît and P. Burckhardt] would not or could not learn the language of the people they desired to serve. [...] Lausanne missionaries lacked in a lamentable degree the tact and resourcefulness which their German brethren possessed." He added however (p. 11): "Forgetting human weaknesses and taking the Lausanne Committee as a whole we have reason to be extremely thankful. They have not only befriended us at a time of need but have conducted the affairs of this Mission, altered and modified the constitution and rules to suit the needs of the day and in a manner to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Indian Christians in allowing them a fair share in the management of their own affairs, with conspicuous success. [...] The women and childrens' Hospital opened by them at Udipi and conducted with great ability, as to win the

tural element to construct a discourse of contestation, one article referred to the example of Wilhelm Tell as a model of heroic resistance against the Swiss missionaries pictured in the role of the infamous Hermann Gessler.⁸⁵ Other texts were straightforwardly calling for sedition, as in the following example:

Wake up! Dear Brothers and Sisters! Shake your letharginess and put on the armour of valour. How long, we ask, How long wouldst you sleep inactive and allow yourselves to be trodden down and treated like the “Odds and Ends” hung up for auction in the auctioneer’s shop to be sold for the highest bidder. Do you know that we, the Indian Protestant Christians of this district, are labelled “For Sale” and the Basel Missionary Society in Basel and the Lausanne Auxiliary Committee in Lausanne are struggling in their bid for us. We, the Children of this Ancient and Sacred Land, the disciples of Christ our Lord, who hath freed us from bondage with the price of his own dear blood, should now have fallen to the degradation of being treated as “Spoils of prey” to be divided and distributed among two greedy alien Missionary Societies, without our being given any Voice in the Choice is the greatest misfortune that could ever befall to a Community. [...] With a heart for any fate and with God over our head let us stand up for our rights determined not to yield with a determination that neither Bruckhardts [*sic*, P.-E. Burckhardt] nor Benoas [*sic*, Pierre de Benoît] can subdue.⁸⁶

The vocabulary of this diatribe clearly refers to the nationalist appropriation of a Christian identity, with a special emphasis on the concept of “Indian Christians” that gained wide currency around this time.⁸⁷ Against the idea that Indian Christian converts were “denationalized,” it seems, on the contrary, that precisely members of the Christian community turned out to be in an excellent position to develop and articulate their nationalist sensitivities: they usually had the necessary literacy, often had access to printing facilities, and could use their Christian identity to network with people from other Christian groups sharing the same political sentiment.⁸⁸ In addition, the KEM’s weak governance made the mission – and in particular its schools – a perfect place for the development of such ideas.

admiration of even the non-Christian public, will certainly immortalise the name of the Lausanne Auxiliary Committee and carry their name to generations yet unborn.”

⁸⁵ “We do not claim to be infallible. We are open to correction; but as William Tell of old, we are not prepared to bend our knees before insolent pride.” In “Subscribers come and subscribers go. But we go on,” *Satyavrata* 3, no. 6, 1928, p. 9.

⁸⁶ *Satyavrata* 1, no. 10, 1926, pp. 5–6, anonymous.

⁸⁷ For an analysis of similar discourses about “Indian Christians” around 1900, especially in the Madras-based journal *Christian Patriot*, see Koschorke 2019.

⁸⁸ This echoes the work of Sudhir Chandra and his recent project on “Beyond modernity: religion, culture, nation and the dream of non-violence,” in which he focuses on the pioneering role “these converts played in the multi-faceted nationalist awakening that led to the making of modern India.”

In Hubli, a former Indian doctor who had worked for the military, C. J. Prabhakar, was leading another dissident group after having been disappointed that the new constitution would not give to the congregation complete independence from the Western missionaries. Named *svatantra* (independent) and also known as the “small party” (as opposed to the “big party” – mostly people who had benefited from the mission infrastructure and were loyal to its people), the group gathering around Prabhakar was in large part composed of converts with a Liṅgāyat background (D. Marigouda, Channappa D. Uttangi, Nidanappa Ramthal), making the residual importance of caste after conversion evident, against the missionary fantasy of conversion as a *tabula rasa*.⁸⁹ This, in turn, had consequences for the “elections” to different organs (district-wise) of the local church, with Prabhakar’s group winning in 1922, but losing in 1926 and again winning in 1932. Despite the propaganda literature insisting that “this small dissident community has no future,”⁹⁰ it represents, on the contrary, a radical shift, signalling the refusal of these communities to follow the direction of the Western missionaries, in theological as well as in social and economic domains.⁹¹

Violating the very principle of an equally constituted district committee, Swiss missionaries organized several meetings from which Indian collaborators were excluded, the so-called European sessions usually conducted in French and before general meetings.⁹² Those sessions dealt with issues concerning the travels of staff members from and to Switzerland, with affairs concerning the relations between the BM and the KEM, and with disciplinary problems encountered in the congregations. This attempt to retain control gives the impression of a situation in which the Swiss staff members were actually a clear minority whose authority was heavily contested. One gains a similar impression from a report about a meeting held in Bern, in 1926, between representatives of the KEM and the BM. The situation in India is described as desperate:

⁸⁹ See Sargant 1987, p. 135; in particular, the fact that Liṅgāyats claimed the body of Marigouda after his death to give him a Liṅgāyat burial. On the persistence of caste after conversion see Mosse 1996 and Viswanathan 1998. The BM was aware of this “difficulty,” and in one of its sessions (2 June 1880), the central committee agreed that recent converts could work as catechists, warning however that “the transformation of ‘lazy astrologists, fortune tellers and itinerant entertainers’ into efficient evangelists was an [unattainable] miracle.” (*GBM*, vol. 2, p. 94)

⁹⁰ “Nos missionnaires se réunissent à Mangalore et à Betgéri” 1922, p. 34.

⁹¹ See Köller 2017, pp. 63–64, on such divisions being perpetuated at a later time, around the three dimensions of theological views, social issues about group identities, and finances. See also Sargant 1987, pp. 148–149, on further divisions in the Church in Dharwad in the 1930s.

⁹² See the minutes of these “European sessions” in Karnataka Theological College Archives, KEM File 78. The first meeting for which minutes are available is dated 19 July 1923.

The situation is irreparable: Abner Soans, who has the most influence, is entirely in the hands of Herbert. [...] Can we allow the natives to do what they want with the missions?⁹³

4 Implications of the Activities in India Back on the Swiss Context

In the rather tense context of these years, the Swiss missionary Jonas Meyer (1867–1955) wrote a book about the relations between Indian Christian congregations and the movement for independence (Figure 3.9). He tried to emphasize the necessary compatibility between Christianity and the Indian independence movement, legitimating this support by observing that

the British government, the European education and the Gospel: those are the roots, or at least the main roots, from which the contemporary national consciousness has arisen.⁹⁴

As the Indian president of the YMCA, Kanakarayan Tiruselvam Paul (1876–1931), had expressed before him, the goal was to disentangle a European nationalism that was “opposed to the spirit of Christ”⁹⁵ from an Indian nationalism that could, under certain conditions such as the abolition of caste-based discriminations, be a sign of a larger providential plan. Thus, siding with Gandhi rather than Tilak, Meyer insisted that if the communities were perfectly entitled to develop nationalist feelings, they also had to do so in strictly non-violent ways. He thought that Indian Christians

knew how much good they had received from the British government. [...] For that reason, they want to achieve freedom through negotiation and a constitutional path.⁹⁶

Such a position had concrete consequences for the role of the mission and even for the actual possibility for Westerners to work as missionaries in the Indian context:

We should become, in order to fulfil the Indian national ideal of a preacher, Christian sadhus or Sannyasi, after the model of Sadhu Sundar Singh. This is, however, not possible for us. We ask ourselves, then: can we not make what is exemplary in the character and the work of a true sadhu our own, at least to a certain extent?⁹⁷

93 “Indische Kommission. 5. Sitzung, Montag, den 13. Dezember 1926 im Hotel zum eidgenössischen Kreuz in Bern,” 2, BMA CC-1, 1.

94 Meyer 1924, p. 13.

95 Paul 1921, p. 4.

96 Meyer 1924, p. 24.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 51 (my translation).

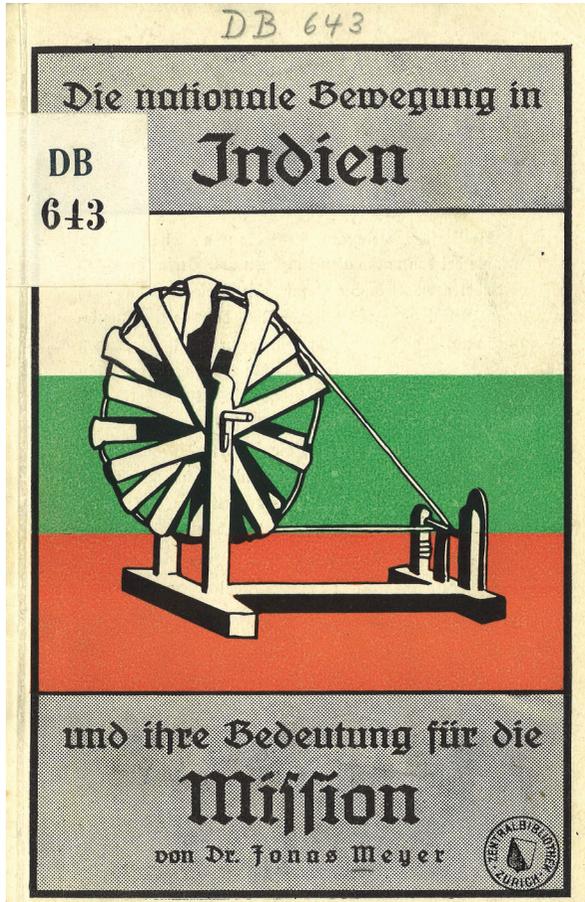


Figure 3.8. *The National Movement in India and its Importance for the Missions*, front cover of Meyer's book. Source: Meyer 1924.

These are quite remarkable statements for the time (1924), especially in their implications for individual missionaries. The notion that they should support local groups in their struggle towards independence was indeed still problematic for many British societies,⁹⁸ even if J. N. Farquhar's theology of fulfilment was

⁹⁸ On the general antipathy of British missionaries towards the nationalist movement see George 1979, pp. 127–133, esp. p. 130: "Missionaries by and large firmly held the view that loyalty to authority was a Christian duty and a Christian could never take part in any movement that questioned the authority of the Government in the country." Unfortunately, George does not question a possible evolution in this issue, and quotes sources dating back to the late nineteenth century and from the twentieth century next to each other.

enjoying a growing popularity – a theology looking at Christianity as the fulfilment of Hinduism, and politically, an argument for the progressive withdrawal of British control before India converted to Christianity.⁹⁹

Similarly, Swiss propaganda tried to present the Swiss missionaries as neutral arbiters in the political struggles, by alluding to the self-perception of the Swiss as belonging to a neutral nation of freedom-lovers.¹⁰⁰ Comparing the mission to the patron saint of Switzerland, Nicholas of Flüe (1417–1487), enshrined in the national mythology as a counsellor and promoter of peace (and canonized for that reason shortly after the Second World War), KEM administrators manifestly conceived their own role as that of natural mediators between Indians and the British government:

Nicholas of Flüe of mankind, the Mission says: To the Indians: “We solemnly insist against the wrong idea that it is only by shedding blood that the inequalities of the current order can be removed (a warning against extremist agitators, affiliated with bolsheviks). One cannot rebuild a true society by overturning all divine and human laws.” To the British: “We insist, with equal solemnity, to hold at a distance the idea inspired by the War, according to which authority can only be maintained by the use of force. The truth is that ‘force’ is not enough to save the social order, except for achieving equality in the administration.”¹⁰¹

Arguably, such positions and the fear of losing control were instrumental in the emergence of an ecumenical movement rooted in Protestant Christianity and people associated with the KEM actually played an important role in that process. In the post-First World War context, John Mott (1865–1955), a Methodist, former leader of the YMCA and organizer of a “World Missionary conference” in 1910 (Edinburgh), organized a “non-official” conference on missions in Crans, near Geneva, from 22 to 28 June 1920.¹⁰² The conference was hosted by the parents of de Benoît’s wife, the van Berchem family, but the project itself had been conceived by Mott responding to the request of national missionary societies regarding the status of missions in the post-First World War context.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ See Farquhar 1919. On the effects of this providential narrative in Indian political circles during the interwar period see Studdert-Kennedy 1998. On Farquhar’s so-called theology or theory of fulfilment, see Fischer-Tiné 2020, p. 663.

¹⁰⁰ Harries has made a similar observation in the context of the “mission Suisse romande,” underlining that “Junod and others believed that Switzerland as a neutral country untainted by imperial wars and colonial excesses, could play an international role as a mediator in colonial matters.” (Harries 2007, p. 58)

¹⁰¹ “Quelle sera l’attitude de la mission en présence de ces réclamations?” 1922a, p. 46 (my translation).

¹⁰² On Mott as a champion of Protestant internationalism, see Clark and Ledger-Lomas 2012, pp. 39–40.

¹⁰³ On the Crans conference see Oldham 1920.

The meeting reinforced the idea that Switzerland could play the role of a “neutral” platform for a “global Christianity” project – since actors and missionaries from countries that had been fighting each other could take part in the event: because of its (alleged) political neutrality, Switzerland appeared as the perfect location for the coordination and organization of proselyte strategies before their global deployment. The Crans conference was a first step towards the creation, in 1921, of the International Missionary Council, which worked on all the issues that were agitating the KEM’s activities, such as the so-called devolution scheme (the handing over of religious matters to local communities), the necessity to introduce radical changes in the methods of Western missionaries, and the theological implications of these changes. Another missionary conference held in 1938 in Tambaram, hosted by the Madras Christian College, was the starting point of the World Council of Churches which elected Geneva as its headquarters and which eventually integrated the International Missionary Council. In this measure, even if the actual experience in India proved to generate more problems than successes, it nourished the discourse of a (Protestant-based) global ecumenism and profiled Switzerland as a fitting hub for such projects.¹⁰⁴

In addition to the contribution to the development of global ecumenism, this troubled time in the activities of the KEM also encouraged the dissemination of pacifist ideologies among the mission’s supporters in Switzerland, joining the voices of Romain Rolland or Rabindranath Tagore. Thus, a theologian from the Zurich region, aligned with the kind of social Protestantism represented by Leonhard Ragaz (and the journal he was editing, *Neue Wege*), Willi Kobe (1899–1985), looked with interest at Gandhi’s pacifist methods and published a book about him in a series of the KEM.¹⁰⁵ He had obtained all the material about Gandhi from Ernst Rippmann, secretary of the KEM in Zurich, and acknowledged Jonas Meyer as a main source of information on the topic.¹⁰⁶ Painting an image of Gandhi as a fundamentally religious man, he was impressed by his political action, entirely rooted in his religious convictions – which Kobe did not see as entirely incompatible with forms of Christianity. Kobe saw in Gandhi’s pacifism not only a way for India’s independence, but also a way for the world to overcome its contemporary crises. He would later become a leading figure in pacifism in Switzerland as president of the Kirchlicher Friedensbund der Schweiz during the Second World War.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ See Clark & Ledger-Lomas 2012, p. 42, about the creation of “formal international communion of churches” to compensate the dwindling of international bodies combining a Protestant and ecumenical character in the early twentieth century.

¹⁰⁵ Kobe 1925, published in parallel by the KEM and the German publishing house Rauhe Haus in Hamburg.

¹⁰⁶ Kobe 1925, p. 8.

¹⁰⁷ On Kobe’s biography, see Brassel & Leuenberger 1994.

Finally, the KEM was the main promoter behind the organization of Sadhu Sundar Singh's (1889–1929?) tour in Switzerland (1922).¹⁰⁸ The tour, with about thirty speeches in Switzerland's traditionally Protestant cantons, attracted major crowds with Sundar Singh appearing as a kind of new Oriental Jesus, practising his Christian faith in a way that appeared more authentic than that of Western Christians. The tour was an occasion for Sundar Singh not only to preach about a kind of Oriental Christianity that had much in common with both evangelicalism and North-Indian devotional cultures, but also to collect money for a school in North India and for the mission itself.

5 Conclusion

To return to the three sets of questions with which we began this chapter, a few interesting points are noteworthy: first, it is clear that, in this case, the missionaries were not able to systematically impress their views. Having to cope with significant opposition, and lacking both resources and expertise, they left ample space to Indian actors to develop their own agendas. With the politicization of congregations and in a rapidly evolving context, the missionaries had to reconceptualize their own role – some going as far as entertaining doubts about the validity of their own presence on Indian soil.

Second, even if the KEM tried to perpetuate the activities started by the BM, there was a clear attempt to brand the activities as “Swiss.” Evident in the propaganda crafted for an audience of Swiss donors, this aspect also appears in the actual activities in India, through specific religious practices (such as the federal fast) or through the teaching of elements specific to the Swiss culture, such as the projection of images of Swiss mountains in the evangelization process. Conversely, one can note the use made by certain Indian groups of the missionary “idiom” to serve their own interests, through the media of a rival journal depicting the Swiss missionaries in negative terms, through the instrumentalization of dissensions between the KEM and the BM, and even through the subverted use of a figure of Helvetic mythology such as that of Wilhelm Tell.

Third, while the image of India mediated by the mission was largely biased, the mission still functioned as a conduit for information, pictures and objects documenting the rich “non-sanskritic” traditions of the region of India it was active in. Its periodicals indeed published numerous pictures, and some – but not all, of course – articles provided relatively accurate descriptions of the Jaina or Liṅṅayat cultures of Karnataka.¹⁰⁹ In addition, missionary exhibitions organized on Swiss soil involved the circulation of objects from India to Switzerland

¹⁰⁸ On which see Bornet 2021. On Sundar Singh in general see Sharpe 2003 and Dobe 2015.

¹⁰⁹ See chapter 5 for more on this.

– and about 120 objects have been integrated into the ethnographic collections of a local museum. The artefacts continued to reproduce an image of an exotic and stereotyped India as a backwards culture well after the mission stopped its activity and are still part of the collections today.¹¹⁰

Finally, even if this episode of a “purely Swiss” mission in South India was short-lived and not a great “success” (from a missionary point of view), it is revelatory of larger processes, showing the complex relations between global politics and international missions. The very difficulties encountered by the Swiss actors encouraged some of them to modify their views in order to cope with the local politicization of the Indian communities. In turn, these reflections became important building blocks in the development of Protestant-based, ecumenical movements and communions of churches with a global outreach. As a self-professed politically neutral space, Switzerland became a fitting place for the international coordination of such projects.

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¹¹⁰ Musée cantonal d’archéologie et d’histoire, inventory numbers IV/B-028 to IV/B-163. On the effects of the exhibition of Indian artefacts on Swiss imaginaries, see Falk & Jenni 2012, in particular the “model” figures meant to represent the diversity of Indian society, pp. 380–390. The authors’ comment (p. 386): “Während auf den Welt- und Kolonialausstellungen das ‘koloniale Imaginäre’ zelebrierte wurde, präsentierte man in der Wanderausstellung der Basler Mission das ‘missionarische Imaginäre.’ Die Ausstellung diene in erster Linie dazu, die Arbeit der Mission zu legitimieren und – ganz in der Manier der mission civilisatrice – aufzuzeigen, wie wichtig es sei, den ‘Götzenanbetenden’ das Heil und das Licht Christi zu bringen.”

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