FRANCKESCHE STIFTUNGEN

DFG

7. Sekundärliteratur

Halle Pietists in England. Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Brunner, Daniel L.

Göttingen, 1993

Reasons for SPCK Involvement

Nutzungsbedingungen
Die Digitalisate des Francke-Portals sind urheberrechtlich geschützt. Sie dürfen für wissenschaftliche und private Zwecke heruntergeladen und ausgedruckt werden. Vorhandene Herkunftsbezeichnungen dürfen dabei nicht entfernt werden.
Eine kommerzielle oder institutionelle Nutzung oder Veröffentlichung dieser Inhalte ist ohne vorheriges schriftliches Einverständnis des Studienzentrums August Hermann Francke der Franckeschen Stiftungen nicht gestattet, das ggf. auf weitere Institutionen als Rechteinhaber verweist. Für die Veröffentlichung der Digitalisate können gemäß der Gebührenordnung der Franckeschen Stiftungen Entgelte erhoben werden.
Zur Erteilung einer Veröffentlichungsgenehmigung wenden Sie sich bitte an die Leiterin des Studienzentrums, Frau Dr. Britta Klosterberg, Franckeplatz 1, Haus 22-24, 06110 Halle (studienzentrum@francke-halle.de)

Terms of use
All digital documents of the Francke-Portal are protected by copyright. They may be downloaded and printed only for non-commercial educational, research and private purposes. Attached provenance marks may not be removed.
Commercial or institutional use or publication of these digital documents in printed or digital form is not allowed without obtaining prior written permission by the Study Center August Hermann Francke of the Francke Foundations which can refer to other institutions as right holders. If digital documents are published, the Study Center is entitled to charge a fee in accordance with the scale of charges of the Francke Foundations.
For reproduction requests and permissions, please contact the head of the Study Center, Frau Dr. Britta Klosterberg, Franckeplatz 1, Haus 22-24, 06110 Halle (studienzentrum@francke-halle.de)

Visual Library

money from Halle, special gifts from the generous Isaac Hollis, and two earmarked legacies to meet the balance.[120]

3. Analysis and Ramifications

Reasons for SPCK Involvement

Why did the SPCK get involved in the East India Mission? It was unprecedented that an Anglican Society, which had hitherto focused almost exclusively on charity schools and the distribution of literature, should support Denmark's effort to send out Lutheran missionaries from Halle. One modern historian, at least, has depicted it as an act of tentative ecclesiastical imperialism by the Church of England. Because Archbishop Tenison expressed suspicion of sectarian Lutheranism, E.A. Lehmann, in his 1955 history of the Tranquebar mission, suggests the possibility that the SPCK became involved in order one day to bring the whole enterprise under Anglican control.[121] This is highly unlikely. Even though in the nineteenth century all mission stations except Tranquebar itself eventually came under Anglican authority, none of the early minutes or records of the SPCK give any evidence to support Lehmann's conjecture. Certainly the Society wished to send Anglican missionaries, but when none were forthcoming, the Society was large-hearted enough to feel (if Newman's description is accurate) "that the heathen should be Lutheran Christians rather than no Christians".[122]

Julius Richter, writing in the first decade of this century, suggested that the mission was "thrust" upon the SPCK which "had no real heart" for the work.[123] However, this is hardly compatible with the fact that the SPCK continued its support for over a century and from the beginning made a significant commitment both in time and money. There was a close correlation in aim between the work of the SPCK in Britain and the mission it subsidized in India. One can see strong similarities between Ziegenbalg's stress in Tranquebar on the need for Church extension by means of education and publication, and the emphases of the SPCK in Britain. In essence the SPCK diverted some of its educational and publishing activity from Britain to India.

Another possible reason for SPCK involvement is that in the colonialist spirit of the times the English Society did not want to be left behind the Danes in christianizing India. Boehm told the Missions College in Copenhagen in

---

120 *An Account of the Origin and Designs of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (London, 1737), p. 6.

121 Lehmann, *It Began in Tranquebar*, p. 99.

122 Newman to Chamberlayne, 19 Dec. 1713 (ArSPCK, *Soc Lett* [CS2/3]).

123 J. Richter, *A History of Missions in India*, trans. S.H. Moore (Edinburgh/London, 1908), p. 164.

1714 that the English were seeking to emulate the Danish mission work.[124] Competition characterizes the situation more than emulation, evidenced by Boehm's suggestion to Ziegenbalg that he refer to the mission as "German" or "Protestant" rather than "Danish", because of the objection to Denmark in the East India Company.[125] This sense of rivalry certainly helped motivate the Society to establish a work in Madras in 1728, but until then it had only assisted Danish efforts in Tranquebar. Even after starting its own work at Madras the Society continued to send gifts and supplies to Tranquebar.[126]

Protestant Churches were united during the early eighteenth century in their common opposition to Roman Catholicism and fears of the global expansion of Roman missions. George Lewis, an early English chaplain in Madras, said that to "put out the smoaking Flax" of the early missionaries "would give our adversary's the Papists, who boast so much of their Congregation de Propaganda Fide too much cause to triumph over us".[127] Notwithstanding such sentiments, they can be overrated as a causative factor in this context. In the letters associated with the mission from the SPCK side anti-Rome attitudes are present, but not as a dominant force. It is equally justifiable to understand the main motives in the SPCK as charitable, philanthropic, and even evangelistic.

One is left with the conclusion that perhaps the main reason for SPCK involvement in the East India mission lay in the energetic idealism of a few strong-minded and well-positioned individuals rather than in any political grand strategy, secular or religious. On the German side the dominant person was Boehm. Through his publications and involvement in the Society Boehm inspired and initiated what was to become over a century of SPCK activity in India. But it is doubtful, given the prejudice against Lutheranism in some High Church circles, whether his initiatives could have succeeded without correspondingly strong support from within the Society itself. Here Henry Newman's role was vital. Boehm testified that Newman "has a great love for the missionaries at Tranquebar"[128] and that he "furthers this work with burning enthusiasm".[129] Since ships usually left for the East Indies around January, Newman was almost exclusively occupied for five to six weeks at the end of each year getting goods and letters onto the ships and negotiating with the East

---

124 Boehm to W[endt] at Copenhagen, London, 30 Mar. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 340f.

125 Boehm to Ziegenbalg, London, 31 Oct. 1715 (copy) (MArFrSt I C 7:77); cf. Newman to Boehm, Middle Temple, 27 Oct. 1715 (ArSPCK, *Soc Lett* [CS2/5]).

126 E.g. *Circular Letter* (1 May 1735), n.p.

127 Lewis to Newman, Oct. 1712, printed in: *PGE III* (1718), pp. 41f, and Clement, pp. 57-58.

128 "Der Societät Secretarius Hn. Newman so eine grosse Liebe zu denen Missionariis zu Tranquebar hat ... " (Boehm to A.H. Francke, London, 7 Oct. 1712 [ArFrSt C 229:39])

129 "Der gute Hn. Neumann, der mit brennendem Eiffer dieses Werck treibet, hat hiebey nicht wenig Kummer gehabt ... " (Boehm to Neubauer, London, 22 Jan. 1714 [ArFrSt C 229:29])

India House.[130] But Newman was not alone. Already in 1709, Henry Hoare, who became the SPCK's treasurer for the mission, sent his own "mite" to Halle for the missionaries,[131] and from Boehm we learn that he had also suggested sending one of the English lads at Halle to Tranquebar as a schoolmaster, to erect a school under their supervision.[132] Chamberlayne offered to go to the East India Company with a proposal for publishing the Portuguese New Testament:[133] he too identified himself closely with the Germans' enterprise. In 1712 he referred to Plutschau as "our Pious Missionary", noting, "I call him ours, because the Society to which I belong, and because I myself claim so great a share in him."[134] Both Sir John Philipps, whose father-in-law was a wealthy East India merchant, and Archbishop Wake, had, according to Newman, a "particular affection" for the East India mission.[135] Wake's concern for the mission was particularly significant after the difficulties with Tenison. Support also came from English citizens in India, of whom George Lewis[136] and William Stevenson[137], successive chaplains at Fort St. George in Madras, deserve special mention. The involvement and interest of these individuals was the chief reason why the SPCK became involved in the way it did.

Anglican-Lutheran Relations

Until 1825, when the SPCK handed its East India work over to the SPG, the Society only employed Lutherans as missionaries, most of them from Halle.[138] In this regard the question of episcopacy has drawn the attention of scholars, in particular Hans Cnattingius and Norman Sykes, who concur that though the SPCK desired episcopal orders for its missionaries, it nevertheless accepted Lutheran orders as valid, though irregular.[139] Our purpose is not to alter their

---

130 Boehm to Neubauer, London, 8 Sept. 1719 (ArFrSt C 229:13); cf. Cowie, *Henry Newman*, pp. 108f.

131 Hoare to Francke, [London,] 25 Apr. 1709 (*Nachlaß* 30.XVIII.666).

132 Boehm to Francke, 29 May 1711 (ArFrSt C 229:47).

133 Boehm to Francke, London, 28 Mar. 1710 (ArFrSt C 229:61).

134 Chamberlayne to Francke, Westminster, 24 Nov. 1712 (*Nachlaß* 30.XXVI.855).

135 Newman to Dal, Bosse, Pressier, and Walther at Tranquebar, London, 8 Feb. 1737 (ArSPCK, *Letters to India* [ME/CS2]); cf. N. Sykes, *William Wake*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1957), ii.212-14.

136 Boehm was particularly impressed with Lewis, including two of his letters in *PGE III* (1718), pp. 41-42,55-59, and speaking highly of him in correspondence with the missionaries and the Mission College (Boehm to Ziegenbalg and Grundler, 31 Dec. 1714; to Mr. W[endt] at C[openhagen], 14 Feb. 1715, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 396,404ff). When Lewis returned to England, Boehm highly recommended him to the SPCK as a residing member. (Boehm to Newman, Strand, 7 July 1715 [Bodl., *Rawlinson MSS* C 743:34]; for the full text of the letter, see Appendix)

137 Boehm included four of Stevenson's letters in *PGE III* (1718), pp. 121-23,149-53,190-93,198-200, and published separately a 1716 letter to Newman, *A Letter from Fort St. George*.

138 The only exception was the Englishman A.T. Clarke who served as a missionary of the SPCK in Calcutta from 1789-1791 before taking up a chaplaincy with the East India Company.

139 H. Cnattingius, *Bishops and Societies* (London, 1952), pp. 38-54; N. Sykes, *Old Priest and New Presbyter* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 154-67.