

**YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS IN THE THIRD
WORLD COUNTRIES BEFORE WORLD YMCA CENTENNIAL
CONFERENCE IN 1955**

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YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES BEFORE WORLD YMCA CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE IN 1955

1. INTRODUCTION

Young Men's Christian Association has been the laboratory of both interchurch and interfaith relations. As Protestant in origin, it grew towards ecumenism much because of facing the other confessions and faiths. During the times when Churches paid attention on the other hand to dogmatic self-defence and on the other hand were servants of their nations, YMCA took small steps towards dialogue. In Latin America this meant dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, in Africa with almost all possible religions. In Near East and Asia it was merely a dialogue with Buddhists, Hindus and Moslems. But one has to remember that there are also such countries as Philippines where 95% of population were Christian¹ and that in India there was more Christians than in the Lutheran Sweden.²

There has been a clear difference in the mission view of YMCA in Europe and in America. In Europe the movements have regarded themselves merely evangelical while in North America they are more social and educational although maintaining their religious interest.³ From this attitude North American movement developed special methods to reach the young men. Such were YMCA games - basketball and volleyball, work in the special fields of army, railroads, immigrants, students etc. In Europe the British YMCA

¹ 83% Roman Catholic, 8% Philippine Independent Church and 3% Protestants. The YMCAs of the World 1958, 154.

² 2,5% of 376 Mill. makes 9,5 Mill. compared to Sweden's 7,3 Mill. The YMCAs of the World 1958, 87, 173.

³ International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations 1932, 335f.

developed Scout-movement, German movement the hostels and the Swiss movement was a pioneer of Reconciliation. In Europe there has been also the distinction between German-Scandinavian model of YMCA as a part of the Lutheran or Reformed Church and the independent model.

The membership of YMCA movement according to Centennial Year Statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955 was like this⁴:

	Members x1000	Associations	Secretaries
Europe	563	5701	1060
Germany	300	3320	400
British isles	101	431	420
Netherlands	48	934	29
Denmark	42	605	57
Sweden	24	181	66
Rest of Europe	58	518	88
North America	2040	1815	4070
USA	1923	1715	3766
Canada	117	100	304
Latin America	41⁵	27	87
S-A Federation	31	15	72
Caribbean	10	12	15
Asia	293	424	484
China	183	23	420 ⁶
India	32	216	96
Philippines	30	16	47
Japan	24	123	99
Rest of Asia	24	46	32
Oceania	27	31	173

⁴ I stress that the statistic can be used only to show general lines. There are mistakes in the report of National Movements. As a former YMCA secretary I remember that the number of members depended on what purpose you had to tell it: When you asked support then all possible people were counted. When you told the membership to National Council you were more moderate because the annual fee to National Council was on the basis of membership amount. And when you had to do some not-so-funny project you could count the members with your fingers.

⁵ In the Centennial statistics there is a mistake here: S-A Federation members and associations are counted twice. Centennial Year Statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955.

⁶ YMCAs of the World 1958, 46.

Near East⁷	19	17	31
Africa	10	43	23
Total	2993	8058	5928

From this table one can see that the North American YMCAs formed 2/3 of the Movement if it was counted by the amount of members. Asia and Germany alone formed both 10% of the membership. Europe as a whole formed 19%. The other areas were minimal: Latin America and Oceania both 0,9%, Near East 0,6% and Africa 0,3% of the membership.

Also the resources were in same areas although the division was not so sharp. North America 69%, Europe 18%, Asia 8%, Oceania 3%, Latin America 1,5%, Near East and Africa both 0,5%.

In the amount of associations the difference is not so big because the size of them varied from a handful of people to big Metropolitan Associations with thousands of members.

In this study I try to find out in which form the YMCA came and developed in different Third World areas. I pay interest on the following detailed issues: Where did the influences to new associations come? What was the membership? What kind of activities existed? How did the new context influence to the mission-view of YMCA?

I base this study mainly on the few data sheets of World Alliance of YMCAs, the publication 'YMCAs of the World 1958' which introduces all existing YMCAs of that time. With these I use several publications in different areas which I introduce in the beginning of the chapters. Some details I also pick occasionally from other sources

⁷ Turkey and Morocco is here counted in Near East group.

2. YMCA EXPANSION⁸ TO LATIN AMERICA⁹

The name 'Latin America' is more political than cultural area. The latter points to Latin based languages but the definition is incorrect in two ways. Firstly there is question of French language. Although it is Latin based it is seldom connected to Latin America meaning a cultural entity. Secondly although some southern parts of US have Spanish speaking majority, they are normally excluded. In the Caribbean and North Coast of South America there are some areas that have been under Spain and then occupied by other colonial powers. Some have been under them since the beginning of colonial rule. Sometimes these countries are included in 'Latin America' and sometimes not. In this essay I use the expression 'South America' to mean the America south from US border. I divide it into two groups: The members of South American Federation of YMCAs which I call 'Latin America' and the Caribbean sea area (US territories excluded¹⁰) which I call Caribbean area.

YMCA has never been a really big movement in South America but it has neither been inconsequential. However it is quite impossible to find out the real significance of the YMCAs in that area for two main reasons. Firstly the work has been 'planting the mustard seeds' and nobody knows what consequences have the right teaching in right time. The other reason is the lack of valid data¹¹.

⁸ The term *expansion* has been used to refer to outreach into new fields of work inside already existing Movements, whereas *extension* has usually meant the starting of work in hitherto unoccupied fields. But it is difficult in practice to make a sharp separation between the two fields. Limbert 1955, 112.

⁹ In this chapter I use also the consultation report 'New Horizons in the Caribbean' from 1958, which gives also historical details of the movements.

¹⁰ Although Bahamas, Miami and Puerto Rico participated later in the Caribbean Consultation, they were part of North American movement.

¹¹ There is neither good data material from South American YMCAs nor comparative material of different NGOs. The available statistics are mostly estimates and unreliable.

2.1. Latin American Federation of the YMCA

In 1888 statistics¹² there were mentioned an existing association in Argentina, Chile (two associations) and Mexico. They were all temporary groups that disappeared in few years¹³. The first sparks came from US and groups were mainly 'Northern Associations in the South' i.e. their members were Evangelical¹⁴ Europeans or North Americans and sometimes (like in Chile) they regarded their Association as a branch of US movement¹⁵.

The statistics in the time of the next two conferences in 1891 (Amsterdam) and 1894 (London) did not tell much more¹⁶. The latter tells that Brazil with two associations and Uruguay with one were the new YMCA countries. The association in Rio de Janeiro was founded in 1893 and it is the oldest continuous association in the area. The association was also one node of the YMCA entering to the continent. For that reason I look it a bit closer.

'The YMCAs of the World 1958' writes:

In 1891 the International Committee of the YMCAs of North America, at the request of a group of citizens from Rio de Janeiro, sent Myron A. Clark to Brazil to make a survey of the possibilities of starting YMCA work in South America. He found a promising situation, and in 1893 inaugurated the first continuous South American Association. This was a group of 71 young men, almost all members of the Protestant Evangelical church, who were concerned with the religious and social needs of the youth of the city. The Association experienced a rapid growth. By 1898, with help from the

¹² Time of the Stockholm World Conference. General statistics of the development of the Young Men's Christian Association throughout the world, 1909. - In 1881 statistics for IXth World Conference in London there were no mentions of associations in Latin America. *Compte-Rendu de la IX^{me} Conférence Universelle des Unions Chrétiennes de Jeunes Gens 1881*, 4.

¹³ *The YMCAs of the World 1958*, 1, 28, 42, 129. With only exception of British Guiana, which have had some YMCA association continually since 1882, but even there no local association have survived without a break.

¹⁴ *Quatrième Rapport du Comité Central International des Unions Chrétiennes de Jeunes Gens 1891*, 12.

¹⁵ *The YMCAs of the World 1958*, 42.

¹⁶ The statistics of Guiana must be false: in 1891 it had 6 associations with 12 members and in 1894 8 associations with 16 members - 2 members per association!! General statistics of the development of the Young Men's Christian Association throughout the world, 1909.

International Committee, they bought their own building and started a well-rounded programme.

In 1901 an Association of 74 members opened in Porto Megre and soon established a fine educational and social service programme. With help of Myron Clark a third Association was opened in Sao Paulo in December 1902... In 1907, with the help of the International Committee, another Association opened in Recife, but when support was withdrawn it closed its doors in 1925 because of the lack of a secretary. No more expansion of the work into new areas was attempted for many years...

In Rio de Janeiro, the distinguishing features of the programme of the YMCA as it developed were its emphasis on physical training, and on general education. The Brazilians have always been a sports-minded people, and good gymnasium facilities are the first thought in constructing a new building. In 1917, when the first building was put up in Rio, it also had space for a secondary school of 500 students.¹⁷

In this text there is some typical features that many Latin American YMCAs had:

Firstly the movement came to the country by the two factors: local request and the help of North American International Committee.

Secondly it continued its spread inside the country just as the innovation theories presume: from the main centre to the areal centres. Also if there is no local need or if the resistance is too high the innovation doesn't take root (like in Recife).

Thirdly the concept of local YMCA was copied from US, where the association work was based on four points: 1) General Secretaryship, 2) building with sports facilities and social work, 3) Bible study and 4) Work for young men exclusively. This concept was introduced by Americans in Berlin World Conference 1884.¹⁸ The main difference to this model was the significant lack of religious activities. This was much because of strategic situation. Catholic Church was against and prohibited Catholics to join the

¹⁷ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 24-26.

¹⁸ Houghteling - Ober, 1984.

movement¹⁹. So YMCA kept 'an absolutely neutral position in the ecclesiastical field'.²⁰

Fourthly the associations were for the first founded by evangelicals of the town.²¹

The other new Movement - Uruguay - had its founding amongst the emigrants from the Waldensian Valleys but they did not extend their membership to other groups and so this country, like most others, had to wait next century to get a permanent YMCA.²²

The second period when new YMCAs were founded was before the First World War. The countries were the same than in 19th Century. This time the North American influence was even more dominant than before.

The association in Rio de Janeiro played important role in the rise of new associations and its concept was true in other Latin American YMCAs as well. From the seven charter associations of the South American Federation it gave spark to four: Brazilian Porto Alegre, Sao Paolo and Recife²³ and the Buenos Aires in Argentina. However the work couldn't be possible without the fraternal secretaries send and supported by North American International Committee of YMCAs.

In Buenos Aires the work was much alike in Brazil. The founding members were practically all from the English speaking community. The early programme emphasis was in the field of physical education in which YMCA was a pioneer in the country. This attracted the university students who soon outnumbered the

¹⁹ Officially Roman Catholics were denied to be members in the Warning of the Holy Office Against the YMCA - a letter to bishops sent in 5.11.1920 and signed by R.Card, Merry del Val.

²⁰ New Horizons in the Caribbean, 1958, 39f.

²¹ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 1-2.

²² The YMCAs of the World 1958, 202.

²³ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 25.

foreigners. Association got an own building in 1912 by 50% support of the North Americans. The boy's work was developed both in the building and for neglected children in outlying district.

In founding YMCA in Chile Buenos Aires Association played similar role as Rio de Janeiro had played in its own beginnings. In 1910 the idea was brought to Santiago, the group of interested men founded the association in Valparaiso 1912 and requested North Americans to send a fraternal secretary to help them. The work was similar to preceding associations in the continent. There was one significant feature: the work included also activities for women - so much that the General secretary urged North American YWCA to found an own association for women.²⁴

In Uruguay the Waldesian YMCAs lived their own life and did not exist any more according to 1909 statistics. The permanent YMCA was founded in Montevideo same year. The basis was a group of young men who had formed a 'Protestant club' but the request to North America was made by prominent business and professional leaders of the town. The association had 50% indigenous and 50% foreign membership. Although it did not get its spark from neighbouring countries it soon co-operated with Buenos Aires and they organised the first International Student Camp at Piriapolis in 1911. The camp got governmental support and was the beginning of, and co-operation with, the YMCA by official circles of the country.²⁵

The seven associations Porto Allegro, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paolo and Recife from Brazil, Valparaiso from Chile, Buenos Aires from Argentina and Montevideo from Uruguay formed the South American Federation of the YMCA in 1914. There were two main reasons for Continental Federation. The first was that YMCAs existed only in

²⁴ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 42-43.

²⁵ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 202-203.

few big cities on area and only Brazil had more than one association (Brazil had founded a National council in 1903). The other reason was the model from the North: US and Canada had a common quite loose organization (the reason for that was the American allergy to any strong federal organizations).

In the formation of the federation the Montevideo association played an instrumental role e.g. lending a secretary for the federation for first months. This activity was later rewarded by placing the YMCA Technical Institute in town.²⁶

In 1914 the first Continental Convention accepted statutes for the federation. In them the local autonomy was granted for each association with one exception mentioned in the first paragraph:

(1) All Associations belonging to the Federation must be non-sectarian, with an interconfessional membership policy.²⁷

The exclusion to sectarianism was probably more because of the struggles between the Roman Catholic Church and YMCA than a refer to Waldesian groups mentioned above. The Catholic Church recarded YMCA as a (protestant) secretarian movement and Latin American YMCAs wanted to get free of that label. From this point of view this was a clear policy statement but it is noteworthy that the paragraph uses also the word 'interconfessional' pro 'interdenominational'. The latter was normally used to describe contacts between Protestant churches and the first expression included all Christian churches. It can be seen that here the World Conferences inflated more than North America. In US there was still their 'Portland Basis' which stated the membership to 'Evangelical churches'²⁸. In the World Alliance Jubilee Conference

²⁶ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 169-170, 202-203.

²⁷ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 170.

²⁸ Shedd 1955, 203n. Portland Basis was valid in US until 1930s. Willis 1955, 696.

in 1905 there was a wide discussion about ecumenism and it was seen that YMCA is open to all Christian confessions²⁹.

After the First World War the Second Continental Convention was held in Buenos Aires in 1919. The main focus there was on expansion. With new enthusiasm it was resolved to establish the YMCA in all 184 cities over 10 000 population. It was estimated that there would be the need for about 400 secretaries. For this purpose it was decided to establish the Technical Institute as a YMCA training school. This was done in 1922 in Montevideo. Since that time its four year courses had trained most secretaries in the Federation associations. The result has been that South American YMCAs had grown to be more self sustaining than in the beginning. The percentage proportion of fraternal secretaries dropped dramatically towards the end of the period.³⁰ Also the combination of fraternal secretaryship changed. At the end of the period a German secretary was working for the Federation. Before they were all North Americans.

The new movements founded by the South American Federation of YMCAs were Bolivia (La Paz) in 1943, Paraguay (Asuncion) in 1943, Peru (Lima) in 1920 and Venezuela (Caracas) in 1943³¹. The work was similar to other neighbouring countries. As in them YMCA was a pioneer in physical education, camping and social work. The noteworthy phenomenon in Peru was the strong attacks of Roman Catholic Church against it. In 1922 the attack was so vigorous that the Lima YMCA had to close for a while.³²

In Paraguay the start was different from others. It was an enterprise of one man. Dr. Insaurrealde started it with a medical

²⁹ Shedd 1955, 423. The association of Mexico City (note: not member of S-A Federation) had been the first association that modified in 1907 its membership to include Roman Catholics. Willis 1955, 695.

³⁰ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 169ff.

³¹ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 206f.

³² The YMCAs of the World 1958, 151ff.

clinic in Asuncion in 1943. With the help of Federation also other activities were started. However the work ceased during the political upheavals of 1946-1947 and restarted in 1949. The clinic was developed to be a hospital. In other fields the Paraguayan YMCA work was similar to other Federation YMCAs.³³

If we look the goal for 184 new associations we can see that it was still far away during the whole period. Adding to above mentioned new movements there became new associations also in the old 'YMCA countries'. In Argentina two new associations was founded: in Rosario 1929 and Bahia Blanca 1933 (which ceased 10 years later). These both joined the Federation.³⁴ In Chile also two new associations started: as a clear result of the decision of the Convention in Santiago 1920 and in Concepcion in 1927. The latter was the first one in the continent that started totally by indigenous secretaryship. These three formed a National Committee of YMCAs in Chile while being also members in Federation.³⁵ In Brazil and Uruguay no new associations were founded.³⁶

The new challenge came during the Second World War. Federation took an active part in War Prisoners' Aid that was the main duty of the World Alliance that time.³⁷

2.2. Caribbean area YMCAs

Mexico, English Guiana and Caribbean islands form the Caribbean group. In 19th Century there were associations in English Guiana, Haiti, Mexico and West Indies (meaning either Barbados or Haiti)³⁸.

³³ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 150f.

³⁴ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 2.

³⁵ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 43.

³⁶ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 25, 203.

³⁷ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 171.

³⁸ There are two possibilities what this expression means: firstly Haiti - the 'YMCAs of the world 1958' don't mention Haiti or West Indies at all but Shedd mentions that a small association in Port au Prince had contacted World Alliance in 1890s. Shedd 1955, 330. On the other hand it can also be Barbados

The first YMCA was founded in Georgetown in 1882 by a Guianise business man Robert Kaufman, who had learned to know YMCA while he lived in London. Soon there were also two branches in country villages. There is no mention what activities the association had but a mention that it met twice a week. Georgetown YMCA foundered in 1890 but was restarted in 1907. Meanwhile the name was kept alive in Den Amstel on the west coast of Demerara until 1924.³⁹

From the Port au Prince in Haiti the only information is its letter to World Alliance Central International Committee in the beginning of 1890s. In the letter there was a collection from their Week of Prayer observance and a mention that two of their young men were going to study theology in USA.⁴⁰

The first YMCA group in Mexico was founded in 1893 but it survived only two or three years. The official work was started in 1902 in Mexico City first among English-speaking young men. One year later a Mexican branch was opened in an other part of the city. These were fused to a single association in 1908. The work was on the behalf of the fraternal secretaries of North America. The activities were sports, educational classes of language and commercial subjects. The work was much centred to the own YMCA building. After extension of work to Monterrey (1904) and Chichuahua (1907) the student activities were developed.⁴¹

because in the 'New Horizons in the Caribbean' conference-report from 1958 tells that there was an established YMCA in 1880. 'New Horizons in the Caribbean', 1958, 28. The information in this report and in 'YMCAs of the World 1958' does not agree. 'YMCAs of the World 1958', 1958, 14.

³⁹ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 28.

⁴⁰ Shedd 1955, 330. From the other West Indian movement in Bahamas there is still fever information. The idea of YMCA was carried there by English settlers but anything else is not known. **The YMCAs of the World 1958, 13.** Same thing is with Dutch Guiana - the statistics from 1905 mentions one association but it is not mentioned in other sources. General statistics of the development of the Young Men's Christian Association throughout the world, 1909.

⁴¹ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 129.

YMCA model of Physical Education was a wider concept than mere sports. It included courses of personal health and hygiene as well as complete medical examinations (since 1916) for all using the YMCA building. In this field YMCA was a pioneer and gave models for many governmental schools and private institutions.⁴²

From these trajectories before the First World War one can see that British YMCAs were the only ones that had religious activities. The Mexican associations don't mention it at all. Their activities were in two fields: physical education and social work. The other difference is that British movements were voluntary based self supporting clubs while Mexican movement was ruined by North American professional secretaries and support. The difference was crucial: Mexican movement expanded, British movements were just and just alive.

The First World War was a time for great YMCA expansion throughout the world. The major reason was the work among soldiers. That work was an official part of US, British and German Military system. In the countries where no other YMCA existed, the Army YMCA planted the seed of the YMCA idea. This phenomenon can be seen also in Caribbean area. This period gave rise to the associations in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad.

In Caribbean area the first new association was in Barbados in 1919. There the influence of the work with Armed Forces was clearly seen. The work gained reputation of high esteem during the war time and after the war the British Central Committee send a fraternal secretary there to work. The work contained active physical education, Scouts, lectures, debates, films, Youth club and Services. This was clearly diversified activity than Latin America had seen before. The model was quite typical British. But in both models - American and British - the building was central.

⁴² The YMCAs of the World 1958, 130.

In Jamaica the start of the association was made by a British businessman in 1920 in Kingston. After a request to Britain they got a fraternal secretary. The work was similar to Barbados.⁴³ Trinidad YMCA started in same time, but the difference was that they did not get a fraternal secretary or any other support and so it died in few years.⁴⁴

British Guiana got a secretary from Britain in 1921 and sponsorship was gained also locally. So the Kingston association was revived that year. Also New Amsterdam (New Amstel) YMCA that had ceased its work in 1924 continued in 1932. The former got also permanent General Secretary and an own building.⁴⁵ From Haiti or Barbados there are no mentions in this period.

In Mexico the work expanded. In 1918 an association founded in Tampico. Also the training school with two years secretarial courses was founded in Mexico City in 1926. Later during the US regression both Tampico and Monterrey had to close down in 1934 because of lacking support.⁴⁶

2.3. The Latin American Concept of the YMCA

The YMCA came to Latin America in three ways:

1. Some individuals brought it.
2. Direct Mission of the North American YMCA
3. Support of the British YMCA

It seems that only in few occasions the first model worked (Paraguay). Most such groups just disappeared or were closed because the lack of resources. It can also be questioned if the

⁴³ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 103.

⁴⁴ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 189.

⁴⁵ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 28f.

⁴⁶ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 130.

motivation for the members was only to have an own club - not an extension enterprise.

The North American model seemed to work. It included a professional fraternal secretary whose duty was to build the association and develop it to self supportive. But before the indigenous leadership was trained in Technical institute the breaks of support from North America caused the collapse of work in some areas. The main features of the model were: Building, secretary, physical education and social work. Perhaps because of the resistance of Roman Catholic Church the YMCA kept low profile in religious activities. The North American influence was dominant in all but Caribbean area.

The British model was similar to North American. The main differences were the influence of work with armed forces, Scouts and the religious activities. In this sense there was a clear division in association policies. The British influence was entirely in the British colonies.

The goal of the South American Federation has been to be more self supporting and partly this has succeed. The other goal for nearly 200 associations was not reached. In the Middle of 1950s YMCA was still clearly a north-western movement. Although the statistics are not valid they tell that YMCA was still marginal in South America in that time. In some towns it had certain status but it was nowhere there like in Anglo-Saxon countries.

The interesting feature is that the German-Scandinavian model of church oriented youth work and other religious activities was absent. The influence of fraternal secretary from Germany was not seen during the period. Anyway the concentration on buildings, sports and social work influenced surely to identity and mission view of the movement.

3. YMCA EXPANSION TO AFRICA⁴⁷

The Continent of Africa is clearly divided into two different areas that are divided by Sahara desert. It's not only geographical division but also cultural watershed. In this chapter I concentrate to the Sub-Saharan area because I deal the Near East in an other occasion.

3.1. The first YMCAs before the First World War

The first YMCAs in Africa were the associations of young British settlers and businessmen in South Africa (Cape Town 1865). Though Bible study was central, from the first the group included activities of a social and recreational nature. The idea spread slowly - the second association was formed ten years later in Pietermaritzburg. In 1895 there was 12 associations with about 2400 members. Although I am quite sceptical about the YMCA statistics and their validity this tells that associations were mere than single Bible clubs here and there. The work among native Africans started year later as a student-work.⁴⁸ Like in South Africa also in Nigeria the YMCA started among the British residents in 19th century but the early records have unfortunately been lost.⁴⁹

The native African YMCAs were founded in Liberia (Cape Palmas 1881), Ghana (Accra 1890) and Sierra Leone (Freetown 1912). The first didn't survive long. The Ghanaian movement was founded by a Ghanaian student who had heard about the Glasgow YMCA when he was receiving his education in Scotland. About the same time Bremen Missionaries in the Keta district sponsored YMCA work and Week of

⁴⁷ The main source in this chapter among mentioned in Introduction is the consultation report 'First West African Area Conference of Young Men's Christian Association' in 1953.

⁴⁸ YMCAs of the World 1958, 194.

⁴⁹ YMCAs of the World 1958, 141.

Prayer Booklets have had a circulation in that area for many years. During the early years of this century, informal YMCA groups are known to have existed in various parts working under voluntary leadership, and attached to schools or churches.⁵⁰ The Sierra Leone YMCA group consisted young educated Sierra Leone, who met together for monthly literary meetings, some sports and occasional socials.⁵¹

There were also two other tries. In Madagascar the first group was founded in 1900 but it was interrupted by government edict.⁵² In Kenya the first association was established in 1910 and had even an own hostel but it discontinued in 1932⁵³.

3.2. Period between the wars

The work in Madagascar continued in 1924 with the leadership of French fraternal secretary. 'The YMCA of the World 1958' reports:

Under able leadership, its programme developed along physical, intellectual, social and spiritual lines. There was an early emphasis on physical education. It was the YMCA which in 1926 introduced volleyball and basket-ball to Madagascar. Football was also developed and tournaments promoted among various school teams. The tennis courts of the "foyer" were much in demand.

The "foyer" was equipped with a library and reading room. The Thursday Lectures (both in French and Malgasy) became a popular feature of the programme. There was a Christian emphasis throughout the programme and Bible study was followed by almost all the organized groups. Regular Wednesday devotional services were a part of the week's activities. The "foyer" also pioneered in introducing scouting and the YWCA to Madagascar. Courses were organized to give training to scout leaders. These groups later became a part of the national scouting organization. From an early date the Association carried out social service projects for the leper Colony at Manakavaly.

⁵⁰ YMCAs of the World 1958, 78.

⁵¹ YMCAs of the World 1958, 167.

⁵² YMCAs of the World 1958, 123.

⁵³ YMCAs of the World 1958, 112.

In 1940 a new project of social service was undertaken in co-operation with church youth groups. 60 of the most needy families were visited. Blankets and needed supplies were purchased and distributed.⁵⁴

Madagascar was not the only country with French influence. Cameroon had a group of young Africans from 1924 in Douala forming YMCA with affiliation to French YMCA. This group was only 30 persons and it was mere a Bible club with some evangelization and social service projects.

The other French colony Dahomey had an association since 1937. It was closely connected to English Methodist Missionary Society which had its work in that area. The leaders of YMCA were normally young African pastors who had responsibility of youth work. The YMCA seemed to be part of the youth work of the church. The work consisted Bible and discussion groups, education classes, boys' clubs, recreation and Scouts.⁵⁵ There were also small groups in Gabon, French Congo and Senegal.⁵⁶

Of the older Movements Ghana and Nigeria lived a quiet life but South African Movement developed its activities. In 1922 North American International Committee of YMCAs offered a fraternal secretary for student work. He organized 31 African Associations - 26 of which were among students. In 1930 the first (and only) Bantu and white student conference was held at fort Hare. In 1930s also British Movement sent a fraternal secretary in the country. His duty was to develop leadership for African work and to form a National Council.⁵⁷

3.3. The period from the Second World War to the Centennial Conference

⁵⁴ YMCAs of the World 1958, 123f.

⁵⁵ YMCAs of the World 1958, 48.

⁵⁶ First West African Area Conference of Young Men's Christian Association, 1954, 18, 20.

⁵⁷ YMCAs of the World 1958, 194f.

During the Second World War YMCA was involved to the services for men in Armed Forces and War Prisoners' Aid. The former was organized in Africa by British National Council and the latter by World Alliance. In Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa the work strengthened also the local YMCA - in Kenya and Nigeria the work practically restarted.⁵⁸ On the other hand the Canteen work for Armed Forces in Accra made Africans to think that YMCA was for the benefit for only Europeans.⁵⁹

After the war New YMCAs were found in Belgian Congo (Leopoldville 1948), Ethiopia (Addis Abeba 1948), Ivory Coast (Abidjan 1944). In Belgian Congo "The work grew in Leopoldville, with a programme including sports, dramatics, scout troops, an active women's work, study and discussion groups, classes in manual training, language, book-keeping, and fundamental education." Because of the work with women it soon lead to negotiations with YWCA and the association was changed to be YMCA-YWCA. The sponsorship came then from Belgian YMCA and YWCA.⁶⁰

In Ethiopia the YMCA was established by Emperors' request. The royals had been active in some European YMCAs (especially Bernadotte in Sweden, Marie in Romania and Paul in Serbia⁶¹) and this was probably the other reason for Haile Selassies request. The first was his experience of Jerusalem YMCA while in residence there during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia.⁶² The Egyptian fraternal secretary started by collecting a group of influential men as a board (Emperor as a Patron). The work included social,

⁵⁸ YMCAs of the World 1958, 112f., 141f, 195.

⁵⁹ First West African Area Conference of Young Men's Christian Association, 1954, 15. YMCAs of the World 1958, 78.

⁶⁰ YMCAs of the World 1958, 17.

⁶¹ Cedergren 1969, 100f., Anderson 1963, 24f.

⁶² Anderson 1963, 27.

recreational and educational lines, with dramatic clubs, Bible classes, lectures, debates and athletic teams.⁶³

In Ivory Coast the YMCA started as a Protestant youth choir in 1944 which in 1953 was transformed to be a YMCA. Its activities consisted mainly music, Bible study and classes in type-writing.⁶⁴

During the war the contacts between YMCAs round the world had suffered greatly. When the peace came the World's Committee of YMCAs felt the need for a study of situation. So in 1946-7 there was a study made also on West African YMCAs. This led in 1953 to the First West African Area Conference of Young Men's Christian Association in Accra, Gold Coast in 1953.⁶⁵ This laid foundations to West African area co-operation. Practically African continent was divided into four districts: Mediterranean, West, East and South Africa.⁶⁶ Of these districts West Africa had associations in 11 countries: Belgian Congo, Gold Coast, Dahomey, French Cameroon, Liberia, Gabon, French Congo, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Only Liberia was officially affiliated to the World Alliance, the others were still 'related movements'.⁶⁷

The East African district contained Kenya, Mauritius, Portuguese East Africa⁶⁸ and Madagascar. South African YMCA had started plans for extension to South Rhodesia but in that time it contained the Southern group by itself. In the North there was Egypt, Ethiopia and Morocco.

⁶³ YMCAs of the World 1958, 62f.

⁶⁴ First West African Area Conference of Young Men's Christian Association, 1954, 19.

⁶⁵ First West African Area Conference of Young Men's Christian Association, 1954,

⁶⁶ Report of the Extension Committee, PleG No 42, 1953.

⁶⁷ First West African Area Conference of Young Men's Christian Association, 1954, 14-20. Centennial Year Statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955. Limbert 1955, 216f.

⁶⁸ In Mauritius and in Portuguese East Africa the work was still in 1953 in planning stage. Report of the Extension Committee, PleG No 42, 1953.

3.4. The patchwork quilt of YMCAs in Africa

According to Centennial Year Statistics 1955 there were three YMCAs in Africa that were clearly in their own membership numbers: Egypt with about 4700, South Africa with about 3800 and Liberia with about 2400 members. The others were from less than 100 to 700 hundred. It tells that in its first 100 years World Alliance of YMCAs had paid little attention to Africa. The 'world of the movement' had clearly constituted merely of the Northern part of the Globe. However there was a shift going on just before the Centennial Conference.

If I had to draw a picture of typical African YMCA the drawing would be a tree with roots in the colonial motherland, strong evangelical bias with connections to Missionary Societies, social and recreational activities and the lack of resources. To add some nuances to this picture would mean to notice YMCAs membership policy that kept the leadership Christian but opened the membership to everyone - in African context this meant also Moslems.

The remarkable thing in African YMCAs was the secondarity of sports in activities. This is special compared with for example South American YMCAs where sport was number one and which had no spiritual activities at all. In Latin America the explanatory thing for policy was the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards to the YMCA. It regarded YMCA as a Protestant sect and forbid its members to join it. This caused YMCA to avoid religious activities. In Africa the Catholic Church had the same attitude but the working policy of YMCA was totally opposite: Bible classes were number one and the other activities followed. There can be two explanations to this: Firstly the fraternal secretaries were mostly from Europe where religious activities played bigger role than in North America. Secondly the Africans are very spiritual

people - it was the Ghanaians during the war that first started to wander 'Where is the C' - the latter crucial question in YMCA.

4. YMCA IN NEAR EAST⁶⁹

In Near East (included North African Mediterranean countries) the first YMCAs were founded in Lebanon (Beirut 1854), in Algeria (Algiers 1850's), in Palestine (Jerusalem 1878), in Turkey (Aintab 1870's) and in Egypt (Cairo 1893). The second wave was after the First World War when an association was found in Iraq (Baghdad 1922) and Morocco (Casablanca 1919). The third wave was after the armistice of Judeo-Arab war in 1948 when Palestinian YMCA was divided into three: Israel, Gaza (1952) and Jordan (East Jerusalem 1949).

4.1. Turkey

Because most of the Near East was in last Century part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, it is best to start looking the YMCA expansion first to Turkey and look the characteristic features of Turkish YMCA. Then the other Movements are compared to this model.

The history of Turkish YMCA starts from the 1870's when individual missionaries and Christian leaders founded YMCA groups. The number of members has always been small for two reasons which both are linked to its Christian nature. The first reason was a combination of nationalism and religion: although Turkish people were not the most eager Moslems, for them to be Turkish was to be Moslem. The other reason came from Christian side: the association had a separation to active members and associated members. Active members were those who signed the Paris Basis of the Worlds

⁶⁹ I base this part mainly on the Paul B. Anderson's review 'A Study of Orthodoxy and the YMCA', Tracy Strongs report 'A Pilgrimage into the World of Islam' and Sarah Graham-Browns book 'The Palestinian Situation'.

Alliance.⁷⁰ Practically this left others than Christians out from the boards. The membership remained under 100 for the whole 19th Century. When there were 6 associations⁷¹ it practically meant that each association was practically a club that had activity services such as Sunday Schools, educational programmes, sports and recreation.⁷²

The work was strengthened by two American fraternal secretaries in 1911. The beginning of their work coincided with the calling of a World's Student Christian Federation Conference in Constantinople same year, at which John R. Mott's leadership gave much impetus to both the student and the city Association work.⁷³ This Conference was also important to YMCA-Orthodox relations.⁷⁴

Turkey involvement to the First World War caused the cease of most YMCAs outside the Constantinople/Istanbul. In 1915, the Constantinople Association began active war-work in relief to refugees and service to prisoners of war amid social and political turmoil. After the war normal civilian programme activities were resumed. A new gymnasium, Camps for sailors, orphan boys and young men were set up. Physical Education was becoming central in the programme.⁷⁵

The foundations of Turkish YMCA model were laid during the vast changes of the country in 1920-1923. The revolution caused many YMCA leaders flee the country because of personal danger and the work had to be greatly consolidated. After that Turkey emerged strongly nationalistic, secular State. Along other religious

⁷⁰ Strong 1959, 47.

⁷¹ General Statistics of the Development of the Young Men's Christian Association throughout the World. s.d.

⁷² YMCAs of the World 1958, 190.

⁷³ YMCAs of the World 1958, 191.

⁷⁴ To this Conference "the Ecumenical Patriarch gave his blessing. 'I consider such a conference to draw Christians into fellowship and co-operation as one of the most sacred causes, and I will help it in any way in my power.'" Rouse 1948, 154.

organisations, except churches, YMCA activities were limited to those of purely a social service or educational nature. The government kept close control over the programme, and permits had to be obtained for all special gatherings.⁷⁶ Also According to the government regulations, educational work had to be organised in a separate institution from other types of work.⁷⁷ So YMCA name was changed in 1926 to 'American School of Foreign Languages and Commerce.'⁷⁸

The Nationalistic (and Islamic) mood in Turkey raised proposals to drop the 'Christian' out of the name. The work could be continued same way but without any Christian emphasis.⁷⁹ Gradually more Turkish and non-Christians came on to the staff and Boards. By 1929, the Stamboul Branch staff was made up entirely of Turkish nationals, and other branches followed suit. The constitution was revised so that any member could sit on Boards and Committees regardless of his religious affiliation.⁸⁰ Practically this did not mean that the whole organisation was turned upside down. Although Turkey was a Moslem country, the Turkish YMCA had Moslems as minority in the membership. According to 1932 International Survey the membership constituted quite mixed group⁸¹:

<i>Nationalities</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Turks	134	22
Greeks	169	27
Armenians	60	10
Jews	187	30
Others	69	11

⁷⁵ YMCAs of the World 1958, 191.

⁷⁶ YMCAs of the World 1958, 191.

⁷⁷ YMCAs of the World 1958, 191.

⁷⁸ Strong 1959, 47. YMCAs of the World 1958, 192.

⁷⁹ International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations 1932, 366f.

⁸⁰ YMCAs of the World 1958, 191.

⁸¹ International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations 1932, 87f.

Total	619	100
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Greeks and Armenians were Orthodox and majority of the 'others' were other Christians. The proportion of Christians together was almost half. Practically table tells surprisingly that the Jews were the biggest group.⁸²

Although Turkish YMCA was small it served as a laboratory in development of mutual understanding of Christians and Moslems. Both had secularism as a common threat and that created ground for seeking the common basis.⁸³ The importance of this gets a wider view when we remember that Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras was a YMCA member.⁸⁴ The other lesson was the role of fraternal secretaries in a context where there is a burden of old hostility or competition between different groups: The American secretaries were both as outsiders and did not belong to any of the local groups. So they could build such bridges that were impossible for the natives.⁸⁵

4.2. Lebanon

Turning to other YMCAs in the Ottoman empire we see that the first YMCA in Near East was founded in Beirut in 1854⁸⁶ where a group of young men of various denominational backgrounds came together to

⁸² The amount of Christians was 45%. International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations 1932, 80.

⁸³ Strong 1959, 138f.

⁸⁴ When he visited World Alliance headquarters in Geneva 1967 recommended the title of his interview in previous World Communiqué: "I see here in World Communiqué a mistake: "Friend of the YMCA." I am not a friend, I am a member, and possibly one of the oldest members of the YMCA from 1919, about 50 years now, and all these years, I have been united to the YMCA. I came here just to feel at home and I do, with my thanks and gratitude for this opportunity to say to you a few words. I may say that part of what I am now, I owe to our organisation. I do not call it your organisation but our organisation." World Communiqué January-February 1968, 14.

⁸⁵ International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations 1932, 368f.

⁸⁶ 1852. See next note. Shedd's dating in an other article is odd: 1861??. Shedd 1955 II, 199.

form a Christian Association. When the membership was mainly French evangelical⁸⁷ they were in contact with French speaking YMCAs in Europe and especially Henri Dunant (the soul of Geneva association) from the beginning.⁸⁸ The next step was in 1878 when an other Association was formed by a group of members of the Greek Church. The development was slow although there was in 1890 five centres and number of groups in American University of Beirut.⁸⁹ It was not until 1930 when a more active work begun by the assistance of French National Council. The associations were also organised as a recognised organisation 'Foyer des Jeunes'. A year later a 'Home for the Homeless' was opened in Beirut by YMCA and by sponsorship of local colleges and schools.⁹⁰ It worth to mention that from this on also the British influence grew because of the British rule over this previously Turkish area⁹¹.

The population of the country - half Christians, half Moslems and Druses created both opportunities and complications. The words of one Maronite⁹² youth leader describe the situation:

"The YMCA must create a common centre where all parties of different ideologies and background can meet in an open, clean atmosphere, where no whisperings, ideas of partisanship, or selfish personal ends predominate but a genuine fellowship exists."⁹³

The Maronite church had as general a positive attitude towards YMCA in that period. The words of the Patriarch of the Maronite Church are significant.

"The Church looks on the YMCA as a social corridor of the Church where youth can meet in genuine fellowship. An adequate YMCA building in Beirut would meet one of our greatest needs".⁹⁴

⁸⁷ Strong 1959, 9.

⁸⁸ Henri Dunant mentions in his letter to Paris association 24.7.1852 that his Geneva Association was in correspondence in Beirut, Syria where there exists a group of twenty Christian young men. Shedd 1955 I, 93. The next mention from Dunant is when he visited there. Shedd 1955 I, 98.

⁸⁹ YMCAs of the World 1958, 118.

⁹⁰ YMCAs of the World 1958, 118.

⁹¹ Graham-Brown 1990, 95.

⁹² Maronite Church originates in the territory of Antioch in the 4th Century. It is in Communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Bouwen 1991, 310.

⁹³ Strong 1959, 9f.

⁹⁴ Strong 1959, 9f.

1948 meant a change to all YMCAs in the area. Lebanese movement was not an exemption. The Palestinian refugee flood was a dominant phenomenon in all YMCAs since that. The work of YMCA has centred round Refugees and activities for them. YMCA was in the middle of the problems that often arise between the refugees and the citizens of the nation. In 1949 the proportion of refugees was four times bigger than the native population.⁹⁵ A large proportion, perhaps one third, of the refugees was children or teenagers that had lost their parents.⁹⁶ The programmes for refugees contained mainly educational and recreational projects. The spearhead of YMCA programme among Palestinian refugees has been the Leadership Training Programme, i.e. enterprise to educate skilful people who could help others. The work was carried on by the support of UNRWA.⁹⁷ In the 1940s YMCA was the only organization in the area with Palestinian staff.⁹⁸

4.3. Palestine

The work with Palestinians had its roots in the Jerusalem YMCA in Palestine. It was founded by British missionary in 1878.⁹⁹ The work was modest scale until British occupation of Palestine in 1917. It was divided into four sections according to nationality: Arab, English, Hebrew and others.¹⁰⁰ During the Mandate period YMCAs in Palestine became active and flourished. Although they were Christian organisations promoting Bible teaching, they became aware of the multi-religious nature of the society. While some members still hoped conversions more stress was laid on bringing together young men of different faiths to share recreation and study. In this period the landmark of West Jerusalem - Jerusalem

⁹⁵ Graham-Brown 1990, 99.

⁹⁶ Graham-Brown 1990, 99.

⁹⁷ Graham-Brown 1990, 103.

⁹⁸ Graham-Brown 1990, 100.

⁹⁹ Graham-Brown 1990, 95. YMCAs of the World 1958, 96.

¹⁰⁰ YMCAs of the World 1958, 96.

YMCA- was build and decorated with the symbols of three faiths: Christianity, Islam and Judaism, which all regard Jerusalem as their holy city.¹⁰¹ Near the end of this period the membership had grown near 2000 of which two-thirds were Christians of various denominations and the rest fifty-fifty Jews and Moslems. The life was not however so calm. Both Jew and Moslem youth movements anticipated YMCA both as Christian as foreign controlled and financed organisation.¹⁰²

During the battles of 1947-49 the Jerusalem YMCA was in the eye of the storm: King David Hotel - the headquarters of British Forces - was across the road. When it was blown up, the British placed a 'security zone' and practically seized the activities in the house. When they withdrew and Jewish Haganah took control over the hotel all the area around it became the area of open fire. YMCA house survived first secured by the Red Cross and later by US Consulate. But after the armistice it was a house of empty walls - 85% of its users had fled and those who stayed were almost all Jewish.¹⁰³ The Jerusalem YMCA was scattered into pieces. As the American fraternal secretaries were the only YMCA people who were permitted to cross the Israeli-Jordan boarder, the new YMCAs were founded in Jordanian East Jerusalem and Jericho.¹⁰⁴ The work was similar to that work done in Lebanon. Later in the beginning of 1950s new YMCAs were founded in Israel in Nazareth, which was the only city in the country with Arab majority - many of being Christians.¹⁰⁵ In Gaza strip the work was started with Egyptian YMCA assistance and Near East Christian Council support.¹⁰⁶

4.4. Egypt

¹⁰¹ Graham-Brown 1990, 95.

¹⁰² Graham-Brown 1990, 96f.

¹⁰³ Graham-Brown 1990, 97. YMCAs of the World 1958, 97.

¹⁰⁴ YMCAs of the World 1958, 110.

¹⁰⁵ YMCAs of the World 1958, 97.

¹⁰⁶ YMCAs of the World 1958, 72.

The YMCA in Egypt was founded by English fraternal secretary with the help of some American missionaries in 1892. In these early days the programme was concerned with the spiritual needs of Europeans living there. In 1913 the responsibility of the work was transferred to Americans. Shortly after that the First World War broke out and was a stimulus for the Egyptian YMCA.¹⁰⁷ YMCA had an official status in both American¹⁰⁸ and British Armies¹⁰⁹ as a service organisation. This time brought also Coptic and Greek Orthodox Christians to YMCA. Later the secretaryship came to consist almost entirely of these groups.¹¹⁰

According the International survey of YMCAs and YWCAs in 1932 there was 1223 members Egypt of which 73% Christians and 27% non-Christians.¹¹¹ The proportion of the members here under consideration represents the work in Alexandria, the city work in Assiut, and the central branch in Cairo, and is predominantly Egyptian and Sudanese. There is another branch in Cairo, sponsored from Great Britain, which caters to the European population.¹¹²

The Second World War had again tremendous effect to Egyptian YMCA. It was asked to take responsibility of the work among the thousands of German and Italian POWs in the desert. After getting a Danish War secretary, huts were opened in 38 different camps. The work continued until 1949 when the last prisoners were released.¹¹³

4.5. The other YMCA Movements in Near East

¹⁰⁷ YMCAs of the World 1958, 54f.

¹⁰⁸ Canfield 1902, 7-10.

¹⁰⁹ Hjelt 1918, 4-6.

¹¹⁰ Anderson 1963, 26.

¹¹¹ International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations 1932, 80.

¹¹² International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations 1932, 87.

¹¹³ YMCAs of the World 1958, 55f.

Algerian YMCA has left not many details. Henri Dunant visited there in 1854 and noted that it "is getting on rather badly and very slowly".¹¹⁴ In 1934 Plenary there was a mention of new start by French movement but since in 1937 statistics there is no information of membership.¹¹⁵ In 1955 Centennial statistics there was not any more mention of Algeria. A good guess is that the movement was entirely French and when the country got its independence YMCA went away with the French.

In Iraq there has been a YMCA in Baghdad since the First World War. It was the fruit of the work for British-Indian Armed Forces. After the war YMCA got a house for a hostel. The service has been directed to both British servicemen and Iraqis. During the Second World War the Association ran 53 canteens in the desert for Allied Forces.

Moroccan YMCA in Casablanca was started in 1919 by a small group of young French who had become acquainted with YMCA work during the war. The group continued till the Second World War when the work among the POWs had same kind of effect than in Egypt and Iraq. The membership is however entirely French.¹¹⁶

4.6. YMCA in the world of Islam

YMCAs in the Near East were founded to serve the Europeans in the area. In most cases the services were given also to the natives. Especially the members of the Eastern Churches, Copts, Greek Orthodox and Maronites took the movement to their own. Although there were old hostilities between Christians, Jews and Moslems, YMCA was practising the dialogue in grass-root level. In Near East

¹¹⁴ Shedd 1955 I, 98.

¹¹⁵ There is a mention that the same numbers than in previous statistics. General statistics up to Jan 1st, 1937.

¹¹⁶ YMCAs of the World 1958, 132f.

there were especially two factors that paved the road for YMCA: the Work for Armed Forces and the Palestinian refugee problem.

One of the most signified - although not noticed - phenomenon of the work among POWs was that for the first time Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic clergy worked together in the prison camps. To study the influence of this, e.g. to Vatican II Council would be an interesting project. For YMCA it was the major task during the war and led to the importance of refugee work later.

The work among the Palestinian refugees is the oldest continuous relief project of the World YMCA. It has brought YMCA to stand with those who are naked and homeless. The transition from the revival movement to social gospel movement was much result of this work.

5. YMCAs IN ASIA¹¹⁷

5.1. The Indian YMCA

The general atmosphere was not conducive to the growth of the movement. It was Christian, Western and especially British. The Great Rebellion of 1857 caused British officials to be cautious to any missionary support. This was further underpinned by Hindu revivalist movements which were acting against the aggressive missionary evangelistic onslaughts on the Hindu religion.¹¹⁸

The first YMCA in India was organized in Calcutta in 1854 but it soon ceased to work. A new attempt was done in 1857 but a permanent Association managed to survive only since 1875. It was launched as a result of the evangelistic campaign of a Scottish

¹¹⁷ In this chapter I base my study on M.D.Davids 'The YMCA Making a modern India' which is a Centenary history of that movement. The other source is a conference report 'Towards a Common Strategy'.

¹¹⁸ Davies 1992, 6.

Free Church Pastor.¹¹⁹ It took several decades for the YMCA to acclimatise itself to the Indian situation. In 1891 35 associations formed the National Council of YMCA of India, Burma and Ceylon. These associations were however 'European YMCAs located in India'. Their membership was not open to Indians and they lasted as long as the founder worked, but if he was transferred or left the place also the Association collapsed.¹²⁰

The first YMCA open to Indians was founded in Madras 1890. Its concept of urban YMCA became a model for Indian YMCAs. In its first meeting these principles were launched:

1. It would be the work of young men, by young men, for young men.
2. It would minister to the whole man - body, mind and soul.
3. Its privileges would be extended to all young men of good character, without distinction of race, rank or religion.
4. The management was confined to active members, who were in full communion with Evangelical Christian churches.
5. It would be extended only so far and so fast as funds were locally forthcoming.¹²¹

In the principles there can be seen influence of both European and American YMCAs. 'Body, mind and soul'-triangle was originally an American concept although adopted also in Europe. When social programmes were added to this triangle there was the four fold programme of American YMCA. The prohibition of distinction was mainly of Indian origin - in Europe and America the Movement was still Protestant and in America there was a distinction between white and black Associations. It can be seen as the reaction towards the olden YMCAs in India which were not open to Indians. If we look the membership of this association in 1891 it can be seen like this¹²²:

Indians	%	Eurasians	%	Europeans	%	Total
140	56	82	33	28	11	250

¹¹⁹ The YMCAs of the World 1958, 87. Davies 1992, 19f.

¹²⁰ Davies 1992, 22ff.

¹²¹ Davies 1992, 28.

¹²² Davies 1992, 30 (both tables).

The proportion of members from different religions was:

Christians	%	Hindus	%	Moslems	%	Parsis	%	Total
151	60	92	37	4	0	3	0	250

The mention of active membership connected to Evangelical churches was an American concept: in Europe the signing of Paris Basis was more in use. Both were to ensure that the leadership would remain in the hands of Christians. Lastly the goal for self supportive work was the goal of North American International Committee. So from the beginning native Indian YMCA chose the models from those available and transformed them to local context.

From that time also the American assistance grew so that practically Indian YMCA was a branch of American YMCA. Sports and physical education became the most influential elements as also in America. They were the features that created the public image of YMCA.¹²⁴ The other American influence was the Student Volunteer Movement started in America by D.L.Moody. In India it came first in 1893 but grew after the student conference series of John R. Mott in 1895-6 in several Indian towns.¹²⁵ The significance of the Student Christian Movement grown from this was in development of leadership to Indian Christian community. Practically it trained most prominent leaders of Indian Church.¹²⁶ Third influence was the specialised services for Army and Railway, which both started in the beginning of 20th Century.¹²⁷

The work of YMCA grew so that in 1907 the Indian movement was financially almost self-supporting. 12 Associations had their own building and 25 had a rented one. The four-fold programme was

¹²³ Indian Christians 140.

¹²⁴ Davies 1992, 10f, 24.

¹²⁵ Davies 1992, 10f, 63f.

¹²⁶ Davies 1992, 10f, 71.

dominant with the special emphasis on Bible Study and prayer. So the infrastructure for the growth of the organisation was well laid.¹²⁸

The well-founded basis gave fruit during the 'Great Decades' of Indian YMCA 1910-30. Its people-oriented activities, indigenous leadership and catholic¹²⁹ approach brought it closer to the Indian people than most of the missionary bodies which remained sectarian, European-managed and distant. Much of this was because the Rural and Physical Development Programmes started in 1913. The Rural Reconstruction Programme stimulated nation-wide growth of rural development schemes and they were also model for the Government programmes. By 1930 YMCA had organised 700 Co-operative Credit societies, 600 of which had been taken under the regular Government Co-operative Department.¹³⁰ The Physical Development Programme led to the development of Indian sports culture. It was YMCA that trained and managed the first Indian Olympic team.¹³¹

During these decades was also the expansion of War Work. Like in Britain also Indian YMCA had an official status in army because of the request of British government. The Indian YMCA might be the first Third World organisation that sent Christian workers to work in Europe during the First World War. Indian YMCA was active also in Mesopotamia, East Africa, Egypt and Palestine.¹³² This work made YMCA highly conspicuous in the public eye in India as well as in other parts of the world.¹³³ It probably gave Indian YMCA also the pride to look European and American YMCAs on equal basis. This was a thing that had no equivalence in other Third World countries.

¹²⁷ Davies 1992, 10f, 78ff. Although Army work came to India in the British form, it was originally American idea.

¹²⁸ Davies 1992, 10f, 90.

¹²⁹ In this occasion: non discriminating.

¹³⁰ Davies 1992, 10f, 96, 308.

¹³¹ Davies 1992, 10f, 97.

¹³² Davies 1992, 10f, 132-137.

After the war Indian YMCA directed itself more towards Social Gospel although there remained some revivalist attitudes in the new constitution of 1920. From that constitution on Indian YMCA has focused on community service.¹³⁴ That led to great growth of non-Christian membership. In an International survey from 1932 56% of membership of 6000 was non-Christian.¹³⁵

The success of Indian YMCA was much of the work of its General Secretary K.T.Paul, who was one of the most prominent Indian Christian leaders. His resignation in 1930 and death in 1931 happened in the same time than the world wide regression hit also India and American YMCA had to cut its support. The indigenous character of Indian YMCA led also to withdrawal of the support from British government and European companies. All these caused serious handicaps to Indian YMCA. With the expansion and projects the movement had become a professional-secretary-lead organisation that was highly depended on support from mentioned sources.¹³⁶

Inside YMCA there was a question of membership. The professionalism had pushed laymen to secondary place.¹³⁷ The other membership question was the division to active and associated membership.¹³⁸ All these were problems that had to be solved during the next years. The biggest problem was the lack of indigenous resources. This slowed the speed for decades.

The broke of the sub-continent of India to four independent countries Burma, India, Pakistan and Sri-Lanka in 1947 broke also the Council of YMCAs of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. In 1951

¹³³ Davies 1992, 10f, 140.

¹³⁴ Davies 1992, 10f, 200ff.

¹³⁵ International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations 1932, 80. Davies mentions 75%, but I guess that it is a mistake. Next line in the table there was Japans amount 73%. Davies 1992, 10f, 204.

¹³⁶ Davies 1992, 10f, 289, 292, 294.

¹³⁷ Davies 1992, 294.

Burma was the first to quit and Pakistan followed in 1955. Their membership in that time was as follows¹³⁹:

	Burma	Ceylon	India	Pakistan	Total
Associations in 1951	3	15	173	3	194
Associations in 1955	4	13	203	2	222
Secretaries in 1951	3	20	159	7	189
Secretaries in 1955	5		96	n.a.	101
Members 1951	334	8050	18418	800	27602
Members 1955	1305	2717	29326	922	34270

The combined membership of India and Ceylon made it the biggest YMCA in the Third World. In Europe there was only four movements bigger than Indian movement.¹⁴⁰

5.2. The YMCAs grown from Indian YMCA

The first Burmese YMCA groups started in 1880 by the British and for the British and 1898 the first fraternal secretary came to the Rangoon. The history was similar to Indian YMCA with Christian and social programmes. The Second World War however completely disrupted the movement. The work was restarted in 1947 and 1951 the Burmese YMCA started as an affiliated member of the World Alliance. It is identified with national hopes and aspirations of the country while striving to serve the whole community. Its concern is to develop an adequate lay and professional leadership. Its membership is 85% non-Christian.¹⁴¹ As the above statistic of Indian subcontinent shows, the YMCA is expanding in great speed.

¹³⁸ Davies 1992, 298-301.

¹³⁹ 1951 numbers: Davies 1992, 367. 1955 numbers: Centennial year statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955. These numbers must however be taken only as rough approximates. As an old YMCA secretary I simply don't believe that Pakistan YMCA could have raised its membership from 922 in 1955 to 1800 in 1958 as the YMCAs of the world 1958 tells in p. 148.

¹⁴⁰ Centennial year statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955

¹⁴¹ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 31f. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 11f.

Pakistan got its first YMCA in 1875 in Lahore. The other Association was opened in Karachi in 1905. In the period before Pakistan independence the work was similar to Indian YMCAs. During 1947 upheaval the work was seriously disrupted. In Lahore all but 29 members moved to India and the association had to rebuild its membership with a new Moslem group. The work is concentrated on social work but YMCA has also important role in the Christian Ecumenism in Pakistan.¹⁴²

5.3. The YMCAs with Chinese connections

The YMCA was first introduced into the missionary schools in China. The first Student Associations appeared in 1885 and City YMCAs in Tientsin and Sanghai in 1890's. The start was strongly evangelistic but later the movement has developed the four fold programme adopted from America. In that time Taiwan YMCA was still part of Chinese YMCA.¹⁴³ The last official statistics from 1950 show the membership of 183 000¹⁴⁴ but the number of people attending into the programmes was well over million.¹⁴⁵ With these numbers Chinese YMCA was in that time the second (or third if only members were counted) biggest YMCA in the world.

In Hong Kong YMCA was established in 1901. Soon the British and Chinese branches were separated. The European YMCA was quite small with membership of 435¹⁴⁶. The Chinese YMCA was bigger with a membership of 1250.¹⁴⁷ Also here the number of participants in activities (500 000/day) was far bigger than membership. The difference between these associations was both in membership and

¹⁴² The YMCAs of the world 1958, 147ff.

¹⁴³ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 45f. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 27f.

¹⁴⁴ Centennial year statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955

¹⁴⁵ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 46.

¹⁴⁶ Compared to 30 000 non Chinese population, the amount of members was quite big compared to any European town of 30000 inhabitants.

¹⁴⁷ Centennial year statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955. The amount of 10000 in The YMCAs of the world 1958, p.83 means 'the friends of the

in function. While European YMCA was mere a club for foreigners - a piece of home abroad - the Chinese YMCA was running large community projects.¹⁴⁸

Malaysian YMCA had same kind of experience than Burmese and Hong Kongian YMCAs. The first Association was founded in Singapore in 1903 and the work expanded according to British model also to Kuala Lumpur in 1907 and in Ipoh 1920. The Second World War ruined both the work and buildings. The members of the Chinese speaking community in Singapore formed an own YMCA in 1946. While the older Associations are quite mixed in their membership and the activities more in recreation-social axle, the Chinese YMCA is 90% Christian and runs also Christian activities.¹⁴⁹

5.4. Other Asian YMCAs

Japan YMCA has its roots in the Student Christian Movement in 1877. The first City YMCA was formed a year later. By 1893 there were 19 societies among students calling themselves YMCAs. The work grew rapidly. The Second World War damaged most major Associations: half of the buildings were just wiped out and almost all others badly damaged. The post-war recovery was quick. In 1955 it had 24000 members in 123 associations with 99 secretaries. This made it the fourth biggest Asian YMCA movement. The activities are according to four-fold programme.¹⁵⁰

Thailand YMCA roots are dated to 1892 when a Thai young man who studied in USA came to start Christian work among men. It took several decades before the YMCA was officially established. This happened when a fraternal secretary came from US to organise the

Association'. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 13. Into All the World 1957, p.93 gives membership amount of 1320.

¹⁴⁸ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 82ff. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 13f.

¹⁴⁹ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 126ff. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 23ff.

¹⁵⁰ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 106ff. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 22.

work. The work was organised on four fold programme basis.¹⁵¹ Its membership was 3736 in 1955.¹⁵²

The Korean YMCA was founded in 1900 in Seoul. The work expanded to several towns but was closed during the Second World War. The second backslash came with the Korean War in 1950. After the war emergency help from North America helped the movement rise again. The programme contained religious, relief and educational activities. By the 1955 the movement has grown to almost 10000 membership.¹⁵³

The YMCA in Philippines has a history as part of the US YMCA. The work was started in 1898 when the country was ceded under US dominion. The work contained mainly social, educational and physical activities. The lack of religious activities was because of vigorous opposition of the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. The Filipino YMCA suffered also of the Second World War - all but one building was destroyed. However the rebuilding has been as effective as in Japan. The YMCA has 30 000 active members and 200 000 participants organised in 20 branch associations.¹⁵⁴

Indonesian YMCA roots are among Dutch nationals in Indonesia. During the Second World War these efforts were wiped out. After the war in 1949 YMCA-Indonesia was founded by both Dutch and Indonesian. The new movement got a fraternal secretary in 1953 to start programme among Indonesian youth.¹⁵⁵ The membership was 600 in 1955.¹⁵⁶

5.5. The influence of Asian YMCAs

¹⁵¹ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 183f. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 30ff.

¹⁵² Centennial year statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955.

¹⁵³ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 114ff. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 22f.

¹⁵⁴ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 154-157. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 26.

¹⁵⁵ The YMCAs of the world 1958, 91f. Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 17ff.

¹⁵⁶ Centennial year statistics of the World's Alliance of YMCAs 1955.

In Asia there were more big and influential YMCAs than in the other parts of the Third World. Chinese, Indian and Filipino YMCAs were among the ten biggest YMCAs in the world. Their special influence was in their own community and in world wide discussion. In his report to Asian YMCA Leaders Conference 1953 the Area Secretary stressed seven achievements of YMCA in Asia.

1. The YMCA the prophet and pioneer in awakening both government and people to understand the importance of youth.
2. The YMCA in Asia has succeeded in bringing men and boys together in common tasks transcending national, racial, communal and class differences.
3. The YMCA has pioneered in the field of leisure time activities for wholesome recreation, for spiritual, cultural and vocational improvement, and for social service.
4. The YMCA has meant to a large number of laymen in Asia, as elsewhere, religion in which they can find a place of responsible leadership.
5. The YMCA in Asia has rightly put the emphasis upon common agreements rather than mutual differences in its approach to the non-Christian people and in its relations to the Christian community.
6. The YMCA has demonstrated through its World Service Program in Asia international co-operation a high plane, with no ulterior motive, with no sense of imposition or encroachment upon others, but with mutual understanding and close collaboration between co-operating movements.
7. The YMCA has been able to present the Christian message to youth in terms that are more readily intelligible to them.¹⁵⁷

The special Indian invention in YMCA work was the Rural Development projects. YMCA had traditionally been an urban movement round the world but Indians made it rural. Their projects for co-operative banks were pioneering in rural development also from the whole world perspective.

6. CONCLUSION

The YMCAs in the Third World were mainly small. Only Chinese, Indian and Filipino movements were over 30 000 members. In Africa the total of all members together remains under 10 000. Near East and Latin American Movements vary from couple a hundred to 10 000.

¹⁵⁷ Towards a Common Strategy 1953, 4f.

The other phenomenon was that, except Asia, YMCA was an urban movement. It was established in big towns and its functions were based on central buildings. The Indian idea was that the majority of the people live in the rural area and YMCA must go along.

The YMCA idea came mainly from North America and Britain. Only in Africa and Near East the French influence was dominant in some countries. Occasionally also Dutch and Belgian movements had started YMCAs in their previous colonies. The German and Scandinavian influence were quite minimal during this period.

YMCA adapted itself in new regions with different concepts. In Latin America and other Roman Catholic Context YMCA tried to avoid conflict by leaving the religious work to the responsibility of the Churches. In other part of the Third World the religion was important part of the programme. Although the beginnings were strictly evangelical the attitude grew to dialogue with other faiths. Especially in India and Palestine YMCA tried to find what was common in religions instead of looking differences. In Near East Orthodox Churches adopted YMCA as one way to work.

The membership was mainly with the principle: 'Open Membership - Christian Leadership'. This was done by division to active and associate members. The first ones were either members of Christian Churches or those who signed the Paris Basis. The board members and secretaries were from this category. The exception was Near East where this division was given up.

In all countries YMCA was the pioneer of youth work and sports. The two World Wars raised the work among the victims of war and most YMCAs were somehow involved to it.

Although YMCA was founded as a revivalist movement it had already turned to be more Social Gospel relief organisation. The

Christianity was the basis but religious activities were not dominant.

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