

Education policies and the development of the colonial state
in the Belgian Congo, 1916-1939.

Submitted by Marie Elizabeth Dunkerley, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, September 2009.

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

(signature)*Marie Dunkerley*.....

Abstract

Taking the transformative potential of education as its starting point, this thesis analyses Belgian attempts to use schools policy to strengthen the hegemony of the colonial state in the Congo during the interwar years. Through an empirical treatment of the development of the colonial school system, based largely on archival research, the study pursues two main contentions. The first is that the Belgian colonial authorities played a far more direct role in formulating and implementing education policy than is often believed. The second is that the state authorities' interest in education was defined both by the economic imperative of colonial exploitation, which compelled them to train skilled workers, and the fear that access to education would fuel potential sedition. Six thematic chapters demonstrate that this paradox of necessity and fear shaped Belgian education policy in the Congo, looking at the reasons behind the fear of potential unrest, and at its ramifications. This thesis argues that these pressures caused the Belgian colonial authorities to try to mould Congolese society using education as a tool, by using specific streams of instruction to inculcate certain groups of Congolese, such as auxiliaries, healthcare workers, and women, with the principles of colonial rule. The thesis also considers how these policies were put into practice, focusing on relations between the colonial authorities and the Catholic and Protestant mission societies, and evaluates their efficacy. Moreover, this thesis attempts to establish, where possible, the reactions of colonized Congolese to European educational provision. Having analysed these issues, this thesis concludes that the colonial education system in the Congo during the interwar years failed to fulfil its main purpose and perpetuate Belgian colonial rule.

Table of Contents:

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements and Note on the Text	7
List of illustrations.	8
List of acronyms, abbreviations, and frequently used translations.	9
Chapter One: Introduction	
1.1: Opening Remarks	10
1.2: Research Aims	12
1.3: Methodology	14
1.4: Sources	15
1.5: Structure and Argument	18
1.6: Context – Belgian Colonialism in the Congo	21
1.6.1.1: The Foundation of the Congo Independent State	21
1.6.1.2: The Rubber Trade	24
1.6.1.3: The Belgian Congo: the New Colonial State	26
1.6.2.1: Education in the Belgian Congo	33
1.6.2.2: Origins: Education in the Congo Independent State	33
1.6.2.3: Education in the New Colony	36
Chapter Two: The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo.	
2.1: Introduction	47
2.2: Early Colonial Histories	48
2.3: Recent Developments in Colonial History	53
2.4: Recent Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo	57
2.5: Works on Colonial Education	59
2.6: Works on Education in the Congo	61

Chapter Three: Defining State Interest in Educational Development.

3.1. Introduction	67
3.2. A Civilizing Mission?	68
3.3.1: The 1917 Questionnaires – Emerging Motivations	69
3.3.2: Questions of Language	75
3.3.3: Summary of issues raised by the survey	79
3.4: Internal Dangers	82
3.4.1: Kimbanguism and Kitawala	82
3.4.2: Islam	84
3.5.1: External Dangers	89
3.5.2: Pan-Africanism	89
3.5.3: Communism	93
3.5.4: Belgian fears of foreign intervention	95
3.6: Education policy – ‘belgicisation’	96
3.7: Conclusion	97

Chapter Four: Auxiliaries or Usurpers? The Colonial Authorities and Catholic Mission Societies.

4.1: Introduction	99
4.2. Existing Literature	101
4.3. Early Development	103
4.3.1: Missions	103
4.3.2: Belgians politics	106
4.4.1: Case studies	107
4.4.2.1: Case study 1 – the White Fathers	109
4.4.2.2: Normal schools – differing priorities	111
4.4.2.3: Local considerations for mission schools	113
4.4.2.4: Roelens and the Administration	116
4.4.2.5: The Ministry of Colonies, Roelens, and the official rural schools of the Eastern Province	118
4.4.2.6: Conclusion	119
4.4.3.1: Case study 2 – the Order of St Benedict	120

4.4.3.2: Competition with the Salesians	121
4.4.3.3: Collaboration with the <i>Union Minière du Haut Katanga</i>	124
4.4.3.4: De Hemptinne and the colonial authorities	126
4.4.3.5: The Benedictines and Protestant missions	126
4.4.3.6: Conclusion	128
4.4.4.1: Case Study 3 – the Trappists	129
4.4.4.2: Trappists and land policy	131
4.4.4.3: Trappist leadership in Belgium	132
4.4.4.4: Conclusion	134
4.5: Chapter conclusion	134

Chapter Five: Colonial Allies or Foreign Rivals? The Belgian Colonial

Authorities and the Protestant Missions.

5.1: Introduction	137
5.2: Existing Literature	138
5.3: Early Protestant Activity	140
5.4.1: The Protestant Challenge to the Belgian Conception of the Congo	142
5.4.2.1: Protestant Missions and Education – Theory	142
5.4.2.2: The American Example – Adapted Education	143
5.5.1: Belgian Resistance to Protestant Influence	150
5.5.2: Comparative Development of Catholic and Protestant Mission Education	151
5.5.3: Kimbanguism	153
5.6.1: Government Policy and Protestant Reactions in the 1920s	157
5.6.2: Increased Competition and Antagonism	159
5.7: Impact of Catholic Expansion: the Case of the Baptist Missionary Society and the <i>Huileries du Congo Belge</i> .	162
5.8.1: Growing Pressure on Protestant Missions and the Debate about Identity in the 1930s	165
5.8.2: Congolese Protestants and their Rights	173
5.9: Conclusion	175

Chapter Six: Fashioning the Congolese? Education Policy and the Development of the Colonial Administration.

6.1: Introduction	178
6.2: Aspects of State Development	179
6.2.1: The Expansion of the Colonial Administration	179
6.2.2: Shortages of European Staff	180
6.3.1: African Clerks and the ' <i>écoles des candidats-commis</i> '	182
6.3.2: Moves to increase the numbers of African Clerks	185
6.3.3: The Further Development of the 'official' schools	187
6.3.4: Educational Content	190
6.3.5: The Types of Students Being Trained as Clerks: A Focus on the ' <i>métis</i> '	191
6.3.6: Subsidised ' <i>écoles des candidats-commis</i> '	197
6.3.7: Further Developments: African girls and the ' <i>écoles moyennes</i> '	200
6.4: Indirect Rule and the ' <i>écoles des fils de chefs</i> '	200
6.4.1: Significant Aspects of Indirect Rule	200
6.4.2: The Concept of the ' <i>écoles des fils de chefs</i> '	202
6.5: Conclusion	208

Chapter Seven: Gender and Education Policies: Shaping Colonial Society

7.1: Introduction	212
7.2: Existing Literature	213
7.3: Pre-Colonial Gender Roles in the Congo	217
7.4: Gender and the Early Development of Formal Education	223
7.5: Christian Missions and Gender: Missionary Ideologies	224
7.6: The Colonial Authorities and Gender	227
7.7.1: The 1925-1929 Reorganisation and its Impact on Girls' Education	232
7.7.2: The Impact of the 1925 Project and Subsequent Development	234
7.8: Reactions to Girls' Education	236
7.8.1: The Colonial Authorities' View	236
7.8.2: African Reactions (European Sources)	237
7.9: Conclusion	242

Chapter Eight: Sickness and the State: The Training of Indigenous

Healthcare Workers.

8.1: Introduction	245
8.2: Existing Literature	247
8.3: Government Medical Education	250
8.3.1: Initial Foundation Development	250
8.3.2: Development during the later 1920s	257
8.3.3: Reorganisation and the École Unique des Assistants Médicaux Indigènes at Léopoldville.	259
8.3.4: Debate over Boarding Arrangements at the École Unique.	261
8.3.5: Midwifery Training	268
8.3.6: Colonial Comparisons	271
8.3.7: Medical Auxiliaries as Agents of Hegemony?	273
8.4: Funding of Independent Medical Education	275
8.5: Conclusion	280

Chapter Nine: General Conclusion. 282

Appendices:

Appendix A: List of Belgian Monarchs, Ministers for the Colonies, and Governors-General.	292
Appendix B: Text of Relevant Articles from the Berlin Act 1885, Convention between the Congo Independent State and the Vatican 1906, and the Convention of St Germain-en-Laye 1919.	294
Appendix C: Text of subsidy agreement between the Ministry of Colonies and the Catholic Mission Societies	298

Bibliography:

Primary Sources:

Archives	299
Printed Primary Sources	301
Secondary Sources	304

Note on the Text:

All translations from the French are the author's own. Where appropriate the original is given as well the first time a term is used. Some words which lack a direct equivalent in English remain in French in the text. A list of commonly used terms follows the List of Illustrations.

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List of Illustrations:

Figure 1: Administrative Map of the Belgian Congo, 1929	28
Figure 2: Organisation of subsidized education from 1925	42
Figure 3: Comparative chart showing the numbers of pupils in official, Catholic and Protestant schools.	152
Figure 4: Chart showing the total numbers of Catholic and Protestant missionaries	166
Figure 5: Known numbers of Congolese training in official clerks' schools	189
Figure 6: Numbers training in subsidized schools	197
Figure 7: Girls in subsidized schools	235
Figure 8: Pupils in <i>écoles des assistants médicaux indigène</i>	258
Figure 9: Women training as midwives or midwifery assistants	269

List of acronyms, abbreviations and commonly used translations:

A.B.F.M.S.	American Foreign Baptist Mission Society
B.M.S.	Baptist Missionary Society
C.I.S.	Congo Independent State/État Indépendant du Congo
I.M.C.	International Missionary Council
H.C.B.	Huilleries du Congo Belge
U.M.H.K.	Union Minière du Haut Katanga
École des aides-accoucheuses	School for midwifery assistants
École des assistants médicaux indigènes	School for native medical assistants
École des candidats-commis	Clerks' school (before 1936)
École primaire	Primary School
École professionnelle	Professional/Vocational school
École moyenne	Clerks' school (after 1936)
Enseignement	Education
Hygiène	Health
Métis/mûlatres/mûlatresses	Mixed-race progeny of European and African parents

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1: Opening Remarks:

Education is the method through which societies and states transmit their accumulated knowledge, skills, and values to new generations of people. It is a process intended to exert a formative effect on the minds of learners, and to shape their understanding of the world. As such, it is imbued with transformational power and can therefore be moulded to reflect specific political or cultural agendas with the expectation that the desired ideas will be disseminated amongst the recipients of such education. Whilst education can be enormously beneficial, we must also recognise that the transmission of knowledge through formal systems of education is shaped by those who plan, fund, and deliver the content of school programmes. In this respect, the use of schools to manipulate societal development is a matter worthy of in-depth exploration.

Nowhere more so than in colonial societies where European educational provision, always limited and always carefully targeted at selected groups, reflected the underlying assumptions of the colonial rulers about the role, capacities, and supposed limitations, of colonized peoples. Beginning from this standpoint, this thesis assesses the use of education policies as a means of furthering the aims of the colonial state in the Belgian Congo during the years 1916-1939, a period as yet little studied in wider histories of the Belgian Congo. In order to fully evaluate the relationship between the development of the system introduced to educate Africans during these years and the consolidation of Belgian colonialism, this study will consider a number of inter-related factors such as the colonial authorities' motivations for involving the state in matters pertaining to education provision, their relations with Catholic and Protestant missionary societies operating in the colony, and the development of several streams of education with specific social, political, and economic purposes. Additional chapters will address the training of indigenous healthcare workers and the gendered dimensions of both colonial education and medical provision in the Belgian Congo between the two World Wars. The main goal of this work is to establish the scope and purpose of colonial state involvement in the formulation and delivery of education

policies, to analyse the motivating factors behind this state interest, and to examine the results of the application of the chosen policies.

As will be seen in the brief outline of Belgian colonialism in the Congo below, the Belgian Ministry of Colonies subsidized the establishment and running of Catholic mission schools throughout the interwar period, a strategy which has led many to conclude that the state took little interest in educational matters.¹ However, this thesis will argue that the colonial authorities in fact paid considerable attention to the formulation and application of basic educational provision, and sought to mobilize schools as constitutive elements of the colonial state itself in the Congolese interior. Put differently, colonial schools were, in large part, established to help fulfil the economic, political, and social agendas of the inter-war colonial authorities.

As mentioned above, the inter-war years, upon which this study focuses, have been somewhat neglected by historians of Belgian colonialism, rarely studied in their own right as a period of discrete and distinctive socio-political change. This neglect is easily explained. It is, in large part, a consequence of the more attention-grabbing controversies of the pre-1908 and post-1945 periods of conquest and decolonization, from the well-known horrors of the Congo Free State to the internationalization of decolonization after the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in 1960.² There is, however, another factor implicit in this historiographical neglect, namely, the assumption that the intervening years of direct colonial rule in the early twentieth century were largely uneventful, characterized by political stagnation, underinvestment, and minimal state initiative. An additional key aim of this study, then, is to shine a light on these supposed years of stagnation in order to disprove these assumptions of inactivity. Indeed, the thesis contends that the inter-war years were highly significant precisely because they marked the transitional period through which the colonial state apparatus, having largely established its hegemony, sought to embed itself and to impress its worldview upon its colonized subjects. With its focus on Belgian colonial education in its various forms, both official and unofficial, this study seeks to identify the particular motivations behind this implantation of Belgian colonial practice, and to establish the reactions they engendered.

¹ See the literature review which follows this introductory chapter for more on this assumption within the relevant historiography.

² These trends in the historiography of the Congo are also examined further within the literature review.

The rest of this introductory chapter interrogates the research questions which this study seeks to answer, highlighting the methodology used and outlining the main sources used as evidence in support of its arguments. The introduction will then present an outline of the development of Belgian colonialism in the Congo, from its inception in 1885 to its conclusion in 1960, with a brief précis of the Congo's history since decolonization. This will be followed by a more detailed description of education provision during the colonial period, including the legislative cornerstones of the system, and the administrative structures which governed it. The aim of this chronological description of the development of the education system is to explain what was put in place, and to introduce the programmes and structures which will be referred to frequently throughout the main body of this work. After the contextual information on the existing historiography on this topic has been examined in the literature review following this introduction, the thesis will move on to analyse why the state chose the education policies it did, and will then examine the application of these policies through several themed chapters.

1.2: Research Aims

Essentially, this thesis explores the reasons behind both the impulsion given to the expansion of education provision and the limitations placed upon the scope and content of that education in the interwar period in the Belgian Congo. In order to assess the role of the Belgian colonial authorities in this concurrent expansion and limitation of educational opportunities for the colonised population it governed, it is necessary to evaluate the positions of the Ministry of Colonies and the government general in the development of education policies and programmes; the roles played by missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant; and the economic, cultural, and political contexts which informed the evolution of the system. Primarily, this thesis aims to establish the extent of Belgian colonial state involvement in the formulation and direction of education policies, considering how the colonial authorities harnessed education to promote the development of state and society in the Congo according to their preferred model. As well as establishing the motivations behind education policies, this study will address the material impact of those policies' application,

reflecting on their effects upon colonial society, both intended and unintended. This assessment of the efficacy of education provision will focus on the reactions of those providing the schooling, typically Catholic missionaries, as well as those of the Protestant missionaries excluded from providing state-sanctioned tuition. Finally, and most importantly, it will analyse the responses of those Congolese for whom these forms of education were intended.

In considering these matters, this thesis also investigates the different European parties involved – the Ministry of Colonies, the government-general, the Catholic and Protestant missions – and significant individuals within each group. It will expose the diversity of views within and between these constituencies of opinion regarding educational development, and will thus explain how education policy emerged as the result of a combination of disputes, negotiations, and collaborations between these parties. In doing so, the chapters that follow will also clarify the shifting balance of power between these European actors at various stages during the processes of policy formulation and application.

Underlying these discussions are more fundamental questions: namely, what motivated Europeans to educate Africans in the colonial context, and why they privileged certain types of education instead of others. Answers to these questions inevitably confront us with the intended role of education in constructing African identities and shaping colonial society as well as the actual impact of education in these spheres. At its heart, the issue here is how the colonizing power attempted to shape the minds of those subject to the education provided, and their more lasting legacy. In the light of this analysis, this study will shed light on the place of education within the wider framework of colonialism, especially its role within the exercise of colonial power.

1.3: Methodology

The thesis is broadly empirical in approach. That is to say, it foregrounds archival research and the critical analysis of historical documents, to achieve an understanding of the relationship between educational policy and the development of the colonial state in the Belgian Congo during the 1920s and 1930s. Whilst acknowledging the impossibility of absolute objectivity, the thesis does not use a singular theoretical lens through which to view the development of its subject matter. This position is taken for two main reasons. The first is that analysing Belgian colonial archival material with a particular theoretical model in mind puts the researcher at greater risk of an inductive approach that would somehow make the documents 'fit' a particular hypothesis. The second is that the topic upon which this thesis concentrates requires reference to a broad range of different concepts and theories, as illustrated by the descriptions of the individual chapters given below. Thus, while there is no single theoretical 'model' at work here, the thesis necessarily engages with the theories and arguments of others in order to arrive at a workable synthesis of the impact of Belgian colonialism as measured through educational activity in the inter-war years. As this implies, the scope of this thesis is limited according to time period and place, with the geographical focus being on events within the colony itself, though reference will be made to metropolitan politics and particularly to the central colonial administration in Brussels. The analysis takes 1916 as its start point because of the particular impetus given to education provision in the colony in this year by the Ministry of Colonies' distribution of the first comprehensive state survey of colonial education. The study ends with the outbreak of European war in 1939 after which Belgium and its empire were thrown into turmoil by the experience of defeat and metropolitan occupation.

The qualitative analysis within this study references numerous concepts which require brief introduction here. The particular situation examined here is an example of what has been termed 'classical colonialism', in which one nation occupies and dominates another territory. Unsurprisingly, the relationship between Belgium and the Congo was an asymmetric one, in which coercive power was concentrated in the hands of the Belgians. In this context, education policy was aimed at meeting the needs of the colonizer, not the colonized populations who were to be enrolled in the schools set up. With this in mind, this thesis will identify and evaluate how the particular aims of the

Belgian colonial state were articulated within education policy. The notion of the 'colonial state' itself also merits further analysis, and is used within this study to refer to the specific form of polity established by the colonizer to administer its colonized territory. In considering the development of the colonial state in the Congo, the work of Crawford Young has provided valuable insight, particularly his identification of six essential elements of state logic.³ The most relevant of these here are the notions of hegemony and legitimacy, which saw colonial governments not only attempt to ensure their dominance but also to justify it.⁴ This thesis suggests that aspects of education policy can be read as supporting these two elements of state logic.

Also vital to the understanding of the research presented here are two paradoxes which marked the colonial encounter between Europeans and Africans. The first is that of 'inclusion and differentiation', which saw colonies either assimilated or associated with the metropole whilst colonized populations were simultaneously discriminated against, and deprived of substantial autonomy, on the basis of their supposed difference from and inferiority to the colonizing power.⁵ The second paradox upon which this thesis centres is that of necessity and fear, which characterized the formulation of education policies. This essentially refers to the conflict between the colonial state's overwhelming need to train skilled workers and its concurrent fear that those in receipt of such education might ultimately present a challenge to state authority. The research which underpins this thesis was focused on establishing the balance between these two pressures at various stages during the interwar years, through the critical analysis of the source materials described below.

1.4: Sources

This study uses a range of documentary materials produced during the colonial period in order to establish and analyse the processes discussed. As the major focus of this thesis is on the role of the state in the formulation and application of education policies, materials produced by the various colonial authorities are its main source of

³ Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp.35-39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.35-6, 37-8.

⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), p.174.

evidence. The majority of the research which underpins this work was conducted during ten months work in Brussels during 2006-2007, and most of that time was spent in the African Archives (*Archives Africaines*) of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*) which is the repository for documents produced by the colonial administrations of the Congo Independent State and the Belgian Congo, as well as those pertaining to Belgian rule in Rwanda and Burundi. The archive houses documents originating in the Ministry of Colonies as well as those from the government-general in the Congo. It thus contains the records both of central government and of the 'men on the spot' (and it was almost exclusively men) in colonial and provincial administration.

One of the major materials used is the series of Annual Reports on the Administration of the Colony, which were presented by the Minister for the Colonies to the Belgian parliament year by year and which were also published, after a delay of a year or two – so the report for 1925 was presented and published in 1927, for example. Although these reports were published, they are referenced here according to their archive-catalogued location due to the fact that the African Archive remains the only place where it is possible to consult the full series of these reports.⁶ In addition, it should be noted that in the footnotes of this thesis for reasons of clarity, the year given for each report after its catalogue number is the year the report was discussing, not the year in which it was published. These annual reports have proved invaluable in providing statistical information, particularly on the numbers of schools opened and of pupils enrolled. They also offer detailed insight into the reasons for the application of certain policies and the problems faced in the course of this process.

It is important, nonetheless, to recognise that the use of these reports as a source material is not without difficulties, as the extent to which they can be considered an unprejudiced account is questionable. Self-evidently, they represent the colonial state's public pronouncements of its achievements and priorities and are, as such, to be treated as part fact, part aspiration, part propaganda. Despite these limitations, valuable use may be made of these reports provided that they are considered critically and in conjunction with other sources of information. Where school attendance figures

⁶ References to these reports will be given in the following format in footnotes: Archives Africaines/Rapports Annuels/Congo Belge/file number/number within file, (year referred to), page numbers. This will appear as AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), p.20.

are given within this thesis, for instance, they should be treated as the absolute maximum number unless otherwise stated as there was a tendency, especially in the early years of the 1920s, to base figures on the numbers of students enrolled and not on average daily attendance which could be as much as fifty percent lower.⁷ Where figures present particular problems or omissions this will be stated. The annual reports also underwent significant presentational changes during the 1920s and 1930s, and information on education within them shifted from being provided on a province-by-province basis to being given on a colony-wide basis. Those reports which furnish more information on a provincial level are interesting because they were compiled by the province authorities in situ. They therefore serve to highlight conflicting and unexpurgated views between the provincial administrations and the centralised authority of the Ministry of Colonies. Essentially, these reports offer a broad range of information, both regarding education and on the wider development of the colonial state, which can be used constructively if treated with caution.

The other main source materials from the African Archives are those from the administrative services within the Ministry of Colonies which dealt with matters pertaining to education policy. Unfortunately, many documents relating to education provision do not survive in the archives, but there remains much of value especially in the deposits recorded as relating to missions.⁸ As the Catholic missionaries were the state's partners in providing education, and the Protestant missions something of an 'enemy' in this regard, the correspondence between these parties reveals much of the discussions over education policy and development. Other documents referred to originate from the department of the Ministry responsible for overseeing 'indigenous affairs', a series which contains documents pertaining, in particular to growing state anxiety about subversion amongst the African population.

This thesis also makes use of material from other archives, especially useful were the personal papers of Edouard De Jonghe, a hugely important figure within the education service of the Ministry of Colonies, discussed further below, whose writings shed

⁷See AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1927), p.22, for discussion of the problematic statistics; see the various school inspection reports with files AA/M/647-650 for examples of actual attendance figures.

⁸ These documents are referenced in the footnotes to this thesis as Archives Africaines/Missions/file number/number within file, so will appear as AA/M/636, for example, and further details such as dates and correspondents will be recorded as appropriate.

useful light on the thinking of Belgium's foremost colonial educational pioneer.⁹

Relevant material from the British National Archives has also been consulted, notably documents from the political department of the Foreign Office relating to the Congo. Another key British source are the archives of the Baptist Missionary Society, one of the largest Protestant mission groups operating in the colony.¹⁰ These documents provide a different, external perspective on the dispute between the Protestants and the Belgian colonial authorities, something about which the Belgian archives have relatively little to say.

As well as documents from Belgium's African Archives and other archival sources, this thesis refers repeatedly to the texts of published reports on education policy and to the programmes set out for use in the Congo's schools. Especially significant are the texts of the 1925 *Projet d'organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo belge avec le concours des Sociétés des missions nationales*, and the 1929 document which made this into law, as well as documents from the period of consultation which preceded this project such as the report of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission on Education in Africa, and the report of a Belgian consultative committee set up in 1922.¹¹ These documents are contextualised within the outline of the development of education in the Congo given below.

1.5: Structure and Argument

Following the historical and historiographical background for this study given in this introduction and the literature review which follows it, the main body of this work is presented in six themed chapters. The first of these, numbered as chapter three,

⁹ These documents are referenced as KADOC/DeJonghe/file number, with other details given as appropriate. KADOC is the research centre and library at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

¹⁰ Documents from the British National archives are referenced in the following format The National Archives/Public Record Office/Foreign Office/Series/File/Document, so appear as TNA/PRO/FO/371/16825/W3523, for example. Documents from the archives of the Baptist Missionary Society are referenced as BMS/Series/Files number, so appear as BMS/A/95, for example.

¹¹ *Projet d'organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo belge avec le concours des Sociétés des missions nationales*, (Brussels: Weissenbruch, 1925); *Organisation de l'enseignement au Congo belge et au Ruanda-Urundi avec le concours des Sociétés de missions nationales*, (Brussels: Verviers, 1929); Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question d'enseignement au Congo*, (Brussels: Goemaere, 1922). The first two of these are available online in pdf format at www.abbol.com This is the website of the African Schoolbooks Online Project, an interesting project led by academics such as Johannes Fabian and Honoré Vinck.

addresses the motivating factors behind the Ministry of Colonies' increasing interest in the structure and scope of the educational provision in the Congo. This chapter argues that a complex mix of internal and external factors heightened official anxieties about potential popular unrest in the colony which the Ministry sought to suppress through closer supervision of the education system. The place of schooling as integral to the state response to the emergence of African politico-religious movements, particularly Kimbanguism, and the authorities' determination to exclude ideologies deemed dangerous, such as communism and pan-Africanism, highlight both the state's resolve to use education to its own advantage and its fear of the potential for literate Africans to access subversive literature. These security concerns will be evaluated alongside the economic imperatives which underpinned other aspects of the education system to illustrate the previously mentioned paradox of necessity and fear which drove the process of development in this arena.¹²

Pursuing this analysis further, chapter four examines the application of the government's preferred system of education in which schools run by Catholic mission societies were subsidised by the state. Examining how this system worked, the chapter uses case studies of three Catholic mission societies, the Benedictines, the White Fathers, and the Trappists, to illustrate the alliances and frictions which marked the relationships between missionaries and state authorities. This chapter will argue that a range of issues, including local conditions, theological stances, and individual personalities, influenced the application of this policy. The case studies also confirm the shortcomings of a simple model of functional collaboration between missions and state. Rather by demonstrating the heterogeneous nature of these groupings, the chapter illustrates the extent to which both the Catholic missions and the colonial authorities contained vested interests and conflicting shades of opinion that made for uneasy partnerships between official and missionaries on the ground.

Following on from this discussion of the extent of collaboration between the state and the various Catholic mission societies, chapter five considers the parallel evolution of the relationship between the colonial authorities and the Protestant mission societies operating in the colony. Focusing on the Ministry of Colonies' ardent defence of its exclusion of Protestant run schools from the subsidy system, it will be shown that the

¹² See the chapter two for more on this paradox.

Protestants were cast in the role of an alien 'other', whose influence was to be limited as far as possible. However, this chapter also reconsiders the argument put forward by the Protestants in the 1930s, the essence of which was that their Congolese adherents should have opportunities equal to those of their Catholic compatriots. It will be shown that this contention made an impact upon some in the colonial administration. It will, therefore, be suggested that the roots of post-war changes to the education system, which allowed Protestants access to subsidies, can be traced to the late 1930s.

Chapter six focuses on the colonial authorities' attempts to use education to train Africans to fulfil specific functions for the state, particularly as clerks in the administration and as Belgian-educated sons of chiefs, trained to spread the colonizer's influence throughout rural Congolese society. This chapter illustrates the development of discrete streams of education tailored to these indigenous auxiliaries. It also reviews the problems encountered, notably with regard to the restriction of access to the higher tiers of the education system and as a result of attempts to channel mixed-race Congolese into the clerks' schools. As the pinnacle of the colonial education system during the inter-war period, analysis of the clerks' schools highlights the interplay between necessity and fear which characterized the entire system.

Chapter seven focuses largely on the female experience of education under the colonial regime in the Congo, as it examines the motivations behind the gender differentiation within Belgian colonial education policies. The chapter considers the role which the Ministry of Colonies assigned to women within colonial society. It demonstrates that girls and young women were to be educated in order to exert a positive – in the eyes of the state – stabilizing influence on their husbands and families, by spreading the Christian morality and colonial ideology to which they would be exposed at school. The chapter also considers the relationship between the views of gender relations espoused by the colonial authorities and the Christian missions, contrasting these with those held in pre-colonial society. The point here is to contextualize the reactions of Congolese girls and their families to European-style education.

The last in the thematic chapters reviews the development of schools for African medical auxiliaries in the colony, focusing on the factors that drove their creation. This

chapter details the debates surrounding the living arrangements for pupils at these schools. These disputes, between various missionaries and state agencies, once again reveal the importance which these parties placed on securing influence over education, and over African pupils. This chapter argues that the major impulsion for this brand of vocational education was the belief of the European parties involved that that educated Africans could be used to spread European conceptions of the world through their wider communities thereby strengthening colonial power. Yet the chapter also shows the limitations inherent in this process as Congolese medical auxiliaries synthesized their own conceptions of the colonial world, mixing African and European influences. This chapter suggests that some of the debates over medical schools in the late 1930s prefigured the more radical changes in education policy of the post-war period.

In order to contextualise the thematic chapters outlined above, it is first necessary to give a brief outline of the wider history of Belgian colonialism in the Congo, and to examine the chronological development of education in the colony in more depth.

1.6: Context - Belgium in Africa

1.6.1.1: The Foundation of the Congo Independent State

Belgian colonialism originated in the nineteenth century as the personal dream of Leopold II, King of the Belgians.¹³ Even before he ascended the throne in 1865, Leopold had longed to expand Belgian influence beyond its narrow territorial confines through the acquisition of a colony.¹⁴ Leopold paid close attention to Henry Morton Stanley's expedition to central Africa to find the missionary David Livingstone in 1871, and a further expedition in 1874-1877 during which Stanley traced the course of the Congo River from East to West.¹⁵ Leopold saw his opportunity to secure a colony in the 'dark heart' of Africa, using the *Association Internationale Africaine*, and later the *Association Internationale du Congo* to promote his interests. The Belgian royal court funded

¹³ Léopold Louis Philippe Marie Victor, (1835-1909), ascended the throne 17/12/1865 as the second Belgian monarch since the country became independent in 1830.

¹⁴ Neil Ascherson, *The King Incorporated: Leopold II in the Age of Trusts*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), pp.39-47. Henry Morton Stanley, (1841-1904), born as John Rowlands, in Wales.

¹⁵ N. Ascherson, *The King Incorporated*, pp.93-118;

Stanley to make a further trip to central Africa in 1879-1882 during which he concluded accords with African chiefs on Leopold's behalf.¹⁶ The King's efforts to secure control over the Congo culminated at the Berlin Conference which was held over the winter of 1884-1885. The conference sought to delineate trade and navigation rights on the two major West and Central African rivers flowing into the Atlantic, namely the Niger and the Congo. With no Africans present at all, the conference brought together the European powers then engaged in the wave of colonisation during the late nineteenth century that became known as the 'Scramble for Africa'. Though his claims faced competition from Portugal, which already had a colony at the mouth of the Congo (later Angola), Leopold's agents were able to conclude, at the fringes of the conference, a number of bilateral treaties between the Association and other powers recognising its right to administer the territory. These treaties led to the creation of the *État Indépendant du Congo* (known in English as the Congo Free State or the Congo Independent State: C.I.S.), and this new entity was subject to the terms of the Berlin Act 1885 which closed the conference.¹⁷

As the power behind the *Association*, Leopold soon asserted his authority over the C.I.S.. He benefited from the fact that the territory's potential was unknown and because its sheer size made it a daunting prospect – the new state was 76 times the size of Belgium. These factors had dissuaded the French and the British from any strong interest in acquiring it, though neither had wanted the other to control the region and so found the foundation of the C.I.S. to be an amenable solution.

Furthermore, the terms of the Berlin Act stated that the Conventional Congo Basin (an area larger than the C.I.S. itself) would be open to free trade. The Berlin Act would become a major issue in Belgian colonial policy-making and in international reactions to it, for, whilst the Conference of Berlin did not create the C.I.S., the Act it produced contained clauses relating to the future occupation and exploitation of the territory. As well as terms relating to free trade and shipping rights, the Act also accorded freedom

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ See Appendix B for a reproduction of the articles of the Berlin Act relevant to education in the Congo. The full text can be seen online at <http://ocid.nacse.org/qml/research/tfdd/toTFDDdocs/4ENG.htm> (accessed 14/05/2007). For more on the proceedings of the Berlin Conference, see Ascherson, *The King Incorporated*, pp.128-137; Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism*, (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp.78-84; Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Congo Independent State*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.39-43.

of action to missionary societies, stating that their activities should be protected and favoured, and that native inhabitants should be allowed freedom of religion. This article was central to the debates which surrounded Belgian policy towards mission-run schools and so will be referred to frequently throughout this study.

Having established himself as ruler of the C.I.S., whose administration was kept strictly separate from that of Belgium itself, Leopold set about exploiting the resources of his new possession. The stated motivation behind Leopold's colonialism was, in common with other colonial powers, that Europeans were duty bound to bring civilization and enlightenment to their colonised subjects. In the Congo, this was initially presented in the form of an anti-slavery campaign directed against supposedly barbarous Arab traders, whose powerbase in the East of the colony Leopold sought to destroy in order to consolidate his own power.¹⁸ Administrative power in the C.I.S. rested in the hands of the King and his chosen advisors in Brussels, though Leopold was represented in the Congo itself by a Governor General, and a hierarchical system of agents in charge of the territory's fourteen districts and their administrative subdivisions of sectors and posts.¹⁹ Local administrators were supported by a military arm, the *Force Publique*, whose European officers commanded African soldiers, at first recruited mainly from West Africa and later from the Congo itself.²⁰ Just as significant as the political division of the territory was the economic regime which was introduced into the Congo during this period, as Leopold sought to make the C.I.S. profitable. At its creation in 1885, the state administration had claimed all 'vacant lands' in the Congo as its own, regardless of the actual occupation of such lands by Africans, and it began to award some of this territory to concessionary companies, as well as establishing the *domaine privé* (private domain) in 1892 to demarcate land to be exploited exclusively by the state.²¹ In 1896, Leopold also created the *domaine de la couronne* (crown domain) as his private property, the profits from which were directed into public building schemes in Belgium.²² The areas being exploited under these arrangements were vast, and, though economic exploitation had initially focused on the ivory trade, attention soon

¹⁸ Ascherson, *The King Incorporated*, pp.169-185; Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, pp.106-118.

¹⁹ Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, pp.171-172.

²⁰ Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, p.173.

²¹ Ascherson, *The King Incorporated*, p.196; Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, p.177.

²² *Ibid.*

shifted to the collection of rubber which proved to be much more profitable for the state - and also highly controversial.

It is important to recall that Leopold's agents were not the only Europeans making their presence felt in the Congo at this early stage, as Catholic and Protestant missionaries had also entered the territory. Missionaries of both denominations had arrived there in the late 1870s, though Catholic missionaries had been present in the Portuguese territory at the mouth of the Congo since the 1490s, and they gradually moved into the interior along two routes: via the Congo River from the West and from British territories in the East.²³ Missionaries would play an important part in the development of the C.I.S. and in the Belgian Congo which succeeded it, through their conversion to Christianity of indigenous populations, their medical work, and their schools.

1.6.1.2: The Rubber Trade

The fortunes of the C.I.S. were transformed by the increased use of rubber in European and North American industry and manufacturing. The colonial state was quick to exploit a good supply of natural rubber that would, in turn, fuel an industry based around its collection. The ruthless quest to extract increasing quantities of rubber dominated events in the Congo during the years 1890-1900, so much so that it would come to define Leopold's rule. Organised into rigorously controlled plantations, the trade centred on the use of African labour to tap the rubber and deliver it to state agents who were paid commission on the amounts collected in the areas under their control.²⁴ That violence was used to compel the indigenous populations to collect the required rubber is now accepted as fact, though the numbers of deaths which resulted from this system, and the extent of Leopold's personal culpability for the abuses which took place under the system, have been highly controversial topics in recent years

²³ Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.49. See Chapters four and five for more on the early settlement of the colony of some particular mission societies, as well as the information given below about early education provision.

²⁴ Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, p.178.

within the historiography of Belgian colonialism, debates which will be examined in more detail in the next chapter of this study.²⁵

The maltreatments of African labourers in the Congo became the subject of a sustained international campaign during the first years of the twentieth century, led by Edmund Dene Morel, a Liverpool shipping clerk, who mobilised public opinion in Britain and elsewhere against Leopold's regime. Morel founded the Congo Reform Association to publicise his cause, using information reported by missionaries in the Congo, such as William Sheppard, of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission, and by Roger Casement, the British Consul in the C.I.S..²⁶ The campaign garnered considerable public support amongst the general public in Britain and the U.S.A., leading eventually to the passage of a resolution by the House of Commons in 1903 urging humane governance in the Congo, which was followed in 1904 by a highly critical report by Casement.²⁷ Leopold attempted to protect the C.I.S. with a counter-campaign but the damage was done, and the process culminated in governmental Belgian annexation of the colony in December 1908, something which had been under discussion since 1906. His dream in tatters, Leopold died a year later.

Whatever the extent of the King's involvement, the international campaign against his rule in the Congo and the circumstances surrounding the end of the C.I.S. were to have a lasting impact on the Belgian state's representation of its colonial regime in the Congo after 1908 and on the policies it pursued within the colony. Not surprisingly, official suspicion of any foreign interest in the colony also remained entrenched. Such matters will be returned to frequently throughout this study in order to analyse how they impacted upon the development of education policies in the Belgian Congo during the post-First World War years.

We need now to consider the administrative structures of the new colonial state which succeeded the C.I.S. in 1908, and the broad outlines of its development before

²⁵ See chapter two.

²⁶ Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp.177-223; Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, pp.23-24; E.D. Morel, *History of the Congo Reform Movement*, edited by William Roger Louis and Jean Stengers, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); William H. Sheppard's recollections of his experiences as a missionary were published as *Presbyterian Pioneers in Congo*, (Richmond, VA: 1917).

²⁷ HCPP: Correspondence and Report from His Majesty's Consul at Boma respecting the Administration of the Independent State of the Congo. No.1, 1904, (1933), LXII.562 - Roger Casement's report on the Congo.

decolonisation in 1960. This will be followed by consideration of the chronological development of education structures in the Congo under European rule, which will provide the factual framework for this thesis.

1.6.1.3: The Belgian Congo: the New Colonial State

The annexation of Congo by the Belgian state was not a particularly popular decision amongst the general public in Belgium, and enthusiasm for colonialism remained largely confined to small sections of the country's predominantly Catholic political and economic elites during the early twentieth century.²⁸ It has been argued that the limited engagement of the wider Belgian public with the Congo contributed to the speed with which Belgium was able to extricate itself from Central Africa upon decolonisation.²⁹ The new colony was further removed from the Belgian metropole as a result of its administrative structures, which ensured that it remained both economically and politically set apart. The Belgian Congo was to be governed according to the principles and structures set out in the *Charte Coloniale* of 1908, the colony's 'constitution' which was signed by Leopold II himself.³⁰ The colonial administration in Belgium consisted of a Ministry of Colonies, headed by a Minister for the Colonies, who was a member of the Belgian government, and who reported annually to parliament.³¹ The Belgian National Assembly also had rights of approval over the colony's budget but generally took little interest in colonial matters beyond this.³² Rather, the Minister himself held legislative power, and was advised by a colonial council (*conseil colonial*) of whose fourteen members six were selected by

²⁸ Vincent Viaene, 'King Leopold's Imperialism and the Origins of the Belgian Colonial Party, 1860-1905', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 80, (Dec. 2008), 741-790, (pp.788-790).

²⁹ E. Lamberts, 'Belgium since 1830', in J.C.H. Blom and E. Lamberts, *History of the Low Countries*, trans. by J.C. Kennedy, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.319-392, (pp.373-4); Guy Vanthemsche, *Nouvelle Histoire de Belgique, Vol. 4: La Belgique et le Congo: Empreintes d'une colonie, 1885-1980*, (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2007), pp.295-6.

³⁰ The text of the *Charte Coloniale* is reproduced in Jean Stengers, *Belgique et le Congo: l'élaboration de la Charte Coloniale*, (Brussels: 1963), pp.229-237.

³¹ In 1958, the Ministry became known as the Ministry of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, with the Minister's title reflecting this. Belgium had become the mandated power in Ruanda-Urundi, formerly part of German East Africa, following the First World War. These territories are not included in this study for reasons discussed below.

³² Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 1, (Brussels: Renaissance du Livre, 1929), p.159; Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, p.45.

Parliament and eight by the King.³³ The Ministry was divided into several departments, each dealing with different aspects of colonial governance, and all with sub-departments - the precise number and responsibilities of these departments changed over time.³⁴

In addition to the Ministry in Belgium, there was a Government-General in the Congo itself, seated first at Boma at the mouth of the Congo, until 1928 when it transferred to Léopoldville. Headed by a Governor General, the colonial government had administrative departments mirroring those of the Ministry, though legislative power and policy-making decisions remained with Brussels.³⁵ Some attempts were made towards decentralisation of power, with Louis Franck looking to transfer more powers to the colony during his tenure as Minister from 1918-1924, but these initiatives did not come to fruition.³⁶ Each province, of which there were initially four, redrawn as six in 1933, was headed by a Vice Governor – known as Provincial Commissioners after 1933 - and also had its own administration.³⁷ The four original provinces were Congo-Kasai, Equator (*Equateur*), Eastern Province (*Province Orientale*), and the Katanga, as illustrated below by Figure 1. The 1933 reorganisation split Congo-Kasai into the provinces of Leopoldville and Coquilhatville, whilst the Eastern Province was also divided into the provinces of Costermansville and Lusambo. The Equator province and the Katanga became known as Stanleyville and Elisabethville respectively, as all the new provinces were now named after their capitals. Provinces were, in turn, divided into districts headed by a District Commissar (*Commissaires de District*), and then further into territories, the smallest administrative unit, headed by a Territorial Administrator (*Agents Territorial*).

³³ Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 1, p.160.

³⁴ See below for an explanation of the administrative structures governing education in the colony.

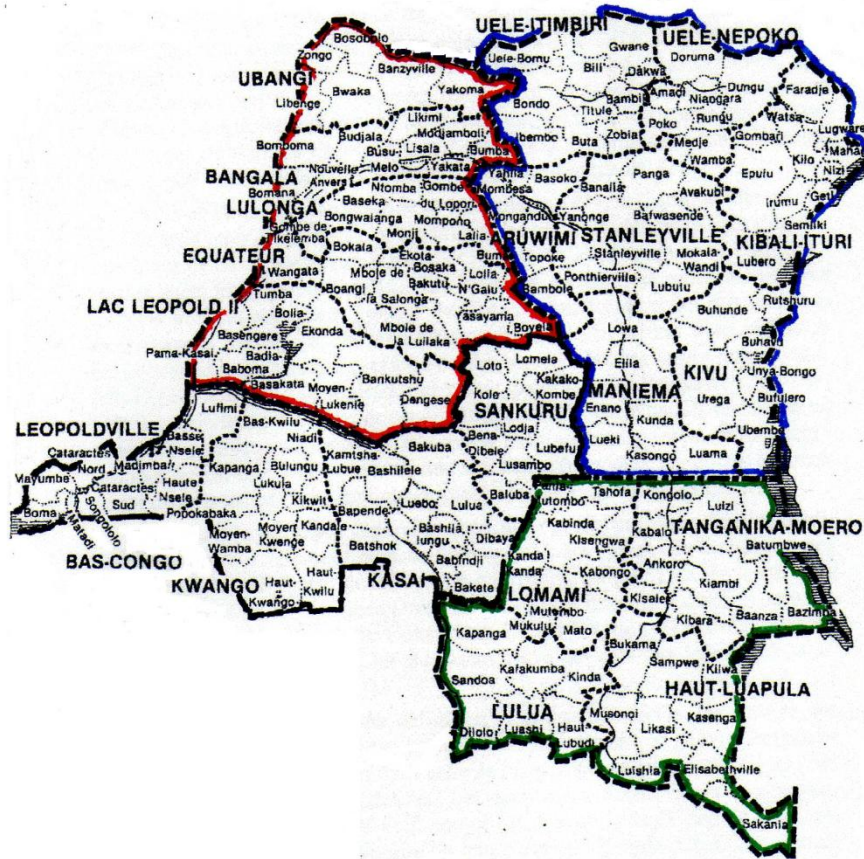
³⁵ The Governor General had the power to issue decrees which had strength of law for sixth months at which point they became void if they had not been passed into actual law.

³⁶ Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 1, pp.162-163.

³⁷ For a detailed account of the development of the territorial and administrative divisions of the Congo under Belgian rule see Léon de Saint Moulin, 'Histoire de l'organisation administrative du Zaïre', *Zaïre-Afrique*, no. 224, (April 1988), 4-31.

Figure 1: Map of Administrative Organisation, 1929.³⁸

Scale: 500Km



- Congo-Kasai
- Equator
- Eastern Province
- Katanga
- District Boundaries
- Territory Boundaries

³⁸ Map adapted from Léon de Saint-Moulin, 'Histoire de l'organisation administrative du Zaïre', *Zaire-Afrique*, No.224m (Apr., 1988), pp.4-31.

In parallel with this, the colony was also divided into chiefdoms (*chefferies*) according to loosely interpreted tribal structures, and into sectors (*secteurs*) in areas where the populations were either too mixed or in groups considered too small to have their own chiefdom.³⁹ Under the C.I.S., some African chiefs had been awarded medals to symbolise their submission to colonial rule and the state's recognition of their authority. However, many of these *chefs médaillés*, had been so honoured because of their willingness to co-operate in the economic exploitation of the territory.⁴⁰ A 1910 decree apparently sought to recognise chiefs on the grounds of their customary authority and to award them some low-level administrative and judicial powers according to principles of indirect rule, though the recognition of chiefs and the delineation of tribal boundaries continued to be fraught with difficulties.⁴¹ Under this administrative system, which was little modified until the years immediately preceding decolonisation, power was concentrated centrally in Brussels, and in particular in the hands of the various Ministers for the Colonies who held office during the period. Significantly for this study, though the office of Minister for the Colonies changed hands frequently during the period under examination here, in line with the unstable and short-lived nature of many of Belgium's coalition governments during the 1920s and 1930s. That said, the colonial portfolio remained almost exclusively the domain of men drawn from the Catholic Party.⁴² This was in line with the Catholic Party's dominance in Belgian politics during the interwar period, which had a profound impact on education policy in the colony as we shall see.⁴³

Despite the decline of the lucrative rubber trade, brought to an end by both the controversy surrounding it and the entry into the market of maturing cultivated supplies from other parts of the world, the economy of the Belgian Congo was transformed by industrialisation during the interwar years. The discovery of large mineral deposits in several regions, particularly of copper and uranium in the Katanga

³⁹ Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, p.45.

⁴⁰ Hein Venhee, 'Maîtres et serviteurs: Les chefs médaillés dans le Congo colonial', in Jean-Luc Vellut, (ed), *La mémoire du Congo, le temps colonial*, (Gand: Éditions Snoeck/Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 2005), pp.79-82, (pp.81-2). The medals were inscribed with the phrase '*Travail et progrès*'.

⁴¹ Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo: de l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique*, (Paris: De Boeck & Larcier, 1998), pp.370-371. See chapter six for discussion of efforts to educate the sons of chiefs.

⁴² See Appendix A for a full list of the Ministers for the Colonies and Governors General of the Belgian Congo during the period under examination. See also Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, pp.67-68.

⁴³ E. Lamberts, 'Belgium since 1830', pp.363-366.

and of gold in the Eastern province - plus the introduction of the technology to exploit them and the infrastructure needed to transport them - was enormously significant. Large concessions of land had been granted to several companies, such the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga* and the *Société Internationale Forestière et Minière*, which had been founded under agreement with Leopold II in 1906, and were to be at the forefront of the colonial economy.⁴⁴ Agricultural exploitation of the colony also remained an important part of the economy, especially the cultivation of cotton and of palm oil, a process dominated by the *Huilleries du Congo Belge* from its foundation in 1911.⁴⁵ The policy of '*mise en valeur*' – literally 'putting to use' or development - was a central theme of Belgian colonial rhetoric during the interwar years, and referred specifically to the exploitation of the colony's natural resources and its population's productive potential.⁴⁶

Leopold II had, in the 1890s, begun to pursue a policy of what has been termed 'belgicisation' in the Congo by encouraging only Belgian missionaries and investors to become involved in the colony, though he did accept the investment of foreign capital when necessary.⁴⁷ Under the new Belgian regime, this policy was pursued with increased vigour as the state sought to extend its influence and involvement throughout the colony.⁴⁸ The concept of 'nationalising' the colony in Belgium's interest was to be enormously important in the formulation of education policies as will be seen below.

⁴⁴ Note that the *Société Internationale Forestière et Minière* was better known as *Forminière*. For more on the economic development of the Belgian Congo see Richard Derksen, '*Forminière* in the Kasai, 1906-1939', *African Economic History*, Vol. 12, (1983), 49-65; Bogumil Jewsiewicki, 'Belgian Africa', in J.D. Fage, (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 7: From 1905-1940*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.460-493, and the same author's 'Rural Society and the Belgian colonial economy', in David Birmingham and Phyllis M. Martin, (eds), *History of Central Africa: Volume Two*, pp.95-125; Jean-Luc Vellut, 'Mining in the Belgian Congo', in Birmingham and Martin, (eds), *History of Central Africa: Volume Two*, pp.126-162.

⁴⁵ On the *Huilleries du Congo Belge*, see Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts: Colonial Exploitation in the Congo*, (London: Verso, 2008). See chapter five for more on the H.C.B. On cotton cultivation see Osumaka Likaka, 'Forced Cotton Cultivation and Social Control in the Belgian Congo', in Allen Isaacman and Richard Roberts, (eds), *Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), pp.200-220.

⁴⁶ Jean Stengers, *Le Congo Belge: Mythes et Réalités*, (Brussels: Éditions Racines, 2005), pp.221-222.

⁴⁷ Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, (London: Zed Books, 2002), p.21.

⁴⁸ Bogumil Jewsiewicki, 'Belgian Africa', p.473; Jean-Luc Vellut, 'Mining in the Belgian Congo', pp.130-135.

Though much had seemingly changed following the annexation of the Congo in 1908, much remained the same – especially for the Congolese themselves. Though forced labour was condemned by the new regime, it remained widespread, and was used by the state itself in the construction of roads, for example, as well as by private companies.⁴⁹ The population was also subject to heavy taxation. Discriminatory land-ownership laws remained in place, and in some areas the indigenous inhabitants were compelled to cultivate crops designated for export.⁵⁰ Congolese residing in traditional villages were required to obtain a '*passport de mutation*' if they wished to leave their chiefdom for more than thirty days, though many did leave for the growing 'indigenous quarters' (*cités indigènes*) of urban centres such as Leopoldville, Stanleyville, and Elisabethville.⁵¹ This trend created new groups of Africans living beyond customary authority, and fear of unrest amongst 'deracinated' urban Congolese became a major issue for the colonial authorities.⁵²

During the Second World War, with Belgium occupied, the Congo was ruled by its Governor General Pierre Ryckmans and played its part as a supplier of raw materials to the Allied war effort.⁵³ The immediate post-war years witnessed considerable changes in Belgian colonialism and new challenges to the colonial state. As well as changes in education policy, detailed below, the colonial authorities faced growing demands, on the one hand, from an expanding Congolese 'evolved' middle-class (the *évolués*), for greater access to governmental decision-making within the colony, and, on the other, from a white settler population who were increasingly keen to see more power devolved to them.⁵⁴ Belgian colonial policies were also affected by growing divisions in metropolitan politics, over matters such as the role of the Catholic Church and Flemish nationalism, issues which eventually seeped into the colonial sphere.⁵⁵

As African political engagement increased and explicit Congolese opposition to colonial rule mounted, so significant reforms were belatedly introduced. Amongst the most

⁴⁹ On forced labour and the *Huilieries du Congo Belge*, see Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghost*.

⁵⁰ Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, p.412.

⁵¹ Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, p.370.

⁵² See chapter three for more on the fear of 'deracinated' Africans.

⁵³ M. Crawford Young, 'Zaire, Rwanda, and Burundi', in Michael Crowder, (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 8: From c. 1940 to c. 1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.698-754, (pp.702-703).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.704-708.

⁵⁵ Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp.141-148.

significant was the decision to allow towns to elect councils in 1957, although wider Belgian preparations for a transfer to independent rule were delayed until 1958.⁵⁶ At this stage, discriminatory legislation began to be repealed, but advocates of immediate independence were gaining support and were unwilling to await the slow transfer of power foreseen by the Belgians.⁵⁷ Cultural associations for Africans based on ethnicity were allowed, (known as *amicales*), but overtly political parties were not until 1959, a decision which, it has been argued, contributed to the bitter ethnic divisions which that scarred the Congo in the wake of decolonisation.⁵⁸

When it came, Belgian disengagement from the Congo was swift, with Congolese independence achieved on 30th June 1960.⁵⁹ Following decolonisation, the Congo experienced several turbulent years which began immediately. The coalition government headed by Joseph Kasavubu, as President, and Patrice Lumumba, as Prime Minister, descended into factional rivalries and struggled to meet challenges such as the secession of Katanga which was announced in July 1960 by Moïse Tshombe, and violence from the quickly Africanized *Force Publique*, renamed the Congolese National Army (A.N.C.).⁶⁰ As is well known, the early 1960s were fraught with instability and violence, with foreign intervention, first by the Belgians, then by United Nations forces, and highly controversial episodes such as the deaths of Lumumba and U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld in 1961.⁶¹ The 'Congo Crisis' of the immediate post-decolonisation years became subject to international interest as the Cold War made the newly-independent state's political stance highly significant.

In 1965, army officer Mobutu Sese Seko took power in a coup, deposing Kasavubu as President.⁶² Mobutu renamed the country the Republic of Zaire and ruled as dictator,

⁵⁶ Jeanne M. Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo: from Decolonization to Dictatorship*, (New York: Agora, 2005), p.17.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁵⁸ M. Crawford Young, 'Zaire, Rwanda, and Burundi', in Michael Crowder, (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 8: From c. 1940 to c. 1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.698-754, (p.710).

⁵⁹ For an account of the negotiations leading to this point see Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo*, pp.18-21; see also Martin Thomas, 'Contrasting Patterns of Decolonization: Belgian and Portuguese Africa', in Martin Thomas, Bob Moore and L.J. Butler, *Crises of Empire: Decolonization and Europe's Imperial States, 1918-1975*, (London: Hodder Education, 2008), pp.385-410, (pp.387-390); Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence*, pp.162-183.

⁶⁰ Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo*, p.24.

⁶¹ Again for details of these events, see Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo*, pp.27-36.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp.39-40.

and Africa's most infamous 'kleptocrat', until 1997 when he was deposed by Laurent Kabila, during the First Congo War of 1996-1997.⁶³ Kabila renamed the country again as the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.), the title it retains to this day, but his own presidency was short-lived, ending in his assassination in 2001. He was succeeded by his son, Joseph Kabila, who remains president. From 1998-2003, the country was ravaged by the Second Congo War, post-war Africa's most violent conflict which involved seven African countries and numerous factional groups and which was largely fought on the Congo's territory. Since then sporadic violence and intervention in the territory by other forces has continued, especially in its eastern border regions.

1.6.2.1: Education in the Belgian Congo

Having outlined the major milestones in the history of the Congo since the dawn of European rule in 1885, it is now necessary to contextualise the specific themes examined in this thesis by considering in more depth the development of Western-style formal education structures in the territory. This chronological description of education provision in the colony will focus on introducing the programmes, types of schools, and laws governing their establishment and funding, which will be referred to repeatedly throughout the themed chapters to follow.

1.6.2.2: Origins: Education in the Congo Independent State

As noted above, both Catholic and Protestant missionaries arrived in the territory which was to become the C.I.S. in the late 1870s, and these missionaries introduced European concepts of education to the indigenous population. Initially missionaries used itinerant preaching as their favoured method of evangelisation, but their strategies soon crystallized into the establishment of mission stations from which efforts were made to convert the inhabitants of the surrounding areas. Schools became a vital part of these efforts, and they were first founded in mission stations

⁶³ For a detailed account of the events during the First and Second Congo wars, see Thomas Turner, *The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth, and Reality*, (London: Zed Books, 2007).

and later in African villages themselves with indigenous converts as tutors.⁶⁴ The Catholic orders who arrived first in the Congo, were actually from two missionary orders with French origins, the Holy Ghost Fathers (*Pères du Saint Esprit*) and the White Fathers (*Pères Blancs*), but once the C.I.S. was formally established Leopold II decided that only Belgians should be involved in mission work in the Congo and so an agreement was reached under which these missions would send only Belgian to the missionaries territory. Leopold, meanwhile, also encouraged orders based in Belgium to set up their own colonial missions.⁶⁵ Whatever his preferences, the King was, however, obligated under the terms of the 1885 Berlin Act to allow missions to operate whatever their creed or nationality, and so British, American, and Scandinavian Protestants also established themselves across the colony.⁶⁶

Alongside independent missionary efforts, the C.I.S. authorities also established limited educational provision of their own, though the state's involvement in this arena was always minimal compared to its interest in economic exploitation. The state supported brief attempts to send Congolese children to Belgium to be educated, but the numbers involved were very small and officials instead soon turned their attention to educating African children in the colony itself.⁶⁷ From 1890, the C.I.S. authorities oversaw the establishment of '*colonies scolaires*', literally school colonies, into which they recruited children apparently freed from slavery or orphaned, though in reality this may not have been the case at all. These were essentially school camps, where children lived as well as learnt, separated from their compatriots, and one of the major aims of these schools was to generate a pool of recruits for the *Force Publique*, the colonial security force.⁶⁸ The first *colonie scolaire* was established at Boma, the capital, and at Nouvelle-Anvers in 1890, and their management was at first in the hands of military officers but was soon conferred to Catholic missionaries, though those missionaries who took on such appointments were considered as state employees.⁶⁹ In 1897, a new school to train recruits for the *Force Publique* opened in Boma, whilst the

⁶⁴ More information on early missionary settlement in the colony, including their schools, is given in chapters four and five.

⁶⁵ Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Generale du Congo*, p.346.

⁶⁶ The significance of the Berlin Act is discussed in chapter five, and the text of its articles relating to missionary activity in the colony is reproduced in appendix B.

⁶⁷ Pierre Kita Kyankenge Masandi, *Colonisation et Enseignement: Cas du Zaire avant 1960*, (Bukavu: Éditions CERUKI, 1982), pp.123-129; Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Generale du Congo*, pp.353-354.

⁶⁸ Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Generale du Congo*, p.354.

⁶⁹ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.136; Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Generale du Congo*, p.355.

colonies scolaires became feeder schools for it and for other new schools being created. In Boma, a school for clerks (*école de candidats-commis*) was opened in 1906, along with trade schools (*écoles professionnelles*) at Boma, Leopoldville, and Stanleyville, and these schools were staffed by state agents or European tradesmen.⁷⁰ As these developments suggest, the 1890s and early 1900s marked a division between military and mainstream education which remained in place throughout the colonial period. In addition, the utilitarian nature of education established under the Leopoldian regime, where Congolese were only educated in order that they might be able to fulfil specific roles considered necessary by the state, was another element which continued to be a feature of the education systems developed after 1908.

Though the state had established some education of its own, the majority of formal colonial education during this era was confined to the rural schools founded across the colony by missionaries, and their predominance in the provision of education was enshrined in law shortly before the C.I.S. became the Belgian Congo.

In 1906, with Leopold's rule drawing to an end, negotiation had already begun to allow the Belgian state to annexe the territory, but the King was still determined to leave his mark. As well as overseeing the establishment of companies like the *Union Minière* and *Forminière*, Leopold also concluded an agreement in that year with the Vatican which marked the culmination of his policy to ensure the co-operation of Belgian Catholic missionaries in the development of the colonial project. Under the terms of this treaty, the state would grant land concessions to the missions, and the missions would, in turn, found schools at their stations where they would provide an education for Africans focused on agriculture and manual labour.⁷¹ The precise curriculum of these schools was to be agreed between representatives of each mission and the Governor General, and the missions were to report periodically to him details of the development of their schools and the numbers of pupils, for instance. This treaty may have been part of an attempt to shift focus on to an aspect of colonialism deemed positive and progressive in the light of the controversies prompted by revelations about abusive practices undertaken during the rubber trade, though it might equally

⁷⁰ Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Generale du Congo*, p.355.

⁷¹ The full text of the 1906 treaty between the C.I.S. and the Vatican is reproduced in appendix B. See also Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre: de Léopold II à Mobutu*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), pp.55-58; Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.55, 58-9.

have been aimed at increasing Belgian Catholic influence at the expense of non-Belgian missionaries, some of whom had been highly active in the campaign against Leopold's rule. Whatever the motivation behind it, the precedent set by the 1906 agreement would be a highly significant one as it provided the template upon which policy in the Belgian Congo was later based.

1.6.2.3: Education in the new colony

The 1906 treaty with the Vatican was, in fact, annexed to the *Charte Coloniale*, the founding document of the Belgian Congo that remained in force throughout the interwar period.⁷² However, other accords were also signed into law during the interwar years which modified the relationship between the Belgian administration of the Congo and the Catholic mission societies, and these are crucial to an understanding of the development of the colonial education system. The new Belgian regime was slow to act in the sphere of education following its annexation of the colony in 1908 and the outbreak of the First World War and the subsequent transfer of the Ministry of Colonies to exile in London only delayed action further.

The colony's educational administration was, as with most legislative and administrative power, centred in Brussels throughout the period. The education service had originally formed part of the C.I.S.'s Department of the Interior, but in the royal decree (*Arrêté Royal*) of 3rd November 1908 which delineated the organisation of the new Ministry of Colonies, the 1st general directorate was made responsible for justice and public instruction, its 1st division being responsible for cults and the 3rd for welfare and public instruction.⁷³ A further royal decree of 25th January 1910 divided the 1st general directorate into three directorates each with two further subdivisions, and cults, public instruction, and 'benevolence' (or social provision) were grouped together as the 2nd division of the 1st directorate, within the 1st general directorate.⁷⁴ The Ministry was further restructured in 1914, when a royal decree created 9 directorates comprising 17 sections, with the 7th directorate being responsible for 'cults and public instruction' and divided into two sections, the first of which included

⁷² *Histoire Générale du Congo*, p.352, states that another treaty was signed between the Belgian Congo and Vatican in 1953 but this was never ratified and the old one remained in force.

⁷³ *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, (1908-1909), pp.89-108.

⁷⁴ *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, (1910), pp.99, 106-7.

education in its remit, although this reorganisation only came into effect after the First World War.⁷⁵ A further reorganisation took place in 1928, when the 2nd general directorate of the Ministry assumed responsibility for 'indigenous affairs, cults, education, and hygiene' and was divided into three directorates, of which the first included education within its 2nd 'office'.⁷⁶ Finally, in December 1946, education became the 3rd office in the 4th directorate of the 1st general directorate in the Ministry.⁷⁷

Confusing as they may sound, despite these numerous changes, the personnel of the education service in Brussels remained remarkably constant. The personification of this consistency and the most significant figure for this study is Edouard De Jonghe, a staunch Catholic who served as deputy director within the 7th general directorate from 1914-1919, as director of its 1st section from 1919-1925, and as head of service from 1925-1928, always with responsibility for education.⁷⁸ When the education service became part of the 2nd general directorate, De Jonghe became its Director General, serving in that position from 1928-1939. De Jonghe's interventions will be frequently examined throughout this study, as his personal involvement in the application of education policy was critical to its overall complexion.

Whilst the Ministry of Colonies underwent reorganisation throughout the early period of the colony's existence, changes were also afoot within the Congo with the establishment of a number of 'official' schools (*écoles officielles*) during the 1910s, closely following the model of those established by the C.I.S. in 1906. A primary school was opened at Boma in 1908 under secular direction, but its running was given over to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (*Frères des écoles chrétiennes*), as was the direction of an official primary school opened in Leopoldville in 1910.⁷⁹ These schools were known as 'official' and differed from other schools in the colony because they were funded completely and directly by the state, and because they were placed

⁷⁵ *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, (1914), pp.869-896; *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, (1918), p.500.

⁷⁶ *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, (1928), pp.1470 onwards.

⁷⁷ *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, (1947), pp.22-23.

⁷⁸ Edouard De Jonghe (1878-1950). The information in this paragraph on the progress of De Jonghe's career within the Ministry is drawn from the catalogue for documents relating to missions in the African Archives of the Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He was also a Professor at the Catholic University of Louvain.

⁷⁹ Busugutsala, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre*, p.81. The Christian Brothers, also known by the abbreviation of their latin name F.S.C., was founded in France in 1680 by Jean-Baptiste de la Salle.

in the hands of religious orders of teaching brothers and sisters.⁸⁰ Other such schools were opened at Elisabethville in 1911, run by the Salesians; in Lusambo in 1911 and Kabinda in 1912 run by the Brothers of Charity of Ghent (*Frères de la Charité de Gand*); and in Stanleyville and Buta in 1913 run by the Marist Brothers (*Frères Maristes*).⁸¹ By 1919 the first official school for girls had been opened at Moanda, providing education for black and mixed-race girls, run by the Sisters of Charity.⁸² As illustrated by the 1919 Annual Report on the administration of the colony, the education on offer at these schools varied considerably during this early period, and their numbers altered too over the colonial period with some being transferred to the subsidy system formulated in 1925.⁸³

1916 marked the beginning of a consultative process about proposed educational reform. The first step in this process was a series of three questionnaires on the subject circulated by the Ministry of Colonies.⁸⁴ These questionnaires were aimed at three different groups of Europeans active in the Congo: state agents, missionaries, and businessmen. Each questionnaire contained a set of questions focused on various aspects on education, including the perception of current provision, the demand for various types of trained workers, and the possible languages of instruction. The period of consultation of which this survey of opinion marked the start, continued until 1925, when the resultant reforms came to fruition in the form of a 'project' agreed between the Catholic mission societies and the state.

The landmarks within this decade-long consultative period were the visit of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission on Education in Africa to the Congo in 1921, and the establishment of a consultative committee on education in 1922, and their subsequent reports. The Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission was led by Thomas Jesse Jones, an American pastor and expert on 'negro education', and its other members were British and American missionaries and educators. In addition to the Belgian Congo, the Commission also visited Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, South Africa, Angola,

⁸⁰ Busugutsala, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre*, p.82.

⁸¹ The Salesians are discussed further in chapter four. The Brothers of Charity order was founded in Belgium in 1807. The Marist Brothers order was originally founded in France in 1817 by Marcellin Champagnat, and a Belgian branch was established in 1856.

⁸² AA/RA/58/6, (1919), p.25.

⁸³ AA/RA/58/6, (1919), pp.21-25.

⁸⁴ These questionnaires are referred to throughout the thesis, and are examined in-depth in chapter three.

and Liberia. Its report, published in 1922, assessed the colonial education currently being provided to Africans and set out a vision of a future provision based on principles of 'adapted' education for blacks then popular in the United States.⁸⁵ Essentially, this theory argued that black people, in the United States or in Africa, would be best served by education which was tailored to their circumstances and which would best equip them for their futures. In practice, this meant a focus on agricultural work, and trade skills, and that academic content was to be very limited. Evidently, such vocationally oriented curricula were close to that which was already being provided in mission and state schools in the Congo, and so 'adapted education' was readily adopted as the theoretical basis for the developing system there.⁸⁶

Closely following on the work of Phelps-Stokes, in 1922, a Belgian consultative committee published its own report on the future direction of education in the colony.⁸⁷ This committee was made up of civil servants and Catholic missionaries, some with experience of teaching in the colony. Its report identified education of the colony's black population as being an 'essential factor' in the 'elevation' of the black race, and argued that the native population would be unable to take part in the material aspects of colonisation if it were not elevated to a 'higher degree of civilization'.⁸⁸ Such comments clearly located education within the discourse of a 'civilizing mission' whilst at the same time betraying the utilitarian motivations behind its development.⁸⁹ The ideas set out in the report were largely in line with the system as it was already developing on the ground, though it foresaw the standardization of school programmes and structures throughout the colony. The system suggested was to have three tiers of which the first would consist of rural primary schools, the second level of schools were to train those destined for the 'top rung' of African society and

⁸⁵ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in Africa: A Study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and Foreign Mission Societies of North America*, (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922). See chapter five for more on this.

⁸⁶ For more on the development of adapted education in the United States and its influence on missionary thought see chapter five. See also Sybille Küster, 'Book Learning' versus 'Adapted Education': the Impact of Phelps-Stokesism on Colonial Education Systems in Central Africa in the Interwar Period', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 43, No.1, (June 2007), 79-97; Maud Seghers, 'Phelps-Stokes in Congo: Transferring Educational Policy Discourse to Govern Metropole and Colony', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 40, No. 4, (Aug. 2004), 455-477.

⁸⁷ Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question d'enseignement au Congo*, (Brussels: Goemaere, 1922).

⁸⁸ Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question d'enseignement au Congo*, (Brussels: Goemaere, 1922), p.14.

⁸⁹ See chapter three for more on the nature of the 'civilizing mission'.

would include training for tradesmen and those destined for more 'literate professions', whilst the third tier would mostly consist of 'normal schools' focused on the formation of tutors for the rural schools.⁹⁰ The report also encapsulated the racial discrimination which defined education in the Congo as, although it did recognise that some Congolese were potentially capable of practising the liberal professions, it also argued that the race as a whole was not ready for such advances and that the priority should be not to produce 'poor copies of Europeans, but good Africans.'⁹¹ This was to be achieved by provided an education that was, in keeping with the principles of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, adapted to the environment in which the Congolese would live their lives, and to their 'mentality'.⁹² In practice, this meant a strong focus on manual and agricultural work throughout all levels of education, and an avoidance of 'book-learning' which was deemed likely to cause Congolese to consider themselves above manual tasks.⁹³

Both the external experts of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission and the Belgian members of the consultative committee had, therefore, recommended the pursuit of an education policy in keeping with the principles of adapted education, principles which were in line with the general trend of existing provision. The exact nature of the system to be introduced in the colony, in line with this policy, was elaborated by the Ministry of Colonies in the *Projet d'organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo belge avec le concours des sociétés des missions nationales*, published in 1925.⁹⁴ This project formalized the terms upon which the state would subsidize Catholic mission schools, and its application is at the heart of much of this thesis. Some Catholic-run schools were subsidized during the early 1920s, as evidenced by information provided

⁹⁰ Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question d'enseignement au Congo*, pp.42-47.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.18, 27.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.17. For the attitudes of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission on race see Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in Africa*, pp.4-6; see also Maud Seghers, 'Phelps-Stokes in Congo: Transferring Educational Policy Discourse to Govern Metropole and Colony', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 40, No. 4, (Aug. 2004), 455-477, (pp.463-465).

⁹³ Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question d'enseignement au Congo*, p.18.

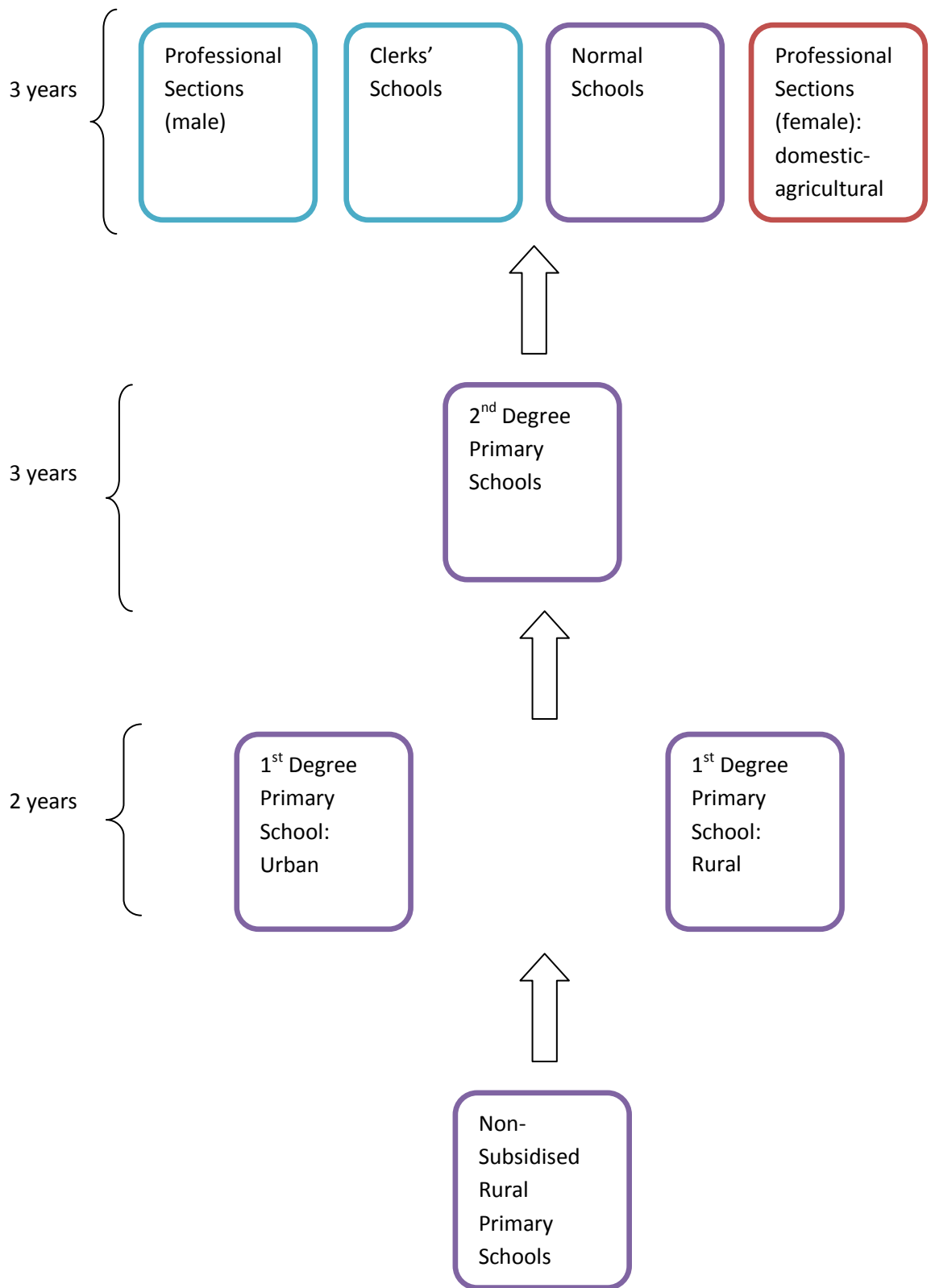
⁹⁴ *Projet d'organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo belge avec le concours des sociétés des missions nationales*, (Brussels: M. Weissenbruch, 1925). The full text is available online via the Abbol.com website, of the African Schoolbooks Online project, as a pdf document listed under the legislation and curricula heading (accessed 8/07/09). The information in the following paragraphs is drawn from this document.

in the annual reports on the administration of the colony.⁹⁵ The 1925 project sought to extend this system, and to standardize the structure and content of the education being provided by Catholic missions across the colony. This thesis argues that it was also aimed at achieving greater state control over the scope of education being provided in the Congo, a matter of considerable importance throughout the interwar period for the Ministry of Colonies.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), pp.32, 98; See also Busugutsala, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaire*, p.69; Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.156.

⁹⁶ See chapter three.

Figure 2: The Education System introduced from 1925



- Education available to boys and girls, taught separately
- Education available to boys only
- Education available to girls only

As figure 2 shows, the project set out a system which in some respect followed the three tier structure set out by the consultative committee in 1922. The lowest tier of the subsidised system was to be the first degree primary schools (*écoles primaires du première degré*), which would provide at least two years of tuition. The content of this tuition was to be strictly focused on work, particularly agricultural labour, and children were also to be taught basic literacy skills. Schools could be single sex or mixed. In rural schools at this level, children were to be taught by Congolese tutors and in their own local dialect. The language of instruction for those schools in urban areas was not specified, perhaps because of the tendency in these cities to use 'vehicular' languages, spoken more widely. The urban schools at this level were also supposed to focus more on literacy, with a view to preparing their pupils for further study, though there was still to be a strong stress on the importance of work. This differentiation marked a division between rural and urban populations, with the educational opportunities for rural Congolese being limited in comparisons to those in urban centres, due to the preference shown by the state for the provision of more advanced education only where it was deemed necessary for the supply of workers and auxiliaries.

The second tier of the education system was to consist of second degree primary schools (*écoles primaires du deuxième degré*) which were to be founded in 'europeanized centres', meaning either towns or mission stations, and which would accept selected students from the first degree based on their aptitudes for learning. Students from rural first degree schools could theoretically be chosen to attend, but the practicalities of this made it unlikely. The second degree schools were principally aimed at preparing pupils for the highest level of the education system, the special sections. At this level, girls and boys were to be taught separately. These schools were to be directed by a missionary, and emphasized the value of contact with Europeans, through which respect for colonial hierarchy was to be inculcated. The education provided in these higher primary schools was to last for three years, and was to include the teaching of French and a wider range of subjects. There was, however, still to be an emphasis on labour – agriculture was again stressed, and it was hoped that these schools might have workshops where pupils could learn woodwork or brick-making for example. The focus on work was deemed to be especially important as not all pupils in these schools would progress to the next level of the system, and would

need to find employment. Kita has identified this characteristic of the three tier system as being worthy of attention, as the 'in-between' stage of the second degree schools created a group of relatively well-educated Congolese who would be instilled with ambitions only to have them frustrated, and suggests that this might have been intentional in order to encourage the colonized population to internalize failure.⁹⁷

Those who were selected for the special sections would, if male, enter either professional schools (*écoles professionnelles*) where they would train to be tradesmen, or clerks' schools (*écoles des candidats-commis*) where they would train to be auxiliary workers either for the state or for commercial enterprises. Girls could enter domestic-agricultural schools (*écoles ménagères-agricoles*), which were technically classed as a 'professional section' alongside the professional schools for boys, but were separate establishments.⁹⁸ There were also normal schools (*écoles normales*) for both sexes, run separately, where pupils would train to become tutors in the primary schools. These schools were to provide three years of further tuition, and the education provided was to be focussed on each specialism. Those in clerks' schools were to be taught to work for Europeans, with a strong focus on acquiring European habits so that they might not be 'shocking' to those Europeans with whom they came into contact.⁹⁹ Professional schools trained metal-workers, stone-masons, and any other trade deemed necessary for industry, and were to be adapted to local needs according the types of economic activity being undertaken in each area. Those trained in the normal schools were to be exposed to the widest range of subjects, so that they could teach the colonial state's desired worldview to new generations, and their training was also to be adapted according to the circumstances of their future teaching posts. Those destined for urban schools, for example, were to be taught French, which was not considered a priority for those who would teach in rural areas.

The 1925 project, therefore, established the pyramidal education system which developed in the Congo during the interwar period. It also enshrined the principle under which the state would fund Catholic missions to provide education through subsidies, and excluded the Protestant mission societies from this financial

⁹⁷ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.173.

⁹⁸ The gender differentiation within the education system is analysed in chapter seven.

⁹⁹ The development and significance of these schools is examined in chapter six.

agreement.¹⁰⁰ In the years immediately after the formulation of the project, the Ministry of Colonies concluded subsidy agreements based upon its terms with the individual Catholic mission societies, and they in turn started to adapt their schools in the colony to the new programme, and to open new ones. The project was passed into general law in 1929, with some minor alterations, as the *Organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo belge et au Ruanda-Urundi*, a document which became known as the 'yellow booklet' (*la brochure jaune*).¹⁰¹ As well as the organisation of the school system itself, the interwar period also saw the creation of an inspectorate system in the colony to oversee it. Each mission society was to nominate a missionary-inspector (*missionnaire-inspecteur*) who was responsible for formulating his mission's schools' programmes, and ensuring their application, and who would provide reports on their operation each year.¹⁰² These reports would be sent to the state's own provincial inspectors (*inspecteurs provincial*) who would also make visits to the schools operating in their provinces and produce their own reports on the progress being made. The system underwent some changes during the 1930s, with the clerks' schools becoming known as middle schools (*écoles moyennes*) from 1936 onwards as part of preparations for a reorganisation which was to have been introduced from 1938, but this did not happen because of the Second World War.¹⁰³

The system did, however, undergo significant changes during the post-War period, starting with the decision taken by Robert Godding as Minister for the Colonies in 1946 to extend the subsidy regime to Protestant mission schools, a decision which came into effect in 1948. This was followed in the early 1950s by attempts to establish official secular education provision in the colony, which became available from 1954 onwards. This period also saw the opening of the first university in the colony, Lovanium, in 1956. Whilst much of the shift away from an emphasis solely on Catholic schools can rightly be assigned to the changes in Belgian politics in the post-1945 era, this study will suggest that the roots of the move to include Protestants in the subsidy regime can

¹⁰⁰ The relationship between the colonial authorities and the Protestant mission societies in the Congo is explored in chapter five.

¹⁰¹ *Organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo belge et au Ruanda-Urundi avec le concours des Sociétés des missions nationales*, again the full text of this document is available online at www.Abbol.com

¹⁰² Busugutsala, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre*, p.66.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

be traced back to the 1930s when some within the colonial authorities began to question the existing policy.¹⁰⁴

Alongside the mainstream system developed during the interwar years there were also other types of education provision offered in the colony. There was an entirely separate system of official schools for European children, all of which were located in the major urban centres, and do not fall within the remit of this study. There were, though, also other opportunities for African students, as several state services offered training in order to produce required workers, including the agricultural service, the telegraphy service, and the sanitation service, for example. These streams of training are not discussed within this study because the numbers involved were very small, because the Ministry's education service had little involvement with them, and because the typically very technical nature of the instruction provided has little wider relevance when considering the role of education in the colonial state. The *Force Publique* also continued to provide its own education, and the particular nature of its schools and their military focus is again outside the range of this work. It had been well addressed previously by Bryant P. Shaw.¹⁰⁵ One separate stream of education provision which is addressed in this study is that which sought to train Congolese auxiliary medical assistants.¹⁰⁶ This is included because the education service was involved in the discussions over its development, because of its role in the disputes between the colonial authorities, Catholic missionaries, and Protestant missionaries, and finally because of the highly significant role played by the expansion of European style healthcare and medicine in spreading colonialism.

This chapter has sought to introduce both the research aims and conceptual framework of this thesis, as well as the basic chronological development of Belgian colonialism in the Congo and its educational aspects in particular. Having considered these elements of this study, we now move on to consider the historiography of colonialism which has informed the writing of this thesis, and to identify the place of this work in the historiography of the Congo.

¹⁰⁴ See chapters five and eight.

¹⁰⁵ Bryant P. Shaw, *Force Publique, Force Unique: the Military in the Belgian Congo, 1914-1939*, (PhD thesis: University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1984), pp.235-252.

¹⁰⁶ See chapter eight.

Chapter Two: The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo

2.1: Introduction

In order to properly contextualize this study, and to establish its relationship to existing work, we need to examine the historiography which has informed it. Though the particular focus of this work is on education policies in the Belgian Congo, its genesis has required consideration of a number of inter-related aspects of colonialism which has, in turn, necessitated the consideration of a wider range of existing literature. Thematically organised, this chapter centres on works examining the history of Belgian colonialism – including the debates of the last decade centred on the ‘red rubber’ controversy and issues of colonial memory. Before moving on to look at these major strands of relevant historiography though, this review will first consider the broader development of colonial history writing, in the hope that this will shed light on the commonalities and peculiarities of works on the Congo itself. Furthermore, in addition to this broad review, most of the chapters of this thesis feature shorter assessments of the literature most relevant to their particular themes.

The colonial period has been described as lasting from the 1490s, when the Portuguese and the Spanish began to found their empires, until the decolonization of many African countries in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰⁷ However, this timescale accommodates many variants of colonialism – differing according to the colonizer and the colonized, as well as the type and scope of the systems introduced into the occupied territories. As the Belgian colonisation of the Congo formed part of the so-called ‘second wave’ of European colonization which saw Britain, France, Germany, and Belgium creating new colonies in the ‘scramble for Africa’ of the late-nineteenth century, this literature will mainly focus on works which address various aspects of this particular period.

¹⁰⁷ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, p.13.

2.2: Early Colonial Histories, with Particular Reference to Belgian Colonialism

Early histories of colonialism included those produced by European writers whilst their countries were still colonial powers, generally dating from the period before 1950. Significant in this regard were the very early pioneer accounts, often autobiographical, in which the exploration and conquest of colonies were described. In the Congo's case the most noteworthy works of this type were those by Henry Morton Stanley about his travels through the territory which, as Guy Vanthemsche notes in his own recent bibliography of literature relating to Belgian colonialism, came to be used as a source material by later historians to whom archives were closed.¹⁰⁸ These accounts tended to be generally positive about colonial expansion, viewing it as having brought advanced European civilization and modern technology to previously 'backward' savages, some lauded the achievements of the colonizer King Leopold.¹⁰⁹ Vanthemsche suggests that Leopold even 'guided' the writing of some such accounts himself.¹¹⁰ In a similar vein, a large number of works were produced by missionaries, both Catholics and Protestants, recounting their efforts to spread Christianity.¹¹¹ Others, notably E.D. Morel, leader of the Congo Reform Association, published works critical of Belgian actions in the territory.¹¹² The value of such works now lies, not in their historical accounts which were often little more than polemic, but in the light which they can shed on contemporary attitudes towards matters such as colonialism, its 'civilizing mission', race, and religion.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Morton Stanley, *Through the dark continent, or, the sources of the Nile, around the Great Lakes of Equatorial Africa and down the Livingstone River to the Atlantic Ocean*, (London: Sampson Low, 1878); *The Congo and the Founding of its Free State: A Story of Work and Exploitation*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1885); *In Darkest Africa: or the Quest, Rescue and Retreat of Emin, Governor of Equatoria*, (London: Sampson Low, 1890); *My Dark Companions and Their Strange Stories*, (London: Sampson Low, 1893); see also Guy Vanthemsche, 'The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo', in Csaba Lévai, (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp.92-119.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, Henry Wellington Wack, *The Story of the Congo Free State: Social, Political, and Economic Aspects of the Belgian System of Government in Central Africa*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1905); Édouard Eugène François Deschamps, *New Africa: an essay on government civilization in new countries, and on the foundation, organization and administration of the Congo Free State*, (London: Sampson Low, 1903).

¹¹⁰ Guy Vanthemsche, 'The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo', in Csaba Lévai, (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp.92-119, (p.92).

¹¹¹ A selection of these works are cited in chapters four and five, and it does not seem necessary to repeat their titles here.

¹¹² Edmund Dene Morel, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa*, (London: W. Heinemann, 1904); *Red Rubber: the Story of the Rubber Slave Trade which Flourished on the Congo for Twenty Years*, (Manchester: National Labour Press, 1919).

There were not a great deal of accounts published during the interwar years which dealt with that period itself, or with the Belgian state's acquisition of the territory. One interesting example is a two volume work produced by Louis Franck, the former Minister of Colonies, in 1929 entitled simply *Le Congo Belge*.¹¹³ The second volume includes contributions from several collaborators detailing the history of various aspects of Belgian colonialism, whilst the first is mostly by Franck himself. These volumes can be considered a quasi-official history of the colony's development up to that point, and are interesting largely for their presentation of some of the major protagonists' own views. Such writings were in keeping with European states' own presentation of their colonizing as being born of a 'civilizing mission'. These works often concentrated on the introduction of railways, for example, as well as Western medicine and education to the colonies they discussed. Early works in this vein were often imbued with the racist categorisations which underpinned colonial expansion and the exercise of colonial power, particularly in colonies established in Africa in the nineteenth century, such as the Congo. Little attention was paid to the pre-existing cultures of the peoples who inhabited colonized lands or to their histories, except where these could be used to portray them as having been based on violence or injustice – such as references to cannibalism and slavery, for example – which could be employed to justify 'enlightened' European intervention.

The period of the 1950s and 1960s marked a change in the writing of colonial history, prompted by the growing trend towards the decolonization of African colonies. Led by academics in the United States where anti-colonialism was strong during the 1950s, there was more work produced both on the negative aspects of European colonialism as well as on pre-colonial African societies. References to the development of the Congo Free State in this study draw, for example, on the work of Ruth Slade, particularly her *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the Developments of Race Relations in the Congo Independent State*, published in 1962, which remains an insightful study concentrating on the installation of European occupation, though aspects of its

¹¹³ Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, two volumes, (Brussels: Renaissance du Livre, 1929).

analysis now appear somewhat dated.¹¹⁴ Alongside Slade's work, the 1960s saw a spate of works focused on the Congo, most likely prompted by the process of decolonization. As well as other studies focused on the Leopoldian period, such as that by Neil Ascherson, or its legacy, as with Roger Anstey's work, there were a number of works focused on contemporary events.¹¹⁵ These ranged from works solely on the decolonization itself, to more in-depth analyses of the events of that period and the developments which led up to it.¹¹⁶ Of these, the most thorough is that produced in 1965 by political scientist Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo*, which addresses a broad spectrum of political and administrative changes in the country during the post-1945 period.¹¹⁷ It is notable that these works were all produced by non-Belgians, leading to questions about the extent of scholarly interest in the Congo from that country during the years immediately following decolonization.

Amongst those Belgian academics active during the 1960s, was the anthropologist Jan Vansina, who specialises in analyses of pre-colonial African societies and cultures, who pursued his career in the United States. In an interview in 2001, Vansina argued that Belgian 'Africanists', including historians, had been unprepared for decolonization and that the state of Belgian historiography on the subject had been weak until the 1980s.¹¹⁸ However, Guy Vanthemsche has pointed to the work of Jean Stengers during the 1950s and 1960s as highly significant in the historiography of the Congo, though he admits that Belgian interest in colonial topics was not strong.¹¹⁹ Stengers was certainly a dominant force in Belgian academic history, producing work from the 1950s through to the 1990s on the Congo, but also on other aspects of Belgian political history. His contributions to debates on the Congo have been defended from accusations of

¹¹⁴ Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the Developments of Race Relations in the Congo Independent State*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

¹¹⁵ Roger Anstey, *King Leopold's Legacy: The Congo Under Belgian Rule*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966); Neil Ascherson, *The King Incorporated: Leopold II in the Age of Trusts*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963).

¹¹⁶ Catherine Hoskins, *The Congo since Independence, January 1960-December 1961*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); René Lemarchand, *Political Awakening in the Belgian Congo*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1964); Ruth Slade, *The Congo: Some Recent Changes*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

¹¹⁷ Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1965).

¹¹⁸ *History Facing the Present: Interview with Jan Vansina*, 01/11/2001, <http://www.history.net.org/~africa/africaforum/VansinaInterview.htm> (accessed 06/09/2009).

¹¹⁹ Guy Vanthemsche, 'The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo', in Csaba Lévai, (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp.92-119, (pp.96-100).

resisting ethical evaluations of colonialism.¹²⁰ Stengers believed that it was the duty of the historian 'not to judge, but simply to understand', however some of his own work on the C.I.S. was rather defensive about the role of Leopold II, though he was clear that abuses had taken place.¹²¹

As well as being influenced by contemporary political developments, such as decolonization, work on the colonial past was also influenced by wider trends within historiography. During the 1970s and 1980s, for example, there was a strong focus on economic models of colonialism, emphasising the exploitation of the colonies' natural resources for the benefit of the colonizer. Jean-Phillippe Peemans wrote on the development of the colonial economic system, and others produced works on a variety of aspects of the economic exploitation of the Congo, often focusing on the large concession companies.¹²² The primary, and often sole, of focus of these works was the functioning of European-style capitalism in the colony, and there was little attention paid to the African experience of this process.

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was also a preponderance of Marxist-inspired readings of colonialism as part of a system of economically determined superstructures. Such interpretations of the colonial period saw the colonial period as being marked by a class struggle over control of the means of production, in which the colonial power sought to exploit the working capacity of colonized populations.¹²³ The achievement of independence was seen as the overthrow of this system by the colonial proletariat, revolting against the capitalism represented by the colonizer, whilst those who had become assimilated or acculturated into Europeanized ways of

¹²⁰ Jean-Luc Vellut, *Jan Vansina on the Belgian Historiography of Africa: Around the Agenda of a Bombing Raid – A Reply to 'History Facing the Present: An Interview with Jan Vansina'*, <http://www.h-net.org/~africa/africaforum/Vellut.htm> (accessed 06/09/2009).

¹²¹ Jean Stengers, *Congo: Mythes et Réalités*, (Brussels: Éditions Racines, 2005), pp.118-9, 203.

¹²² Richard Derksen, 'Forminière in the Kasai, 1906-1939', *African Economic History*, Vol. 12, (1983), 49-65; Simon E. Katzenellenbogen, 'Financial Links between the Congo and its Southern Neighbours', *African Economic History*, Vol. 12, (1983), 183-193; Bogumil Jewsiewicki, 'The Great Depression and the Making of the Colonial Economic System in the Belgian Congo', *African Economic History*, Vol. 4, (1977), 153-176; Jean-Luc Vellut, 'Mining in the Belgian Congo', in David Birmingham and Phyllis M. Martin, (eds), *History of Central Africa: Volume Two*, (London: Longman, 1983), pp.126-162; Jean-Philippe Peemans, *Le Congo-Zaïre au gré du XXe siècle. Etat, économie et société 1880-1990*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997) – a collection of earlier works.

¹²³ Charles Perrings, *Black Labour in the Copper Mines of Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo, 1911-1941: Industrial Strategies and the Evolution of an African Proletariat*, (PhD Thesis: SOAS, University of London, 1976).

life, such as the *évolués* in the Belgian Congo, were seen as being colonial society's petty bourgeoisie.¹²⁴

The years following decolonization also saw the emergence of many more scholars from formerly colonized countries, bringing new conceptions of colonialism and its aftermath.¹²⁵ Some studies by African authors sought to 're-Africanize' the history of the colonial period, shifting the focus away from European actions and focusing on African reactions and especially on anti-colonial activity and protests.¹²⁶ Works in this vein continue and included Ngonzola's recent work on the Congo, which sees workers' revolts as part of a meta-narrative of resistance against oppression leading to the African overthrow of colonialism, and retains the theoretical lens and terminology of Marxist theory.¹²⁷ Another aspect of the entry of African scholars into the debate on readings of colonialism, was a determination by some to re-establish the writing of histories of Africa which took a longer view, and which saw the colonial period as being a relatively short segment – in the Congo, European rule lasted less than a hundred years – in a much longer history.¹²⁸

In addition to the trends outlined already, there are a number of singularly valuable works on the history of Belgian colonialism in the Congo, which merit specific reference here. Notable amongst these is Marvin D. Markowitz's study of the role of missionaries, *Cross and Sword: The Political Role of Christian Missions in the Belgian Congo, 1908-1960*, based on field research in the Lower Congo and published in 1973.¹²⁹ This study is an insightful account of the role played by Christian missions in the Congo, addressing many different aspects of the relationship between the missions and the state. However, Markowitz does not discuss education policy in depth, and he

¹²⁴ Georges N. Nzongola, 'The Bourgeoisie and Revolution in the Congo', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4, (Dec., 1970), 511-530.

¹²⁵ Guy Vanthemsche, 'The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo', in Csaba Lévai, (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp.92-119, (pp.101-102).

¹²⁶ On this trend, see Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), p.43.

¹²⁷ Georges N. Nzongola, *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, (London: Zed Books, 2002).

¹²⁸ Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo: de l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique*, (Brussels: De Boeck & Larcier, 1998).

¹²⁹ Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword: The Political Role of Christian Missions in the Belgian Congo, 1908-1960*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1973).

displays a tendency to consider the Catholic missions, for example, as a homogenous bloc, always united in their dealings with the colonial authorities. In 1986, the German cultural anthropologist Johannes Fabian, published *Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo, 1880-1938*, in which he assesses the role of the state authorities and missionaries in the manipulation of language use, especially in the Katanga province, and argues that the diffusion of Swahili in that area was the result, not of organic change, but of a deliberate policy, largely motivated by economic factors.¹³⁰ Another anthropologist, Wyatt MacGaffey, has also made a significant contribution to the understanding of colonial Congo, with works on several aspects of the colonial era, including religion and tradition.¹³¹

2.3: Recent developments in Colonial History

In common with wider historiography, colonial history has undergone a process of diversification, both in terms of its subject matters, its source materials and its methodologies. Especially important for historians of colonial Congo was the opening from the 1980s onwards of the archives of the former Ministry of the Colonies and government-general, held at the Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which allowed access to a wealth of sources. Beyond these official documents though, historians have made use of a range of different sources to shed new light on various aspects of colonialism, its impact, and reactions to it. The period of decolonization and the influence of changing methods within the wider field of historiography, fuelled by the influence of Edward Saïd's *Orientalism* with its critique of Western cultural imperialism and the view that the West's tendency to view other cultures – Saïd concentrated on Western conceptions of the Middle East – as alien and inferior dominated Western academic output, have had a profound effect.¹³² Saïd's work was highly influential in

¹³⁰ Johannes Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo, 1880-1938*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

¹³¹ Wyatt MacGaffey, 'The Implantation of Kimbanguism in Kisangani, Zaire', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (1982), 381-394; 'Education, Religion and Social Structure in Zaire', *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2, (Autumn, 1982), 238-250; 'Ethnography and the Closing of the Frontier in Lower Congo, 1885-1921', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 56, No. 3, (1986), 263-279.

¹³² Edward Saïd, *Orientalism*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); see also Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, *Edward Saïd*, revised second edition, (London: Routledge, 2009).

the development of postcolonial studies, which focuses on the post-independence cultural and political experiences of previously colonized peoples, and which has been a major facet of recent literary theory.¹³³ These developments, along with the impact of postmodernism and, perhaps especially, poststructuralist textual analysis, have also been reflected in recent developments within colonial studies.

From the 1990s onwards, the historiography of Belgian colonialism reflected the growing popularity of social history, with works such as Maryinez Lyons' *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness in Northern Zaire, 1900-1940*, and Osumaka Likaka's *Rural Society and Cotton in Colonial Zaire*, examining the impact of Belgian policies upon indigenous social structures and behaviours.¹³⁴ Non-African historians also began to focus more critically on the active role of Africans under colonialism, no longer seeing the colonized as passive subjects, a trend seen in works such as those by John Higginson on workers' revolts in the Katanga.¹³⁵ However, some such works still maintained the view of Africans and Europeans as two entirely distinct groups aligned in opposition to each other, which rather oversimplified the complexities of the colonial encounter in which relations between and within these two groups were varied according to time, place, and situation. These nuances have, though, become the major theme of much colonial history produced over the last ten to fifteen years, discussed in further depth below.

Before moving on to these works though, it is necessary to pay specific attention to one particular volume, which has influenced this study in a number of ways. Crawford Young's analysis of the workings of the colonial state, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, published in 1994, compares the development of colonial administration structures and policies in the African colonies of various European

¹³³ See, for example, Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp.57-70.

¹³⁴ Osumaka Likaka, *Rural Society and Cotton in Colonial Zaire*, (Madison, WI: Wisconsin University Press, 1997); Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness in Northern Zaire, 1900-1940*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹³⁵ John Higginson, 'Bringing the Workers Back in: Worker Protest and Popular Intervention in Katanga, 1931-1941', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (1988), 199-223; 'Steam without a Piston Box: Strikes and Popular Unrest in Katanga, 1943-1945', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (1988), 97-117; 'Liberating the Captives: Independent Watchtower as an Avatar of Colonial Revolt in Southern Africa and Katanga, 1908-1941', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, (Autumn, 1992), 55-80.

powers and seeks to establish whether analysis of the way in which colonial policies developed can aid understanding of what he calls 'the crisis of the postcolonial state in Africa.'¹³⁶ In pursuing a central thesis which posits that the colonizing powers' oppression of any nascent expressions of indigenous political activity, and the adoption of colonial administrative structures by post-colonial regimes, can be seen as explanatory factors in the collapse of democratic rule in many African countries post-independence, Young produces an impressive analysis of the colonial state. Whilst his understanding of the state locates it as a monolithic structure, a view which oversimplifies the operation of colonial power, his identification of the six imperatives governing the colonial state's existence is illuminating.¹³⁷

There has been a growth in subaltern studies focusing on those groups whose experiences of colonialism were left out of the grand, unified narratives of earlier works.¹³⁸ In colonial studies, this often meant a shift away from studying European experiences and perspectives of colonialism to looking at how colonized peoples experienced the colonial encounter. Due to a lack of written sources – other than those where the voices of the colonized were reported by Europeans – these studies have been aided by the growth and professionalization of oral history, as well as cultural anthropology. There have been a growing number of works on the everyday experience of colonial life by various sections of African societies, such as clerks, medical assistants, and midwives.¹³⁹ There have been an especially large number of works focusing on the place of women within colonial societies, in keeping with the growth of gender studies as a discipline, and a particularly strong focus on understanding the concept of 'domesticity' as introduced by Europeans, especially missionaries, and the extent to which it moulded the development of gender relations

¹³⁶ Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, pp.3-9.

¹³⁷ Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, pp.35-39, 95-136.

¹³⁸ The term 'subaltern' is accorded a variety of meanings by postcolonial theorists. It is used here in its broadest sense, to refer to marginalized groups.

¹³⁹ See, for example, Jeremy Rich, 'Trouble at the Office: Clerks, State Authority, and Social Conflict in Gabon, 1920-45', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 38, No.1, (2004), 58-87; Maryinez Lyons, 'The Power to Heal: African Medical Auxiliaries in Colonial Belgian Congo and Uganda', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks, (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, (British Academic Press, 1994), pp.202-226; Jane Turrin, 'Colonial Midwives and Modernizing Childbirth in French West Africa', in Jean Allman et al,(eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp.71-91.

during the colonial period.¹⁴⁰ In recent years there have been a large number of works focusing on conceptions of gender in the colonial arena, and of the export of European models of gender to the colonies, as well as the modification of the understandings of gender relations held by both Europeans and colonized peoples, which have often included a focus on encounters between African and European women.¹⁴¹ Many works discussing the experiences of women, or of other particular groups within colonial society focus on the construction of group identities and the extent to which this process was driven by European notions or by indigenous ideas, or resulted from an amalgamation of the two. Such concepts have concentrated on the idea of colonies as meeting-places, where new, uniquely colonial, understandings were forged. Furthermore, recent colonial histories have also focused on the extent to which attitudes in European metropolises were themselves influenced by the colonial encounter.¹⁴²

The works described above represent a significant shift from earlier research priorities and methods, when the actions of European actors in the colonial sphere were considered all important. This is not, though, to suggest that works which focus on the formulation and application of European colonial policies are obsolete or old-fashioned – this study itself takes this approach, after all - as this stream of historiography has also undergone significant developments during recent years. Most historians now recognise that colonial states were not constructed by a singular colonizing power in the form of the European government. Rather, we now see that many parties were involved in building up colonial state structures and expanding European influence in a

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Deborah Gaitskell, 'At Home with Hegemony? Coercion and Consent in African girls' Education for Domesticity in South Africa before 1910', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks, (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, (British Academic Press, 1994), pp.110-128; Kathleen Sheldon, "'I Studied with the Nuns, Learning to make Blouses": Gender Ideology and Colonial Education in Mozambique', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, (1998), 595-625.

¹⁴¹ See, for example, Nakanyike Musisi, 'The Politics of Perception or Perception as Politics? Colonial and Missionary Representations of Baganda Women, 1900-1945', in Jean Allman et al,(eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp.95-115; Rita Smith Kipp, 'Emancipating Each Other: Dutch Colonial Missionaries' Encounter with Karo Women in Sumatra, 1900-1942', in Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, (eds), *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, (Richmond, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1998), pp.211-235; Kathleen R. Smythe, 'African Women and White Sisters at the Karema Mission Station, 1894-1920', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 19, No. 2, (2007), 59-84.

¹⁴² Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (London: Routledge, 1995).

colony. Amongst these parties we should include European colonial ministries and governments-general, missionaries, businesses, and white settlers. Rather than seeing these groups as being part of a unified consortium, colonial historians now dedicate much attention to the multitude of different colonialisms pursued by groups whose priorities were not always compatible. The relationships between these groups and within them were characterized by discord as much as by harmony, according to one of the central themes of this thesis. The disputes arising from these relationships and the many and varied co-operations and oppositions between them were sites where colonialism and colonial power were conceptualized, contested, and developed. A growing number of works addressing such relationships have recently been published, particularly focusing on the French and British Empires, such as those by James Daughton, Kenneth Orosz, and Andrew Porter.¹⁴³ It is within this strand of historiography that this study seeks to locate itself, addressing as it does the varied aspects and competing pressures which acted on those responsible for the formulation and application of education in the Congo. This thesis concentrates on identifying the points at which education policy was subject to disagreement and negotiation between Europeans, and to identify their different conceptions of the ideal colonized population, which education was intended to form.

2.4: Recent Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo

The historiography of Belgian colonialism is one which is marked with debates and which has been marked by considerable tension during the last ten years in particular. As previously, the period of colonization and the period of decolonization have dominated work produced on the Congo in recent years. The troubled course of Congolese history since decolonization has most likely contributed to the continued interest in the events surrounding the establishment of independence, with particular attention being paid to the possibility of Belgian involvement in the death of Patrice

¹⁴³ James P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Kenneth J. Orosz, *Religious Conflict and the Evolution of Language Policy in German and French Cameroon, 1885-1939*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

Lumumba.¹⁴⁴ The second major stream of recent work on Belgian colonialism is that which has arisen surrounding claims of an apparent lack of interest shown by Belgian academic historians in the abuses which took place during the Leopoldian era in the Congo. The debate over such accusations can be traced back to the publication of *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, by the American writer Adam Hochschild in 1998.¹⁴⁵ The controversy surrounding the publication of this volume, and more particularly the publicity campaign which accompanied it, has already been ably dissected by Guy Vanthemsche, Phillippe Marchal, Geert Castryck, and Jean-Luc Vellut, and there is little need to repeat it all here.¹⁴⁶ Suffice to say that whilst none of these Belgian historians deny that atrocities took place in the C.I.S., they do object to Hochschild's association of this violence with twentieth century notions of genocide, and to the basis for his claims of how many died as a result of the rubber trade. Moreover, Belgian historians point out that most of the content of Hochschild's work had already been published by Belgian researchers and was well known in Belgian academic circles. The public debate over the Leopoldian period continued with the release of a film entitled 'White King, Red Rubber, Black Death' in 2004, whose broadcast drew the condemnation of the Belgian government.¹⁴⁷ The significance of these debates for this study lies largely in the fact that such public scrutiny has attracted significant academic attention to the history of colonialism in the Congo, but that this has also been largely focused on the earliest and latest years of the colonial encounter.

¹⁴⁴ Most notable is Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Patrice Lumumba*, (London: Verso, 2002).

¹⁴⁵ Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, (London: Macmillan, 1999). The book was published in the United States in 1998 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

¹⁴⁶ Geert Castryck, 'Whose History is History? Singularities and Dualities of the Public Debate on Belgian Colonialism', in Csaba Lévai, (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp.71-88; Phillippe Marechal, 'La Controverse sur Leopold II et le Congo dans la Littérature et les Medias. Reflexions Critiques', in Jean-Luc Vellut, (ed.), *La Memoire du Congo, Le Temps Colonial*, (Ghent: De Snoeck/Tervuren: Musée Royale de l'Afrique Centrale, 2005), pp.43-49; Guy Vanthemsche, 'The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo', in Csaba Lévai, (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp.92-119; Jean-Luc Vellut, 'Regard sur le temps colonial', in Jean-Luc Vellut, (ed.), *La Memoire du Congo, Le Temps Colonial*, (Ghent: De Snoeck/Tervuren: Musée Royale de l'Afrique Centrale, 2005), pp.11-22.

¹⁴⁷ Geert Castryck, 'Whose History is History? Singularities and Dualities of the Public Debate on Belgian Colonialism', in Csaba Lévai, (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp.71-88, (p.79).

The history of the Belgian Congo is not unique in this respect, with the interwar period being subject to less attention generally amongst colonial historians until recent years. The focus on Leopoldian atrocities has perhaps exaggerated this trend in the case of the Congo, but there have, however, been a number of valuable recent works which have addressed aspects of the interwar period, and which have brought into the historiography of the Congo some of the methodological and theoretical developments which have marked colonial history in recent years. Notable amongst such works have been those focused on the nuances of encounters between Africans and Europeans, and which have gone far beyond the traditional foci of state violence and economics, to address the extent to which colonialism aimed at ruling the minds and bodies of subject peoples, as much as at controlling land or wealth. Notable contributions include those of Maryinez Lyons, mentioned above, with regards to colonial medical policies, and Nancy Rose Hunt, who has addressed the intervention of the state authorities and missionaries in childbirth and infant care practices.¹⁴⁸

2.5: Works on Colonial Education

Education was one of the components of colonial which proponents of the system used to support the argument that European colonization was a 'civilizing' and modernizing undertaking. Schools became one of the major sites of contact between Europeans and their colonized subjects, so it is not surprising that they have been a major source of interest for researchers. Colonial historians have concentrated on establishing the rather more functional motivations which underpinned education policies, focusing on both economic determinants and ideological factors. Some scholars have focused on the essential paradox of colonial education, which centres on the conflicting pressures which acted on policymakers: namely, the necessity of training workers to meet the needs of the colonial state on one hand, and the fear that

¹⁴⁸ Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization and Mobility in the Congo*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); and 'Le bébé en brousse: European Women, African Birth Spacing and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, (1988), 401-432; Maryinez Lyons, 'The Power to Heal: representation of disease and the creation of the colonial subject in Nyasaland', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, (London: British Academic Press, 1994), pp.202-226; and *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness in Northern Zaire, 1900-1940*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

providing education might inspire anti-colonial political aspirations, or simply personal ambitions, amongst those who received it.¹⁴⁹ These two factors are identified by this study as being at the heart of the decisions made about education provision by the Belgians in the Congo, and the conflicts between them are analysed to show that education provision was a matter of compromise for the colonial state.

Schools have also been recognised as a site where power was contested by missionaries and the state, as each sought to impose their own version of colonialism, and the role of missionaries in the delivery of education contact has been discussed a good deal, especially with regard to the use of schools as a means of delivery for Christian evangelism and their moral codes.¹⁵⁰ Some recent work has focused on how far the pupils who passed through colonial schools internalised the ideologies with which tuition was imbued, and how far they developed their own understandings of the world, or even rejected the European ideas to which they were exposed. Such work is easier when focused on the post-1945 period, as there is both the potential to interview subjects who passed through the colonial education system about their experiences, and access to source materials written by colonized peoples, whether in diaries, books, or indigenous-run newspapers.¹⁵¹ The scarcity of such resources from the earlier period of colonial rule makes it, at least in the case of the Congo, difficult to establish how Africans reacted to European education, though this study makes careful use of documents containing reports of African attitudes – typically produced by missionaries – to cast some light on such matters when possible.

¹⁴⁹ Seppo Sivonen, *White Collar or Hoe Handle: African Education under British Colonial Policy, 1920-1945*, (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1995); Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons: Africans' Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1918-1940*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002).

¹⁵⁰ Nicholas Ibeawuchi Omenka, *The School in the Service of Evangelization: The Catholic Educational Impact in Eastern Nigeria, 1886-1950*, (Leiden: Brill, 1989); Ana Isabel Madeira, 'Portuguese, French and British Discourses on Colonial Education: Church-State Relations, School Expansion and Missionary Competition in Africa, 1890-1930', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 41, Nos. 1 & 2, (Feb., 2005), 31-60.

¹⁵¹ Gail Paradise Kelly, 'Learning to be Marginal: Schooling in Interwar French West Africa', in Gail Paradise Kelly and David H. Kelly, (ed.), *French Colonial Education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*, (New York: AMS Press, 2000), pp.189-208; Spencer D. Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul: French Education, Colonial Ethnology, and Muslim Resistance, 1912-1956*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

2.6: Works on Education in the Congo

Whilst there has not been a great deal of attention paid by historians to issues surrounding education policies in the Belgian Congo, there have been a small number of works which have addressed the subject matter either as their main focus or as part of broader works. The remainder of this literature review is dedicated to a detailed analysis of the content of these works, in order to establish the relationship of this work to them. In many general surveys of Belgian colonialism in the Congo, there has been a tendency to assume that the establishment of the subsidy system and the prominent involvement of the Catholic mission societies in education provision, equated to an abdication of responsibility for education on the part on the colonial authorities. Jean Stengers, the pre-eminent Belgian historian of the late twentieth century, wrote that in the Congo 'all initiative was left to the missions, and the government contented itself with funding that which the missions created', and recognised government involvement or interest only in the form of making 'suggestions from to time to time.'¹⁵² Others, such as D.K. Fieldhouse and B.G. Gabudisa, have also assigned only a minimal role in education to the Belgian state authorities, again recognising only their role in supplying subsidies to the Catholic missions.¹⁵³ This study argues against this viewpoint, and considers it to be an enormous oversimplification of the forces which acted to construct the colonial education system. Rather, one of its major themes is the identification of the wide range of economic pressures and political fears which motivated the state to take a direct interest in matters involving education. Whilst this study does not deny the role of the missions in the provision of education, or in the formulation of education policy, and in fact discusses these issues at length, it also suggests that the policies which were pursued were the product of discord and negotiation between the state and the Catholic missions, and that the relationship between these actors was more complex than has been allowed for previously.

¹⁵² Jean Stengers, *Congo: Mythes et Réalités*, (Brussels: Editions Racine, 2005), p.208.

¹⁵³ D.K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd edition, (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 362; Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre: de Léopold II à Mobutu*, (L'Harmattan: Paris, 1997), pp.46-49.

Several scholars have, though, focused on education exclusively and have considered various aspects of the system. Firstly, Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa has produced a survey of education provision in colonial Congo, published in 1997, however the book takes a legalistic approach to the subject and focuses almost exclusively on the published education programmes as its source material.¹⁵⁴ It is a largely descriptive work, which presents the chronology of the development of the education, but lacks analysis of its wider significance or its impact on African society or culture. Whilst the book provides useful factual information, the majority of it focuses on the post-1945 period, and it offers little to the debate on the significance of colonial education in the Congo.

Barbara A. Yates wrote a series of articles addressing various aspects of the education system thematically, and posits some valuable ideas. Many of her pieces focus on the Leopoldian period and so their value to this study is largely as background material.¹⁵⁵ However, some of her works have a more direct relevance, especially her assessment of education for Congolese girls, which is discussed further in chapter seven.¹⁵⁶ Yates concentrates on the missionary contribution to education in the colony, and uses missionary archives, diaries, and letters as her main source materials, perhaps in part because the archives held at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were still unopened at the time she published her work.

The most thorough critical evaluation of Belgian colonial education policy to date is Pierre Kita Kyankenge Masandi's *Colonisation et Enseignement: Le Cas du Zaïre avant 1960*, published in 1982, and therefore subject to the same restrictions as Yates' work with regards to archive materials.¹⁵⁷ In this book, Kita looks at the course of education

¹⁵⁴ Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre: de Léopold II à Mobutu*, (L'Harmattan: Paris, 1997).

¹⁵⁵ Barbara A. Yates, 'African Reactions to Education: The Congolese Case', *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, (June, 1971), 158-171; 'The Triumph and Failure of Mission Vocational Education in Zaïre, 1879-1908', *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2, (June, 1976), 193-208; 'Shifting Goals of Industrial Education in the Congo, 1878-1908', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (April 1978), 33-48; 'Educating Congolese Abroad: An Historical Note on African Elites', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (1981), 34-64.

¹⁵⁶ Barbara A. Yates, 'Colonialism, Education, and Work: Sex Differentiation in Colonial Zaïre', in Edna g. Bay, (ed.), *Women and Work in Africa*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992).

¹⁵⁷ Pierre Kita Kyankenge Masandi, *Colonisation et Enseignement: Le Cas du Zaïre avant 1960*, (Bukavu: Éditions CERUKI, 1982). Note that this author has published work under several variants of his name. His surname will be given throughout as Kita, according to the African system.

policy from the inception of the C.I.S. through to decolonization in 1960 and its lasting impact. Inevitably, Kita's book and this thesis touch on similar themes, though the structures and arguments of the two works are marked by notable differences. In order to establish the relationship between this study and Kita's earlier work, it is necessary to consider his approach to the subject in some depth. The structure of the book is essentially divided into two main parts, with further subdivisions, of which the first concentrates on establishing the author's understanding of the ideology behind colonial education, and the second gives a chronological description of the development of the education system in the light of the earlier analysis.

Kita takes a structuralist view, influenced by Marxist theory, in which he sees colonial education as being a system functioning within the larger system of the colonial state.¹⁵⁸ This study does not share the rigid theoretical lens which Kita applies to this subject, rather in this work the terms 'system' and 'structure' should be read without structuralist connotations. This is not to deny that colonialism, in the Congo as elsewhere involved the introduction of systems, but rather means that this study does not support the anti-humanism of the structuralist approach. Instead this thesis presents the view that personalities and interest groups were central to the process of formulating and applying education policies in the colony, and that the education provision which resulted was not a unified mechanism resulting solely from the action of impersonal forces, but was in fact the product of discord, negotiation, and collaboration, as much as of over-arching principles of colonial ideology.

Kita, in line with much literature on colonial education, identifies the paradox at the heart of colonial education policy, which he describes as 'the dialectic of necessity and fear'.¹⁵⁹ This paradox is one which has long been considered central to understanding colonial education and which this study also focuses on analysing. However, Kita does not fully explore the actual impact of these competing pressures on the formulation and application of education policy, preferring to concentrate on an assessment of the psychological and ideological motivations behind education provision.¹⁶⁰ Having

¹⁵⁸ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.20.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.17-18, 84.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.73-101.

established his view of the ideology behind colonial education, Kita goes on to discuss in some depth the development of early education during the C.I.S. period, but then fails to extend the same level of consideration to the events of the interwar years, preferring to relate the contents of the 1925 education project and then to move on to the post-war period.¹⁶¹ Evidently, the primary focus of this thesis is the development of the colonial education system during the interwar period, and more particularly the formulation and application of the 1925 project and its impact. Kita chooses to move to an in-depth analysis of the post-war period, apparently assuming that the introduction of the project made the colonial education system a *fait accompli*. Rather, this thesis will argue that the implementation of various aspects of the project encountered difficulties caused by disputes between the Ministry of Colonies, the colonial administration, and the missionary societies.

Kita concentrates on the strength of the 'colonial trinity' of state, church, and business, though he also identifies, but does not discuss in any depth, that the colonial authorities and the Catholic missions were not always in agreement.¹⁶² Having identified this significant issue, he goes on to say that the colonial authorities left education to the missions after 1925, and took only an indirect interest in it thereafter.¹⁶³ Essentially, Kita seems to see the issue of education to be static during the interwar period, and he acknowledges this in his conclusion, stating simply that he has focused on an overview of the development of education.¹⁶⁴

On the contrary, this study focuses almost exclusively on the 1920s and 1930s, though of course with reference to what preceded and followed that period. As outlined in the Introduction, this focus is considered both valid and valuable because this period represented the 'embedding' of the colonial state during which Belgium sought to formulate and impose colonialism, and so these were the policies that were intended to perpetuate colonial rule. Unlike Kita this thesis privileges the social and political aspects of this period in order to analyse their impact upon education, and will argue that it was because of this context that the Belgian authorities maintained a direct

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp.171-191.

¹⁶² Ibid., pp.27, 38-42.

¹⁶³ Ibid., pp.28-30.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.262.

interest in education, even if much of the responsibility for its actual provision lay with the Catholic missions. Moreover, this thesis also pays a good deal more attention to the personalities and interest groups that shaped colonial education during this era, as it argues that differences of opinion and emphasis which surfaced on occasion between the Ministry of Colonies and the colonial administration in the Congo, and between the Ministry and the Catholic missions, between one mission group and another, for example, were important in understanding both the development of policies during the interwar years and the changes which took place after 1945. Kita argues that the 'colonial trinity' broke down after 1945 as a result of changes in Belgian political direction and of the events of the war in the colony itself.¹⁶⁵ Whilst not denying the importance of these factors, this thesis argues that it is also important to consider the fractures that were already apparent within the colonial authorities with regards to the policy of exclusively subsidizing the Catholic missions before the Second World War.

In formulating this argument, this study has focused on a broader range of source materials than those referred to by Kita, who relies primarily on descriptions of published education programmes and, notably for his limited discussion of the interwar period, on works published in the years after that period, especially a piece written by Edouard De Jonghe in 1948. It must be considered that this work, produced once De Jonghe had left the Ministry of Colonies, and once the policy he so strongly advocated had been subject to significant changes, might have contained a retrospective justification of that policy which raises questions as to its usefulness as a source for discussing the pre-war years. Of course, De Jonghe's words might retain value and certainly interest, but Kita does not acknowledge the political context surrounding the piece's production. One must, of course, also acknowledge Kita's own curious position as a historian addressing the education system of which he himself was a product. The book is in places rather imbued with the author's personal views of Belgian colonialism, something which Kita acknowledges from the outset.¹⁶⁶ In summary, this work has been a valuable point of reference for this study, though their arguments are divergent, and their source materials very different.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.194-230.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.22.

Since the publication of *Colonisation et Enseignement*, Kita has produced some further work which is also relevant to this discussion, including an article on girls' education in the Congo which is discussed further in chapter seven.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, he has been part of research based at the University of Leuven, along with Marc Depaepe and Honoré Vinck, which has used textual analysis of colonial schoolbooks and songs to deconstruct the process by which colonial ideology and missionary morality were transmitted through these materials.¹⁶⁸ The results of this work are interesting and provide another level of understanding - that of the everyday, described as 'classroom history' - for anyone interested in colonial education in the Congo.

The literature review has described and analysed some of the major trends in recent historiography which have informed this work, as well as the longer development of works addressing the history of Belgian colonialism in the Congo. It is hoped that this review, in conjunction with the historical background information given in the introduction, will serve to contextualise the analysis of the relationship between education policies and the development of the colonial state in the Belgian Congo to which the remainder of this volume is dedicated. This study aims to provide a rigorous analysis of the development of the education system in the Congo during the interwar years, focusing on a re-positioning of the relationship between church and state in this regard. Though not seeking to minimize the role played by missionaries in the provision of tuition, and in the evolution of colonial theories of education, this study will show that the interest of the state in these matters was direct and constant during this period, that this interest manifested itself in various ways, and that it was motivated by a number of factors, as identified and analysed in the following chapter.

¹⁶⁷ Pierre Kita Masandi, 'L'Éducation Féminine au Congo Belge', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 40, No. 4, (Aug., 2004), 479-508.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, Marc Depaepe, et al, *Manuels et Chansons Scolaires au Congo Belge*, (Louvain: Presses Universitaires Louvain, 2003), a collection which contains contributions from Vinck and Kita; Honoré Vinck, 'Le Mythe de Cham dans quelques Livrets Scolaires du Congo Belge', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2/3, (1999), 642-647; Honoré Vinck, 'Livres Scolaires Coloniaux: Methodes d'Analyse: Approche Hermeneutique', *History in Africa*, Vol. 26, (1999), 379-408.

Chapter Three: Defining State Interest in Educational Development

3.1: Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore in greater depth the main contention of the thesis, which is that, as Pierre Kita Masandi has argued, the education policies adopted by the Belgian colonial authorities in the Congo were shaped by the dual pressures of necessity and fear. However, this chapter also goes further and, where Kita is content to outline the measures put in place during in 1925 and to consider them as static until the post-Second World War period, will argue that in fact a number of factors arising during the 1920s and 1930s ensured that colonial education was more or less in constant flux. The chapter therefore rejects any idea that the formulation and application of these education policies can be assigned solely to the overarching impact of something that might, in the abstract be termed 'colonial power'. Rather, this analysis, whilst recognising and accepting the importance of certain impersonal forces, economic factors in particular, pays most attention to the political issues which impacted upon the direction of education policy during this period, and which caused the Ministry of Colonies to take more direct and interest in its application and potential consequences. Such an interest went far beyond that allowed for in much previous historiography and signified a good deal more than a 'civilizing mission'. In the Belgian Congo, as in many other colonies, education was a means through which the European power sought to expand and strengthen its influence on its colonised subjects.

Any consideration of Belgian colonial education policy must also take account of the international pressures which influenced internal colonial policy, such as the rise of pan-Africanism and communism, and even the prospect of foreign intervention in the Congo. Alongside these extraneous factors, the chapter will also consider the influence on Belgium's colonial educators of internal dissent and potential subversion, specifically the emergence of messianic sects, such as Kimbanguism and Kitawala, as well as the presence of Islam in the eastern regions of the colony. Careful consideration of the influence of these threat assessments on Belgian colonial thought during the 1920s and 1930s helps demonstrate their significance in maintaining state interest in educational provision, and in strengthening official efforts to support the

wider dissemination of Catholic mission education. Put simply, this chapter will provide a framework through which the following chapters can be understood, as the needs and fears analysed here motivated the state's action with regard to all aspects of education policy.

3.2: A Civilizing Mission?

During the colonial period 1908-1960, the Belgians portrayed their efforts in the Congo as constituting a 'civilizing mission' (*une mission civilisatrice*), an idea which supposed that Congolese people's lives would be improved by the progress, modernity, and culture brought to them by the Belgians.¹⁶⁹ According to this concept, benevolent Belgian paternalism would bring European culture, religion, and morality to raise Africans up from savagery. During the period 1908-1939, a focus on social welfare programmes, such as education and healthcare, was particularly important in the Ministry of the Colonies' public pronouncements on the colony as it sought to disassociate Belgian rule from the atrocities of the Leopoldian era which had generated much international controversy.¹⁷⁰ This focus on social welfare in statements of colonial policy was clearly intended to improve the international image of Belgian colonialism, and chapters detailing efforts in healthcare and education featured increasingly prominently in the Annual Reports on the administration of the colony during the 1920s and 1930s. These reports were presented by the Minister for the Colonies to the Belgian lower house of parliament each year, and were the colonial authorities' own representation of the 'progress' made in the colony. The idea of the 'civilizing mission' recurred throughout the period, such as in the Annual Report on the administration of the colony for 1921 which stated that 'the lot of the indigenous

¹⁶⁹ Alice Conklin's critique of the French idea of the 'civilizing mission' in West Africa is useful here as, although its secularism after 1905 set it apart from that of Belgium, there were many commonalities. Conklin identifies the concept of 'mastery' as being at the heart of the 'civilizing mission'; see Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p.6.

¹⁷⁰ See, for example, AA/RA/CB/58/7, (1920), pp.4-6; AA/RA/CB/58/8, (1921), p.6; Edouard De Jonghe, *L'Instruction Publique au Congo Belge*, (Brussels: Goemaere, 1922), p.3; Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 1, pp.279-280.

populations, their moral and economic betterment [...] continues to be the dominant preoccupation of our policies.’¹⁷¹

However, despite the prominence of the civilizing mission in Belgian rhetoric, the development of education was slow during the early years of Belgian state rule. There were a few ‘official schools’ or ‘*colonies scolaires*’, the origins of which lay in the Leopoldian period.¹⁷² Alongside these, various mission societies, both Catholic and Protestant, had developed their own systems of schools. Most often these involved the creation of a basic primary school, focusing on basic literacy skills and religious instruction, at each main mission station, where African children were taught by European missionaries. Such mission stations also often provided some vocational training in trades such as brick-making and carpentry, as the importance of character-building manual labour was central to the missionary ideology.¹⁷³ In addition, there were rudimentary village schools where Congolese tutors, trained by the missionaries, passed on basic teaching to their compatriots.

3.3.1: The 1917 Questionnaire – Emerging motivations

Despite it having been the Belgians’ stated intention to develop education structures in the colony, there was little movement prior to 1916 as economic exploitation, a tenuous occupation of the territory in places, and the outbreak of the First World War took precedence.¹⁷⁴ However, despite the war – or perhaps because of interest in training relevant workers for the war effort in Africa – the Ministry of the Colonies, exiled to London, sought to assess the situation with regards to education in the Congo in during the period 1916-18. This was to be achieved through the distribution of three versions of a questionnaire, the responses to which would allow the Ministry to establish what types of education structures existed by that stage, and what developments those on the ground in colony itself wished to see. The questionnaires were the start of a process of debate and consultation about education in the Congo which led eventually to the formulation and implementation of the 1925 project, the

¹⁷¹ AA/RA/CB/58/8, (1921), p.6.

¹⁷² See chapter one.

¹⁷³ See chapters four and five.

¹⁷⁴ Kita cites some discussion of education before the First World War but it had no outcome, see *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.156.

education programme which defined the terms on which the government would subsidize Catholic-run schools, and as such embodied the Belgians' priorities for education in the colony.¹⁷⁵

Questionnaires were sent out to representatives of the three groups deemed likely to have experiences and opinions with a valuable bearing on the subject of education in the colony – missionaries, and tutors in the '*colonies scolaires*'; businesses with operations in the Congo; and members of the colonial service, more particularly the District Commissars (*Commissaires de district*) and their Higher Deputies (*adjoints supérieurs*). The content of the three questionnaires differed slightly according to the group being targeted, but all three versions addressed corresponding themes. Whilst the various responses to the questionnaires will be discussed in more detail in the chapters of this thesis which discuss Catholic missionaries and the training of Congolese clerks, the focus here will be on the process through which the concept of such a survey arose, and the nature of the questions which the Ministry of Colonies decided to ask their chosen respondents. The questionnaires asked both about existing education or training provision and about the respondents' views on how the system should be developed. All three versions had a strong focus on the provision of training of black artisans, in fields such as carpentry, masonry, and brick-making, but also asked about the need for black clerks. Each of the three questionnaires also featured a separate section containing questions exclusively focused on the issue of language usage within education, and on a wider scale, the possibilities for the future development of language in the colony, especially as related to trade and industry.

The origins of the questionnaire illuminate an interest in developing education on the part of the government which had little to do with the rhetoric of the civilizing mission, and rather more to do with pragmatic economic issues as well as a preoccupation with asserting a distinctly Belgian identity in the colony. A letter sent by Jules Renkin, the Minister for the Colonies, to the Governor General of the Congo, Eugène Henry, dated 30th December 1916, made clear that the idea for the questionnaire, and therefore the impetus behind this wartime push to reorganise education in the colony, came from

¹⁷⁵ See '*Projet d'Organisation de l'Enseignement libre au Congo Belge avec le concours des Sociétés de Missions nationales*'. As explained in the introduction this project was introduced in 1925, and was followed by the 1929 '*Organisation de l'Enseignement libre, au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi avec le concours des Sociétés de Missions nationales*'.

the Minister himself.¹⁷⁶ In this letter Renkin mentioned, as the motivation behind his desire to rethink the education system, that low level European employees in the colonial service were expensive and mediocre, and that therefore 'if we manage to replace them with black clerks and artisans, it would be an enormous progress from a financial and economic perspective.'¹⁷⁷ He then went on to introduce the idea of a survey, in the form of the questionnaires, and asked the Governor General to make any changes to the questions he deemed necessary and then to furnish the Ministry with 50 printed copies of the questionnaire to be distributed to the European headquarters of missions and businesses operating in the Congo. Furthermore he urged Henry to press upon civil servants issued with the questionnaire the importance of completing it. Interestingly, Renkin also suggested that some matters raised in the questionnaire 'are, in fact, resolved' but that the relevant questions should still be included in order to maintain 'an homogenous and complete documentation' and went on to say that the details of a programme of education could be decided by a consultative committee.¹⁷⁸

Evidently, the Ministry for the Colonies was taking the organisation of the education system in the Congo seriously, even during the confusion of the war years. It may be that in some ways the war itself had added to the determination of the Belgian administration to improve education provision in the colony. As will be noted below, some responses to the questions emphasised a lack of trained artisans – for whom wartime demands may have exposed a need – and it is also possible that the conflict may have exacerbated long-standing Belgian concerns about British interests in the colony in the event of any weakening of Belgian control.¹⁷⁹ Whatever the immediate impetus behind the questionnaires, the Ministry's keen interest in the subject of education was again illustrated during the consultation process in May 1917 by a telegram sent to the Governor General ordering that he 'hasten the education survey.'¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ AA/M/645/2, letter from Renkin to Henry, dated 30/12/1916.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Guy Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, pp.117-120.

¹⁸⁰ AA/M/645/2; The responses to the questionnaire are contained within AA/M/645, either as booklets or as loose sheets, some of which are in sub-folder 2; they are not catalogued any more precisely.

It is not possible to determine precisely how many examples of each of the three categories of questionnaire were distributed as no list remains in the archival records. However, it seems that it was never intended to be a complete survey of all the education provision in the Congo at the time, as on a list of businesses to be issued with copies twenty-eight names are marked out of a much longer list, although it must be noted that some of the responses preserved in the archives come from businesses not marked on that list at all.¹⁸¹ To give a general overview, it seems that most replies were received from businesses and territorial agents, but that the most detailed responses were given by territorial agents and missionaries.

Those targeted by the questionnaire circulated among civil servants were at the level of District Commissars and their Higher Deputies, that is to say relatively low level colonial agents probably approached for their practical experience of the actual conditions in the colony. One of the most notable features of the responses from the civil servants is the wide range of existing training available for skilled workers in different regions of the colony. For example, the differences between the answers given by M. Drapier, District Commissar of the Bas-Congo, and those of the Higher Deputy of the district of Lac Léopold II, are striking. In the Bas-Congo, the region surrounding the then capital Boma on the West Coast with the longest established European population in the colony, whilst the District Commissar related a need for more trained craftsmen, he also described a system in place for the training of artisans. Workers were being trained in the colonial administration's own workshops under the tutelage of European artisans after having been recruited from amongst the pupils of Boma's *colonie scolaire*. The district of Lac Léopold II, in contrast, was in the Equateur Province and by 1917 had seen much less European contact than the West coast of the Congo. This is clearly shown by the response given to the questions on artisan training by its Higher Deputy, as he states that whilst there were some blacks learning trade skills, there were 'neither teachers nor workshops' in the accepted sense of the terms anywhere in the district.¹⁸² These responses, amongst others, highlight the variety of education being offered at this stage, both in term of quantity and quality.

¹⁸¹AA/M/645/2

¹⁸²AA/M/645

The Higher Deputy of Tanganyika-Moero made an interesting comment on the supply of trained workers emerging from the mission schools in that region. While he stated that those are the only real source of training in the region – there being no administration workshop – he also made clear that because the professional education provided by the missionaries went hand-in-hand with religious instruction, the trained workers stayed at the missions. He suggested this was either because of their own ‘zeal of the newly converted’ or was due to the missionaries’ fear that, distanced from their influence, their charges might lose their religious belief. Whatever the reason, this suggested, as did some of the missionaries’ responses about the numbers of pupils being employed as catechists, that a significant proportion of missionary educated natives were not entering general employment, but being retained by the missions themselves for a variety of purposes.¹⁸³ This was an issue which would surface frequently during the period, and which was one of the practical factors that motivated state interest in education, as it needed to ensure a supply of suitable workers.

One particularly interesting question that was posed to the civil servants, and which clearly relates back to the Minister for the Colonies’ stated motivation behind his desire to reform the education system, focused on whether they thought it possible that black clerks might replace some junior European personnel. The Higher Deputy of Sankuru was enthusiastic about this idea, at least in so far as it meant replacing some European subalterns with black clerks who would be responsible for typing, general office work, and collecting the native tax. He also favoured trained black artisans taking over the physical duties of European tradesmen which he explained the climate made much more difficult for them to complete. However, he added the proviso that these black replacement workers, both artisans and clerks, should always be under ‘the direct supervision’ of a white so that they would not be able to abuse the situation they were working in. This distrusting attitude towards the native workers is present in other responses too, despite a general preference towards replacing lower level European staff with Africans.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ AA/M/645 (booklet)

¹⁸⁴ AA/M/645 (booklet).

Whilst not universally approved of – with the District Commissar of Bas-Congo stating that actually very few whites could be replaced by Africans in this way – there do seem to have been more positive than negative reactions to the idea. The Higher Deputy of Tanganyika-Moëro expressed the view that such a policy would allow the European agents to supervise the collection of the indigenous tax, for instance, without being so closely involved in the actual practical business of the collection. Furthermore he believed that the time of Europeans was being wasted, at a high cost, on such matters when low level administration tasks could be left to African clerks, allowing the colonial agent to regain ‘his necessary prestige, as much in the eyes of the Europeans as the Africans.’¹⁸⁵ He also made the point that the European agent was ‘already so rare’, therefore implying that the employment of more black clerks in junior administrative positions would allow the promotion of the European staff as well. This is an important point because the shortage of colonial agents, particularly territorial agents, was to be a problematic issue for the Belgian administration, so the idea of training and employing African clerks may have been welcome not just for economic reasons, as Renkin's letter suggested, but also due to basic necessity caused by staff shortages.¹⁸⁶ The Annual Report on the colony for 1919, noted that the First World War had exacerbated these shortages in the colonial services and that recruitment levels had dropped as a result of ‘the profound transformations caused to economic conditions in Europe and Africa.’¹⁸⁷ In such circumstances, with difficulties in recruiting European agents, the employment of Africans wherever possible seems to have been a largely attractive solution, both to the local agents in the Congo and to the senior administrators at the Ministry.

It is clear therefore that the Belgian colonial authorities sought to expand the provision of education in the colony for reasons other than the ‘civilizing mission’. The economic exploitation of the territory required artisans skilled in a variety of trades, and the shortage of European recruits into the colonial service presented another role which Africans would have to be trained to fill. However, as well as revealing the strictly economic context for education reform, the education survey also highlighted the emerging significance of other factors.

¹⁸⁵ AA/M/645 (booklet)

¹⁸⁶ See chapter six.

¹⁸⁷ AA/RA/58/6, (1919), p.4.

3.2: Questions of Language

In addition to the questions focused on the training of tradesmen and the possible employment of Congolese auxiliaries, a section of each of the three versions of the questionnaire concentrated on matters relating to language usage in the colony. The questions on language aimed at two basic issues, should a European or an African language be used (in education, and then in commerce), and which European language or which African language should be prioritised. Johannes Fabian, in his work *Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo, 1880-1938*, examined the language issue in the Belgian Congo, including a discussion of the place of language in the education system and an appraisal of the responses to the same questionnaires being considered here.¹⁸⁸ Fabian notes that in the sections of the questionnaires dealing with languages, the formulation of the questions themselves is particularly interesting and that the Belgian administration's preferred positions were indicated by the way in which questions are asked about national languages first and native languages last. He also suggests that part of the motivation behind the survey might have been that it should signal the government's intent in order to prepare its missionary partners for change.¹⁸⁹ Also, he points out that the specific wording of questions points to the preferred response, such as in questions thirteen to businessmen and twenty-five to colonial officials, which asked 'Don't you foresee that, as trade languages, the native languages will sooner or later give way to European languages?'¹⁹⁰ This would indeed seem to make clear the type of answer that the administration was seeking was a confirmation of its own view.

The questionnaire distributed to missionaries and teachers contained more questions on language than either of the others, with twelve questions asked of them, as opposed to four and five asked to businessmen and administrators respectively. This seems to have been because the missionaries and teachers had practical experience of using various languages in education, and the additional questions that they were

¹⁸⁸ Johannes Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo, 1880-1938*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 49-67. Fabian is also particularly illuminating on the background to this issue, including the treatment of language in the *Charte Coloniale* of 1908; Barbara A. Yates has also written on this matter, focusing on missionary attitudes towards language use in education, in 'The Origins of Language Policy in Zaire', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2, (June 1980), 257-279.

¹⁸⁹ Johannes Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power*, p.51.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

asked largely focused on which languages they already used, and how certain developments, such as the wider use of European languages might affect their work. They were asked in which language they currently taught, whether they taught a native language, whether it would be a great inconvenience to adjourn the teaching of native languages until there were more Congolese teachers, and what the usefulness of teaching a native language was, for the natives themselves, and in terms of the administration and European commerce. They were then asked if it would not be better to teach the natives exclusively in 'one of our national languages' and further questions on whether professional training should be given in a European language, particularly with reference to technical terms, and which language this should be. One final question asked whether the respondent considered that there might arise any difficulties, political or otherwise, from the teaching of a European language.

These questions produced, as with the earlier sections of the questionnaire discussed previously, a variety of responses illustrating some interesting strands of argument about language in the Congo and its role in education. Firstly, two main sources of debate appear with regards to the teaching of European languages, the first in regards to the matter of which of Belgium's two national languages – French or Flemish - should be used, and the second regarding the use of English by some Protestant missionaries. As Fabian remarks, the *Charte Coloniale* of 1908, transferred to the Congo, officially at least, freedom of use of language, following on from Belgian laws of 1898 which had decreed that both French and Flemish should be used in government there.¹⁹¹ Article three of the *Charte Coloniale* dictated that all laws and decrees should be published in both French and Flemish and allowed for general freedom of choice in language use for both Belgians and Congolese.¹⁹² The somewhat vague terms of this article unsurprisingly did nothing to halt the introduction of a variety of teaching methods by individual missionary groups, operating outside any real government control in the early years. However, with regards to the issue of which, if either, of Belgium's national languages should be used, there was overwhelming agreement amongst the Catholic missionaries at least. All favoured French over

¹⁹¹ J. Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power*, pp.44-46.

¹⁹² *Charte Coloniale du Congo Belge*, as published in the *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, 18/10/1908. Full text available at <http://www.congoforum.be/fr/congodetail.asp?subitem=21&id=18716&Congofiche=selected>

Flemish and a variety of reasons were given for this preference. The Redemptorist representative suggested that French was preferable because it was 'spoken by all the Europeans', the representative of the Scheut Mission in North Katanga also favoured French, and so did the director of the *colonie scolaire* at Stanleyville.¹⁹³ This is unsurprising, perhaps, as the colonial, and indeed the Belgian, administrative elite were usually francophone and this situation had been transferred to the colony, whatever freedoms the *Charte Coloniale* allowed for in principle. As Fabian observes 'French was the official medium of exchange among colonial agencies', and this included the Catholic missions.¹⁹⁴ However, it is interesting that many of the mission societies had Flemish origins so their unequivocal support for the use of French is interesting, though, it was only part of the full story, for whilst the missions preferred French to Flemish, it seems that they did not use it, and certainly not exclusively, in their teaching. The responses of both the Redemptorist representative and that of the Scheut mission, show that both were conducting their teaching in African languages – the Redemptorists were using Kikongo the local language in the Bas Congo, as well as giving French lessons in the later school years, and the Scheut mission were teaching in Kiluba. It must be remembered that these missions' own primary objective was religious and that preaching and conversion were more likely to be successful when conducted in indigenous languages. It has also been argued that the Flemish origins of many Catholic missionaries instilled them with an interest in minority languages.¹⁹⁵

In addition to the Catholic missions' apparent preference for teaching in African languages, there was also the issue of the use of English by some Protestant missions. Some Protestant missions appear to have recognised the delicate nature of the language issue for the Belgians, and that their very presence in the Congo was unwelcome to some, and adopted a diplomatic approach to the matter.¹⁹⁶ Others however aroused the suspicion of the Ministry by stating that they taught in English and that their Congolese pupils wanted to learn it, which coming from an American missionary based in the Katanga was controversial.¹⁹⁷ The Katanga region, emerging as

¹⁹³ AA/M/645 (booklet)

¹⁹⁴ Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power*, p.49.

¹⁹⁵ Isidore Ndaywel é Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, p.397.

¹⁹⁶ AA/M/645/2

¹⁹⁷ AA/M/645; These comments came from Reverend Springer of the American Methodist Episcopal mission.

immensely rich due its mineral deposits, was a source of some concern for the Belgian colonial authorities as it had a large non-Belgian white population, and because it bordered British colonies to the south and east. A campaign to encourage Belgians to settle there was accompanied by a determination in the 1920s to ensure that Catholic missions multiplied their efforts in the region.¹⁹⁸

While it seems as though a majority of businesses surveyed responded positively to the idea that French should be more widely disseminated, some pointed out a number of potential problems. The *Société Belgika* suggested that relying on the indigenous populations learning French in order to conduct trade with them would leave businesses reliant on intermediaries, and stated that it was good business sense to learn the client's own language and that any trader with knowledge of the local language would have 'a marked superiority' over French-only speaking competitors.¹⁹⁹ Significantly, several businesses also mentioned English when asked which European language or languages should or would become widely spoken in the colony. The representative of the *Société Agricole de Mayumbe*, stated that eventually French, as the national language, and English, because it was already spoken by many workers brought from the coastal colonies, would impose themselves in the Congo. The representative of the *Huileries du Congo Belge* also suggested that the spread of both English and French was desirable in order to facilitate good relations between the Europeans and the natives, but also between the Congolese and other African workers.²⁰⁰

The responses from members of the Belgian colonial service itself are surprisingly mixed in their opinions on the whether the spread of French in the colony was particularly desirable or not, or indeed whether it would even be possible for French to replace native languages as the vehicular language (*langue véhiculaire*) used in commerce. There was some pessimism about the likelihood that French would spread to the indigenous populations.²⁰¹ Whilst it seems clear that there was no unified view on language usage in the colony among those who responded to the

¹⁹⁸ On European settlement in Katanga see AA/RA/CB/58/8, (1921), p.74, 222-4; AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), p.11, 97-98; see also the case study of the Benedictine mission in chapter four.

¹⁹⁹ AA/M/645 (booklet).

²⁰⁰ AA/M/645, (booklets).

²⁰¹ AA/M/645, (booklet).

questionnaires in 1917, it is important to recognise that this was not surprising. Although French had been declared the official language of the Congo Independent State, it had not been widely diffused amongst the Congolese population.²⁰² Rather, various parties – especially businesses and missions – had used whatever language most readily suited their purposes. For the missionaries, this might often mean that they learnt the local tribal languages in order to convey their message most effectively to those they wished to convert. Businesses seem to have turned to French, English, or perhaps a more widely used African language – such as Swahili – in order to facilitate their activities. Whilst the questions posed by the Ministry of Colonies in its questionnaires suggest that the wider diffusion of French was officially favoured, in reality it seems as though a far more complex situation had already developed. The sheer size of the colony and the number of languages already in use there, made the imposition of French yet more unlikely. Evidently, a compromise or more nuanced policy would need to be pursued, and this was certainly the case in the language policies which were expressed in education programmes during the 1920s.

3.3: Summary of Questionnaires

The questionnaires as a source are valuable for several reasons. As has been shown above they illustrate a range of different factors affecting the provision of education in the Belgian Congo as the colony entered the interwar years. They show the variety of education already offered in 1917, from the official *colonies scolaires*, through the schools of the Catholic and Protestant missionaries, to the training of artisans being provided by the workshops of both the colonial administration and private businesses. The responses make clear that there was absolutely no central organisation within the education system in terms of its programmes at least, and that what provision there was mainly assumed whatever form those who provided it either thought best, or could achieve. The questionnaires do show consensus on some issues though – most particularly the urgent need for more sufficiently well trained Congolese artisans and clerks to replace workers bought in from other colonies and possibly low level European employees. In all, the picture that the responses to these questionnaires

²⁰² Barbara Yates, 'The Origins of Language Policy in Zaire', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Jun., 1980), 257-279, (p.258).

create is one of an education system – if indeed it can be called a system at all - in need of direction and shape. This direction would be brought about by the propagation of the *Projet d'organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo Belge avec le concours des Sociétés des missions nationales* of 1925.

The very existence of the 1917 questionnaire proves the interest of the Belgian Ministry of the Colonies in education. The questions contained within it illustrate the pragmatic political and economic concerns which lay behind the facade of the 'civilizing mission.' It is evident that the Belgian authorities wanted to use education of their Congolese subjects to further a number of aims, including training a supply of cheaper skilled workers to replace those brought in from West Africa and Rhodesia, as well as potentially some European subaltern administrators.²⁰³ In addition, education was believed to be a method which could be used to shape colonial Congolese identities, through the spread or restriction of languages, for example. It is also evident from the responses to the questionnaires – especially those from territorial agents - that education was the subject of controversy surrounding the involvement of non-Belgian Protestant missionaries, a situation which would intensify throughout the period before 1940.²⁰⁴

The issues raised in the questionnaires and which were further discussed by the consultative committee which reported in 1922, discussed in the introduction, and fed into the structure of education which was established by the 1925 project and made law in 1929. It is clear that this system aimed to train workers necessary for the colonial economy, such as artisans and clerks, and that the mass of the population was to receive only basic primary tuition, especially in rural areas. These aims were enshrined within a system of 'adapted education', strongly influenced by the report of the Phelps Stokes Fund Commission on African Education whose members spent several months in the Congo in 1921.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ See chapter six

²⁰⁴ See chapters five and eight

²⁰⁵ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in Africa: A Study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and Foreign Mission Societies of North America and Europe*, (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922). The members of the Commission visited the Belgian Congo in January 1921, and also from April to August of that year.

However, these priorities did fluctuate over the years, as the focus on training African teachers strengthened whilst the stress on training tradesmen reduced somewhat, as the state limited the number of professional schools to the official schools and a few subsidised mission schools - those that were deemed strictly necessary - and left much of this work in the hands of businesses themselves. This limiting of professional education was also influenced by concerns that trained artisans were struggling to find work during the early 1930s due to economic depression, a situation which evoked the spectre that they might become troublesome, 'deracinated' men, unable to fulfil the purpose for which they had been trained, and therefore potentially subversive.²⁰⁶ Fear of the potential for unrest amongst such 'deracinated' Africans, removed from their traditional '*milieu*' and living in the colony's urban centres was a recurring theme in official discourse during the period.²⁰⁷ By 1938, there were four official schools and four subsidised schools training artisans, with 504 pupils whilst there were thirty-two subsidised normal schools training Congolese tutors, which had 1,954 pupils enrolled.²⁰⁸ Clearly, during the interwar years the dissemination of primary education – necessitating all those tutors – had become highly important, and not solely to facilitate the training of skilled workers as the pyramidal system of schools did not allow the majority to progress above primary level. It is therefore necessary to consider what other factors motivated the state to encourage, through its subsidies, the extension of the education system. Early in the period, the responses to the questionnaires had also highlighted issues beyond the strictly economic, such as fear of foreign interference in the colony, which are worthy of further discussion as they developed different facets during the 1920s and 1930s, and caused the Ministry of Colonies to have to pay close attention to the application and direction of education policies in the colony.

²⁰⁶ AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), pp.36, 154.

²⁰⁷ See for example AA/RA/CB/58/8, (1921), p.217; AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), p.7, p.95; AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1928), p.7. See also Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville, 1910-1940*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), pp.115-119, 125-127; Bogumil Jewsiewicki, *Histoire économique d'une ville coloniale, Kisangani: 1877-1960*, (Brussels: CEDAF, 1978), p.28.

²⁰⁸ AA/RA/CB/60/1, (1938), pp.71, 73-74, 78-79.

3.4: Internal Dangers

3.4.1: Kimbanguism and Kitawala

One of the other major motivating factors behind the Belgian colonial authorities' interest in education policies was fear. Essentially this fear emanated from concern about the potential for anti-government subversion to emerge if the development of educational establishments was left unfettered. This fear emerges several times in documents from the interwar period, and typically centres on the idea that once literate, and introduced to European ideas, some amongst the Congolese population might gain access to – and perhaps spread further – political or religious doctrines which were considered to represent challenges to colonial rule.

Such fear can be seen in the reaction against Protestant mission schools in the wake of the emergence of Kimbanguism in the Lower Congo in 1921. To summarise briefly the history of the movement, Simon Kimbangu, from the village of Nkamba (or Kamba) in the district of Thysville, had been baptised by Baptist missionaries in 1915 but in 1921 he began to preach that he had been visited by the Angel Gabriel and had a mission to help his fellow Africans by studying and preaching the word of the Bible.²⁰⁹ He acquired many followers in the Thysville district and the Belgian administration, fearful of his influence, declared the movement to be seditious and declared martial law in the district. Kimbangu eventually surrendered to the authorities and was sentenced to death, a sentence that was later commuted to life imprisonment by King Albert of the Belgians. Kimbangu died in 1951 in an Elisabethville prison, but the movement which he had inspired continued in his absence, despite attempts to suppress it completely.²¹⁰ Much of the government's response to the emergence of this movement, encouraged by some of the more combative elements of the Catholic clergy in the Congo, focused on the fact that Kimbangu was a product of a Protestant education.²¹¹

Initially, the colonial administration had moved quickly to combat the spread of Kimbanguism with military force, sending troops into the areas where it had

²⁰⁹ Patrick Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, 1880-1995*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.95-96, and Robert I. Rotberg, *A Political History of Tropical Africa*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), p.339.

²¹⁰ Robert I. Rotberg, *A Political History of Tropical Africa*, p.339-40.

²¹¹ See chapter five.

flourished.²¹² However, the movement was not suppressed, and though forced underground it continued to attract adherents and continues today as the *Église Chrétienne du Prophète Simon Kimbangu*. This failure to suppress the movement forced the Belgian authorities to take a different type of approach during the 1930s, and saw the foundation of special 'official' schools in regions where Kimbanguism was present, particularly the Lower Congo.²¹³ The foundation of such establishments in the years of depression implies concern that increased economic hardship might render the indigenous population more open to the alternative view presented by the movement. These schools were outside of the subsidy system and were not operated by missionaries, and no religious instruction was given there. The establishment of these schools shows that the colonial authorities were prepared to look beyond the Catholic mission school model when it was deemed necessary, and that education was seen as a means through which colonialism could connect with populations who were resistant to its power.

Kimbanguism was not the only proto-religious movement which caused concern to the Belgian authorities, and that was believed to have the potential to be politically subversive. The Kitawala or Watch Tower movement, for example, which started in Rhodesia and spread into the neighbouring regions of the Eastern Congo, was also seen as dangerous.²¹⁴ There were also numerous other sects which attracted the attention of the administration during the 1920s and 1930s. The draconian response to these movements shows how worried the colonial authorities were by divergence from colonial orthodoxy, and their use of education in the years after Kimbanguism shows that it was seen as a tool which could combat unsanctioned behaviours and beliefs.

The systematization of education and the increase in state control over what was taught in schools through standardized programmes was evidently intended to instil an acceptance of Belgian colonial rule in Congolese pupils, and to prevent the advent of

²¹² In 1922, for example, military occupation was ordered in the Lower Congo territory, and in the South Cataract territory because of Kimbanguism. AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), p.33.

²¹³ AA/RA/CB/59/6, (1932), p.109.

²¹⁴ On Kitawala see, for example, AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.197; AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), pp.7, 181; AA/RA/CB/59/6, (1932), p.208. See also John Higginson, 'Liberating the Captives', 55-80; Georges Ngongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, p.50. On other sects see Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.72-76.

ideas dangerous to the colonial state. In fact, Kita has suggested that this also explained state opposition to Protestant schools as Protestantism required of its adherents a more personal reading of the Bible which might have been considered as awakening individual consciousnesses.²¹⁵ However, in fact, in the early 1920s, there were fears that any mission activity, including that of Catholics, had the potential to engender undesirable responses amongst Congolese people, particularly independent-mindedness, as a result of removing them from traditional cultural restrictions.²¹⁶ Whilst the colonial authorities soon came to favour the spread of Catholic education, the fear that free-thinking amongst Congolese people could instigate unrest remained, and was focused on a number of other issues during the period in question, particularly international developments in black consciousness and revolutionary ideologies which were closely followed.

4.2: Islam

Islam was also seen by the Ministry of the Colonies as presenting a potential challenge to its authority in the Congo. Controversy over Islamic influence in schools arose, particularly between 1925-1927, and was focused on the eastern regions of the colony where the Muslim population was concentrated. It is difficult to find figures for the number of Muslims in the colony during the interwar period as they are rarely mentioned in the Annual Reports on the administration of the colony, but an official Belgian survey of the Congo published just before independence in 1960 records the Muslim population at that stage as having been 115,500, with 75,000 of those residing in Kasongo.²¹⁷ It is clear, therefore, that Muslims did not form a large part of the Congo's total population, which by 1960 was estimated at 13 million, at any stage

²¹⁵ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.55; see also Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.71. See chapter five also.

²¹⁶ AA/RA/CB/58/7, (1920), p.6-7. This annual report argues that the Christian efforts to counter polygamy and slavery, for example, might emancipate some Congolese without placing them under a new form of authority. The report argues in favour of a slow transition period, rather than a rapid introduction of new ideas of 'civilization.'

²¹⁷ *Belgian Congo, Volume II*, (Brussels: Office de l'information et des relations publiques pour le Congo belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, 1960), p.171. Kasongo was in the Maniema district which formed part of the Eastern Province until the 1933 administrative reorganisation when it became part of the newly created Costermansville Province.

during the colonial period but the possible spread of Islam was of concern to the Ministry of Colonies.

Campaigning against 'Arab slave-traders' operating in the Great Lakes region had been used to justify Leopold II's military expeditions in that region in the 1890s.²¹⁸ Anti-Islamic sentiment continued under the new Belgian regime after 1908, with the commission set up in 1922 by Louis Franck to discuss education policy describing Islam in its report as dangerous and 'anti-European.'²¹⁹ Islam was, therefore, largely excluded from the developing school system and its presence mostly ignored in reports on the administration of the colony.²²⁰ However, whilst Kita is right to state that there were no Muslim schools in the colony during the interwar period, the situation in the Eastern province during the 1920s and 1930s was more complicated than this assessment recognises. Access for its Muslim populations to education was the source of some debate between the provincial administration and the education service of the Ministry of Colonies.²²¹

Controversy flared in May and June 1925 over the issue of Muslim influence in the Eastern Province of the Congo. A note sent to the Minister for the Colonies, Henri Carton, from the 7th Directorate of the Ministry, then tasked with overseeing education and missions, stated that a report had been prepared by the White Fathers which denounced the activities of Muslims in the Maniema territory.²²² Appearing to place full faith in the veracity of the missionaries' report, the education service attacked the apparent preferential treatment shown 'consciously or unconsciously' towards the Muslim community by the local administrative agents.²²³ Evidence for this accusation was said to be the appointment of Muslims as judges in indigenous tribunals, and the opening of government-run schools in 'Arab' areas in the Eastern Province. Furthermore, the note criticised the Governor General for not having commented on the missionary report before forwarding it to Brussels, apparently

²¹⁸ Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, pp.106-118.

²¹⁹ Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question de l'enseignement au Congo*, (Brussels: Goemaere, 1922), pp.32-34.

²²⁰ Markowitz identifies Islam and pan-Africanism as sources of concern for the Belgian administration but does not discuss this in detail, see *Cross and Sword*, p.12.

²²¹ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.53-54.

²²² AA/M/636/6, letter to Minister, Henri Carton, from the Inspector General of 7th Directorate, Edouard De Jonghe, dated 1/05/1925.

²²³ AA/M/636/6, letter to Minister, Henri Carton, from the Inspector General of 7th Directorate, Edouard De Jonghe, dated 1/05/1925.

betraying a lack of interest in the matter. For the civil servants in the education service this was an unacceptable attitude towards the 'Muslim peril' and so it was suggested to the Minister that, whilst the spread of the supposedly Arab language Swahili could not be contained, the Ministry could act by preventing 'foreign Muslim propagandists, marabouts, and talebs' from entering the colony, and by having the police close Muslim schools. Clearly, the department led by the staunchly Catholic Edouard De Jonghe was convinced by the arguments of the White Fathers and advocated a hardline response.

However, as was pointed out in a note by the Director General of the 2nd Directorate of the Ministry, responsible for political and administrative affairs, both of the measures advocated by the education service would have been illegal as they were counter to article two of the *Charte Coloniale*, which guaranteed freedom of religion and of education.²²⁴ At this stage, Carton wrote to the Governor General, Rutten, with instructions for him to counter Muslim influence by controlling immigration as strictly as possible, by using Muslims 'as little as possible' as intermediaries in administrative business, and by simultaneously discouraging the establishment of Muslim schools whilst encouraging the further development of schools run by Christian missions.²²⁵ It is also worth noting that this issue arose at the same time as the Ministry was implementing the introduction of the 1924 programme, clearly placing it in partnership with Catholic missions such as the White Fathers. It is possible that the issue of Muslim influence was raised as a way to ensure further support for this policy.

Though the education service in Brussels continued to press for a firmer response, criticising the local administrative authorities further for supporting 'Arab' communities 'whether because of antipathy toward certain Christian missions or whether for simple reasons of practicality', and pressured the 1st Directorate which was responsible for native policy to intervene as 'the security of the colony' was at stake, it is clear that others were not so convinced of the urgency of the supposed

²²⁴ AA/M/636/6, letter from Director General of 2nd Directorate to Secretary General of Ministry, dated 12/06/1925. See *Charte Coloniale*, (1908), article 2, edited text available online at <http://www.congoforum.be/fr/congodedetail.asp?subitem=21&id=18716&Congofiche=selected> (accessed 20/09/2009). Article 2 imported into colonial law several articles from the Belgian constitution.

²²⁵ AA/M/636/6, letter from Minister Henri Carton to Governor General, dated June 1925.

threat.²²⁶ The 1st Directorate commented in response that the fear of Muslim propaganda might be 'an exaggerated alarm' and cited a report from an edition of the International Review of Protestant Missions which had suggested that Muslim propaganda would not succeed among 'Bantu populations' were it not for the attraction of the opportunity to receive an education in a koranic school, and that Christian schools were 'more attractive to blacks because of their particular mentality.'²²⁷ This led them to argue that the further development of official or Christian-run schools would be enough to counter Islamic expansion. This, of course, echoed the policy already suggested by Carton to the Governor General.

The discussion about the influence of Islam in the Congo continued into 1927, as the government general, presumably under instruction from the Minister, conducted inquiries into its true scale. The District Commissar of Maniema, the territory at the centre of the controversy, sent details of the official rural schools in the district and stated that – contrary to the claims made by the White Fathers – there were no Muslim tutors employed.²²⁸ Rather the tutors were government clerks or had been trained by Catholic or Protestant missionaries. Moeller, Governor of the Eastern Province, added to this that the administration had been obliged to found its own schools in Elila where there were no White Fathers to do so and that in other areas the schools were in the hands of the Catholic mission.²²⁹ This information was forwarded to the Ministry in Brussels by the Governor General, as was a further letter stating that Muslim influence in the Katanga province was 'practically non-existent', with a small Muslim population of mostly traders kept under close surveillance.²³⁰ The majority of the official rural schools in the Eastern Province were gradually transferred to the direction of Catholic missionaries following the introduction of the 1925 programme, however this was not the case for all of them.²³¹ Annual reports on the administration of the colony in the early 1930s clearly state that although most of the schools had

²²⁶ AA/M/636/6, letter from Edouard De Jonghe, dated 27/08/1926.

²²⁷ AA/M/636/6, letter from Lambin, Secretary General of 1st Directorate, dated 16/10/1926.

²²⁸ AA/M/636/6, letter from District Commissar, Van Not, to Governor of the Eastern Province, Moeller, dated 3/06/1927.

²²⁹ AA/M/636/6, letter from Governor of the Eastern Province, Moeller, to the Governor General, Rutten, dated 24/06/1927.

²³⁰ AA/M/636/6, letters from Rutten to Minister dated 30/07/1927 and 11/10/1927.

²³¹ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.160.

been placed in the hands of missionaries, those in 'arabised' areas, meaning those with Muslim populations, had not.²³²

The discussions of the influence of Islam in the eastern regions of the Congo which took place during 1925-1927, and especially the references to koranic schools, are significant for several reasons. They highlight, once again, the Ministry of the Colonies' fear that 'undesirable' foreign elements might be able to exert an anti-colonial or anti-European influence on the Congolese population using schools as a medium. However, in the case of Islam – unlike, for example, the policy toward African-American tutors – there seems to have been some discord between Catholic missionaries and territorial administrators in the Congo, between the territorial administration and sections within the Ministry of the Colonies, and – although to a lesser degree – between various departments within the Ministry itself. The apparent antipathy between Catholic missionaries, specifically in this case the White Fathers, and local colonial administrators might well have been due to the personalities involved and the delicate balance of power between the parties. Monseigneur Roelens in particular was an influential and controversial figure, and will be discussed further in a case study of the White Fathers activity in the Congo in chapter four.²³³

The tension between the government general and the Ministry seems to have stemmed from a lack of recognition from those in Brussels that sometimes measures taken, such as opening official rural schools in the less well developed Eastern Province, might not be in accordance with central policy but were considered necessary by those on the ground in order to meet a local need. Furthermore, the forthright nature of the arguments put forward by the education service in Brussels clearly shows that a strong interest was being taken in the provision of schooling in the colony, and that the department was firmly in favour of the Catholic position.

²³² AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.154; AA/RA/CB/59/6, (1932), p.172.

²³³ See chapter four.

3.5.1: External dangers

Amongst the threats which the colonial authorities perceived as menacing their control of the Congo during the 1920s and 1930s were the pan-African theories of W.E.B. Du Bois and of Marcus Garvey, and international communism. Each of these presented a separate source of agitation for the Belgian authorities, but as will be shown below, the actually distinct theories were often conflated together by colonial officials/in the 'colonial mind' as one integrated subversive threat. Education policies played a key role in the Belgian response to these perceived dangers, in two main ways as the Ministry of the Colonies and the colonial government aimed both to limit the involvement in the education system of those thought likely to expound such creeds, as well as trying to further expand and strengthen the influence of their preferred Catholic schools. Furthermore, the colonial authorities were determined to stop literate Congolese people who had been through the school system, and who had therefore been exposed to some European notions, from accessing anti-colonial literature. It is now necessary to examine in more detail how these potentially anti-colonial influences were seen by the various Belgian authorities and the reactions which they provoked. This will once again clearly illustrate that the government took a strong interest in the provision of education for reasons that went far beyond the concept of a civilizing mission.

As well as giving considerable attention to these potentially anti-colonial agitators, the Belgian authorities were imbued with a suspicion that other powers, especially Britain, might intervene in the colony. This fear also influenced education policy, especially in the Ministry of Colonies' reactions to Protestant missions as examined in detail in chapter five, and so such concerns are worthy of brief inclusion here.

3.5.2: Pan-Africanism

The origins of pan-Africanist theories can be traced back to the late eighteenth century, as arguments in favour of the abolition of slavery began to emerge, and eventually sparked the formulation amongst former slaves and their descendents of sentiments expressing a desire to 'return' to Africa, of a sense of solidarity amongst

black people whether in the Americas, Europe, or Africa, and a determination to escape from white domination.²³⁴ Though never a unified movement, variants of pan-Africanist thought gained ground, fuelled by the resettlement of former slaves in Sierra Leone beginning in the 1790s and the establishment of Liberia in 1847 as a republic for former slaves, and was by the early twentieth century a significant political force.²³⁵ Unsurprisingly, the existence of an ideology which aimed at the improvement of black people's lives across the world, including increasing their involvement in politics and, in some of its expressions, aimed to overthrow European colonial rule in Africa, was a matter of concern for colonial governments.

Concern surrounding the potential influence of pan-Africanism in the Congo was at its height in the early 1920s, when both Du Bois and Garvey were particularly active, although it certainly persisted beyond this time. The Belgian authorities in Brussels paid close attention to Du Bois, especially when the Belgian capital itself was the location for a session of the Second Conference of the Pan-African Congress in 1921.²³⁶ Belgian officials were, in fact, invited to join the conference and to accompany the delegates on a visit to the Royal Museum of Central Africa at Tervuren – there is no evidence that this invitation was accepted.²³⁷ One of the delegates, Paul Panda Farnana, was the son of a Congolese tribal chief who had been educated and baptised at the *colonie scolaire* in Boma before being taken to Brussels in 1900, he later fought for Belgium in the First World War and was interned as a prisoner of war.²³⁸ He was a strong advocate of black rights and maintained links with West African-led pan-Africanist circles active in Léopoldville, and was considered a danger by the colonial authorities.²³⁹ A report on the proceedings of the conference notes the references made to the governance and development of the Congo, and was in fact rather positive about the conference and noted its relatively moderate stance, particularly

²³⁴ For a detailed analysis of the origins, development, and variations of pan-Africanism see Immanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, translated by Ann Keep, (London: Methuen, 1974).

²³⁵ Geiss, *Pan-African Movement*, pp.30-57, 81-82.

²³⁶ Geiss, *Pan-African Movement*, pp.240-248. For more on Du Bois and his career see David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century*, (New York: Henry Holt, 2000); Brandon Kendhammer, 'Du Bois the Pan-Africanist and the Development of African Nationalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1,(2007), 51-71.

²³⁷ AA/M/636/6.

²³⁸ Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, pp.439-443.

²³⁹ Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, p.49.

the fact that Du Bois had distanced himself from Garvey's views.²⁴⁰ Along with this report was a copy of the manifesto produced by the Pan-African Congress, which would have brought to the attention of the Ministry of the Colonies the criticism of its failure to organise an official education system in the Congo.²⁴¹

The more radical nature of Marcus Garvey's brand of pan-Africanism caused more consternation within the Ministry of the Colonies. Immanuel Geiss describes Garveyism as being 'imperial pan-Africanism', as through his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) Garvey aimed to overthrow white rule in Africa, even declaring himself in August 1920 to be the 'Provisional president of Africa.'²⁴² This was clearly a movement which would attract the close attention of colonial governments, especially following the inception of the UNIA's own journal 'Negro World', in January 1918, designed to spread Garvey's message.²⁴³ The possibility that copies of this periodical might find their way into the Congo, to be read by literate Congolese, was something which the Belgian authorities were keen to avoid, though a letter sent by Franck to the Belgian Foreign Minister stated that some examples were known to have made it into the Congo.²⁴⁴ Concern over the possible introduction of Garvey's ideas into the colony was also cited as a reason to train more Congolese artisans, and thus avoid the need to employ West Africans to fill these positions, citing Sierra Leone and Liberia as being home to pan-Africanists.²⁴⁵

Worries over the entrance of such theories into the colony – and, more particularly, into its schools – led the Ministry of the Colonies to seek assurances in 1920 from Thomas Jesse Jones, head of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission into education in Africa, that he would not encourage the sending of African-Americans educated at the

²⁴⁰ AA/M/636/6, undated report.

²⁴¹ AA/M/636/6, dated 30/09/1921.

²⁴² Geiss, pp.263-282; for more on Garvey see E. David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

²⁴³ Geiss, *Pan-African Movement*, p.267.

²⁴⁴ AA/M/636/6, letter from Franck, Minister for the Colonies, to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paul Hymans, dated 14/08/1922.

²⁴⁵ Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question de l'enseignement au Congo*, (Brussels : Goemaere, 1922), p.22.

Tuskegee or Hampton Institutes to the Congo as tutors.²⁴⁶ As a letter from the office of Minister Louis Franck to Governor General Rutten noted:

‘Nothing can guarantee us, in effect, that the blacks from Tuskegee or Hampton will not inculcate our natives with very advanced ideas, and that they are not affiliated to pan-African organisations whose infiltrations of our colony could be very dangerous.’²⁴⁷

Moreover the same line of thinking also led the Belgians to adopt a policy of refusing to issue travel documentation to African-American missionaries from the early 1920s onwards. Exceptions were made to allow for the return to the colony of two couples, the Edmistons and the Rochesters, who by 1921 had been working in the Congo for 16 years each for the American Presbyterian Congo Mission. These documents were issued after the mission society undertook not to send any more African-Americans, and also because of concern that refusing to allow people who had been such long-term residents of the colony to return to it might provoke a diplomatic incident with the United States government.²⁴⁸ However, other African-Americans were refused permission to travel to the Congo because of this policy, such as Clara E. Lewis from Chicago who wished to work as a missionary at Kikwit.²⁴⁹ This request was denied following consultation with Belgian Protestant leader Henri Anet and was in accordance with a decision taken by Protestant missions operating in the Congo at a conference at Bolenge in 1921 to send only white missionaries to the colony.²⁵⁰ This Protestant stance seems to have been calculated to show support for government policy, perhaps in an attempt to curry favour. The policy itself might also have been designed to allow the colonial authorities to further limit the opportunities for foreign activity in the Congo. It also seems likely that the potential impact on Congolese populations of contact with any well-educated black person, in a position of responsibility and on a par with white colleagues, might serve to undermine the

²⁴⁶ AA/M/636/6, letter from Secretary General on behalf of Minister for the Colonies to Governor General, dated 20/05/1920.

²⁴⁷ AA/M/636/6, letter from Secretary General on behalf of Minister to Governor General, dated 20/05/1920.

²⁴⁸ AA/M/636/6, letter from Minister to Governor General, dated 7/07/1922; AA/M/636/6, letter from Minister to Governor General, dated 19/12/1921.

²⁴⁹ AA/M/636/6, letter from Secretary General to Governor General, dated 24/09/1924.

²⁵⁰ AA/M/636/6, letter from Secretary General to Governor General, dated 24/09/1924; AA/M/636/6, letter from Minister to Governor General, dated 19/12/1921.

limitations imposed by the Belgians on their Congolese subjects, even if that person was not a proponent of pan-Africanism. Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem has suggested that during the 1920s and 1930s, rumours did circulate amongst some sections of the Congolese population that black American missionaries would arrive and liberate the colony.²⁵¹ The Belgian colonial authorities, most likely aware of such rumours, were evidently determined to frustrate such hopes.

3.5.3: Communism

Fear of potential communist agitation also arose in the Ministry of Colonies, especially following the establishment of the Comintern in Moscow in March 1919.²⁵² The Ministry gathered newspaper reports focussing on the subject and received missionary accounts of supposedly communist activity in the Congo, such as that by Abbott Leonard published in 1922 in the *Messenger du St Esprit* entitled 'Bolshevism among the natives' in which the missionary suggested that a cook on the Governor's boat had expressed such sentiments to him.²⁵³ Leonard's accusations were based on an encounter with one individual whose reported comments, whilst certainly expressing anti-European sentiments, contained nothing which could be described as actually communist. However, despite an apparent lack of any concrete evidence of communist activity, or even interest, in the Congo, the Ministry maintained its suspicions. A request passed through the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the British Foreign Office for information on a possible link between the 'International Bible Students Association', Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Comintern prompted a response explaining that the British considered there to be no connection between the two, other than a shared interest in promoting a pan-African movement of one kind or another.²⁵⁴ The British did, however, commend the Belgians' vigilance in this matter, citing information that suggested that several 'civilized blacks', from

²⁵¹ Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, pp.434-435.

²⁵² Comintern, the Communist International or Third International, was an alliance of Communist and Socialist groups backed by the Russian state which aimed to foment revolution around the world, and explicitly stated an interest in challenging colonial rule. For more on Pan-Africanism and communism see Geiss, *Pan-African Movement*, pp.322-339.

²⁵³ AA/M/636/6, copy of article, dated March 1922, and accompanying note.

²⁵⁴ AA/M/636/6, letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paul Hymans, from M. Silvercruys, Belgian chargé d'affaires in London, dated 5/08/1932; TNA/PRO/FO/371/16355/W7150, dated 22/06/1932; TNA/PRO/FO/371/16355/W8400, dated 22/07/1932.

Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, and French Sudan, were involved in the Comintern.²⁵⁵ The British documents in this exchange suggest that the Belgians were blaming the origin of the serious 1931 Pende revolt in the Kwilu territory on Garvey and bolshevism.²⁵⁶ Other such requests for information were sent to the British regarding various groups suspected of communism, such as 1931 when details of the activity of Johnstone Kenyatta and the Kiknya [sic] Central Association were requested.²⁵⁷ This organisation based in British East Africa was properly called the Kikuyu Central Association and its General Secretary, whom the Belgians described a dangerous communist and the British response regarded as harmless and potentially pliable, later became the first Prime Minister and President of independent Kenya.

This focus on communism reflected, of course, the European political landscape, and the British response makes clear that the Belgians were not alone in their concerns over the potential spread of bolshevism into the colonial sphere. The Belgian Ministry of Colonies, however, did seem to demonstrate a tendency to conflate the threats of pan-Africanism – especially in its Garveyist guise – and communism into one. Evidently, the potential which these movements had to disrupt colonial rule if allowed to spread amongst the Congolese populations was a source of serious concern to the colonial authorities and a danger which they were determined to keep in check by carefully controlling levels of education, especially literacy, and by restricting access to publications.

²⁵⁵ AA/M/636/6, letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paul Hymans, from M. Silvercruys, Belgian chargé d'affaires in London, dated 5/08/1932.

²⁵⁶ TNA/PRO/FO/371/16355/W7150, dated 22/06/1932. For more on the Pende revolt see Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts: Colonial Exploitation in the Congo*, (London: Verso, 2008), pp.148-169; Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, pp.383.

²⁵⁷ TNA/PRO/FO/371/15635/W11983, letter dated 17/10/1931 and reply dated 26/10/1931. Jomo Kenyatta (1894-1978) was born as Kamau wa Muigai but took the name Johnstone following conversion to Christianity and changed his name again in 1934. He did study briefly at a Comintern school in Moscow during 1932-1933. The K.C.A. was banned by the British in 1940.

3.5.4: Belgian fears of foreign intervention

The potential for literate Congolese to access subversive material was evidently a concern for the colonial authorities, especially in the case of anti-colonial religious and political movements, such as those discussed above. There was also evidently a desire to instil the Congolese population with the sense of identity which the Ministry of Colonies wished them to have as colonised subjects, so that they might internalise the values imposed on them, and so that they would come to accept Belgian rule as entirely valid, processes which were to be achieved through education. Islam was clearly seen as a challenge to this, as was the teaching of foreign Protestant missions whose educational endeavours and disputes with the Ministry of Colonies were so significant that they are examined separately in chapter five. However, there was another significant reason why the Belgians were so keen to stamp their mark on the colony and on the minds of its inhabitants, through nationalistic education delivered by Belgian Catholic missionaries and with a strong emphasis on Belgian superiority and the legitimacy of colonialism. Since the inception of the C.I.S., there had been concerns amongst Belgian colonialists over the stability of Belgian rule in the territory and the possibility of intervention by another colonial power, especially Britain. These worries had been heightened by foreign criticism of the Leopoldian regime during the very early years of the twentieth century, and had continued to fester under the new colonial regime. Britain did not recognise Belgian rule in the new colony until 1913, and there were fears during the First World War that Belgium might lose control of the Congo. Such fears flared again in the early 1930s, when it was rumoured that the British and the French may have been planning to pass Belgian colonial territory to a resurgent Germany.²⁵⁸ Guy Vanthemsche has identified such fears as having a strong influence on Belgian colonial and foreign policy during the interwar period and it is evident that this also impacted on the Ministry of Colonies' determination to exclude Protestant missionaries from the subsidy regime and to suppress English as a language of instruction.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Guy Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, pp.122-123.

²⁵⁹ Guy Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, pp.121-125. See also chapter five.

3.6: Education policy - 'belgicisation'

These combined fears and pressures led the Ministry of Colonies to pursue a formalisation and extension of its co-operation with the Belgian Catholic mission societies operating in the Congo. As has been seen in the introduction to this thesis, this collaboration dated back to the early years of the C.I.S. and had been imbued with a nationalist element since Leopold II's decision to encourage only Belgian Catholic orders to send missions to the colony. During the 1920s and 1930s, successive Ministers for the Colonies, and particularly the Ministry's education service, determinedly pursued this strategy aimed at achieving the 'Belgicisation' of the Congo. This did not, however, mean that the colonial authorities wished to assimilate Africans into Belgian culture. In fact, as will be discussed in chapter six, the Belgians had no desire to create a large *évolué* class of Congolese but rather sought to educate Africans in such a way as to instil them with an acceptance of the legitimacy of Belgian colonial rule. The essential element of the policy was to strengthen Belgium's grip on power in the colony, and similarly inspired policies of 'Belgicisation' were carried out in the economic sphere as the Ministry sought to encourage Belgian-owned businesses and to increase the Belgian population, especially in the Katanga, until it formed a majority of Europeans in the colony. The impact of this stream of thought on education policy was shown in the 1923 Annual Report on the administration of the colony, in which it was stated that:

'And so in our colony, which is too scarcely inhabited by our compatriots, education given to the blacks will contribute to the reinforcement of the national character of our occupation...'

Such a focus on 'national character' was evident in the 1925 education project, which laid out not just which subjects should be taught in each of the different types of school to be established under the new system, but also identified the topics on which they should concentrate.²⁶⁰ In history, for example, Congolese students were to learn of the positive, civilizing nature of Belgian colonialism, especially those who reached the higher levels of the system.²⁶¹ The introduction of this programme set the tone of

²⁶⁰ For Kita's discussion of the programmes content, see *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.171-191.

²⁶¹ 'Projet d'Organisation de l'Enseignement libre au Congo Belge avec le concours des Sociétés de Missions nationales', pp.5-6, 8-9; see also Inspection Générale de l'Enseignement, *Instruction relatives*

education policy in the Belgian Congo for the next two decades. Its application, not without problems or critics, will be the focus of the remaining chapters of this thesis which will seek to address how various aspects of the education system actually functioned and to what ends, with a strong focus on the concept of 'belgicisation' throughout.

3.7: Conclusion

Whilst education provision in the Congo was presented by the Ministry of Colonies as being part of a 'civilizing mission' through which European morality and modernity would be brought to Africa, the true motivations behind the form and content of education programmes in the colony were very different. From the outset, there were economic imperatives which necessitated the training of African auxiliaries and artisans as highlighted by the questions asked in the 1917 survey conducted by the Ministry. However, the same survey also raised other issues particularly regarding foreign influence in the Katanga which touched on pre-existing sensitivities among Belgian colonialists. The responses received to the questionnaires served to illustrate the varied nature of education provision across the colony, and the differing levels of development in various regions, as well as showing that there was little consensus amongst those asked about how education should be extended. The survey therefore showed the lack of cohesion in the education then being provided in the colony, and fed into the process of consultation during the early 1920s – described in the introduction to this thesis – which led to the introduction of the 1925 programme and its successors. The major aims of these programmes were to introduce the standardization lacking in the existing provision, and to develop a system of education which would both fulfil the economic need for trained workers whilst at the same time calming the fears of potential subversion which might arise if literate Congolese gained access to anti-colonial movements.

The groups of whom the Ministry of the Colonies feared the influence within the colony had in common their perceived potential to transmit to the colonized

aux programmes à suivre et aux methods à employer dans les écoles de la Colonie, (Leopoldville: Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1931), pp.23-24, which gives details of similar types of content to be taught in the second degree schools.

Congolese populations – whether in schools themselves or through the distribution of prohibited literature - notions which might cause them to turn against the colonial state. Whether it was the explicit threat posed by political ideologies such as pan-Africanism and communism, or the more subtle danger presented by another religion (Islam or Protestantism) or the spread of different languages (Swahili or English), the Belgian colonial authorities targeted any deviation from its preferred conception of a purely Belgian, Catholic, colonial identity. Evidently, concern centred on the potential for Congolese reached by such ideas to formulate identities which would set them apart from Belgian influence, and to conceive of themselves as being something other than that which the state desired. These policies were strengthened by the fear of intervention in the colony by other colonial governments, which imbued the ‘belgicisation’ of the colony and its inhabitants with an added importance. Evidently, the emergence of anti-colonial and revolutionary ideologies internationally during the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the presence of prophet movements within the colony, were vitally important in reinforcing the Ministry of Colonies’ adherence to the principles laid out in the 1925 education project. The education system was set up as much in opposition to these factors as in favour of Catholicism, as illustrated by the colonial authorities’ willingness to establish non-mission schools in regions where Kimbanguism took hold.

Schools were considered to be a powerful arena for the transmission of ideas relating to religion and moral codes, language, and social position: essentially, some of the central aspects of the formulation of individual or group identities. Therefore, the Ministry of the Colonies was compelled to take on a directional role in this sphere. As has been seen, the terms of the *Charte Coloniale* and international treaty obligations meant that there was no question that unwanted groups could simply be banned from opening schools. For this reason the Ministry opted to pursue the active encouragement and funding of its preferred schools, those of the Catholic mission societies. The implementation of this policy and its consequences will be examined in much greater detail in the following chapters.

Chapter Four: Auxiliaries or Usurpers? The Colonial Authorities and the Catholic Mission Societies

4.1: Introduction

As discussion of the Ministry of Colonies' motivations for interest in education provision has already shown, the Belgian colonial authorities took a much more active role in the development of education in the Congo during the interwar years than has previously been acknowledged. This analysis reviewed the economic, cultural, and political issues which lay behind the state's involvement in education provision. Having therefore established why education was so critical to the colonial authorities, we will now examine the ways in which this interest manifested itself in practice, focusing, in particular, on how far the Ministry of Colonies pursued its aims consistently and effectively. This particular chapter focuses on the reality of the bipartisan collaboration between the colonial state and the Catholic mission societies, as this relationship was at the core of education provision in the colony, and an understanding of its workings is vital for any assessment of this system.

In order to properly assess this dynamic, one must consider each group's reasons for working with the other, the balance of power in relations between the two, and any disputes which arose between them. Generally seen as auxiliaries of the colonial state, in educational matters especially, Belgium's Catholic mission societies were sometimes closer to usurpers, arrogating educational authority and, with it, colonial power to themselves, at least at local level. Though this chapter will consider the broad relationship between these two parties, it is also vital to realise that neither could be considered a homogenous entity. In order to examine the more nuanced aspects of the education system, this chapter uses case studies to examine how the Ministry of Colonies and the colonial government worked with each other, and with various mission societies, as well as revealing the nature of inter-mission relations, whether harmonious or fraught. Within all these groups, at various times, there were different shades of opinion regarding how and for what purposes Africans should be educated. In seeking to answer questions of what notions of identity the colonial state and the Catholic missions wished to propagate amongst the Congolese populations exposed to

European forms of education, this chapter will argue that both parties viewed education as being a vital tool in the process of cultural and societal development.

Essentially, this discussion – in delineating the relationships within and between these major European groupings – will underline one of the central contentions of this thesis, as already outlined in the introduction and set out more generally in chapter three, that in fact the Belgian government was a far more active and interested party in the development of education in the colony than has previously been allowed for. Whilst not equipped to – and perhaps having no desire to – take full control of and responsibility for the entire education system in the colony, the Belgian government was determined to have a directorial role in education policy. As already shown in chapter three, this state interest was motivated by a range of issues, such as the need for educated Congolese workers to fulfil a variety of functions in support of economic development, and fears of the potential that unfettered missionary education might produce undesirable consequences by introducing new ideas of personal freedom to the populace. Believing that education would impact on how Africans perceived themselves, and on how they reacted to European rule and how they functioned in colonial society, the colonial authorities recognised that they must have a strong involvement in the formulation of education programmes in order to facilitate the strengthening of Belgian cultural and economic control of its colony. With this in mind, this chapter will seek to establish the level of input which the government was able to have into educational programmes and practices in the Congo, whilst at the same time leaving the delivery of that education largely in the hands of other parties.

For the Catholic mission societies, to whom most of the delivery of the Congo's government-supported education was delegated, schools were only one aspect of their involvement in colonial society, alongside agricultural programmes, healthcare systems, and most importantly to them, spreading their Christian faith. This chapter will examine how the Catholic missions perceived their role in educating the Congolese populations and how their focus on spreading Christianity at times brought them into conflict with the government's own agenda in the colony. In order to properly contextualise this analysis of colonial education provision, this chapter will also look at how the relationship between the Belgian government and the Catholic missions in the Congo was influenced by disputes over the provision of education in Belgium itself,

particularly the legacy of the Belgian 'Schools Wars' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Alongside this issue, consideration will be given to the impact of anti- and pro-clerical attitudes on Belgian politics, and the role of a strong Catholic presence within the Ministry of the Colonies, and particularly within the Education Department. Exploration of these issues will establish how politics in the Belgian centre impacted on policies in the African periphery, even in the sphere of education.

All of these issues demonstrate that education was considered to be a significant force for constructing colonialism in the Congo, whether that colonialism was of a political, a religious, or an economic variant. All of the major parties in the development of the favoured education system in the Congo saw education as a way for them to fulfil their own objectives, by shaping Africans to meet a particular set of requirements and to fulfil certain roles in colonial society. This chapter will seek to establish both what the objectives were for each group and how Congolese populations responded to the education they were provided with. In doing so, it will seek to establish that the construction of the colonial state through education was subject to debate amongst the various agents and to challenges from the reactions of Congolese populations.

4.2: Existing Literature

Much of the literature addressing colonialism in the Belgian Congo has assumed that because Catholic missionaries were the major providers of education in the colony, this meant that the Belgian colonial administration had surrendered responsibility for education to them. This view was notably expounded by Jean Stengers, who wrote that 'all initiative was left to the missions, and the government was content to subsidise that which the missions created.'²⁶² The uncomplicated idea that education was left to the Catholic missions, supported by subsidies, has become broadly accepted by many wider reviews of colonial history in Africa. However, this perception of the colonial state as having abdicated responsibility for, and avoided involvement in, education policy and provision is clearly at odds with the argument of this thesis, and ignores the vital links between education and economic issues, particularly that of its impact on creating a suitably trained workforce.

²⁶² Jean Stengers, *Congo: Mythes et Réalités*, p.208.

There have been some works which have addressed more deeply matters relating to education, though these have mostly focused on schools as a site of dispute between Catholic and Protestant missionaries. In this respect Markowitz's work is again useful, though the portion of his work dedicated to education is short, and privileges somewhat post-1945 developments.²⁶³ He also displays a tendency to consider the Catholic missions as acting as a bloc in this sphere, as does Kita who, whilst he notes at the end of his book that regional differences in education provision were in part due to the varied activities of different missions, does not in fact address this matter in much detail.²⁶⁴ Though it is not denied here that there was considerable unity on some occasions, this chapter aims to illustrate that at times there were considerable differences between the missions' viewpoints and actions.

For a long time, much of the literature addressing missionary activity in the Congo – and also in other colonies – consisted of what might best be described as institutional histories. Often written by missionaries themselves or their successors, largely uncritical accounts of the endeavours of individual mission societies, or of those of a particular denomination were commonplace. Such works include very early works detailing the 'pioneer' years of mission work, many from the C.I.S. era. Such works are valuable for the insights which they provide into missionary attitudes, especially towards Africans.²⁶⁵ However, generally speaking the recent historiography dealing with missions in the Congo and their role in education in the Congo specifically, is very limited, especially in terms of works which address the more nuanced aspects of the Catholic missions' relationship with the Belgian colonial authorities. In this sense – as it must be said in others – the historiography of the Belgian colonial project lags behind that which addresses the colonial possessions of other European powers, particularly France and Britain. An exception to this has been the work produced at the Catholic University of Louvain by a number of scholars focusing on the pedagogy of the missions, in an attempt to analyse the everyday 'classroom history' of colonial

²⁶³ Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.52-69.

²⁶⁴ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.245-6.

²⁶⁵ Paul Peeters, *Henry Beck de la Compagnie de Jésus, Missionnaire au Congo Belge*, (Bruges: 1898); Ivan de Pierpont, et al, *Au Congo et aux Indes: Les Jésuites Belges aux Missions*, (Brussels: 1906).

education.²⁶⁶ This work has focused on the close textual analysis of schoolbooks and school songs, and does not address the wider context of education policy.

In recent years a range of works have appeared which have established that the development of colonial states and cultures was influenced by a wider range of motivations than previously acknowledged. The relationship between missions and governments, and their often conflicting viewpoints, has been a key element in this historiography as illustrated in works such as James Daughton's *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914*, and Kenneth Orosz's *Religious Conflict and the Evolution of Language Policy in German and French Cameroon, 1885-1939*.²⁶⁷ Such works have highlighted the role of missionaries in influencing various areas of colonial life, including the spread of European language and education, and shown the influence of disputes between mission groups and the French colonial authorities. Whilst this chapter will argue that the strongly Catholic tendency within the Belgian Ministry of Colonies insulated the Catholic missions in the Congo from much of the official anti-clericalism with which their counterparts operating in colonies governed by the French had to contend after 1905, it remains the case that some differences over policy – often over similar topics as those identified in the works just cited – still arose between Congo missionaries and the Belgian authorities. The major contentions of this thesis, therefore, align themselves with this stream of modern historiography which seeks to challenge earlier views of the 'colonial state' as being a 'monolithic' entity where European governments and missionaries worked together to further common aims. Rather, historians of empire should seek to identify the far more complicated and less coherent process which saw metropolitan debates exported to the peripheral sphere, as well as differences in approach or emphasis arising from conflicting views of the situation in colonies themselves, shaping colonial policies and development.

²⁶⁶ See for example, Marc Depaepe, et al, *Manuels et chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*, (Louvain: Presses Universitaires Louvain, 2003), which contains contributions from Kita and Honoré Vinck amongst others detailing the content of books from the Trappist, Sacred Heart, and White Fathers missions, for example.

²⁶⁷ James Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Kenneth Orosz, *Religious Conflict and the Evolution of Language Policy in German and French Cameroon, 1885-1939*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

4.3: Early development

4.3.1: Missions

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, Catholic missionaries and businesses had been partners with the political architects of Belgian colonial expansion since the Leopoldian era. Though Leopold had initially encouraged foreign missionaries, including Protestants, to settle in the Congo, apparently in order to extend by any means possible the European influence there, he decided to move away from this early policy towards one which strongly favoured Belgian Catholic mission societies, as his distrust of foreign influence in the colony grew.²⁶⁸ Pope Leo XIII decided in 1886 that the Congo territory should be reserved for Belgian mission societies and so groups such as the Scheut Fathers (Pères de Scheut) in 1888, and Belgian representatives of the White Fathers (Pères Blancs), and the Jesuits in 1891, entered the Congo.²⁶⁹ Each of these groups, and those which later joined them, were assigned responsibility for a particular area of the colony with the Scheut Fathers active along the lower river Congo and in the Kasai, the Jesuits in the lower Congo and the Kwango, and the Sacred Heart Mission establishing itself along the Aruwimi river.²⁷⁰ In these early years, the missionaries were faced with the task of introducing Christian belief into African societies, and this proved to be problematic for a variety of reasons. Initially at least, missionaries in the Congo were often inclined to view Africans as savages and did not recognise that any such thing as indigenous 'civilisations' existed in the colony, or that there might be any positive elements found in the tribal cultures and practices which they encountered. Ruth Slade wrote on this subject in the 1960s and described how missionaries were convinced that African culture must be entirely replaced with a European, Christian version and that 'it hardly occurred to them that it might be necessary to try to modify what they brought so that the new life could be grafted on the stock of the old.'²⁷¹ Slade identifies the Catholic missionaries' favoured tactic during this period was to establish Christian villages, known as '*chrétientés*', around

²⁶⁸ Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Congo Independent State*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.146; Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Stead, *A History of the Church in Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.294-297.

²⁶⁹ Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, pp.146-7.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.148.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.149.

their mission stations which were inhabited by adherents (often freed slaves), who – whilst not strictly converts initially – lived according to the rules of the missionaries.²⁷²

Following on closely from this concept, and motivated by a concern that the Christian village would limit the influence of the mission to those people who lived within it, the Jesuits developed a new system of chapel-farms (*ferme-chappelles*), which were to be founded by groups of Christians who would leave the central mission station and establish themselves in close proximity to a traditional village.²⁷³ The idea behind this was that Christian converts would not become isolated from African life, and would also be able to engage others in their new faith, especially children. This system was widely adopted by other groups in the early years of the twentieth century, though it was subject to some criticism and was modified in 1910 to avoid children being alienated from their homes, and became known as chapel schools (*chappelle-écoles*). From this stage onwards, the Catholic mission groups began to move increasingly towards the Protestant model, with indigenous catechist-teachers running small rural schools, and with missionaries themselves leading schools in the central mission stations.

In 1906, Leopold II concluded a convention between the Congo Independent State and the Holy See under whose terms the colonial government would be obliged to give land to Catholic mission groups in order that they might carry out their work, and the mission groups would establish schools at their stations.²⁷⁴ These schools were to deliver a programme which had been agreed with the Governor General but this could vary between groups. Though it did not make reference to subsidisation, this agreement would be the basis of the later collaboration between the colonial state and the Catholic missions in education provision after the Congo was annexed by the Belgian government in 1908. The arrangement between the government of the C.I.S. and the Vatican can be seen as the result of a number of pressures: Leopold was already in negotiations with the Belgian state about probable annexation by the latter of the Congo colony, following the controversies over the treatment of Congolese

²⁷² Ibid., p.151.

²⁷³ Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, pp.159-160; Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, p.297.

²⁷⁴ See www.abbol.com, for a PDF document showing the full text of this agreement [accessed 20/4/2009]. See also Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre*, pp.55-8.

involved in the collection of rubber and the resulting high profile campaign against his rule, and highlighting work in social endeavours such as education might have been intended to improve his reputation. Furthermore, the exclusion of Protestants from the agreement might have been in part due to the involvement of some amongst them in aiding the aforementioned campaign against the King, as well as being an additional rejection of foreign influence in the colony.

4.3.2: Belgian politics

Moreover, the 1906 convention's formalising of the Ministry of Colonies' support for Catholic education in the Congo was likely to be strongly linked to events surrounding education in Belgium itself during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Political discord over the direction of public education in Belgium dated back to the adoption of the 1830 constitution which guaranteed freedom of education.²⁷⁵ In the years after 1830, the Catholics had established a wide network of schools and also established its influence over many municipal schools, although this was ended in 1850 after the first so-called 'school war' between Catholics and Liberals, leading to a situation in which Belgium had two separate schooling systems: one Catholic and one largely secular. Later the issue of religion in education erupted again during the period 1879-1884 as Catholics fought Liberal attempts to remove their influence from municipal primary schools altogether, in what Lamberts refers to as 'the most fiercely fought political conflict in Belgian history.'²⁷⁶ The result was essentially favourable to the Catholics, as the towns themselves were able to retain control over their primary schools and so decide whether to accept Catholic direction. Whilst these disputes had brought the issue of religion in education to the forefront of Belgian politics, Catholic influence in this area was somewhat lessened until the Catholic party achieved a large majority in 1893, which allowed them to reintroduce religious instruction to state primary schools and, more significantly for this study, to attempt to strengthen a system of subsidies for private schools in order to allow them to compete with free of

²⁷⁵ Neil Ascherson, *The King Incorporated*, pp.136-142; E. Lamberts, 'Belgium since 1830', J.C.H. Blom and E. Lamberts, (eds), translated by James C. Kennedy, *History of the Low Countries*, (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.329-330.

²⁷⁶ E. Lamberts, 'Belgium since 1830', p.333.

charge state education.²⁷⁷ Although anti-clerical politicians managed to hold back this measure until 1914, this does show that the notion of subsidising private education provision was already well established in Belgium itself and so, given the close relationship between the royal family and the Catholic Church, it is unsurprising that the idea was extended to the Congo. The significance of the system would be increasingly apparent as the colony's school system was developed and extended during the interwar period through collaboration between the Catholic mission societies and the Ministry of Colonies, alongside the colonial government.

The strength of the Catholic Party in Belgian domestic politics during the interwar years can also be seen as contributing to the continued strength of the alliance between Church and state in the colony. As described in the introduction to this thesis, the Ministry of Colonies was almost constantly in the hands of Catholic politicians, and the Catholic party was the dominant force in domestic politics during this period.²⁷⁸ Moreover, Markowitz argues that the introduction of the subsidy system in the early 1920s was a result both of Catholic lobbying, and also of an easing of domestic tensions and a unifying nationalism following the First World War.²⁷⁹

4.4.1: Case studies of Catholic mission societies:

The chronological development of education in the colony, including the subsidisation of a small number of schools in the early 1920s, and the generalisation of this principle and standardization of schools programmes after 1925, has already been described in the Introduction. It is not necessary to revisit it here, however in order to better illustrate some of the ways in which these innovations were implemented this chapter will now present three case studies detailing how the education provision of different mission societies evolved and highlighting the nuances of the relationships between the colonial authorities, the Catholic mission societies, and also businesses. Before turning to these extended case studies though it is necessary to first consider in brief a more straightforward example of a relationship between the colonial state and a

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p.347.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p.366.

²⁷⁹ Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.54.

Catholic mission society which functioned as it was intended to under the subsidy system.

The Scheut Fathers had arrived in the Congo in 1888, following Leopold II's appeal for Belgian Catholic missions to occupy the C.I.S.²⁸⁰ Founded specifically as a missionary group, the Scheut Fathers were involved in state-sponsored education endeavours in the Congo from the outside, as one of their number, Father N. De Cleene, was charged with the direction of the first *colonie scolaire* opened at Boma.²⁸¹ The Scheut Fathers became a favoured partner for the colonial authorities in the provision of education during the interwar years, and were active in several regions of the colony. In 1925, when the new education programme was introduced, the order already had subsidised schools at Luluabourg, Hemptinne-St Benoit, Luebo, and East Leopoldville, in the Congo-Kasai province, as well as schools at Barumba in the Eastern Province.²⁸² These schools would also have been the pinnacle of their educational efforts, having been deemed worth recording in the Annual Reports on the colony's administration, and would have been supplemented by a much larger number of rural schools. Following the introduction of the new programme, the Scheut Fathers expanded their provision of education rapidly, in common with other Catholic groups in receipt of subsidies. However, unlike some other societies, it seems that the Scheut Fathers were not subject to criticism from the colonial authorities over the education they delivered, nor were they engaged in disputes. On the contrary, their schools were repeatedly praised, and held up as examples of excellence especially with regards to their adherence to the Ministry of Colonies' programmes.²⁸³ By 1938, the order had four separate missions in the Congo, which – in collaboration with some smaller missions – had nearly 43,000 pupils enrolled in their first degree primary schools, of whom over 28,000 were in the Upper Kasai.²⁸⁴ Approximately another 14,000 were enrolled in their second degree primary schools, and they operated 5 normal schools and so were training more teachers than any other mission, as well as having a large clerks' school

²⁸⁰ The order was properly known as the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but came to be known as Scheut after the suburb of Brussels where it was founded in 1862.

²⁸¹ Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.296.

²⁸² AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), pp.121, 161.

²⁸³ AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1927), p.82; AA/RA/CB/59/1, (1929), p.90; AA/M/650/13, report by Provincial Inspector E. Romain on Albertville schools run by the White Fathers suggests that should follow the example of the Scheut Fathers at Thielen St Jacques and Kabinda.

²⁸⁴ AA/RA/CB/60/1, (1938), p.75.

at the capital Léopoldville, which would have provided many auxiliaries to the colonial government.²⁸⁵ In this respect, the Scheut Fathers were again pursuing the aims favoured by the state, by training teachers but also focusing on training clerks.²⁸⁶

The Scheut Fathers were, therefore, a Catholic mission society whose collaboration with the colonial authorities in the Congo was seemingly positive for both sides. However, relations between the Ministry of Colonies, the government-general, and the multitude of Catholic mission societies were not always without complications. As the following case studies of the White Fathers, the Benedictines, and the Trappists show, there were a number of issues surrounding education which could cause discord and debate between these parties.

4.4.2.1: Case Study 1 - The White Fathers

Founded by Cardinal Lavigerie, the White Fathers were active in the Great Lakes region of Africa from 1879, and during the late 1880s and 1890s, in keeping with the policy of Leopold II, the order gradually replaced with Belgians those of its missionaries of other nationalities in the Congo.²⁸⁷ In common with other Catholic missions during the early C.I.S. era, the White Fathers favoured the establishment of chapel-farms, and later of chapel-schools, where Congolese converts to Christianity lived set apart from but in the vicinity of traditional villages, and were led by a catechist and taught agricultural methods and religion.²⁸⁸ As with all other religious missions, Catholic and Protestant alike, the primary focus of the White Fathers' mission was evangelisation. Also in common with other groups, they soon recognised education as being a vital tool for extending their influence within African society and bringing new converts into the church. Alongside the primary schools which they hoped would bring Congolese

²⁸⁵ AA/RA/CB/60/1, (1938), pp.78-79.

²⁸⁶ See chapter six for more on the colonial administration and the training of African clerks.

²⁸⁷ *Méthode Gahungu, Former les prêtres en Afrique: Le roles des Pères Blancs (1879-1936)*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), p.11. The White Fathers were so-called because of the white robes they wore, the order was properly titled the Missionaries of Africa (originally the Missionaries of Our Lady of Africa of Algiers) and was founded in Algiers by Cardinal Martial Lavigerie in 1868.

²⁸⁸ Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, pp.159-160. See AA/M/636, letter to Thomas Jesse Jones dated 4/07/1921, annexed to which is a description of the White Fathers chapel-schools by Georges Van Der Kerken, Governor of the Eastern province, dated 7/11/1919. Jones described the White Fathers' schools in the Phelps Stokes Fund Commission report on education in Africa although the commission did not actually visit them.

children under their influence, the White Fathers also founded seminaries in the Congo, from 1899, first at Mpala but moving it to Lusaka in 1905, and later at Baudouinville, for the training of Congolese priests, of whom the first was ordained in 1917.²⁸⁹

The White Fathers, with the support of their sister organisation the White Sisters, were given responsibility for the missionary occupation of the *Vicariat Apostolique du Haut-Congo*, the Upper Congo region, which focused on the Eastern areas of the territory in regions bordering lakes Tanganyika, Kivu, Edward, and Albert.²⁹⁰ Through their work in these regions they became one of the largest mission societies operating in the Belgian Congo, operating in the Eastern province and Katanga. By 1923 the order was running stations in Katanga at Baudouinville, Mpala, Lusaka, Albertville, Sola, and Lukulu.²⁹¹ Around these stations, they had established twenty central primary schools, of which thirteen were for boys with 1923 pupils and seven for girls with 1105 pupils, staffed by fifteen European missionaries and sixty-four native tutors. Additionally, there were 110 rural schools, of which around two-thirds were for boys and the remainder for girls, with around 21,000 pupils.²⁹² This separation of boys and girls at all levels of education was typical of the way Catholic missions organised their educational endeavours, in contrast to their Protestant counterparts who were content to teach both sexes together in their rudimentary rural schools.²⁹³

As one of the larger mission societies operating in the Congo, and throughout Central Africa, the work of the White Fathers has attracted a certain amount of attention, with two recent works discussing aspects of their work in the Congo. Friedrich Stenger's study on missionary discourse and the White Fathers in Central Africa contains a rather basic evaluation of Belgian education policy stating, rather simplistically, that before 1946 'all education was in the hand of the Catholic missions.'²⁹⁴ The work is however a very valuable source for further insight into the thinking of Monsignor Roelens, leader

²⁸⁹ Méthode Gahungu, *Former les Prêtres en Afrique: Le roles des Pères Blancs (1879-1936)*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), pp.116-117.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.113.

²⁹¹ AA/RA/CB/58/10, (1923), p.75.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ For more on gender and education in the Belgian Congo, see chapter seven.

²⁹⁴ Friedrich Stenger, *White Fathers in Colonial Central Africa: A Critical Evaluation of V.Y. Mudimbe's Theories on Missionary Discourse in Africa*, (PhD thesis: SOAS, University of London, 2000), p.65.

of the White Fathers in the Upper Congo, who is discussed further below.²⁹⁵

Additionally, Méthode Gahungu's *Former les Prêtres en Afrique: Le rôle des Pères Blancs* considers the training of indigenous priests by the White Fathers in Central Africa, but focuses largely on the theological content of this and does not expand on the wider context or significance of this stream of missionary education, which will also be examined briefly in this case study.²⁹⁶

Along with the Jesuits and the De Scheut Fathers, the White Fathers became one of the largest and most influential mission societies in the Belgian Congo, and by 1944 the area under their influence had been divided into three apostolic vicariates, those of Baudouinville, Lake Albert, and Kivu, and where they ministered to over 300,000 adherents.²⁹⁷ However, whilst the White Fathers consistently increased the number of schools which they administered and the number of Congolese pupils they taught, a deeper analysis of the development of their educational work shows that they were not always in as close collaboration with the colonial authorities as might be assumed from a simple quantitative analysis. Whilst Kita briefly identifies that some mission societies ran better schools than others and were more amenable to introducing the state's preferred school structure and programme, he does not analyse the reasons behind this or consider the state's reactions to such disparities.²⁹⁸ In the context of this study, these differences are obviously significant as they speak to the nuances in the relationship between the colonial authorities and the Catholic mission societies, and highlight that the intentions of the state and the missions with regard to education were not always compatible.

4.4.2.2: Normal schools: differing priorities

Whilst the Annual Report on the administration of the colony in 1927, praised the normal school run by the White Fathers at Lusaka, in Katanga, because it was approaching an excellent level of teaching, other documents show that in fact the colonial administration was disappointed with the results and the direction of the

²⁹⁵ Ibid., pp.68-80.

²⁹⁶ Gahungu, *Former les Prêtres en Afrique: Le rôle des Pères Blancs*.

²⁹⁷ AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1944), pp.100-101.

²⁹⁸ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.150-151.

school.²⁹⁹ The provincial education inspector, E. Romain, reported on the schools run by the White Fathers in 1928, and complained that the Lusaka school needed to be reorganised, arguing that it needed to be better staffed as it educated both seminarians and those being trained to teach.³⁰⁰ Complaints about the White Fathers' administration of this type of school were not restricted solely to that at Lusaka. For example, a report sent to the Minister for the Colonies, Henri Jaspar, by the Governor General, Auguste Tilkens, in February 1929 outlined some reservations about the quality of the education being offered by the White Fathers in the Eastern Province as Tilkens reported that the provincial education inspector, M. Welvaert, had left 'a pessimistic impression' with his comments on their oeuvre.³⁰¹ The main problem identified by Tilkens was one of prioritisation, as the White Fathers focused on training priests in their seminary at Mugeru and channelled the most promising students into that stream of education rather than into the normal school which had also been established there.³⁰² The Governor General placed the responsibility for this decision solely with Mgr Roelens, whose absolute priority was the seminaries.³⁰³ At both Lusaka and Mugeru during the last years of the 1920s, just as the state was pushing the introduction of the 'brochure jaune', there was discord between the White Fathers and the state about how these schools should be run. It is clear from these documents that the Provincial Inspectors felt that the White Fathers were not training enough teachers, and that too much of their efforts were expended on the education of indigenous priests. The different priorities of the state and of missions were an issue that recurred frequently, as will be seen below.

These complaints about the administration of the normal schools at Lusaka and Mugeru were backed by numerous references in reports on individual schools about the perceived lack of quality of many of the monitors, or Congolese tutors employed by the White Fathers, for example Welvaert wrote that 'none of the coloured teaching

²⁹⁹ AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1927), p.116.

³⁰⁰ AA/M/650, report on Lusaka normal school by E. Romain, dated 16/07/1928.

³⁰¹ AA/M/649/11, letter from GG Tilkens to Henri Jaspar, dated 19/02/1929.

³⁰² AA/M/649/11, letter from GG Tilkens to Henri Jaspar, dated 19/02/1929; see also Welvaert's letter to the Governor of the Eastern Province, setting out complaints about Mugeru, AA/M/650/13, dated 29/11/1928; Welvaert's report on the school is AA/M/650/13, dated 29/10/1928.

³⁰³ AA/M/649/11, letter from GG Tilkens to Jaspar, dated 19/02/1929.

personnel are up to the task.³⁰⁴ However, here Welvaert also showed that his view on the development of education in the Congo was somewhat different to that set out publically by the Ministry of Colonies, as he argued that extending education to the 'great mass' of the Congolese population had no educational value and that education should be reserved for an elite only.³⁰⁵ This of course contradicted both the Ministry of Colonies and the missions' points of view, as both sought to influence as many Congolese as possible through the establishment of small village schools. It is also the case that some of those teaching in the White Fathers schools had not been trained to do so, but were seminarians or ordained priests, such as at the boys' schools at Baudouinville and Bruges St Donat-Sola.³⁰⁶ This went against the state's wish that those responsible for teaching should have pedagogic training, and supports Kita's assertion that some Catholic missions used the school subsidies to employ their religious staff in schools when they were not strictly qualified.³⁰⁷

4.4.2.3: Local considerations for mission schools

Whilst the reports which survive in the archives on the schools run by the White Fathers in the Eastern Province and the Katanga come only from one year, meaning that it not possible to trace the course of later inspections and reports, they do still give some valuable insights. As well as the differences between the missionaries and the state detailed above, the reports also shed some light on the practical problems of trying to implement a universal programme in a territory as large as the Belgian Congo. This is particularly true of the reports that were compiled by the missionary-inspectors, who were appointed to organise and direct the schools of each mission society, and who reported to the state's provincial education inspectors each year on the development of education undertaken by their particular society.

³⁰⁴ AA/M/650/13, Welvaert 'Avis et considerations', dated 10/12/1928; Welvaert letter to VGG of Eastern province, dated 11/09/1928.

³⁰⁵ AA/M/650/13, Welvaert report dated 29/10/1928; AA/M/649/8, undated report by Welvaert on White Fathers primary schools.

³⁰⁶ AA/M/650/13, report by missionary-inspector Father Arthur Van den Bulcke, undated. The teacher at the Baudouinville boys' school was Stefano Kaoze, who was the first Congolese priest to be ordained in 1917.

³⁰⁷ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.66.

There were a large number of issues which affected the application and introduction of the education system favoured by the Ministry of Colonies. One example of this is that in some cases schools were forced to close, or lost considerable numbers of their pupils for significant periods of time due to the presence in the area of diseases such as small-pox and influenza.³⁰⁸ Attendance was a big issue in the schools of the White Fathers, and was something which could be disrupted not just by disease but also wildlife, as with the presence of lions in the Tanganyika-Moëro district.³⁰⁹ A more consistent impact on school attendance was that had by the lure of paid work, in industry or on plantations. In several of his reports, the White Fathers' missionary-inspector, Arthur Van den Bulcke, reports various instances of this, and even suggests that in the Kivu area of the Eastern province young students would sometimes replace their fathers or older brothers to work on the roads, once the older man had been officially recruited.³¹⁰ Furthermore, in the same report he suggests that settlers sought to employ women and children to harvest coffee because they were physically capable of the work and a cheaper source of labour than adult men.³¹¹ Whilst it was true, as shown below, that large concession companies sought to work with missions to establish schools, there were still possibilities, and pressures, which saw children leaving school before completing their studies.

One issue also discussed in the introduction to this thesis was that of language use in schools, the case of the White Fathers shows that even within one mission society's area of work several different languages might be used in their schools. The mission station at Kasongo and at Sola in the Eastern province taught in Kiswahili, a vehicular language used across the region, whilst the schools of the Kivu missions operated in a range of maternal languages.³¹² The complexities of the language issue in the Congo clearly remained, and one issue that arose from this as a result of the pyramidal education system being introduced was not just that pupils might have to shift from

³⁰⁸ AA/M/650/13, undated report on White Fathers' schools in Katanga in 1927-1928 by Arthur Van den Bulcke, see sections on Lusaka and Murungu schools.

³⁰⁹ AA/M/650/13, E. Romain's report on rural schools run by White Fathers in Baudouinville area of Tanganyika-Moero, dated 11/7/1928, says lions in the vicinity of Kala school affected attendance.

³¹⁰ AA/M/650/13, undated report on White Fathers schools in Katanga in 1927-1928 by Arthur Van den Bulcke, see section on Albertville school; AA/M/650/13, undated report on White Fathers' schools in the Eastern province in 1927-1928 by Arthur Van den Bulcke.

³¹¹ AA/M/650/13, undated report on White Fathers' schools in the Eastern province in 1927-1928 by Arthur Van den Bulcke.

³¹² AA/M/650/13, undated report on White Fathers' schools in the Eastern province in 1927-1928 by Arthur Van den Bulcke.

learning in one language to another if they moved up to a second degree primary school or later special section, but also that those trained as monitors were often trained in a vehicular language but then had to return to teach in their mother tongue. Such issues raise further questions about how cohesive the education system that the Ministry of Colonies introduced was, especially at the lower levels where language use was so varied.

Attempts in 1929 by the White Fathers in the Eastern Province to standardize the six-week long major school holiday, were fraught with difficulties due to the varied demands of the local conditions faced by each mission station. Whilst a start date of 15th September was set, exceptions had to be made for the schools of the Ngweshe mission as many boys enrolled there were also cattle herders and had to leave depending on the onset of the dry season to move their herds to summer pastures.³¹³ The schools of Kasongo and Sola also had to take into account the arrival of rain in August when many pupils would be engaged in helping their families with agricultural work. Whilst these matters might seem trivial, they highlight the importance of local conditions in developing and applying school systems.

The Ministry of Colonies had developed a unified education programme, but the experiences of the White Fathers show that its application was subject to a variety of local forces such as language issues, employment markets, disease, and even the presence of lions. Missionaries, therefore, had to have considerable latitude in how they organised their schools, though it is clear that the administration sometimes did not approve of how mission schools were being directed. Moreover, it is also clear from the school inspection reports that Congolese people were not passive recipients of the education provided by the missions. Missionaries had to arrange the school calendar around local agricultural practices because otherwise their pupils simply would not attend at certain times of year. Complaints by missionaries about their students leaving for paid employment before they had completed their studies recurred frequently in the reports, and the same issue also arises in the state's own Annual Reports, as discussed above. Evidently, the interests of state, missions, and business continued to be in competition with each other during this period.

³¹³ AA/M/650/13, undated report on White Fathers' schools in the Eastern province in 1927-1928 by Arthur Van den Bulcke.

4.4.2.4: Roelens and the Administration

The leader of the White Fathers in the Belgian Congo, Monsignor Roelens was one of the most influential figures within the Catholic clergy in the colony, and his relationship with the colonial authorities was sometimes marked by disagreement. Stenger argues that Roelens' attitude towards co-operation with the colonial state was one of pragmatism, and that he was willing to work with the state as long as doing so did not contradict the interests of his mission.³¹⁴

Roelens set out his thoughts on education for Africans in a document sent to Edouard De Jonghe in 1930.³¹⁵ In it, a racist perception of Congolese pupils is evident, showing a belief that they lacked civilization and were 'little savages', whom rural schools sought to introduce to notions of discipline and religious morality. Roelens believed that Africans had no innate virtue and that, though capable of virtuous and courageous acts, were likely to return to their 'base instincts' if not carefully supervised.³¹⁶ In common with many missionaries, Catholic and Protestant, Roelens felt that those Africans who received instruction at anything above a very basic level were likely to leave their villages and move to the growing industrial and urban centres of the colony, a movement which he feared would create large unstable, 'deracinated', populations. In order to combat this danger, he argued in favour of limiting the numbers, especially outside the urban centres, admitted to second-degree primary schools and that education for those who were admitted was strongly centred on moral guidance, so that they might be strong enough to resist the temptations of the *cités indigènes*.³¹⁷ Roelens believed that the focus should be on extended basic primary education as far as possible because this would, he wrote, improve the state of the entire population – it would also, of course, expose more people to Catholicism.³¹⁸

On a practical level, Roelens complained that more than half of those trained as teachers had abandoned the profession to pursue higher paid jobs with European commercial concerns.³¹⁹ This was not a problem which was limited to those in this

³¹⁴ Stenger, *The White Fathers in Central Africa*, p.81.

³¹⁵ KADOC/DeJonghe/241, letter from Mgr Roelens, p.1.

³¹⁶ KADOC/DeJonghe/241/ letter from Mgr Roelens, p.5.

³¹⁷ KADOC/DeJonghe/241, letter from Mgr Roelens, p.2.

³¹⁸ KADOC/DeJonghe/241, letter from Mgr Roelens, p.2.

³¹⁹ KADOC/DeJonghe/241, letter from Mgr Roelens, p.9.

stream of education, as the Annual Reports on the administration of the colony often noted the same pattern amongst those who were training as clerks, who would often leave for relatively lucrative employment before they even completed their schooling.³²⁰ Whilst the training and retention of catechist-teachers was important to Roelens because it was they who would ensure the running of the rural schools and the expansion of Catholic influence, the missions' insistence on training so many of them rather than clerks was a cause of consternation for the Ministry of Colonies in the late 1920s.³²¹ This clearly shows that the interests of the Catholic missions and of the colonial state authorities were not always the same, and that neither was able to control as it wished to the paths chosen by those Congolese in receipt of a more advanced education. Indeed, it appears that Roelens' priorities were rather different altogether to those of the Ministry of Colonies, as he placed the training of priests above that of teachers, and the training of teachers above that of clerks, essentially reversing the Ministry's preferences.

Such a strong personality as Mgr Roelens was not always easy for the colonial government and the Ministry of Colonies to deal with. On occasion, such as in relation to the issue which arose in the 1930s of suitable accommodation for trainee Congolese healthcare workers at the *École Unique des Assistants Médicaux Indigènes*, a controversy detailed in chapter eight, he disagreed forcefully with members of the colonial administration and defended Catholic interests in a way which went against the colonial government's preferred solution. Before this, in the early 1920s, he had refused to lodge pupils taught in schools run by the White Fathers with the Salesians in Elisabethville, which perhaps touched on the issue of the various mission societies' different practices, as their shared Catholicism did not mean that they were always in agreement on the best way to conduct their missions in the Congo. V.Y. Mudimbe has identified the division of the Congo into various ecclesiastical regions which were each awarded to a different religious order as being significant because of the distinct characteristics of those orders, and some of Roelens actions also suggest these distinctions were important.³²²

³²⁰ See chapter six.

³²¹ See chapter six.

³²² V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa*, (Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1994), p.108.

4.4.2.5: The Ministry of Colonies, Roelens, and the official rural schools of the Eastern Province

As well as involving himself in the dispute over the training of medical auxiliaries in the 1930s, Mgr Roelens was also involved in a dispute over rural primary education in the Congo's Eastern province. The White Fathers were, as has been seen, a strong presence in the Kivu region of the Eastern province and focused a good deal of their attention on extending their network of rural primary schools or *chapelles-écoles*, sometimes to the annoyance of the administration's provincial inspectors. However, uniquely the provincial administration of the Eastern Province had established its own distinct education policy having identified a lack of schools in its rural areas during the early 1920s, before the introduction of the subsidy system and the 1925 education project. These rural schools were paid for from local indigenous funds, allocated by the chiefdom or sector.³²³ The section of the 1923 Annual Report on the administration of the colony compiled by the Eastern province administration states that there were 'many' of these schools and gives details of thirty-two of them, each having anywhere between sixteen and a hundred pupils.³²⁴ Following the introduction of the 1925 project which cemented the concept of collaboration between the Ministry of Colonies and the Catholic missionary societies, these schools aroused criticism from both those parties. In particular, debate surrounded the possibility that the presence of these schools in Muslim areas of the Eastern province might be encouraging Islam to flourish by imbuing it with some type of official recognition, and there was even a suggestion that Muslims were being paid to teach there by the provincial administration. These issues and the wider context of European responses to Islam in African colonies has been discussed in chapter three, however, in this case study of the White Fathers, it is pertinent to look at Mgr Roelens' involvement in this episode.

Given the aspects of Roelens' character outlined above, especially his determination to spread the mission's influence through rural schools, it is unsurprising that he saw the official rural schools in the Eastern Province as a challenge to the White Fathers' efforts in the region. The correspondence which passed between the territorial administration in the Eastern province, the Government-General, and the Ministry of

³²³ See AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), p.60, and AA/RA/CB/58/10, (1923), p.58, for details of the Eastern province policy.

³²⁴ AA/RA/CB/58/10, (1923), pp.58-9.

Colonies between 1925 and 1926 was prompted by a report by Mgr Roelens, and his agitation about the issue of Islam in schools spurred on the controversy.³²⁵ The provincial administration was instructed to strengthen its co-operation with Christian mission and was encouraged to replace its official rural schools with subsidised mission schools.³²⁶ However, this was not the policy which the provincial authority chose to adopt as the official rural schools, or sector schools as they later came to be known, continued to operate. However, some of them were transferred to the care of missionary-trained monitors.³²⁷ The 1931 Annual Report on the administration of the colony foresaw that 'in the near future' all of these schools, which by that time numbered 264, would be transferred to the missions, though an exception was maintained for those in Muslim areas and areas where the missions did not operate.³²⁸ It seems likely that, in his opposition to these schools, Mgr Roelens' major concern was to ensure that Catholicism was diffused as widely as possible through the Eastern province, and that an official, secular, system was not established in competition with the White Fathers' network of schools. In this case, though Roelens may have been genuinely concerned with stopping the spread of Islam, he also used the issue to act against the territorial administration in order to ensure Catholic dominance.

4.4.2.6: Conclusion

The pyramidal development of education was enshrined within the education system introduced after 1925, however it is significant that by 1938 only around ten per cent of the pupils in the White Fathers' first-degree primary schools progressed to the next level of schools. For the De Scheut Fathers, as shown above, the figure was more than a quarter. Furthermore, the two normal schools run by the White Fathers remained tied to their seminaries at Lusaka and Mugeru, something which state inspectors had long criticised, suggesting that the mission continued to privilege the training of priests above its obligations to the state. By 1937, the White Fathers were responsible for teaching 21,516 pupils in first degree primary schools, and 2,320 in second degree

³²⁵ AA/M/636/6, various documents. See chapter three for more on this correspondence.

³²⁶ AA/M/636/6, letter from Governor General, Rutten, to Provincial Governor, de Meulemeester, dated 27/11/1926.

³²⁷ AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1927), p.99.

³²⁸ AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.154.

primary schools, although these figures included some schools operated by the Marist Brothers who also operated in the Lake Albert region.³²⁹ The White Fathers had only 180 pupils in two normal schools, at Mugeru and Lusaka, and the group did not operate any professional school or any *école moyenne*, as schools for clerks had become known.³³⁰

This study of the relationship between the White Fathers, the Ministry of Colonies, and the territorial administration is significant because it sheds light on the complexities involved in the development of an education system where different priorities were sometimes in conflict with each other. In addition, it also shows the challenges presented by localised problems to attempts to introduce a standard programme across the colony, and highlights the significance of strong personalities in the development of colonial education, as Roelens' actions show. The White Fathers, were though, by no means the only mission whose activity in the Congo was marked by the views of a strong leader, as consideration of the Benedictines will show.

4.4.3.1: Case Study 2 - The Order of St Benedict

Whilst there were some mission societies, like the Scheut Fathers, that introduced and administered the type and number of schools that the Ministry of Colonies wished to see, there were also those, like the White Fathers, who did not always pursue the same goals. The complexities of the Ministry's relations with the Catholic mission societies are further illustrated by the case of the Order of St. Benedict, who operated in the Katanga province, where Belgian fear of foreign involvement was particularly acute, especially during the early 1920s, and resulted in a strong focus on the extent of Catholic activity in the province.³³¹ Furthermore, the Benedictines' activity, particularly in the provincial capital of Elisabethville, was marked by competition with other Catholic missions, further highlighting the nuances of the relationships between Europeans actors in the colony. The mission also formed a partnership with the *Union*

³²⁹ AA/RA/CB/59/12, (1937), p.69.

³³⁰ AA/RA/CB/59/12, (1937), p.73.

³³¹ The Order of St Benedict, also known as the Benedictines, dates back to the sixth century. The Benedictine mission to the Congo was originally sent from the Abbey of St Andrew, Bruges.

Minière du Haut-Katanga (U.M.H.K.) which will be discussed in order to illustrate some important aspects of the relationship between business and education in the colony.

4.3.2: Competition with the Salesians

The Benedictines arrived in Elisabethville in 1910, where they conducted their work in the city alongside that of the Salesian Fathers who arrived in the town in the following year.³³² As the years progressed, the discovery and exploitation of the Katanga's mineral wealth, especially its copper mines by the U.M.H.K., meant that, as its provincial capital, Elisabethville became an increasingly important urban centre.³³³ This in turn gave the missionary occupation of the town and the whole Katanga province an added importance, which turned to competition between the Benedictines and the Salesians, and also between the Catholics and the Protestant representatives there, the American Episcopal Methodists. An analysis of the development of these conflicts between missionary groups, and the colonial authorities' involvement in them, further illustrates the highly political role of education in the colony.

By the early 1920s, the Benedictines and the Salesians had both developed educational structures in Elisabethville and in other areas of the Katanga province. Up until 1924, the Salesians dominated education provision in Elisabethville itself, running both the official school for white boys as well as an official professional school for African boys which had 129 former pupils employed in the town by 1923.³³⁴ They also had schools outside the city, notably a subsidised primary school at Kiniama and an agricultural school, also subsidised, at Kafubu.³³⁵ The Benedictines, meanwhile, were recorded as focusing their attention on the frontier region of Luapula, where they had established a station at Kasenga with thirty rural schools, and also as providing curates for Panda-Likasi and Elisabethville.³³⁶ The Annual Report on the administration of the colony does not record the complete numbers of schools being run by these missions though, as

³³² Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, et al, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, p.347. The Salesians Fathers are fully titled the Salesians of Saint John Bosco, and the order was founded in 1859.

³³³ For more on the development of Elisabethville and the mining industry see Bruce Fetter, *Creation of Elisabethville*, pp.95-121; Jean-Luc Vellut, 'Mining in the Belgian Congo', pp.126-162;

³³⁴ AA/RA/CB/58/10, (1923), p.75.

³³⁵ AA/RA/CB/58/10, (1923), p.75.

³³⁶ AA/RA/CB/58/10, (1923), p.75.

they would also have been operating rural schools at each of their mission stations and in surrounding areas. This lack of information in the administration reports is typical of the years before 1925, when a more systematic recording of educational endeavours began to be introduced alongside the new education programmes.

The educational landscape in Elisabethville underwent significant changes just prior to the introduction of the 1925 project, however, as the Salesian mission encountered funding problems and was forced to give up control of its schools for Africans in the town to the Benedictines in 1924. Fetter describes that the Salesians would in fact have preferred to close part of the school for European boys but were forced to extend it instead at the behest of influential parents, and so had to withdraw funding from the schools for Africans.³³⁷ The Benedictines took over the responsibility for providing education to Africans boys in the city, and the Salesians even eventually had to move their professional school out of Elisabethville to Kafubu, where their agricultural school was already established.³³⁸ Several important factors which contributed to the Benedictines' ability to capitalise on this development and to establish themselves in a way which the Salesians were unable to do have been highlighted in earlier works, and deserve mention here. Fetter focuses on the importance of the growing personal influence of the Benedictines' leader in the Congo, Monsignor Jean-Félix De Hemptinne, who had established himself as an important figure in the Elisabethville's European community and then worked to increase the importance of his mission.³³⁹ De Hemptinne was a controversial and influential character, and a particularly staunch defender of the role of Catholic missions in the Congo, especially against Protestant competition, and his name will recur throughout this thesis.

By 1925, the Salesians had become responsible for the running of the newly-created Apostolic Prefecture of Upper Luapula (*Haut-Luapula*) in the south-east of Katanga, though the Annual Report on the administration of the colony for that year still cited Elisabethville as the centre of their activity.³⁴⁰ In fact, by this stage they had been

³³⁷ Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville: 1910-1940'*, pp.104-105.

³³⁸ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.109.

³³⁹ Jean-Felix De Hemptinne (1876-1958), was born in Ghent to a francophone family. He was the leader of the Benedictine mission in the Congo from its inception in 1910, when he became Vicar Apostolic of Katanga, a position he held until his death. He was ordained as a Bishop in 1932. On De Hemptinne in Elisabethville, see Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville: 1910-1940'*, pp.75, 104-107.

³⁴⁰ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.203.

largely pushed out of the city and replaced by the Benedictines, and were in the process of shifting the focus of their work to the central part of the Haut-Luapula district, notably at Sakania. The Salesians' leader, Monsignor Joseph Sak, became Prefect of Upper Luapula, a move which Fetter sees as compensation for having lost Elisabethville to De Hemptinne.³⁴¹ The Benedictines meanwhile continued to expand their activities in Elisabethville and the surrounding areas, having opened their school for African boys in the *cite indigène* in 1925, and having an additional 216 rural schools with 11,439 boys and 7,295 girls recorded as being enrolled.³⁴² Thereafter, the Benedictines developed their schools in accordance with the government programme, opening a school for clerks in Elisabethville in 1929, and a normal school there in 1930.³⁴³ By 1937, they had 6,640 pupils enrolled in their first degree primary schools, 358 in their second degree primary schools, 40 in their normal schools and 23 in an *école moyenne*, the successor to the school for clerks, in Elisabethville.³⁴⁴

The competition between the Benedictines and the Salesians in Elisabethville in the early 1920s is an illustration of the way in which the development of education in the colony was in some cases marked by competition between Catholic missions as much as between Catholic and Protestant groups. The division of the colony into ecclesiastical regions assigned to different groups made the religious occupation of the Congo a territorial matter, in which some prime locations – such as Elisabethville – were highly prized. Alongside the nuances observed in the relations which developed between elements of the colonial state apparatus and individual Catholic missions, examples of competition between different Catholic missions again highlight that Catholic missionary activity in the Congo cannot be seen as an homogenous movement with a unified purpose.

³⁴¹ Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville*, p.105.

Joseph Sak (1875-1946) was appointed Prefect of Upper Luapula in 1924, and later made Vicar Apostolic of Sakania in 1939.

³⁴² AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.203.

³⁴³ AA/RA/CB/59/1, (1929), p.141; AA/RA/CB/59/4, (1930), p.148.

³⁴⁴ AA/RA/CB/59/12, (1937), pp.70-74.

4.4.3.3: Collaboration with the *Union Minière*

Having established themselves at the expense of the Salesians in Elisabethville itself, the Benedictines consolidated their position as a major force in the Katanga by entering into a partnership with the U.M.H.K. under the terms of which the company would fund schools in which the missionaries would educate the children of its workers. This agreement was formed in 1926, and once more the Benedictines were chosen by the U.M.H.K. instead of the Salesians, a choice which Kita sees, in keeping with his regard for Marxist theories of class, as being not just due to the personal influence of De Hemptinne but also to the different origins of the missionaries in Belgium itself as he argues that the Salesians recruited amongst those of more modest backgrounds and so had less connections to the Belgian political and economic elite than the typically wealthier Benedictines.³⁴⁵ Fetter also suggests that the U.M.H.K., in common with the colonial authorities, feared the influence of Protestantism, and prophet movements such as Kimbanguism and Kitawala, on its workforce and so turned to the Catholics to counter it.³⁴⁶

The schools developed under this agreement were given added impetus following a decision by the U.M.H.K. to adopt new policies towards recruitment under which the company sought to employ workers for longer terms, and encouraged them to bring their wives and children to live with them in the companies' camps.³⁴⁷ The Benedictine education these children received was aimed at ensuring a continuous supply of labour to the mines by inculcating them with loyalty to the company, a relationship which Kita characterizes as the church being at the service of capital.³⁴⁸ The Catholic missionaries, of course, also benefited from the arrangement as they gained access to a new and somewhat captive audience for their religious message. By 1937, the Benedictines, based at mission stations at Elisabethville and Jadotville, were running 13 schools for the U.M.H.K. with 1232 recorded pupils.³⁴⁹ However, that the funding for these schools came from the company and not state subsidies might also have been a source of some changes during the later period as Fetter suggests that

³⁴⁵ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.48; Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.61-62.

³⁴⁶ Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville: 1910-1940'*, p.105.

³⁴⁷ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.46-48.

³⁴⁸ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.50.

³⁴⁹ AA/RA/CB/59/12, p.77.

economic conditions during the depression led the U.M.H.K. to cut funding for post-primary teaching in its camps.³⁵⁰ The link to the company also meant that schools established under this agreement were kept separate from the wider education system, just as the administration of Africans in the mining camps was kept separate from that of those in the *cit  indig ne* in Elisabethville itself.³⁵¹

The arrangement between the Benedictines and the U.M.H.K. was not unusual, and during the 1920s and 1930s other large companies formed similar partnerships with Catholic missionaries in order to found schools in the areas under their control as part of a 'stabilization of labour' policy. The *Formini re* in the Kasai region, a large diamond mining company, conferred the direction of its schools to the Scheut Fathers, for example, and the *Soci t  des Mines de Kilo-Moto* (SOKIMO) funded schools in its camps near Lake Albert run by the White Fathers, whilst the *Huileries du Congo Belge* subsidised schools run by several different mission societies on its behalf.³⁵² These arrangements were clearly an example of the much vaunted trinity of state, church, and business, working in harmony with each other in the field of education, as the agreements between the companies and the Catholic missions benefited the state because it did not have to fund education to those sections of the Congolese populations these schools reached, and also because the Catholic missions and the companies were supportive of the colonial authorities' desire to 'belgicise' the Congo. That the agreement between the Benedictines and the U.M.H.K. represents this alliance perhaps explains why it has received more attention from historians than other aspects of the missions' work. However, whilst co-operation was evident in such arrangements, it has also been seen that business could be an obstacle to the missions and to the state by recruiting school pupils before they were deemed to have completed their education.

³⁵⁰ Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville: 1910-1940*, p.148.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.157.

³⁵² See AA/RA/CB/59/10, (1935), p.80, for details of these company-funded mission schools; Richard Derksen, 'Formini re in the Kasai, 1906-1939', *African Economic History*, vol. 12, (1983), 49-65, (pp.60-61). See chapter five for more on the H.C.B. funded schools.

4.4.3.4: De Hemptinne and the colonial authorities

As alluded to above, Monsignor De Hemptinne of the Benedictines was a controversial and powerful figure within the Belgian Congo, in common with Roelens of the White Fathers, and his relationship with the colonial authorities is worthy of some attention. Whilst the Benedictine order became a strong ally of the Ministry of Colonies in its attempts to embed Belgian influence definitively in the Katanga, some of De Hemptinne's personal views, which he did not hesitate to express publically, were a source of concern for the colonial service. In chapter five of this thesis, it will be shown that De Hemptinne's attacks on Protestant missionaries working the Congo sometimes were deemed to be too extreme, even by staunchly Catholic staff in the Ministry of Colonies.³⁵³

De Hemptinne also expressed strong views on other aspects of colonial politics and administration, arguing in favour of provincial autonomy for Katanga during the 1920s, something which the province had enjoyed to some extent before the organisation of the other provinces in the 1910s.³⁵⁴ During the Second World War he sought the colony's withdrawal from the conflict, though his efforts were overruled by Pierre Ryckmans, the Governor General.³⁵⁵ The impact of this position on the post-war relationship between the Catholic missions and the colonial state is difficult to assess, as evidently the change in government had a huge impact in that regard, and Ryckmans left office in 1946, but it is possible that De Hemptinne's criticisms were not forgotten and that they raised questions as to the loyalty of the missionaries to the state.

4.4.3.5: The Benedictines and Protestant missions

The relationship between the colonial authorities and Christian missions of different denominations is central to understanding the role of education in the Belgian Congo and is, as such, one of the main aspects of this thesis. Mgr De Hemptinne was a fierce

³⁵³ See chapter five.

³⁵⁴ Bogumil Jewsiewicki, 'Belgian Africa', in A.D. Roberts, (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 7: From 1905-1940*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.460-491, (p.488).

³⁵⁵ Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville: 1910-1940*, p.173; Guy Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, p.137; Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo*, p.223.

opponent of Protestant activity in the colony, viewing them as a foreign influence and a political threat, and his Benedictine mission became a strong ally in the state's efforts to combat the spread of foreign influence. The origins of the state's fears of foreign inference in the Congo are examined in chapter three, and their continued significance with regards to the Protestant missions is discussed in chapter five. This campaign to 'belgicise' the Congo took on an added significance in the Katanga as not only was it the colony's most productive province, its inclusion in the Congo Free State had been subject to debate in the 1880s and 1890s and fear of British interest in the colony was maintained in the 1920s, exacerbated by its proximity to the British colonies of Rhodesia and Nyassaland.³⁵⁶

Concerns about the Protestant presence in Katanga were evident in the responses received to the Ministry of Colonies' 1917 questionnaire on education, in which several respondents raised the matter, especially in replies focussed on language issues. The threat from the spread of English was raised by the Higher Deputy of Tanganyika-Moero district, in the Katanga, who mentioned the danger from the spread of non-Belgian European languages several times in the course of his answers to just five questions on language.³⁵⁷ While he does not mention English specifically, it seems most likely to be the language to which he was referring. The response given by Reverend Springer of the Methodist Episcopal Church caused some consternation within the Belgian colonial service, and the Minister for the Colonies' attention was specifically drawn to his comments by the Governor General.³⁵⁸ Springer's responses to the questionnaire stated that the Methodist Episcopal Church taught in native languages, and in English as well as French. Interestingly, when asked whether it would not be better to teach exclusively in one of the Belgian national languages, Springer states that because there were a high number of Rhodesian workers in good positions, and who spoke English, most Congolese in the Katanga wanted to learn English also. In fact, he adds that most Belgians spoke in English to their 'boys', or personal employees.

³⁵⁶ On the early occupation of the Katanga, see Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, p.119-140.

³⁵⁷ AA/M/645 (booklet).

³⁵⁸ AA/M/645/2, letter from GG Rutten to Minister Franck dated 11/05/1918. For a contemporary account of the early development of the Methodist Episcopal Church mission to the Congo written by the Reverend in question, see John McKendree Springer, *Pioneering in the Congo*, (New York: The Katanga Press, 1916).

The influence of the American Methodists within Elisabethville, and of Protestants within the Katanga more broadly, became a matter in which the state and the Benedictines shared a common goal, with the Ministry of Colonies keen to reduce foreign influence as far as possible and the Benedictines interested in extending the reach of Catholicism. The mission's role in this campaign to strengthen Belgian influence in the region was noted in the Annual Reports on the administration of the colony during the early 1920s, especially in the Luapula border areas.³⁵⁹ Fetter and Kita agree that in fact, the Methodists' influence in Elisabethville was reduced dramatically by the late 1920s as a result of the decrease in the number of Rhodesian workers coming to Katanga, and because of the Methodists' exclusion from U.M.H.K. camps.³⁶⁰ However, it is clear that the spread of Belgian influence and the corresponding countering of foreign influence remained important during these years, as the impact of the Benedictines based at Kasenga in combating the Garenganze Evangelical Mission at Munene was noted approvingly in a report on the operation of their schools there in 1927.³⁶¹ This report also stated that a 'notable section' of the population in this frontier region was under English influence, and it is evident that the work of the Benedictines was considered vital in this area.

However, the influence of Protestant missions in the Katanga, which in 1933 became the Province of Elisabethville, was not eliminated by any means as the Garenganze Evangelical Mission had over 17,000 pupils in its schools by 1937, whilst the Methodist Episcopal Church had over 11,000, and they were not the only Protestants operating in the region.³⁶² However, the vast majority of these were in rudimentary branch schools as these missions, excluded from the subsidy system, could not compete in the provision of higher primary and post-primary education.

4.4.3.6: Conclusion

The Benedictines became therefore, despite the sometimes controversial political positions taken by De Hemptinne, a significant ally for the Ministry of Colonies in its

³⁵⁹ AA/RA/CB/58/11, (1924), p.84.

³⁶⁰ Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville: 1910-1940*, p.106; Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.50-51.

³⁶¹ AA/M/648/19, report by E. Romain on Kasenga schools, dated 2/10/1927.

³⁶² AA/RA/CB/59/12, (1937), p.81.

campaign to combat foreign influence in the colony, especially that of the Protestant missions. This was a role that they shared with other Catholic mission societies and which was a highly significant element in the development of the education system designed and implemented by the state during the interwar years. However, this did not mean that they necessarily shared a common purpose with other Catholic missions in all things, as shown by their competition with the Salesians for the control of Elisabethville's schools in the early 1920s. The partnership between the Benedictines and the U.M.H.K. developed schools in the company's mining camps which fell outside the bounds of the mainstream education system, but illustrates that business played a double role in education in the Congo, as both provider and recruiter, and that whilst the former was seen as beneficial for the colonial authorities, the latter has been shown elsewhere to have been problematic.

4.4.4.1: Case Study 3: Trappists

Whilst Catholic missionaries were undoubtedly the Belgian authorities' closest allies in providing education in the Congo, relations between the two groups were not always without difficulties. Much depended on attitudes towards particular situations – such as the controversies described in the chapters examining education for indigenous healthcare workers and gendered education programmes – and complexity was added to some matters because of the strong personalities involved, like Roelens of the White Fathers and De Hemptinne of the Benedictines, for example. Despite some conflicts, though, these missions were still able to work with the colonial authorities to provide education, even if there was sometimes cause for debate or a need for compromise. However, a case study of the Trappist mission which operated in the colony from 1895 to 1924 shows that it was not always possible for Catholic missionaries to work within the system devised by the Ministry of Colonies. It must also be remembered that the Belgian authorities and the Catholic mission societies were not operating in isolation, and that there were a number of other parties who influenced the relations governing the development of education in the colony at various times, and in various places. The roles of the Protestant missions and of businesses will be addressed later, as their impact was particularly significant. An

examination of the involvement of Trappist monks and priests in the Congo serves to illustrate that disagreements between those deployed in the colony itself and their religious superiors in both Belgium and Rome could impact on schools in the Congo.

In 1895 the Trappists had been one of the orders which had responded to Léopold II's call for Belgian missionaries to enter the Congo, with monks and priests from the Abbey of Westmalle travelling to the colony.³⁶³ However, unlike some other orders who were always dedicated to the evangelisation of as broad a section of the indigenous population as possible, the Trappists arrived in the Congo hoping to establish a monastery modelled on those they belonged to in Belgium.³⁶⁴ Having come to see that the realisation of this aim would be unlikely to happen for many years, the Trappist missionaries turned to the same methods of evangelisation and education adopted by other Catholic groups, and became a part of the nascent education system which developed in the Congo. Based in the Equateur region, by 1919 the Trappists established a network of five main mission stations concentrated in the Equateur district of the region and which by 1922 were home to around a dozen priests, some monks, and another dozen mainly Dutch nuns from the *Précieux Sang*, or Holy Blood, order. These stations were estimated to be responsible for 25,000 baptised adherents, although the validity of such figures is open to question.³⁶⁵

³⁶³ Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, p.147. The order is properly known as the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, and the name Trappist derives from the La Trappe Abbey in Normandy where the order was founded in 1664. The Trappist mission to the Congo was sent by the Abbey of Westmalle.

³⁶⁴ AA/M635/1 (Mission des Trappistes, Divers): undated note on the history of the Trappists in the Congo, written by a representative of the De Scheut mission (name illegible), apparently dating from around 1924.

³⁶⁵ AA/RA/CB/58/6, p.28 (1919 Annual Report); see also AA/M/635/1 (Mission des Trappistes, Divers): undated note on the history of the Trappists in the Congo, written by a representative of the De Scheut mission (name illegible), apparently dating from around 1924. On conversion statistics, Bogumil Jewsiewicki notes that the Catholic missions included child baptisms when calculating numbers of conversions, whilst the Protestants did not baptise children, 'Belgian Africa', p.472. Louis Franck suggested that the Catholics sought to evangelize as many Congolese as possible whilst the Protestant were more concerned with achieving the 'profound conversion' of a few – *Le Congo Belge*, volume one, p.315.

4.4.4.2: Trappists and land policy

Whilst the Trappist mission appeared to be expanding in common with other societies operating across the colony there were in fact a number of issues which arose surrounding their work in the Congo during the period 1922-1925 which throw further light on the complexities of mission and government co-operation in the colony. Firstly, problems emerged from the application of government directives on land division and occupation, an enormously complicated issue in the colony as missionaries, businesses, and Christian and non-Christian Congolese often competed for 'ownership' or rights of occupation for land. As Dirk Beke explains, under Leopold II the Congo Independent State had claimed ownership of much supposedly 'vacant' land for the state or for the monarch himself, but had also recognised the existence of customary rights of the indigenous populations.³⁶⁶ However, whilst the recognition of these customary land rights was passed into the laws of the Belgian Congo after 1908, they were never clearly delineated and so complex situations over land usage arose.³⁶⁷ Indigenous populations were given rights of occupation and cultivation in areas they inhabited but not actual rights of ownership. Large areas were given over in concession to European companies and the state also ceded land to missions in order to facilitate their works. The establishment of Christian villages had further complicated this situation.

Georges Van Der Kerken, governor of the Equateur province from 1919 to 1924, and a strong supporter of Louis Franck's desire to establish a system of government inspired by indirect rule, put forward proposals suggesting how land use rights should be determined in the Equator province.³⁶⁸ These apparently brought the government into conflict with some of the Catholic mission societies, including the Trappists as the new guidelines would have meant some Christian villages being deemed to be illegally located. A letter written to Director General of the Ministry of the Colonies in 1922 by the Abbott of Westmalle, P. Grégoire, suggested that Christian villages which had

³⁶⁶ Dirk Beke, 'Land-law in Belgian Central Africa' in Jap de Moor and Dietmar Rothermund (eds), *Our Laws, Their Lands: Land Laws and Land Use in Modern Colonial Societies*, (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 1994), pp.57-67, (p. 58).

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Georges Van Der Kerken (1888-1953) went on to become a professor at the Belgian Colonial University in Anvers, and wrote several books on the Congo mainly focused on Belgian colonial policy and ethnographic studies of the Mongo peoples. On his involvement in land and administration policy, see Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, pp.392-393.

previously been deemed to be located legally on '*terrain libre*' or vacant land had been reassessed as actually being situated on the land of an unnamed 'malevolent company'.³⁶⁹ Grégoire suggested that this decision had been motivated by pressure from the company, who only superficially supported the mission's civilising efforts and who did not want Christians on their land.³⁷⁰ This illustrates how the colonial authorities, in Belgium and in the Congo, could be subject to conflicting demands from missionaries on one side and from businesses on another. Grégoire does not, however, explain why he believes a company would be averse to Christians inhabiting land under their control, but it may be that Congolese Christian converts were thought to be under the protection of the missions, or that they were considered to be more independent-minded than other Congolese.

4.4.4.3: Trappist Leadership in Belgium

During the period 1922-1924, the position of the Trappist mission in the Equateur came to be at the centre of some debate between the missionaries in the colony and their superiors in Belgium, under Grégoire's leadership. The missionaries in the Congo were keen to expand their endeavours, applying for funding for the construction of a girls' school at Coquilhatville and a boys' professional school at Bamania.³⁷¹ The proposal for the girls' school caused some concern for the government as it was initially suggested that it should be staffed by Trappist sisters, which would not have been in line with the authorities' policy of only encouraging native Belgians as missionaries, because the Trappist nuns already in the Congo were mostly of Dutch origin. Duchesne, as acting Governor of the Equateur region suggested that the running of the school should in fact be placed in the hands of the Augustine Canonesses (*Chanoinesses de St Augustin*) as there was 'no question of conferring solely to foreigners' the direction of classes which should necessarily conform 'to the national mentality and aspirations.'³⁷² This again highlights the stress placed on the

³⁶⁹ AA/M/635/1, letter from P. Grégoire to Director General Postiaux, dated 29/01/1923; AA/RA/CB/58/9, p.42.

³⁷⁰ AA/M/635/1, letter from P. Grégoire to Director General Postiaux, dated 29/01/1923.

³⁷¹ AA/M/635/2, letters exchanged between 1922-1924 between Duchesne(acting Governor of the Equateur Province), Governor General Rutten, Governor General Lippens, Robert Brepoels (Trappist), and Anseline Le Bail (Abbott of Chimay, who visited Trappist mission in Congo in 1922).

³⁷² AA/M/365/2, letter from Duchesne to Governor General Rutten, dated 28/6/1923.

importance of the so-called 'belgicisation' of the colony, even with regards to Catholic missionaries who might otherwise be considered close allies of Belgian colonial efforts whatever their nationality. The running of the Coquilhatville girls' school was eventually placed in the hands of the Belgian Daughters of Charity (*Filles de la Charité de Belgique*) in 1924.³⁷³

As Trappist missionaries and the government in the Congo discussed the establishment of new schools and the extension of subsidies to them, discord arose between the missionaries in the colony and the order's leadership in Belgium. Debate centred on the nature of the mission's essential purpose, as the missionaries in the colony seemed content to pursue broad evangelism whilst Abbot Grégoire believed the time had come to return to a primary focus on monastic life.³⁷⁴ This dispute arose after a decision in 1922 by the Belgian Trappist leadership to reiterate their commitment to their original ethos and to turn away from the foundation of any more missions or the expansion of that already in existence.³⁷⁵ Grégoire therefore refused to send any further support or personnel to the mission in the Equateur, and those already there were given the choice of returning to Europe or retreating to the mission station at Bamanian and turning it into a monastery.³⁷⁶ This decision prompted the Trappist missionaries in the colony to withdraw from one of their mission stations, reducing the number to four by ceding that at Bokote to the Sacred Heart Mission, in order that they might have enough personnel to staff the professional school at Bamanian for which they were seeking funding.³⁷⁷ However by this stage, in 1924, negotiations were already underway between other mission groups as to who might be able to take over the area for which the Trappists were responsible.³⁷⁸ Eventually, the Trappist mission

³⁷³ AA/RA/CB/58/11, (1924), p.48.

³⁷⁴ AA/M/635/1 (Mission des Trappistes, Divers): undated note on the history of the Trappists in the Congo, written by a representative of the De Scheut mission (name illegible), apparently dating from around 1924.

³⁷⁵ AA/M/635/1 (Mission des Trappistes, Divers): undated note on the history of the Trappists in the Congo, written by a representative of the De Scheut mission (name illegible), apparently dating from around 1924.

³⁷⁶ AA/M/635/1 (Mission des Trappistes, Divers): undated note on the history of the Trappists in the Congo, written by a representative of the De Scheut mission (name illegible), apparently dating from around 1924.

³⁷⁷ AA/RA/CB/58/11, p.48; AA/M/635/1, letter from Duchesne to Rutten dated 5/05/1924.

³⁷⁸ AA/M/635/1, letter from Duchesne to Rutten dated 5/05/1924; AA/RA/CB/58/11, p.48.

in the Congo was dissolved in 1925 and its remaining stations and schools were taken over by the Sacred Heart mission.³⁷⁹

4.4.4.4: Conclusion

The short-lived Trappist mission in the Belgian Congo is significant because it illustrates a problem of incompatibility between a particular religious ethos and the government's growing commitment to expanding the missionary occupation, and the concomitant education provision, in the colony. This case also highlights the potential for differences of opinion between Catholic missionaries actually at work in the colony and their distant superiors in Belgium itself, showing once again that, just as with the Belgian colonial authorities, the Catholic missions cannot be seen as a monolithic or homogenous entity.

4.5: Chapter Conclusion

During the interwar period the number of Catholic missionaries active in the Congo increased enormously, to 3,068 in 1939, with 323 mission stations divided amongst many different groups.³⁸⁰ The impression this gives is certainly one of fruitful collaboration between the colonial state and the missions, but this chapter has shown the situation to be a considerably more complicated one than such an assessment allows. Whilst the colonial authorities were consistently happy with the actions of the some missions with whom they collaborated in the field of education, such as the Scheut Fathers, the case study of the activity of the White Fathers shows that at times they were forced to collaborate with missions who did not have precisely the same aims as them. The discord over the types of education offered by the White Fathers in the Eastern Province and Katanga, and the way in which it was delivered, showed that the state's provincial education inspectors were capable of criticising missionaries and that their reports were not simply routine. They highlight the differences in focus between some missions and the state authorities, as the White Fathers preferred to

³⁷⁹ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.73.

³⁸⁰ AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1944), p.99.

concentrate their efforts on training priests rather than meeting the political and economic needs of the state by training teachers and clerks as required.

The complex role played by business, the third element in the 'colonial trinity', is shown by its differing role in each of the three studies. In the early 1920s, the Trappists found their adherents and, therefore themselves, portrayed as an obstacle to a commercial enterprise. Later though, commerce was seen to both support education through funding, as in the case of the arrangement between the U.M.H.K. and the Benedictines, and also to undermine it by drawing pupils away from schools, as in the complaints made by the White Fathers.

All three case studies also highlight the role played by strong personalities, especially mission leaders, in the development of schools and in the application of the state's programmes as well as in shaping policy itself. Both Mgr Roelens, in his attack on the official rural schools, and Mgr De Hemptinne, in his manoeuvring against the Salesians and his agitating against the Protestants, showed that they were able to manipulate the Ministry of Colonies' policies in order to better the position of their own particular mission society. The early competition in Elizabethville between the Salesians and the Benedictines highlights the fact that Catholic missions were sometimes in competition with each other as well as with the Protestants in their midst.

Finally, the case study of the relatively short-lived Trappist mission to the Congo shows that the development of education in the Congo was not simply a matter of the state passing subsidies and responsibilities to whatever mission happened to be operating in an area of the colony. The Trappists' own ethos caused them to quit the colony just as the state was preparing to expand its support to Catholic missions, both financially as well as figuratively, but the discord between the Trappists in the colony and their leadership in Belgium also shows that Catholic missions could experience the same splits between centre and periphery, and between decision-makers and those charged with implementing decisions, as the colonial authorities sometimes did.

In sum, this chapter has shown that the situation regarding the development of education in the Congo during the interwar period cannot simply be considered in terms of collaboration between the colonial authorities and the Catholic missions, still less as a mission-led process in which the state took little direct interest. Rather, the

1920s and 1930s saw the Ministry of Colonies and the territorial administration play a pivotal role in the development of schools. Officials typically maintained constant contact with the missions about the direction and content of their education programmes. Education policy and its application was thus a site of contestation and negotiation where the sometimes complementary, sometimes competing priorities of the Church and the state met. Moreover, it is evident that the education system introduced was subject to local variations and difficulties, and that the relationship between the colonial authorities and the missions was frequently characterised by discord as much as collaboration.

Chapter Five: Colonial Allies or Foreign Rivals? The Belgian Colonial Authorities and the Protestant Missions

5.1: Introduction

Having examined, through the previous chapter's case studies, the main aspects of the relationship between the Belgian colonial authorities and the Catholic mission societies, it now seems pertinent to consider the role played by Protestant mission groups. To that end, this chapter begins by briefly examining the early development of Protestant mission work in the C.I.S., before analysing the policies adopted toward Protestant activity during the 1920s and 1930s. It will focus on how far the Ministry of Colonies and the government-general really distinguished between the 'foreign' and the 'Protestant' – as they often professed to, and will consider the extent to which the Protestant groups were portrayed as a hostile 'other' within the colony. Whilst examining the various outbreaks of discord between the Protestants, parts of the colonial state apparatus, and the Catholic missionaries operating in the Congo, close attention will be given to the questions which arose surrounding the group identity of Congolese Protestants. In order to contextualise and illustrate the issues raised in this chapter, particular references will be made to the development of the Baptist Missionary Society and especially its educational endeavours in the Congo, as the group emerged as one of the biggest Protestant missions in the Congo with stations spread across the colony and its activities provoked some of the bitterest controversies of the period.

Central to the debates between the Belgian colonial authorities and the Protestant missions was the issue of discrimination, particularly in terms of funding through subsidies and official recognition of the qualifications awarded by schools. As has been shown previously, these advantages were awarded to Catholic missions throughout the period in question, and the Catholics played a major role in developing the structure and content of the education programmes introduced in the colony. In examining the development of Belgian policies towards such matters, this chapter will focus on the concept of identity formulation and the importance of the 'belgicisation' of the Congo. With regard to this concept, the non-Belgian origins of the Protestant missions, and their appeals to the British and American governments about their

treatment in the Congo, are also addressed here, as they throw further light on the impact of Belgian fears of international intervention in the Congo, as previously mentioned in chapter three.

Moreover, in detailing the differences of opinion which arose between various parties within the Belgian colonial administration, this chapter will seek to establish the major protagonists behind such policies and their motivations, as well as highlighting dissension from this orthodoxy. The expression of such dissent, particularly during the 1930s, shows that support for the policy of subsidizing exclusively the Catholic missions was not unanimous during the interwar period, and suggests that the roots of the changes to this policy which took place between 1946-1948, when the subsidy regime was extended to the Protestants, can be traced back to the pre-war years.

5.2: Existing Literature

As in the case of the Catholic mission groups discussed in the previous chapter, much of the older literature addressing Protestant missions generally focused on portrayals of the 'pioneering' and 'civilizing' elements of their work, particularly in the form of institutional histories, often written by members of the groups themselves. Many such works were published in the very early years of the twentieth century, whilst the missionaries were in the process of occupying the colony, and were often appeals for aid and funding from their supporters at home.³⁸¹ However, some works of this type continued to be published many years later.³⁸² Whilst these accounts offer little in the way of critical analysis, they remain useful as sources of information, and the very early accounts shed light on contemporary missionary attitudes towards the role of mission work and conceptions of race, for example.

³⁸¹ F. S. Arnot, *Garenganze: A Review of Twenty-One Years' Pioneer Work in the Heart of Africa*, (Glasgow: Pickering & Inglis, 1902); Royal J. Dye, *Bolenge: A Story of Gospel Triumphs on the Congo*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Foreign Christian Missionary Society, 1910); H. Sutton Smith, *Yakusu: The Very Heart of Africa*, (London: Marshall Brothers, 1911); William H. Sheppard, *Presbyterian Pioneers in Congo*, (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1917); Robert Dabney Bedinger, *Triumphs of the Gospel in the Belgian Congo*, (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1920); Max Wood Moorhead, *Missionary Pioneering in Congo Forests: A Narrative of the Labours of William F.P. Burton and his Companions in the Native Villages of Luba-Land*, (Preston, 1922); W.Y. Fullerton, *The Christ of the Congo River*, (London: Carey Press, 1928).

³⁸² See, for example, John R. Crawford, *Protestant Missions in Congo, 1878-1969*, (Kinshasa, 1969); Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992).

Again in parallel with works examining Catholic missionaries, more recent works by historians such as Andrew Porter and Norman Etherington have considered the relationships between Protestant mission groups and colonial governments with a more critical eye, and have highlighted the differences in approach which often characterized mission/government relations.³⁸³ However, the major focus of these works has often been the role of British Protestant missions in British colonies, with less attention being paid to the role of the same mission societies in other empires such as that of Belgium.

However, the tense relationship between the Belgian colonial authorities and Protestant missions active in the Congo, as well as the role of Catholic missions in the debates on the subject, are matters which have long attracted attention. Much of this has been focussed on the C.I.S. period, and the involvement of some Protestant missionaries in supplying information to E.D. Morel and the Congo Reform Association for use in the campaign against the rule of Leopold II.³⁸⁴ Markowitz's exploration of the entirety of the relationship between the various parties throughout the period of Belgian rule is a most valuable study in this field, but his discussion of the dispute over education is brief, and does not address the development of the debates in depth.³⁸⁵

Pierre Kita Masandi, in his study of Belgian education policy in the Congo, pays little attention to the broader international setting of the Belgian policy of exclusion towards the Protestant mission societies, preferring to briefly establish the fact of their exclusion and then not to discuss their role further.³⁸⁶ Though he does mention the debates concerning the application of the terms of the Berlin Act, he does not engage with the development of the arguments surrounding the terms of the Act.³⁸⁷ This chapter will focus on these debates in some detail, in order to illustrate that whilst Belgian education policy might appear to have been static during the interwar period, it was located within a shifting political context where different motivations caused the same policy to be reinforced and fiercely defended. The tentative steps taken by

³⁸³ Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion 1700-1914*, (Manchester University Press, 2004); Andrew Porter, (ed.), *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003); Norman Etherington, (ed.), *Missions and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³⁸⁴ Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa, 1450-1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.435-7.

³⁸⁵ Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.65-6.

³⁸⁶ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.54-62.

³⁸⁷ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.60.

Governor General Pierre Ryckmans in the late 1930s towards altering the policy of exclusion, and the response of the Ministry of Colonies, which are analysed below, show that the Ministry of Colonies chose again and again to continue the policy of exclusion, not because of a lack of alternative, but because it was deemed to remain necessary. In looking at how the Protestants came to be presented as an alien presence in the colony, it will be seen that their representation as an 'other' was significant in giving an oppositional focus to education policy, and also in binding the Ministry of the Colonies and the Catholic missions more closely together. However, this analysis will again stress the importance of the personal politics of some of the major characters involved in policy formulation, and the differences between them. This will highlight the fact that, behind the facade of the unified colonial ideology which Kita identifies, there lay significant nuances and fractures. Furthermore, both Kita and Markowitz locate the change of policy which finally included the Protestants in the subsidy system as being an exclusively post-war development, whilst this study shows that the beginnings of moves in this direction can be seen in the 1930s.³⁸⁸

5.3: Early Protestant Activity

Protestant missionary activity in the Congo basin predated the foundation of the C.I.S. in 1885. Tracing the roots of their ambitions back to David Livingstone's exploits in central Africa, several Protestant groups became determined to penetrate the then unknown interior of the territory and to evangelize the populations there. Even before news of H.M. Stanley's westwards navigation down the Congo River from Nangwe to Boma reached London in 1877, the Baptist Missionary Society had accepted funding from a benefactor named Robert Arthington for the establishment of a station on the Congo.³⁸⁹ The first B.M.S. station in the region was founded at São Salvador in the Portuguese-controlled area of the Congo basin (later Angola) in 1879.³⁹⁰ That station was preceded by two belonging to the Livingstone Inland Mission (L.I.M.) at Matadi

³⁸⁸ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.194-5; Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.65.

³⁸⁹ Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, p.279; Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.1; Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, pp.142-3; Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, p.118.

³⁹⁰ Stanley, p.120.

and Palaba.³⁹¹ Over the following years the B.M.S. sought to extend its work along the Congo River, establishing stations at Tunduwa (Underhill station) in 1882, Ngombe Lutete (Wathen station) in 1884, and Kinshasa in 1884.³⁹² Also in that year, the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (A.B.F.M.S) took over the stations of the L.I.M, marking the arrival of missionaries from the United States in the Congo.³⁹³

The B.M.S. was initially courted by Leopold II during his campaign to secure control of the Congo, and the society supported the King's cause at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.³⁹⁴ B.M.S. stations were established at Lukolela (1886, closed 1895), Bolobo (1888), Upoto and Monsembe (1890), Yakusu (1896), Yalamba (1905), and further upriver at Wayika and Mabondo (1911).³⁹⁵ Despite their support for the foundation of the C.I.S. and Leopold II's favourable early attitude towards the society, Stanley reports that the B.M.S. found their attempts to secure land for the Yakusu and Yalamba stations hindered by state authorities.³⁹⁶ The reasons for such an attitude can most likely be traced to Leopold's change of policy during the 1890s, when he decided to pursue the 'nationalisation' of the Congo and to encourage only Belgian Catholic missionaries to establish stations there. Later problems might also have been due to the involvement of some Protestant missionaries in publicising the cruelties of the Leopoldian regime, which eventually led to the annexation of the territory by the Belgian state.³⁹⁷ Interestingly, Stanley and Porter note that, as an institution, the B.M.S. was notably quiet on the subject of the reported atrocities until as late as 1905.³⁹⁸ However, this lack of involvement in the campaign against Leopold would do the B.M.S. no favours when it came to the attitude of the new Belgian colonial administration towards Protestant mission groups.

³⁹¹ Stanley, p.119.

³⁹² Stanley, p.123.

³⁹³ Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo*, p.46.

³⁹⁴ Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.2; Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1966), pp.365-6; Stanley, p.128; Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, p.283.

³⁹⁵ Stanley, pp.124-134; See also W.Y. Fullerton, *The Christ of the Congo River*, (London: Carey Press, 1928).

³⁹⁶ Brian Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, pp.133-4. For a contemporary B.M.S. account of the founding of Yakusu station see H. Sutton Smith, *Yakusu: The Very Heart of Africa*, (London: Marshall Brothers Ltd., 1911), pp.184-191.

³⁹⁷ See chapter four for more on Leopold's policy, and the Introduction for more on the CRM campaign and Belgian annexation. On Protestant involvement in the campaign against the C.I.S., see Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.5-7.

³⁹⁸ Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword* p.5; Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, pp.309-310; Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, pp.135-139.

From these beginnings, the Protestant missionary occupation in the Congo grew to include some 39 different mission societies by 1944, most of American, British, or Scandinavian origin and who by that time had 750 missionaries and around 650,000 followers.³⁹⁹ Whilst this did not match the Catholic missions who, as we have already seen, counted over 3,000 missionaries by the same point, it did mean that the Protestants were a notable minority amongst the European population with a significant influence upon at least a proportion of the Congolese population. The remainder of this chapter will examine how the Belgian colonial authorities reacted to this influence and why the Protestant missions were subject to a policy of exclusion. In doing so, it will be shown that the Protestants were stigmatised as an outside and potentially malign presence within colonial education, and colonial society more broadly.

5.4.1: Protestant Challenge to the Belgian Conception of the Congo

The C.R.A. campaign had undoubtedly helped to identify the Protestant missionaries in the colony as having the potential to act in ways that were counter to government interests. The sense of paranoia regarding foreign interest in the Congo has already been broadly identified and discussed in chapter three, as have the central roles assigned to teaching and language usage in schools as part of attempts to form a 'belgicised' Congolese populace. Chapter four has explored how this was one factor which motivated the Ministry of Colonies' policy of subsidizing Catholic mission schools. However, it is now necessary to examine the challenge which the growing number of Protestant missions operating in the Congo presented to this policy, and the questions that their presence posed for the Belgian authorities and their attempts to strengthen and extend the power of the colonial state.

5.4.2.1: Protestant Missions and Education - Theory

For many Protestant mission groups education was a central pillar in their evangelical efforts as missionaries. From the outset, they had focused a good deal of their

³⁹⁹ AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1944), pp.102-103.

attention on learning local languages and on producing vernacular translations of the Bible.⁴⁰⁰ For such works to have their intended impact, some level of literacy in the indigenous populations was desirable, as was the training of African teacher-evangelists – the equivalent of the Catholic monitors – who would spread the Protestant creed amongst their own communities. It is important to examine though, before considering the relationship with the Belgian colonial authorities in regards to education, the wider aims which lay behind Protestant missionary education and the methods through which these aims were pursued. It is also necessary to consider whether there were significant differences in educational practices between the Protestants and their Catholic counterparts. Whilst it is clear that practices may have varied to some extent between the various Protestant groups operating in the Congo, it is still the case that there were general themes which framed the efforts of the Protestant missions. These general trends can be identified by examining some of the discussions and exchanges of ideas which took place on an international level between Protestant groups.

5.4.2.1: The American Example: Adapted Education

During the early years of the twentieth century, Protestant teaching methods and theories were strongly influenced by ideas emerging from the United States which focussed on the ‘adaption’ of education to suit the perceived needs and abilities of African-Americans. Within missionary discourse on educating Africans during this period, much attention was paid to the examples set in the United States by the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, founded in Virginia in 1870 by Samuel C. Armstrong, and the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, founded in Alabama in 1881 under the leadership of Booker T. Washington, which both sought to provide education for African-Americans in order that they might, for example, become teachers in small community schools or gain employment in agriculture or industry. The educational methods employed in these establishments focused on morality and

⁴⁰⁰ On missionaries and translation see Paul Landau, ‘Language’, in Norman Etherington, (ed.), *Missions and Empire*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.194-215.

on manual labour and trade skills, with very limited literary content.⁴⁰¹ The Institutes in the United States had strong ties to church and missionary movements there, and came to be held up by many within the Protestant missionary movement as the paradigm for what might be achieved by missionary educators in African colonies.⁴⁰²

The philosophy behind the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes developed during the period following the American Civil War, when, despite the end of slavery, the socio-economic position of African-Americans – especially those in the Southern states – remained low. Booker T. Washington, who became one of the most prominent African-American figures during the period was, until his death in 1915, the most well-known black proponent of the view that industrial education was a necessary step for the African-American population if it were to improve its own circumstances, and that through making the small steps that seemed possible in the negative political atmosphere of the era, larger progress might become more likely.⁴⁰³ Though this view was not universally popular amongst African-Americans themselves, some of whom – most notably W.E.B. Dubois - saw it as being unnecessarily limiting and as supporting the social and political divisions imposed by whites, Washington's ideas were widely adopted by missionaries operating in Africa.⁴⁰⁴

However, it is important to recognise that once adopted by the mainly white missionaries operating in Africa, the conceptual framework lying behind the introduction of 'adapted' education – as Washington's theories came to be known – shifted as negative views of the academic capabilities of Africans came to the fore. Conceptions of race in missionary thought seem to have developed largely along the same lines as in wider society where ideas hardened during the late-nineteenth

⁴⁰¹ Booker T. Gardner, 'The Educational Contributions of Booker T. Washington', *Journal of Negro Education*, Vol.44, No.4, (Autumn, 1975), pp.502-518 (pp.508-9); See chapter three for more on Belgian government's wariness of these Institutes and refusal to accept any graduates from them as teachers in Congo due to fears of pan-Africanism.

⁴⁰² Norman Etherington, 'Education and Medicine', in *Missions and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.261-284, (pp.270-271).

⁴⁰³ On Booker T. Washington's pedagogic philosophy see Booker T. Gardner, 'The Educational Contributions of Booker T. Washington', pp.502-518; Robert J. Norell, 'Booker T. Washington: Understanding the Wizard of Tuskegee', *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 42 (Winter, 2003-2004), pp.96-109.

⁴⁰⁴ On Dubois' criticism of Washington see Daniel Walden, 'The Contemporary Opposition to the Political and Educational Ideas of Booker T. Washington', *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1960), pp.103-115, (pp.109-112). See chapter three of this thesis for more on Dubois and pan-Africanism.

century and a clearly defined racial hierarchy enshrining white superiority became part of the prevailing Western orthodoxy.⁴⁰⁵ There were a range of theories about African 'educability' but all were essentially founded on the idea of their racial and cultural inferiority.⁴⁰⁶ Africans were seen as lacking in 'civilization' and in need of careful supervision and tutelage so that they might achieve 'progress', as defined according to Western standards. In time, missionary attitudes towards Congolese cultures developed to include a recognition that some aspects of their traditions were not without value though some practices, such as polygamy, were still condemned.⁴⁰⁷ Despite the modification of missionary views, and their apparent commitment to developing indigenous churches led by Africans themselves, the belief in European cultural superiority remained absolute. The influence of race as a factor in missionary education policy in Africa was evident in the discussions on the subject which took place during this era.

The direction of Protestant missionary education was discussed at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. It has been suggested that this Conference constituted 'the beginning of twentieth-century Protestant ecumenism', and it is certainly true to say that the discussions of educational practice which took place there were significant in the course of the development of Protestant mission schools.⁴⁰⁸ The Edinburgh conference was the largest of several organised by missionaries during this period, with twelve hundred members drawn from one hundred and fifty mission groups attending.⁴⁰⁹ Delegates discussed committee reports prepared prior to the conference on various aspects of mission work, including that of its third committee which focused on 'Education in Relation to the Christianization of National Life', a remit which illustrates that education was seen as a means to extend

⁴⁰⁵ Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, pp.283-4.

⁴⁰⁶ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.94-101; Barbara A. Yates, 'White Views and Black Views: Schooling in King Leopold's Congo', *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (Spring, 1980), pp.27-50.

⁴⁰⁷ Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.15-17.

⁴⁰⁸ Kim Sanecki, *Protestant Christian Missions, Race and Empire: The World Missionary Council of 1910, Edinburgh, Scotland*, (Unpublished MA thesis: Georgia State University, Georgia, GA, 2006), available online: http://etd.gsu.edu/theses/available/etd-07062006-114644/unrestricted/sanecki_kim_200608_ma.pdf, p.19, (accessed 24/07/2009).

⁴⁰⁹ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'To Hang a Ladder in the Air: Talking about African Education in Edinburgh in 1910', in Chima J. Korieh and Raphael Chijioko Njoku, (eds), *Missions, States and European Expansion in Africa*, (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.101-126, (p.107).

the influence of Christianity.⁴¹⁰ This report focused on the need to enable people to read the Bible, to combat some indigenous practices and beliefs whilst guarding against the introduction of Western traits seen as being negative (individualism and materialism for example), and the notion of training an indigenous church leadership. The need for industrial training and the importance of enabling students to find work were also prominent as was praise for the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes.⁴¹¹ However, whilst the report identified the training of indigenous church leaders as being a major motivation behind mission education, Ogbu U. Kalu has suggested that this might have been meant more for China and Japan 'and hardly for Africa.'⁴¹² Race and issues surrounding perceived levels of 'civilization' were certainly a major part of the conceptual framework within which such discussions of education took place, though to what extent such notions were a defining aspect of missionary policy is difficult to assess. Sanecki suggests that the Edinburgh conference was attended by those from a generation imbued with the racial hierarchies of Social Darwinism as well as older delegates whose ideas had formed prior to the spread of such notions and younger men who were reacting against such ingrained racism.⁴¹³ This range of delegates, alongside the desire to encourage the development of indigenous churches, seems to have been a complex mix as 'the missionary struggled to balance an evangelical spirituality with the racism of the age.'⁴¹⁴ Though overt racism may not have been universal, it seems clear that the racial categorisations of the late nineteenth century and the widespread belief that Africans lacked civilisation acted as the basis for the paternalistic approach to education which led to missionaries deciding to focus on spreading industrial training rather than literary education.

A focus on such training, normally in trades such as carpentry, brick-making, and metalwork, therefore became a central tenet of missionary education during the early twentieth century. In fact, the belief that manual labour could improve character, instilling discipline for example, was shared by Protestants and Catholics, and it is clear

⁴¹⁰ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'To Hang a Ladder in the Air', pp.109-110.

⁴¹¹ Kim Sanecki, *Protestant Christian Missions, Race and Empire: The World Missionary Council of 1910*, p.72; Ogbu U. Kalu, 'To Hang a Ladder in the Air', p.124; Kenneth J. King, 'Africa and the Southern States of the USA: Notes on J.H. Oldham and American Negro Education for Africans', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1969), 659-677, (p.661).

⁴¹² Ogbu U. Kalu, 'To Hang a Ladder in the Air', p.111.

⁴¹³ Kim Sanecki, *Protestant Christian Missions, Race and Empire: The World Missionary Council of 1910*, p.91.

⁴¹⁴ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'To Hang a Ladder in the Air', p.124.

that the provision of this type of training also benefitted the colonial government who often employed those who emerged from the missionaries' workshops and also encouraged the expansion of professional schools.⁴¹⁵ The doctrine of adapted education was shared by all parties engaged in providing education in the Belgian Congo, especially following the 1922 report of the Phelps Stokes Fund Commission on Education in Africa, written by the Commission's leader Thomas Jesse Jones, a proponent of adapted education.⁴¹⁶ With particular regard to the work of the Protestant missions operating in the colony, its findings were rather mixed. Whilst superficially praising the 'endurance, skill, and devotion' of the missionaries, it condemned their stations as being inadequate for the task of educating the indigenous population and deemed the education on offer to be of a 'primitive character' even by the standards of the age.⁴¹⁷ Further criticisms suggested that missions had opened schools due to demand when they did not have the resources to operate them properly, though this might be seen as a plea for more funding meant to be heard by the governments and mission society headquarters at whom the report was aimed.⁴¹⁸ Significantly, the report also contained some criticism of the way in which industrial training – at the heart of the adapted education ethos – was being delivered, for example at the B.M.S. Bolobo station and other schools following its example, where boys were taught to make rattan chairs.⁴¹⁹ Whilst recognising the skills acquired by those involved in this work, the report noted that as the chairs produced were destined for Europeans the work was not of any benefit to the indigenous population and that it would be preferable if the missionary educators put more effort into teaching agricultural skills and 'Native handicrafts' rather than the skills required for making chairs.⁴²⁰ Therefore, for these prominent advocates of adapted education, the aim for the missionaries should be to teach their pupils less advanced skills that were deemed more useful in their current environments. Of course, this highlights the central issue in this educational ethos as those who deemed what education was to be

⁴¹⁵ See chapter three.

⁴¹⁶ See chapter one for more on the Belgian Government's attitude towards adapted education and the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission.

⁴¹⁷ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in Africa*, p.270.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.272.

⁴¹⁹ See chapter seven.

⁴²⁰ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in Africa*, pp.274-5.

considered appropriate for Africans were white Westerners who discriminated against them on the basis of their supposed racial and cultural inferiority.

It is evident that such discrimination was not limited to the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission, but rather formed part of the general background against which education in African colonies developed. Also significant in this regard, are the views of prominent Protestant missionary spokesman Joseph Houldsworth Oldham, who was a central figure both in the organisation of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference and also in the disputes which raged between Protestant missionaries and the Belgian Ministry of the Colonies during the interwar period.⁴²¹ Oldham had been a strong supporter of the work of the Phelps Stokes Fund Commission and was closely involved in the development of education in Britain's African colonies. He was an advocate of the notion of 'trusteeship', the concept that colonial governments had a duty to protect the interests of native peoples and to encourage their development, and which was closely related to that of the 'civilizing mission'.⁴²² Oldham visited the Hampton Institute in 1912 and used the *International Review of Missions*, of which he was editor, to encourage Protestant missionaries to follow the adapted education agenda.⁴²³ In 1923, Oldham became a member of the British government's Committee on African Education and pressed for the British government to implement the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission report in its colonies in Africa.⁴²⁴ These efforts to cement adapted education as the paradigm to be pursued by Protestant missionaries in Africa peaked at a conference held in Le Zoute, Belgium, in 1926 where missionaries were addressed by some of those involved in educational endeavours in the southern United States and where Protestant mission leaders presented adapted education as the favoured path for those working in Africa.⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ J.H. Oldham (1874-1969) spent three years as a missionary in India in the 1890s before being invalided home due to typhoid. He spent the remainder of career as an advocate for missionary work as the founding editor of the *International Review of Missions* from 1912, and in 1921 became secretary of the new International Missionary Council (IMC) a position which he held until 1938. It was in this role that he became involved in the disputes relating to the Belgian Congo. (See D.N.B.). On Oldham's role in organising the 1910 Edinburgh conference see Kim Sanecki, *Protestant Christian Missions, Race and Empire: The World Missionary Council of 1910*, Edinburgh, Scotland.

⁴²² Ana Isabel Madeira, 'Portuguese, French and British Discourses on Colonial Education: Church-State Relations, School Expansion and Missionary Competition in Africa, 1890-1930', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 41, Nos1&2, (Feb. 2005), pp.31-60, (pp.38-41).

⁴²³ Kenneth J. King, 'Africa and the Southern States of the USA: notes on J.H. Oldham', p.662.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.667.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.672-673.

Representatives of the Protestant mission societies operating in the Belgian Congo attended Le Zoute and followed the decisions made there, and so the direction of Protestant educational activity there was aimed at multiplying the number of basic rural schools and focusing on industrial and agricultural training, though it will be shown later that this focus was sometimes modified in order to compete with the more sophisticated school structures which the Belgian government and their Roman Catholic missionary associates developed.

This exploration of the development of Protestant missionary concepts of education for Africans during the early years of the twentieth century shows that the primary influence was that of the Tuskegee model of adapted education, as taken up by Thomas Jesse Jones and J.H. Oldham. The adoption of this pedagogic theory by the Protestant missions as suitable for transfer to Africa, from the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 to Le Zoute in 1926 and beyond, was clearly predicated on the idea that education provided to blacks must necessarily be differentiated from that provided in schools for Europeans, and that it should seek to give Africans rather basic industrial or agricultural skills rather than a literary or academic education. Placing such limitations on the types of education deemed suitable for Africans was not though, as has been seen in previous chapters, unique to the Protestant sphere of influence. A focus on training African tutors who could run village schools and therefore expand the influence of the missions, a stress on the moral education of their charges and a focus on industrial training were typical of the schools of both sets of missionaries. The main differences remained those of denomination and of national origin, and it was these which turned the Protestant mission groups operating in the Congo into potential challengers to the power of the Belgian colonial apparatus. The influence of their schools, however positive locally in terms of providing skilled tradesmen, clerks or nurses, was seen by the Belgians as being the most negative expression of their presence in the colony as it embodied the potential for an alternative influence to spread amongst the Congolese population. It is now necessary to consider how the Ministry of Colonies justified its negative response to Protestant schools and how this related to the broader development of its conception of the colonial state in the Congo.

5.5.1: Belgian Resistance to Protestant Influence

As discussed in the introduction, the Belgian colonial authorities favoured the 'belgicisation' of the Congo with regards to economic investment and exploitation of resources, as well as in the missionary occupation of the territory and the provision of education. This was to be achieved through the strengthening of collaboration with Catholic, and predominantly Belgian, mission groups, and through the introduction of the '*brochure jaune*' between 1925-1929. However, the presence of non-Belgian Protestant mission societies in the colony was obviously problematic for the Belgian Ministry of Colonies in respect of this policy. The remainder of this chapter will examine the circumstances in which antagonism between the two groups flared throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and, whilst examining the colonial authorities' fears of Protestant influence, will trace the development of the debates surrounding the exclusion of Protestant groups from the subsidy system.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Ministry of Colonies was keen to publicly express that harmony reigned between itself and the Protestant missions, and between the Protestant and Catholic groups. Whilst the 1920 Annual Report on the administration of the colony acknowledged that there 'remained some elements of conflict' in some areas, though proclaiming the colonial authorities' determination to calm them, reports from later years generally proclaimed that inter-denomination relations were good.⁴²⁶ An admission, in the 1928 Annual Report, that 'from time to time' a conflict might arise between Catholic and Protestant missionaries was followed by the assertion that in such instances 'the administration intervenes as mediator, taking care to stay strictly impartial.'⁴²⁷ Another brief reference to the existence of rivalry between the two denominations, particularly in the Lower Congo – the area most affected by Kimbanguism and a region in which Protestants, including the B.M.S., were especially well established, appeared in the 1931 Annual Report and again the administration's desire to ease the tensions was stated.⁴²⁸ Despite these statements, it is evident that relations between Catholic and Protestant missionaries were often highly strained, and

⁴²⁶ AA/RA/CB/58/7, (1920), p.79; for examples of proclamations of harmonious relations see AA/RA/CB/58/10, (1923), p.43; AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), pp.138/162; AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1927), pp.23/100; AA/RA/CB/59/9, (1934), p.52; AA/RA/CB/59/10, (1935), p.73; AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), p.81.

⁴²⁷ AA/RA/CB/58/17, (1928), p.71.

⁴²⁸ AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.38; for a further example of this type of statement see AA/RA/CB/59/8, (1933), p.50.

that the Ministry of the Colonies was intent on favouring the Belgian Catholic mission societies whenever it was able to. Though this thesis will later show that the Ministry was prepared to accept, and even to encourage, the involvement of foreign Protestant missions in the provision of healthcare in the Congo, and in the training of indigenous healthcare workers, education was one domain in which Protestant involvement was definitely discouraged.⁴²⁹ As has been shown in chapter three, Belgian colonial policy was informed by a deep paranoia about potential foreign takeover or influencing of the Congo and it was this fear of 'other' influence which informed the Ministry of Colonies' stance towards Protestant involvement in education, as through their schools the foreign mission societies were in contact with – eventually - hundreds of thousands of Congolese.⁴³⁰

5.5.2: Comparative Development of Catholic and Protestant Mission Education

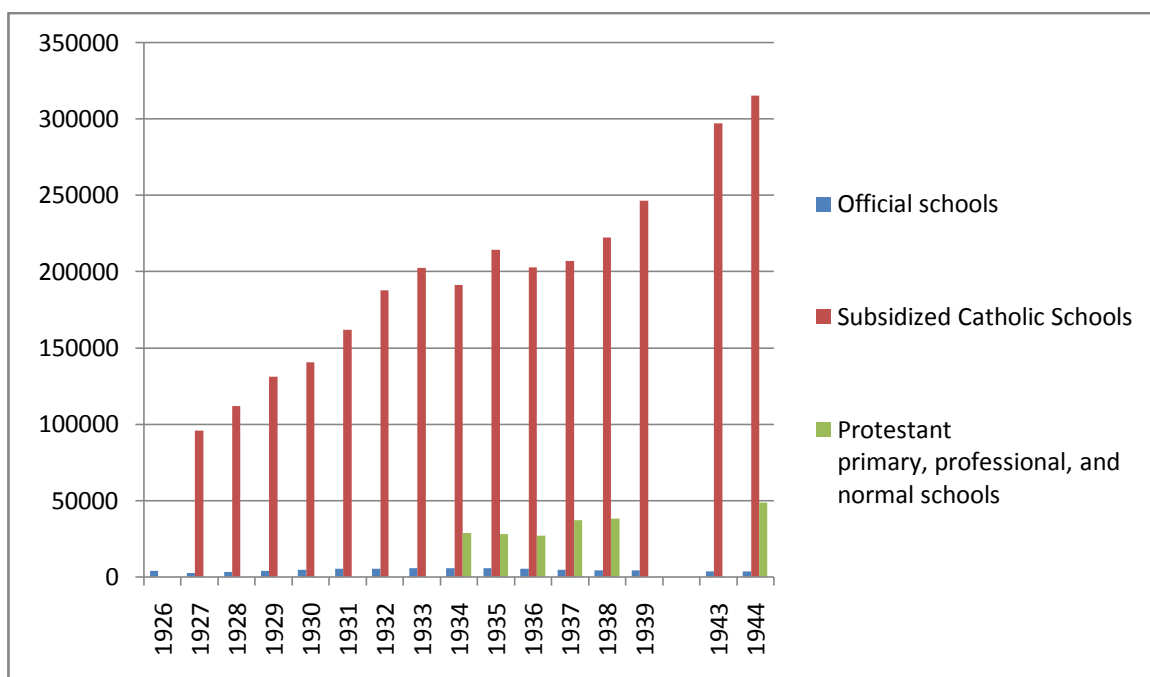
Following the introduction of the 1925 project and the 1929 '*brochure jaune*', the increase in the number of schools run by Catholic mission societies in the Congo was rapid.⁴³¹ Whilst the numbers attending Protestant schools also rose, they did so much more slowly than the subsidized schools. Unfortunately, detailed figures are not available for Protestant schools during the 1920s, as they were not required to provide statistics to the colonial authorities, but the chart below shows how the situation developed during the 1930s.

⁴²⁹ See chapter eight.

⁴³⁰ See chapter three.

⁴³¹ See chapter four.

Figure 3: Comparative chart showing numbers of pupils in official, Catholic and Protestant schools.



This chart has been compiled using statistics contained within the annual reports on the administration of the colony. No complete figures are available for Protestant schools before 1934.

Significantly, this chart only includes those pupils being educated in subsidized Catholic schools and those Protestant schools which might be deemed to be their equivalents. This means that the lowest rung of the education system in the Congo, consisting of the non-subsidized Catholic schools – those which did not conform to the government programme – and Protestant branch schools, is not shown here. By 1938, there were approximately 240,000 pupils in such Catholic schools and 223,000 in the Protestant branch schools.⁴³² These categories of school consisted of rudimentary rural schools, operating – often not regularly – throughout the colony.

What the chart shows is that during the course of the late 1920s and 1930s, the Protestant mission societies in the Congo did not expand their provision of what might be termed ‘higher primary’ and post-primary education to anywhere near the same levels achieved by their Catholic counterparts. There are several reasons why this was the case, all of which merit attention, and not all of these can be attributed to the

⁴³² AA/RA/CB/60/1, (1938), pp.75-6.

Belgian policies. Firstly, it must be recognised that a strong focus on basic village education was a central element of Protestant pedagogic practice, at least during the earlier part of this period. Secondly, the Protestants mission societies were also hard hit by the Great Depression of the early 1930s and did not, during that period, have enough European missionaries to staff many more schools at the higher levels.⁴³³

However, it is clear that funding from the subsidy system might have helped to protect the Catholic mission societies from the worst effects of the depression. Moreover, the very existence of the subsidy system allowed the Catholics to expand their education provision almost at will. Also significant is the fact that Protestant mission societies were not solely interested in basic village schools and showed themselves to be keen to compete with the Catholics in providing education at the higher levels wherever it was possible for them to do so, as will be discussed later. Exclusion from the subsidy system, and the inspection regime which accompanied it and through which schools achieved official recognition, was clearly the major factor behind the Protestants' inability to keep pace with the Catholics in providing education. As well as the major issue of the Protestant's foreignness, there were other specific issues which caused the Ministry of Colonies' concern about their influence.

5.5.3: Kimbanguism

Suspicion about the activities of Protestant missionaries in the Congo, and about their potential for anti-Belgian agitation, dated back to the C.R.A. campaign against Léopold II's regime in the C.I.S. Following the annexation of the Congo in 1908, and in the context of the paranoia about foreign interest in the Congo which marked the interwar period, concern about the presence of Protestant missions was expressed by several of the respondents to the Ministry of Colonies' 1917 questionnaire on education provision. This issue was particularly prominent in response to some of the questions on language usage in schools, as the potential spread of English, especially in the Katanga region which was bordered by British colonies, was a matter of concern.⁴³⁴

⁴³³ In 1931, the number of Protestant missionaries in the Congo fell by 32, nearly a fifth of the total, whilst Catholic numbers increased by 124 to 1702. On the B.M.S.'s financial problems see Brian Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, pp.384-386.

⁴³⁴ See chapter three.

However, under the terms of the 1885 Berlin Act and the 1919 Treaty of Saint Germain-en-laye, the Belgians were obliged to allow missions to operate in the colony, an issue which will be explored further below, though it is clear that the Ministry of Colonies would have preferred that this was not the case.

The first major flare-up of ill feeling between the colonial authorities and Protestant missions during the period under examination here was provoked by the emergence of Kimbanguism in 1921, as discussed in chapter three of this thesis. The reaction of the Belgian colonial authorities to this movement included a focus on the actions of Protestant missionaries, particularly those of the B.M.S., as Simon Kimbangu himself had been baptised by them at Ngombe Lutete, near Thysville in the Lower Congo region, in 1915.⁴³⁵ Furthermore, some B.M.S. missionaries were present at some of the early Kimbanguist gatherings as they sought to establish for themselves the nature of the movement, which had attracted many of their adherents to it.⁴³⁶ Seeing the movement as an anti-colonial threat, the Belgian authorities moved quickly to quash it, with Kimbangu being arrested and imprisoned at Elisabethville until his death in 1951. The impact of the movement continued to be felt for several years, however, not least with regards to relations between the colonial authorities and the B.M.S., as aspersions were cast about the nature of Baptist involvement in the development of the movement, both by government officials and by some local Catholic clergy.

In February 1925, the British Foreign Office received from the British Embassy in Brussels a despatch which had been sent there by its Consul at Boma, John P. MacGregor, and which contained documents dating back to 1921 tracing the history of the movement and discussing some of the issues surrounding missionary activity in the Belgian Congo.⁴³⁷ The despatch was forwarded to the Foreign Office because of a campaign being conducted in the Belgian Catholic press, as well as in newspapers with a strong interest in colonial affairs, to raise money for a Catholic Mission Station – the Father Superior of which had apparently been responsible for "press agitation" in

⁴³⁵ For timeline of the development of Kimbanguism see André Geuns, 'Chronologie des Mouvements Religieux Indépendants au Bas-Zaïre, Particulièrement du Mouvement Fondé par le Prophète Simon Kimbangu 1921-1971', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 6, 3 (1974), pp.187-222; on the B.M.S. and the Kimbanguist movement see Brian Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, pp.341-345, and D.J. Mackay, 'Simon Kimbangu and the B.M.S. Tradition', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 17, 2 (June 1987), pp.113-171.

⁴³⁶ Brian Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, p.342.

⁴³⁷ TNA/PRO/FO371/11041/W1581.

Belgium against Protestant missionaries in the Congo.⁴³⁸ The despatch contains both an official summary of the history of the movement as well as the views of the Protestant missionaries concerned which were collected by the Consul, who also points out some of the disparities between the two versions of events. MacGregor's despatch from Boma shows that great controversy surrounded the details of these events with the Belgian official version accusing Protestant missionaries of not having done enough to combat the spread of the movement and suggests that some of them of having been 'convinced of the divine origins of Simon Kimbangu's mission.'⁴³⁹ The accounts of the events supplied by the missionaries refute those allegations and MacGregor offered his support for their point of view, for although they had advocated a more peaceful approach to settling the problem than that which had been adopted by the Belgians, and had appealed for more lenient sentences for those arrested, the Consul did not accept that they had in any way encouraged sedition.⁴⁴⁰ In fact, MacGregor gave his own interpretation, suggesting that if the advice of the Protestant missionaries who urged restraint had been followed then 'the whole affair would have come to nothing' as it would eventually have been proved that Kimbangu did not possess healing powers.⁴⁴¹ He argues that by suppressing the movement the Belgian had given it more power and had left the local populations with a sense of injustice, and had, despite the death sentence having been commuted, made Kimbangu something of a martyr.⁴⁴²

Within his despatch, MacGregor also commented on other issues surrounding the position of Protestant missionaries in the Congo, suggesting that it would be desirable for Protestant missionaries to learn French so as to be better able to communicate with the Belgian administrative staff, who he believed to have an education 'generally of the most elementary type.'⁴⁴³ Also relating to the question of language, MacGregor claimed that it was untrue that Protestant missionaries taught in English and that, while they did not use French, their schools and churches used the local languages in

⁴³⁸ Ibid. See also Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.77.

⁴³⁹ TNA/PRO/ FO371/11041/W1581.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

their dealings with the indigenous populations.⁴⁴⁴ The consul wrote that while the central administration, under the Governor-General, generally acted impartially in their dealings with missionaries of either denomination, they were too ready to 'accept without question' the reports of local administrators who he believed to be easily influenced by Catholic missionaries.⁴⁴⁵ Finally, he stated that the aims of the Catholics in the Congo were 'well known', and that they were 'prepared to do anything' to accomplish 'the complete suppression of all' the non-Catholic missions in the colony.⁴⁴⁶ It is evident from MacGregor's report into Kimbanguism that his sympathies lay with the Protestant missionaries, whom he exonerated of any blame regarding the uprising, and that he regarded with suspicion what he saw as the hostile attitude of the Catholic missionaries and their accompanying propensity for encouraging anti-Protestant comment in the Belgian press.⁴⁴⁷ The reaction of the Belgian colonial government to the B.M.S.'s purported involvement in the genesis of Kimbanguism echoed that of the Portuguese authorities in Angola to the Buta uprising of 1913.⁴⁴⁸ Clearly the perception and portrayal of 'foreign' missionaries as a subversive threat, whether fair or not, was not limited to the situation in the Congo. The Portuguese reaction was to introduce measures which forbade the use of vernacular languages in schools and required native teacher-evangelists to have a certificate proving their proficiency in Portuguese, which Brian Stanley states led to the closure of two hundred schools run by the B.M.S.⁴⁴⁹

The impact of Kimbanguism, and more particularly of its repression by the state, was not merely reflected in the bad-blood between the B.M.S. and the Belgian authorities. In fact, the B.M.S. found that its efforts in the Lower Congo region, particularly around Ngombe, the epicentre of the movement, were hampered by both the administration and the attitudes of the local populations, sections of which apparently abandoned the Protestant mission, believing its members had colluded with the state's repressive actions. Yet more Congolese converts were dismissed from membership of the Protestant churches in the area after having followed Kimbangu and being judged by-

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ AA/M/636/5, article by Henri Anet (Belgian Protestant leader), dating from 1922, details and refutes Catholic allegations in newspaper articles.

⁴⁴⁸ Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, pp.336-341.

⁴⁴⁹ Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, p.340.

the missionaries to have lost their faith.⁴⁵⁰ These twin pressures, from the authorities and the local population, caused the B.M.S. missions in the area and therefore their schools, to lose many attendees, a situation that continued for several years. It is likely that the opening of government-funded schools, from 1929, in the areas of the Congo-Kasai region most affected by Kimbanguism further exacerbated this problem for the Protestants.⁴⁵¹ These schools, which numbered eight by 1932, were apparently 'created to fight Kimbanguism' and their education programmes, unusually, did not include religious education so they would clearly have been in direct competition with mission-run schools in the area and might have attracted populations who had become suspicious of the B.M.S. Moreover, their existence may have prevented the Baptists from 're-occupying' some of the villages in question.

The advent of Kimbanguism in the Lower Congo clearly presented different challenges to the Belgian authorities and the B.M.S., as the government sought to quash it and the Baptists apparently sought to engage with a movement which had energised many of their own adherents. Whilst the impact on the B.M.S. mission stations and schools was localized, the government's negative reaction to their involvement was indicative of the latent suspicions which surrounded Protestant activity in the Congo. This chapter will now move on to examine how these suspicions developed during the remainder of the interwar period, as well as looking further at the role played by anti-Protestant agitation by Catholic missionaries.

5.6.1: Government policy and Protestant reactions in the 1920s

As has been explained previously, the education policy developed by the Ministry of Colonies during the 1920s focused on extending the provision of schooling in the colony by funding the Catholic mission associations through a subsidy system. Those Catholic mission societies were referred to in official reports, letters, and in the terms of the education programmes agreed with them, in 1925 and 1929, as 'national missions'. The Protestant mission societies operating in the Congo were usually

⁴⁵⁰ AA/RA/CB/58/11, (1924), p.32; Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, p.344; W.Y. Fullerton, *The Christ of the Congo River*, (London: Carey Press, 1928), pp.131-133; see also BMS/A/56/7, (Bolobo station), for a circular letter dated 15/03/1922 by Lydia Mary de Hailes, a missionary in the Congo from 1899-1930, describing the impact of Kimbanguism and its repression.

⁴⁵¹ AA/RA/CB/59/6, (1932), p.109.

referred to in official Belgian discourse as ‘foreign missions’ and were excluded from the education subsidy system.⁴⁵² The categorisation of the Protestant mission societies as ‘foreign’ may, at first, appear to have been entirely factual and their exclusion from the education subsidy system consistent with the Ministry of Colonies’ pursuit of a policy of ‘belgicisation’ of the colony. This is certainly how the development of the subsidy system was framed at the outset. Whilst including references to Protestant schools in his survey of education in the colony, published in 1922, Edouard De Jonghe wrote that the metropole ‘should use schools in order to build a national spirit’ in the colony.⁴⁵³ Therefore, in this respect, it appears that nationality and not religious denomination was indeed the basis for the exclusion of the Protestant missions from government education funding.

Interestingly, Louis Franck, the Liberal Minister for the Colonies from 1918-1924, did not particularly share the anti-Protestant sentiments, as evidenced by his recounting of a visit he made to Protestant mission stations during a tour of the colony in 1920, when he noted that he saw ‘not the slightest trace of political propaganda.’⁴⁵⁴ Whilst Franck’s Liberal politics led him to take an anti-clerical stance in domestic politics, he supported the role of the missions in the Congo, but it seems he personally was content for the Protestant missionaries to be involved in the development of the colony alongside Catholics.⁴⁵⁵ An internal note prepared in May 1924 for the next Minister, Henri Carton, admitted that the Ministry’s files ‘contained no precise and well-established fact which would demonstrate anti-national tendencies amongst the foreign missions in the Congo.’⁴⁵⁶ However, the same note went on to suggest that it would be unwise not to worry about what it termed the ‘invasion of certain frontier regions’ of the Congo by non-Belgian missions, citing particularly the Kilo-Moto region in the Eastern Province, the site of the colony’s most important gold mines, and the Moero and Luapula regions of the mineral rich Katanga region. Significantly, the document stated that ‘the administration is preoccupied with re-enforcing its influence

⁴⁵² See Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.8-9, on discussion during early years of Belgian rule about possible Belgian Protestant mission work. There was apparently a small contingent of Belgian Protestant missionaries in the Congo in the 1920s, who were classed as a ‘national mission’, but there is no evidence they were involved in education – see Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, p.769.

⁴⁵³ Edouard De Jonghe, *L’instruction Publique au Congo Belge*, (Brussels: Goemaere, 1922), p.32.

⁴⁵⁴ Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol.1, (Brussels: Renaissance du livre, 1929), p.315.

⁴⁵⁵ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.117; Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.58.

⁴⁵⁶ AA/M/636, (unmarked file), note dated 26/05/1924.

in this part of the territory by attracting Belgian missionaries there' and that new Catholic mission stations were being opened with the financial aid of the government.⁴⁵⁷ Such phrasing clearly shows a blurring of boundaries between the state and the Catholic missionaries, who in this instance were clearly acting as agents of the state in its fight against non-Belgian influence in the Congo. It is clear, therefore, that despite the lack of evidence, the Ministry of Colonies, particularly galvanised by the proximity of Protestant missionaries to the emergence of Kimbanguism and their strength in border regions, that non-Belgian missions represented a challenge to Belgian hegemony in the Congo. Moreover, the Catholic missions operating in the colony were clearly allied to the colonial authorities as they pursued their policy of limiting the influence of Protestant missions upon the Congolese population, specifically through simultaneous expansion of the Catholic school network and the exclusion of Protestant schools from the subsidy system.

5.6.2: Increased Competition and Antagonism

As the introduction of the newly codified subsidy system began, from 1926 onwards and in earnest when the new programmes became law in 1929, Protestant missionaries in the colony became increasingly dissatisfied by the situation and began to rail against what they perceived as the injustice of the situation. At this stage, complaints focused on the impact of the Belgian policy on Protestant missionary activity and on the way in which it reduced their ability to attract converts and pupils to their schools when in direct competition with a Catholic mission. Protestant groups had taken an active interest in the development of the government's school programme, and some expressed that they were willing where possible to conform to the same standards as were expected from the Catholic schools eligible for funding under the new system.⁴⁵⁸ Growing complaints, though, reveal that behind the colonial authorities' public proclamations of harmonious relations between the various parties, as detailed above, the reality was that there was great antipathy in some instances. Records from B.M.S. stations on the Upper Congo illustrate the intensity of the rivalry

⁴⁵⁷ AA/M/636, (unmarked file), note dated 26/05/1924.

⁴⁵⁸ AA/M/636, letter from Ministry of Colonies to Anet, dated 11/09/1926, sending copies of 1925 education project, apparently for the attention of J.H. Oldham; AA/RA/CB/59/6, (1932), p.38.

between representatives of the two denominations on the ground, with references by the Protestants to 'Catholic aggression', especially as the rivalry between the two denominations became increasingly intense during the early 1930s.⁴⁵⁹

Equally, Catholic missionaries revealed their antipathy towards the presence of non-Belgian Protestant missions in the Congo, though it is evident that to them it was the Protestantism that really mattered, even if some were also deeply patriotic as well. This antipathy became particularly prominent in 1929, following a decision by the Protestant mission groups to invite administrative officials to attend their conference at Leopoldville in September 1928, and also to publish the proceedings of that conference in a pamphlet entitled '*Vers L'Avenir*'. These events caused considerable consternation amongst some officials in the Ministry of Colonies, including Henri Jaspar then serving in the Belgian government as both Prime Minister and Minister for the Colonies, as Vice Governor General Engels had attended the conference in an official capacity, representing the colonial government, seemingly contrary to ministerial instructions of which he later claimed not to have been informed.⁴⁶⁰ Jaspar declared that instructions not to attend the conference had been given because he considered it to be 'inopportune to subject our policy on the subject of missions and education to the appreciations of a meeting of foreigners', and emphasised the need for the metropolitan authority and administrators in the colony itself to show 'a unified view' in such matters.⁴⁶¹ Clearly, the Ministry of Colonies was not keen to invite criticism of its policy of subsidising only Catholic-run schools.

As well as provoking Jaspar's annoyance, further controversy surrounding the event arose the following year when there was a suggestion that the published proceedings of the conference, *Vers L'Avenir*, had been circulated amongst colonial administrators – a suggestion which the Ministry of the Colonies found difficult to confirm.⁴⁶² These

⁴⁵⁹ See, for example, BMS/A/95, a letter from Dr Adam to Mrs A. Tyrell at Bolobo, dated 11/12/1933; also BMS/A/65: Upoto station records, 1877-1953, 'Congo Mission Log Book, 1890-1953', Annual Report 1935.

⁴⁶⁰ AA/M/636, (unmarked file), letter from Henri Jaspar to Governor General Auguste Tilkens, dated 9/11/1928; letter from Vice Governor General Engels to Tilkens, dated 19/12/1928. These letters also reveal that further controversy centred on the presence of two black men at a drinks reception hosted by Engels, for conference delegates, the day after the conference and especially on claims that European girls had served tea to them.

⁴⁶¹ AA/M/636, (unmarked file), letter from Henri Jaspar to Governor General Auguste Tilkens, dated 9/11/1928.

⁴⁶² AA/M/636, (unmarked file), note from Edouard De Jonghe for Jaspar, dated 8/10/1929.

issues, implying attempts by the Protestant missionaries to influence the colonial administration, were cited by Edouard De Jonghe as being the reason for the 'lively' tone of a reply to *Vers L'Avenir* written by Mgr De Hemptinne of the Benedictines.⁴⁶³ This reply, in the form of a brochure entitled *La Politique des Missions Protestantes au Congo*, accused the Protestants of wishing to see the Congo removed from Belgian control, and citing their presence as a major danger to the colonial state.⁴⁶⁴ Interestingly, in this instance Edouard De Jonghe, who has elsewhere been shown to be a strong supporter of the Catholic cause in the Congo, wrote a memorandum disputing De Hemptinne's conclusions, though still recognising that the strength of 'anglo-saxon' influence in the colony was a matter of concern which should be addressed through the continuation of the policies already in place.⁴⁶⁵ In a letter to Governor General Tilkens on this matter, Paul Tschoffen, as Minister for the Colonies, expressed the view that, whilst De Hemptinne had overstated the immediate danger, in some areas the influence of the Protestant missions was not being countered by that of Catholic representatives, whose involvement in education and medical endeavours was believed to be the best method of reducing the potential political danger of foreign influence upon the 'native mind'.⁴⁶⁶ This was evidently the effect which the 'brochure jaune', fully introduced in 1929, was intended to have as subsidies would enable the Catholic missions to extend their school network into areas previously solely under Protestant influence. The issue of official attendance at the Protestant conference was also recognised by Tschoffen as having antagonised De Hemptinne, a very influential figure amongst Catholic clergy in the colony and in Belgium, and whom the administration needed to keep onside as Catholic co-operation was a pre-requisite in several areas of development.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶³ AA/M/636, (unmarked file), note from Edouard De Jonghe for Jaspar, dated 8/10/1929.

⁴⁶⁴ Jean-Félix De Hemptinne, *La Politique des Missions Protestantes au Congo*, (Elisabethville: 1929), a copy of this leaflet is contained within AA/M/636; see also AA/M/636, (unmarked file), note from Edouard De Jonghe for Jaspar, dated 8/10/1929.

⁴⁶⁵ AA/M/636, (unmarked file), note from Edouard De Jonghe for Jaspar, dated 8/10/1929.

⁴⁶⁶ AA/M/636, (unmarked file), letter from Minister Paul Tschoffen to Governor General Tilkens, dated 11/12/1929.

⁴⁶⁷ See chapter four for more on De Hemptinne.

5.7: Impact of Catholic Expansion: the Case of the BMS and the *Huileries du Congo Belge*

Subsidisation of Catholic schools clearly enabled the Catholic missions to expand their provision of education in the colony exponentially, but the advantages which Belgian policies gave to them were not solely financial. The fact that diplomas granted by Catholic schools were officially recognised qualifications whilst those awarded by Protestant schools were not was another major source of complaint by Protestant missionaries. This disparity was cited as a major reason for Congolese people choosing Catholic education over that provided by Protestants in areas where groups of both denominations were active, as a recognised qualification could help in gaining employment. This disadvantaged position in which the Protestant missions increasingly found themselves during the 1920s is well illustrated by the case of some of the schools founded by the *Huileries du Congo Belge* (H.C.B.).

A subsidiary of the British company Lever Brothers, the H.C.B. was established in 1911 and was granted large land concessions in the colony containing palm groves, in order to extract lucrative palm oil used in the production of soap.⁴⁶⁸ Over the course of the next few years, the company founded factories at Lusanga (renamed Leverville), Tango and Kwenge on the Kwilu river; at Ebonda (Alberta) and Lukutu (Elisabetha) on the Congo River; Boteka (Flandria) on the Ruki; and Mapangu (Brabanta) on the Kasai. In each of these areas the company also took possession of large tracts of land on which the palms grew.⁴⁶⁹ Notably, the H.C.B. was one of few foreign-backed enterprises to be welcomed into the Congo before the Belgian government began to pursue its policy of 'belgicisation', and the company was clearly keen to proclaim its loyalty to the Belgian regime from the outset, as shown in the names given its settlements.⁴⁷⁰ This loyalty to the Belgians was also evident when the H.C.B. came to found schools for Africans in the areas under its control, as it was obliged to do under the terms of the convention which brought it into existence.⁴⁷¹ In 1915, the company set up a school at Leverville

⁴⁶⁸ Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts: Colonial Exploitation in the Congo*, trans. by Martin Thom, (London: Verso, 2008), p.1.

⁴⁶⁹ Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts*, pp.1-3; Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, p.383.

⁴⁷⁰ Alberta and Elisabetha were named in honour of Albert II, King of the Belgians, and his wife, Queen Elisabeth. Flandria and Brabanta were named after Belgian regions.

⁴⁷¹ Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts*, p.3.

which was to be administered by a new Jesuit mission founded there, and this was followed by the establishment of schools at its other major settlements, all eventually placed in the hands of various Catholic mission groups.⁴⁷²

Catholic involvement in the H.C.B.'s provision of education was not a foregone conclusion however, at least not in the minds of some Protestant missionaries. The B.M.S., having received donations from Sir William Lever the owner of Lever Brothers, was hopeful that it would given responsibility for at least some of these schools.⁴⁷³ This was especially true of the school that the H.C.B. opened at Elisabetha, in the Eastern Province. The B.M.S. station of Yalembe, in the vicinity of Elisabetha, already operated a school near the company base. In late 1923, Allan Palmer, missionary at Yalembe, wrote to the society's General Secretary, C.E. Wilson, expressing his interest in the H.C.B. Elisabetha school but also stating his concerns that it would be put into the hands of Catholic missionaries.⁴⁷⁴ His concerns had arisen following discussions with state agents and company employees, as well as the granting of large plot of land, a few miles from Elisabetha, to the Catholics.⁴⁷⁵ Palmer's attitude towards this potential development demonstrates the same degree of animosity towards Catholics, and what he described as their 'superstitions and half-truths', as some Catholic clergy in the colony showed towards Protestants.⁴⁷⁶ Palmer's major fear was that if the company school was awarded to the Catholics it would be 'a very serious thing' for the B.M.S., and would draw people away from their schools and turn 'the balance completely in favour' of the Catholics.⁴⁷⁷ Palmer urged Wilson to appeal directly to Lord Leverhulme – 'such a strong Free Churchman' – on the matter.⁴⁷⁸ B.M.S. officials in London did approach Lever Brothers, but there was no change of policy and the B.M.S. central

⁴⁷² Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts*, p.3; see Annual Reports on the Administration of the Belgian Congo for more on the development of schools run by the H.C.B, for example AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), p.80. These schools were variously placed under the direction of the Brothers of Charity (Leverville), the Scheut Fathers (Alberta and Brabanta), and the Monfortain Fathers (Elisabetha).

⁴⁷³ Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, pp.349-350. William Lever (1851-1925) was created Viscount Leverhulme in 1922.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

administration recognised the political need for the H.C.B. to 'give a good deal more thought to the desires and susceptibilities of the government.'⁴⁷⁹

It is not clear whether Belgian pressure was a factor in the H.C.B.'s decision to award the running of the schools it funded to Catholic missions or whether the company simply felt that it would be politically expedient to do so. One factor recognised by the B.M.S. in London was that the 'work' might be better for being 'completely free' from links to the government or the company, and it is also possible that the H.C.B. wished to avoid being subject to scrutiny by the Protestant missionaries, as some of its practices, particularly in terms of forced labour, left a lot to be desired.⁴⁸⁰ Whilst the Elisabetha school was outside of the subsidy system, the impact that it had on Protestant schools in the area mirrored the situation in places where Catholic education provision expanded during the 1920s and 1930s. In a letter to Wilson dating from circa 1928, Palmer referred to the H.C.B. schools training 'scores' of boys as teachers for village schools, whose ability to speak a 'smattering of French', and the backing of the government, would attract the favour of native chiefs.⁴⁸¹ Palmer stressed the need to establish a Protestant teacher training school, a matter which was under discussion, in order to combat the Catholic advance otherwise 'we might just as well pack up and go now.'⁴⁸² Palmer's phrasing of his worries clearly illustrates that, despite public protestations to the contrary on the part of the Belgian colonial authorities, some missionaries characterised the situation in the Congo as being a competition, and that religion was for them the defining factor upon which that competition was based.

⁴⁷⁹ BMS/A/48/1 (xxvi), unsigned letter from London to Palmer letter dated 5/02/1924.

⁴⁸⁰ BMS/A/48/1 (xxvii), unsigned letter from London to Palmer dated 26/03/1924. See Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts*, for a full exposé of the H.C.B.'s involvement in forced labour.

⁴⁸¹ BMS/A/48/1 (liv), letter from Palmer to Wilson, undated but contents place it at between July 1928 and early 1929.

⁴⁸² BMS/A/48/1 (liv), letter from Palmer to Wilson, undated but contents place it at between July 1928 and early 1929.

5.8.1: Growing Pressure on Protestant Missions and the Debate about Identity in the 1930s

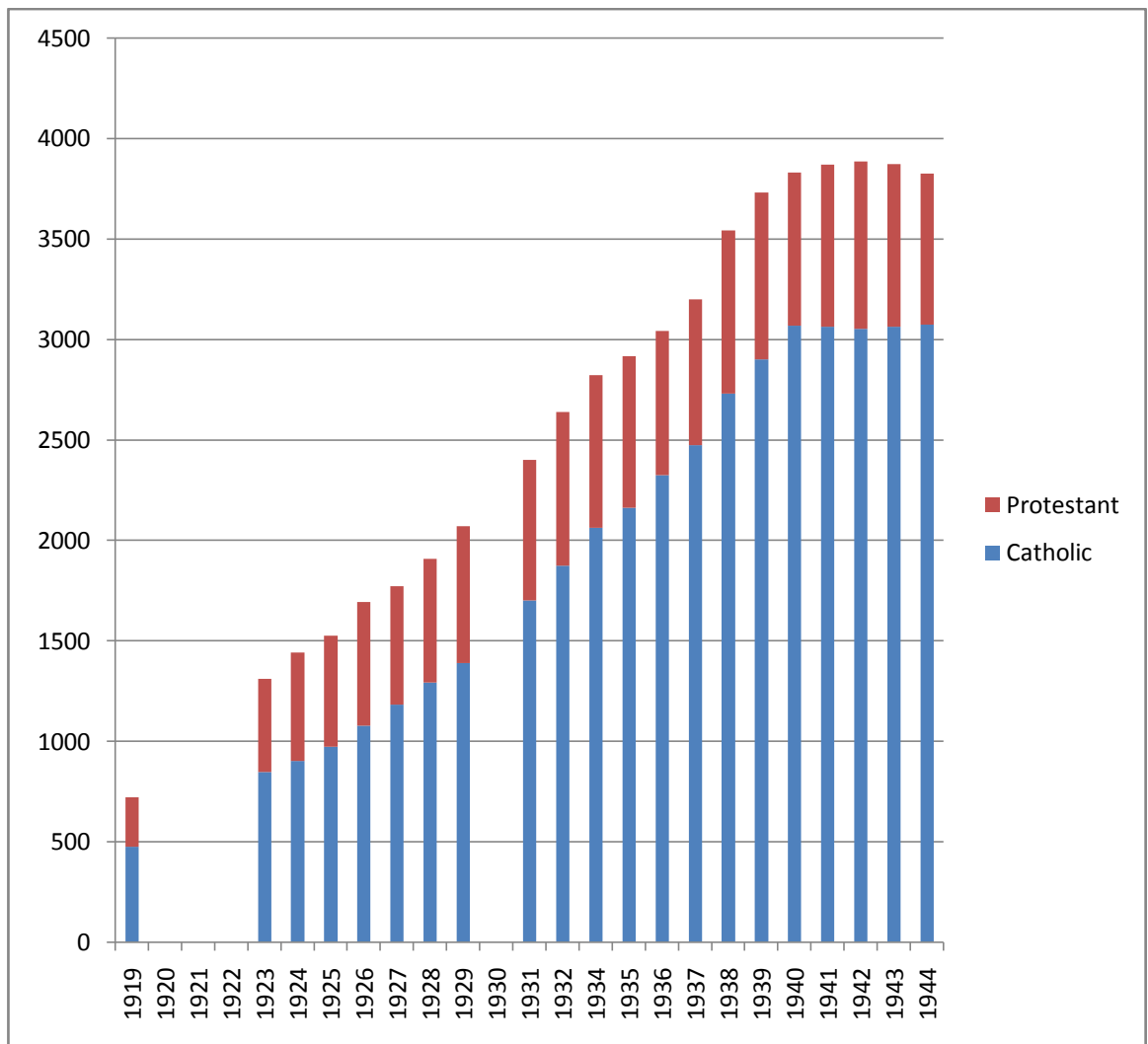
As Allan Palmer's comments show, the opening of a Catholic-run school in the vicinity of a Protestant mission was a cause of major concern for those missionaries because government backing had made such schools more attractive to many Congolese. Palmer's worries were echoed by other B.M.S. missionaries working in the Congo as the Catholic expansion fuelled by the introduction of the '*brochure jaune*' really began to make itself felt. An annual report from the Upoto station on its work in 1933 stated that the missionaries there had decided to occupy new territory, where Catholics had been active for many years, as 'advance is the best form of defense', and complained of being 'hard-pressed' by five Catholic missions around them.⁴⁸³ The 1938 annual report on this station stated that the attraction of Catholicism continued to grow and that this, in the case of young people, was mostly due to the 'education advantages' offered.⁴⁸⁴ Similar complaints were also made by V.J.G. MacGregor from Bolobo station in 1932, where the opening of a 'state-school' at Ngongo, meaning a subsidised Catholic one, and especially the opportunity to learn French had drawn pupils away from the B.M.S.⁴⁸⁵ That these complaints emanated from a range of B.M.S. stations, spread across the colony, shows that the Ministry of Colonies' policy of excluding non-Belgian mission groups from the subsidy system set up in the 1920s was having the intended effect. This is also well illustrated by the chart below which shows the numbers of Catholic and Protestant missionaries operating in the colony, most of whom would have been involved in the provision of education.

⁴⁸³ BMS/A/65: Upoto station records, 1877-1963: Congo mission log book 1890-1953, Annual report on Upoto station 1933.

⁴⁸⁴ BMS/A/65: Upoto station records, 1877-1963: Congo mission log book 1890-1953, Annual report on Upoto station 1938.

⁴⁸⁵ BMS/A/95: Bolobo station records, miscellaneous correspondence, 1931-1965: letter from MacGregor to Dr Adam, dated 15/9/1932.

Figure 4: Chart showing the total numbers of Catholic and Protestant missionaries in the Congo



* Information taken from the various annual reports for these years where available.

** Note that the figure for 1919 does not include missionaries operating in Katanga.

As the situation in which the Protestant missions found themselves became more and more difficult during the early 1930s, so their complaints to the Ministry of Colonies escalated. These complaints centred on the perceived injustice of Belgian education policy and the debate threw a spotlight on the differing interpretations of Belgian obligations under the terms of the 1885 Berlin Act and the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye of 1919.

In the context of Belgian paranoia over foreign intervention in the Congo, discussed in relation to education more broadly in chapter three of this thesis, Guy Vanthemsche has written of Belgian dissatisfaction with the existence of these treaties and of their

desire to see them abrogated.⁴⁸⁶ He argues that the Belgians feared that the terms of these treaties had left them open to more rigorous scrutiny of their policies in the Congo than other powers had to contend with in their colonial possessions, and unable to take decisions solely according to their interests. In terms of internal policy in the Congo, Vanthemsche also argues that recurrent questioning of Belgian capability as colonial ruler in the Congo, inspired by the controversies of the Leopoldian era, in the press and by other governments lay behind the Ministry of Colonies' determination to limit as far as possible foreign access to the colony.⁴⁸⁷ Such issues do appear to have contributed to the Ministry of Colonies' stance on foreign missionary involvement in education, but it is clear that this was not the only, or even the most important factor. Rather, as has been shown already in this chapter and in that on the motivations behind education policy more generally, the Ministry feared the potentially anti-Belgian influence which foreigners might have on the Congolese populations with whom they came into contact through their schools. If this were not the case, then it is clear that the Ministry of Colonies would not have welcomed the involvement of the same Protestant mission societies in the provision of healthcare quite as readily as they did.⁴⁸⁸

The General Act of the Conference of Berlin contained several clauses regulating the administration of the Congo basin, as detailed in the Introduction of this thesis, mainly designed to enshrine free trade commitments and navigation rights in the region. However, its article VI related to the activities of missionaries and stated that the powers responsible for governing colonies in the area would 'without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific, or charitable institutions', and also went to say that 'freedom of conscience and religious toleration are expressly guaranteed to the natives', and finally stated that 'the right [...] to organize religious missions belonging to all creeds, shall not be limited or fettered in any way whatever.'⁴⁸⁹ These articles were also incorporated into Article 11 of the Convention of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, concluded in September 1919 between the governments of

⁴⁸⁶ Guy Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, pp.102/ 124.

⁴⁸⁷ Guy Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo*, p.110.

⁴⁸⁸ See chapter eight.

⁴⁸⁹ Article VI, *General Act of the Conference at Berlin...*, 1885, <http://ocid.nacse.org/qml/research/tfdd/toTFDDdocs/4ENG.htm>, (retrieved 14/05/2007). The full text of the articles of the Berlin Act relevant to education in the Congo are reproduced in Appendix B.

the United States, France, Italy, Japan, Portugal, the British Empire and Belgium.⁴⁹⁰ This slightly revised version of the original wording allowed these freedoms to be restricted if necessary for the maintenance of public order, or in the case that the application of a colonial power's own constitutional law in its colony might require limitations. These articles would be the basis of the Protestant mission societies' attempts to argue against their exclusion from the system of school subsidies developed by the Ministry of Colonies.

Protestant missionaries in the Congo were angered by the differentiated treatment they received from the Belgian government in comparison to the Catholic missions. As has been discussed previously, the terminology used by the Ministry of Colonies in fact usually described mission groups as being either 'national' or 'foreign', however as there was no Belgian Protestant mission operating in the Congo, the two categories also essentially equated to Catholic and Protestant respectively. There was, however, one British based Catholic mission, the Mill Hill society, who employed Irish and Dutch missionaries in the Congo but was grouped in official reports with the 'national' missions, suggesting that the government's policy did have a religious basis.⁴⁹¹ Other Catholic missions were, as has been seen in the previous chapter, of non-Belgian origin but employed mainly Belgian missionaries. However, it is also necessary to consider whether the strongly Catholic political orientation of the Ministry of Colonies might have meant that Catholicism and Belgian were conflated in the minds of at least some of those responsible for the maintenance of the policy in question.

One part of the argument put forward by the Protestant mission groups to the Ministry focused on the issue of whether Belgian policy was contrary to their obligations towards the European missionaries themselves. Protestant missionary organisations, specifically the IMC through John Mott and J.H. Oldham, began to complain about the system in the Congo to others, such as the British Foreign Office.⁴⁹² Already in 1932, Dr Clement Chesterman from the B.M.S.'s Yakusu station had complained to the Foreign Office with regards to funding of his medical work,

⁴⁹⁰ Article 11, *Convention Revising the General Act of Berlin of 26 February 1885*.

⁴⁹¹ See TNA/PRO/FO371/17285/W3233, (1933) for Protestant reference to the Mill Hill situation; see AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1944), p.100, to see how the Mill Hill Society was listed as a national mission.

⁴⁹² TNA/PRO/FO371/16356/W11978, letter from J.H. Oldham initially requesting an informal meeting to discuss situation in the Congo, dated 30/10/1932.

especially the training of native healthcare workers.⁴⁹³ In February 1933, the Protestant missions decided to escalate their dispute with the Belgian government so Emory Ross, General Secretary of the Congo Protestant Council, an umbrella organisation, wrote a long memorandum setting out the Protestants' feeling of injustice in considerable detail.⁴⁹⁴ This document was divided into three sections addressing the medical system in the Congo, the education system, and the Ministry's general policy towards missions there. The section dealing with education stated that Protestant missionaries had pioneered education work in the colony but had been excluded from consultations which took place prior to the formulation of the 1925 education project, and subsequently from the subsidy system. The tone of Ross' memorandum was combative, accusing the Ministry of Colonies of acting in the 'ecclesiastical' interests of the Roman Catholic church, rejecting the idea that Belgian policy was based on the nationality of missionaries by pointing to the inclusion of the London based Mill Hill mission on the list of 'national' missions, and suggesting that the subsidising of three stations run by Belgian Protestants – in Rwanda - was a kind of smokescreen, used to stymie the criticisms of government policy. For Ross, it was the intention of the Catholic Church to destroy Protestantism in the Congo by suppressing Protestant schools, and the Belgian government was complicit in this plan. The memorandum asked for redress, not only in the form of access to subsidies, but also by the extension of state recognition – namely school inspection and recognition of the diplomas – which the Protestants felt currently gave the Catholic schools an unfair advantage. Ross asked that the Belgians comply with their obligations under international treaties and the *Charte Coloniale*.

This impassioned appeal to the Minister for the Colonies certainly provoked a response amongst those responsible for Belgian policy, but it was not that which it had been intended to achieve. Following its delivery, J.H. Oldham travelled to Brussels in March 1933 on behalf of the I.M.C. to meet with Tschoffen, accompanied by Henri Anet, a meeting in which the British ambassador to Belgium had refused to take any part due largely to his perception that the strength of the Catholic party in Belgium meant that reactions were likely to be negative, especially given the tone of Ross'

⁴⁹³ See chapter eight.

⁴⁹⁴ TNA/PRO/FO371/17285/W3233, (1933), contains a translation into English of this memorandum, delivered to the Foreign Office by J.H. Oldham.

memorandum.⁴⁹⁵ Oldham's attitude was somewhat more polite, and he distanced himself from the memorandum, although raising the same issues, and British reports noted that he received a more cordial reception than had been anticipated.⁴⁹⁶ Oldham stressed that the I.M.C. believed that existing Belgian policy contravened the terms of the Convention of St-Germain-en-Laye, but said that the most missions were not arguing that all missions should automatically be eligible for the same subsidies or treatment, but that they should be categorised according to the quality and value of their work, rather than by nationality or denomination.⁴⁹⁷ Oldham later wrote to the Foreign Office that the extension of education subsidies to those Protestant schools which met the government's criteria would be 'the acid test' of whether the Belgian Ministry of Colonies was truly prepared to pursue a policy of impartiality.⁴⁹⁸ During his trip to Brussels, Oldham also met with both Edouard De Jonghe, whose strong Catholicism and support for existing policy he acknowledged, and King Albert, to whom he explained Protestant complaints.⁴⁹⁹ Henri Anet also wrote to the Ministry putting forward similar proposals which he hoped would act as the basis of discussions which might lead to the modification of education policy in the Congo.⁵⁰⁰ Anet played a major role in discussions between the Protestant mission societies and the Belgian government, his Belgian nationality obviously making him a powerful advocate for the 'foreign' missions and challenging the perception in some quarters of Protestantism as somehow non-Belgian.

However, documents circulated within the Ministry of Colonies during 1933 show that there was no intention on their part of entering into discussions of the type that Ross, Oldham, Anet, and the mission groups whom they represented had hoped for. In his meeting with Oldham and Anet, Tshoffen reportedly expressed the view that it might be possible 'to arrive at an agreement' regarding the extension of the school inspection regime to Protestant schools, however he said nothing about subsidies or the wider policy of discrimination.⁵⁰¹ In fact, in a response to Ross' memorandum

⁴⁹⁵ TNA/PRO/FO371/17285/W3420, (1933). Henri Anet (1875-1952) was director of the Société Belge des Missions Protestantes au Congo, which despite its name actually operated in Rwanda.

⁴⁹⁶ TNA/PRO/FO/371/17286/W3473; TNA/PRO/FO/371/17286/W3677.

⁴⁹⁷ TNA/PRO/FO/371/17286/W3473.

⁴⁹⁸ TNA/PRO/FO/371/17286/W3956.

⁴⁹⁹ TNA/PRO/FO/371/17286/W3956.

⁵⁰⁰ AA/M/638, note by Henri Anet, dated September 1933.

⁵⁰¹ TNA/PRO/FO/371/17286/W3956: contains Anet's minutes of the meeting with Tshoffen.

issued in September 1933, the Ministry argued that Belgium had no more obligations under international treaties in the Congo than other powers with African colonies and suggests that the I.M.C. would prefer to see the 'internationalisation' of the Congo.⁵⁰² Belgian officials also pointed to the examples set in Portuguese and French colonies in Africa, where those providing schooling were subject to rigid laws, especially on language provision, which aimed at limiting foreign involvement and protecting the formation of the ruling power's desired colonial identity amongst its African subjects.⁵⁰³ Stressing the colony's Belgian identity, the Ministry argued that it had the right to organise education in the colony as it pleased, as according to their perception of its terms, the Convention of St-Germain-en-Laye referred only to a 'general goodwill' towards missions of different denominations, not to an obligation to treat them all with absolute equality. Furthermore, the case of the Mill Hill society was attributed to a decision taken by Leopold II and honoured by the Belgian government. The response also argued that the term 'foreign' was not used in a pejorative sense but was due to the fact that in the eyes of the Belgian public, such missions simply were foreign - the language used in the response also seems to equate Catholic with Belgian. This was followed by a history of the development of the education system in the Congo from the early 1920s onwards, explaining that collaboration with the 'national' missions was sought because of a desire to promote education with a Belgian character. Whilst refusing to entertain the possibility of extending subsidies to the 'foreign missions', this response did state that there was nothing preventing school inspectors from visiting Protestant schools and that successful Protestant pupils might receive official diplomas. Finally, the response appealed to the Protestant missions to 'abandon the policy of systematic criticism' they had adopted and to accept the Ministry's right to govern the Congo as it saw fit. Evidently, though there was some concession made to the Protestants regarding school inspections and diplomas, the issue of subsidies and the designation of Protestant missions as 'foreign' were matters that the Ministry of Colonies considered non-negotiable.

⁵⁰² AA/M/638, 'Reponse au memorandum du 14 fevrier 1933', dated 14/09/1933; on Belgian fear of internationalisation of colonies, see Guy Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le Congo: Empreintes d'une colonie*, p.103.

⁵⁰³ KADOC/De Jonghe/251: note from J.B. Hautefelt, Inspector General of Education in Leopoldville, to Vice Governor General Postiaux, dated 6/01/1931; on language in French West Africa see Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, p.84.

This was not, though, to be the end of this debate, which rumbled on throughout the remainder of the 1930s with both sides repeating the same points increasingly vehemently.⁵⁰⁴ As Ministers, Tschoffen and his successors - all of whom belonged to the Catholic Party - maintained the same policy, encouraged by Edouard De Jonghe, who was completely adamant that the Protestant missions should not be appeased.⁵⁰⁵ In fact, De Jonghe also argued against following up on the suggestion that government inspectors should visit Protestant schools and their diplomas be recognised, viewing such concessions as the start of a slippery slope which would end with the Belgians being compelled to subsidize Protestant schools.⁵⁰⁶ He advocated a policy of non-engagement with the Protestants on this issue, and though the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs raised concerns about the Protestants' involvement of the British Foreign Office and the United States State Department in the debate, De Jonghe argued that these bodies were preoccupied with more pressing economic matters to bother much about the complaints of the missionaries.⁵⁰⁷ The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Liberal Paul Hymans, was particularly concerned because of the 'current state of international affairs', by which he presumably meant speculation that the British and French were prepared to offer Belgian or Portuguese colonial territory to the German National Socialist regime, and argued that all attacks on Belgian government of the Congo based on international treaty obligations were dangerous.⁵⁰⁸ Such concerns highlight the delicacy of matters of colonial policy, and again echo Vanthemsche's sentiments regarding the potency of Belgian fears of international interest in the Congo. It is also possible that Hymans' Liberalism might have led him to question the pro-clerical policy adopted by the Ministry of Colonies.

⁵⁰⁴ For more Protestant complaints and appeals see AA/M/636, letters from Anet dated 14/11/1934, and 9/02/1937; AA/M/636, note from J.H. Oldham dated 11/04/1934. For more rebuttals from the Ministry of Colonies see AA/M/636, letter from Tschoffen to I.M.C. dated 19/03/1934; AA/M/636, letter from Minister for the Colonies Edmond Rubbens, dated 18/02/1937.

⁵⁰⁵ AA/M/638, note by Edouard De Jonghe, dated 17/10/1934.

⁵⁰⁶ AA/M/638, note by Edouard De Jonghe, dated 17/10/1934.

⁵⁰⁷ AA/M/638, note by Edouard De Jonghe dated 12/03/1934; AA/M/638, note by Edouard De Jonghe, dated 17/10/1934; KADOC/DeJonghe/251, handwritten note by De Jonghe dated 1934; AA/M/636, letter from Paul Hymans dated 16/01/1935. Hymans (1865-1941) was Minister for Foreign Affairs at this point, and a Liberal.

⁵⁰⁸ AA/M/636, letter from Paul Hymans dated 16/01/1935; AA/M/636, note dated 19/01/1935, to De Jonghe from Cabinet secretary detailing correspondence between Hymans and Anet. See Guy Vanthemsche, *Nouvelle Histoire de Belgique, vol. 4: La Belgique et le Congo: Empreintes d'une colonie, 1885-1980*, (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2007), p.123, on suggestions that Germany might takeover colonial possessions in Africa.

5.8.2: Congolese Protestants and their Rights

There was, however, another dimension to the Protestant case for equal treatment in matters relating to education which did make an impression on some in the Belgian colonial administration. Alongside their complaints about Belgian compliance with international treaty obligations, the Protestant missionaries also argued that whilst the Ministry of Colonies could justly point to the foreign origins of the missionaries themselves, their Congolese converts were just as Congolese as those who had converted to Catholicism, or those who were not Christian.⁵⁰⁹ This assertion led them to claim that these Protestant communities should have access to the same opportunities as their Catholic compatriots, especially in the form of officially recognised diplomas necessary for gaining some types of employment.⁵¹⁰ By the 1930s, the numbers of Congolese who were counted as Christian were significant, with figures of around 1.3 million Catholics and 400,000 Protestants being recorded in 1933, for example, out of an estimated total population of nearly 9.4 million.⁵¹¹ This argument was not solely based on the needs of the Congolese Protestants though, as we have seen from the case of the B.M.S. stations detailed above that the proximity of a Catholic-run school could draw pupils away from Protestant schools largely because of the desire for a diploma – if the Protestants could offer such certificates they might retain more pupils and therefore more converts. This line of argument was not enough to shift opinion in the Ministry of Colonies itself, although in 1933 Tschoffen suggested that it would be wise to avoid antagonising the Protestant missions too much in case their dissatisfaction spread to their Congolese adherents.⁵¹²

However, this aspect of the Protestant case did sway the influential Governor General of the colony, Pierre Ryckmans, who headed the government general between October 1934 and 1946. Ryckmans' biographer, Jacques Vanderlinden, was granted exclusive access to his private papers and records how the Governor entered the debate over the treatment of Protestant missions in December 1935, in private correspondence with the Minister for the Colonies, Edmond Rubbens, with a letter in

⁵⁰⁹ TNA/PRO/FO/371/17825/W3233, Ross memorandum, 1933.

⁵¹⁰ AA/M/636, letter from Henri Anet, dated 14/11/1934.

⁵¹¹ AA/RA/CB/59/8, (1933), pp.10/50: note that the Catholic missions tended to baptise converts more quickly than the Protestants.

⁵¹² AA/M/636, letter from Tschoffen to Governor General Auguste Tilkens, dated 18/09/1933.

which he argued that whilst it might be legitimate to make a distinction between foreign and national missionaries, 'we cannot establish a difference between Catholic Congolese and Protestant Congolese.'⁵¹³ Vanderlinden also notes that Ryckmans was friends with both Anet and Oldham, and that Oldham had written to him about the Protestants' complaints – it is clear that the Catholic Governor General was swayed by their arguments.⁵¹⁴ A suggestion by Ryckmans that religious schools of either denomination might be funded with *chefferie* monies aroused anger amongst the Catholic missions, notably from Mgr De Hemptinne.⁵¹⁵ This tentative proposal did not amount to anything, but Ryckmans continued to concern himself with the issue of Protestant involvement in education, writing in October 1937 a memorandum to his Vice Governors in which he analysed the education system in the colony and the Ministry of Colonies' policy and argued that it was inadequate in areas with a high Protestant population, as children there were not being reached by the government's favoured education programme although a part of the tax paid by their parents went towards education provision.⁵¹⁶ This memorandum reached the conclusion that the colonial government would fund schools for those children finding themselves in this situation, a suggestion which was evidently contrary to the Ministry of Colonies' policy, and which provoked anger there and amongst the Catholic clergy. Vanderlinden recounts the reactions to Ryckmans' initiative as they developed during 1938, with the Minister for the Colonies, de Vleeschauwer, King Leopold III, and Pope Pius XI, all declaring themselves opposed to any change of policy, and Ryckmans being forced to back down.⁵¹⁷

Ryckmans' attempt to redress the balance between the Congolese Protestants and Catholics was doomed to failure, as the strength of the mutually beneficial alliance in providing education between the Catholic missions and the Ministry of Colonies was proven once again. The far-reaching influence of the Catholic clergy, who contacted the King and the Pope, is clear as is the importance of the strength of Catholic politics in Belgium during the interwar period, particularly within the Ministry of Colonies

⁵¹³ Jacques Vanderlinden, *Pierre Ryckmans, 1891-1959: Coloniser dans l'honneur*, (Brussels: De Boeck Université, 1994), p.321.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.320.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.335-6.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.365-6.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.366-370.

itself. However, this episode – as well as the developments in the funding of training for indigenous healthcare workers during the same years, in which Ryckmans also played a crucial role – shows that the policy of only funding Catholic missions was not unquestioned within Belgian colonial circles. It also throws more light on the tensions that sometimes arose between the government-general in the Congo, and the Ministry of Colonies, where most power in fact rested.

5.9: Conclusion

It is clear that the Ministry of Colonies' policy towards the non-Belgian Protestant missionary societies' involvement in education was one of exclusion, and that this was maintained from the introduction of the state's favoured education programme in 1925 until the end of the interwar period and beyond. In fact, change to the policy only came in when a Liberal Minister for the Colonies, Robert Godding, extended the subsidy regime to Protestant schools in 1946, a measure which took effect in 1948.⁵¹⁸ However, it is also evident that the policy pursued during the interwar years was the source of much opprobrium from the Protestant missions, who were prepared to seek international condemnation of the Belgian policy and forced the Ministry to defend itself vigorously against claims that it had contravened international law.

In both the original basis of the policy, an amalgamation of nationalistic sentiment and Catholic sympathies on the parts of successive Ministers and Edouard De Jonghe, and in the later defences of it, a sense of paranoia about the potential danger of foreign influence in the colony is evident. At its core, the matter seems to have been one of dominant culture. In Belgium, Catholicism was the main religious sect and a major part of the political landscape, and it therefore became a part of the conception of Belgian identity which the Catholic-dominated Ministry of Colonies sought to export to the Congo. For those in charge of education policy at the Ministry, most notably De Jonghe, Protestantism was an unwelcome challenge to that orthodoxy. The foreign origins of the Protestant mission societies operating in the colony only strengthened that view.

⁵¹⁸ KADOC/DeJonghe/169: contains a handwritten note dated 31/10/1946 giving De Jonghe's angry response to this change in policy.

Though there were some differences between their methods of teaching, these were minor by the 1920s as the Catholic missions had moved away from the *fermes-chappelles* and adopted the model of village schools run by indigenous tutors. Furthermore, the Annual Reports on the administration of the colony acknowledge that the Protestants were willing to conform to the state's programmes, though this meant little to those who were convinced of their essential 'otherness'. It was this perception, fuelled by the memory of their involvement in the campaign against Leopold II and by the spectre of Kimbanguism, which sustained the policy over the course of the period, and which in turn led their adherents to be disadvantaged in terms of funding and qualifications. The Ministry of Colonies decided repeatedly to refuse Protestant requests for equality, not just maintaining but hardening its stance – the combative attitude of some Protestants, like Emory Ross, and their appeals to other governments did not help to assuage Belgian concerns.

However, it is evident that the policy of exclusion was not without its detractors, and the willingness of some colonial administrators in the colony – such as Engels in 1928 – to engage with the Protestants hint at this. More overtly, Pierre Ryckmans' attempts to alter this policy from 1935 onwards, although they came to nothing before the Second World War, illustrate that the discrimination against Protestants, especially the Congolese adherents of the missions concerned, was not universally accepted by Belgian colonial officials. The roots of the change in policy that occurred following the war can therefore be seen in the 1930s, rather than the shift being seen merely as a result of wartime events and the change in Belgian government which marked the later 1940s.

This chapter has shown, therefore, that just as the Belgian education policy was set up in favour of the Belgian Catholic mission societies, it was also developed and maintained in opposition to the Protestants and the threat to Belgian hegemony which they were perceived to pose by the Ministry of Colonies. This fear, renewed and reinforced during the 1920s and 1930s as a result of Kimbanguism and developments in international politics, was a significant motivating factor in the development of the Catholic-run education system discussed in the previous chapter, which needs to be considered alongside the economic reasons for expanding the system. These factors provide not only context, but also show how the events and personalities of the period

contributed to policy making, showing that it cannot be attributed solely to structural forces. Having so far explored what the education system introduced was, as well as the major motivations behind it, and how the Ministry of Colonies and the Catholic mission societies functioned to exclude Protestants from it, this study will now move on to analyse how certain streams of that education system were intended to meet specific political aims.

Chapter Six: Fashioning the Congolese: Education Policy and the Development of the Colonial Administration.

6.1: Introduction.

During the period 1916 to 1939, several elements of Belgian education policy in the Congo were contingent upon the development of the colonial state and its administrative structures. After the initial period of colonisation under the Congo Independent State, these years can be described as a time of consolidation, and signified an 'embedding' of the colonial power. This manifested itself in several ways, most importantly here through the expansion of the colonial government's responsibilities and interests in administrative, political, and social control of the population and through the development and implementation of policies of indirect rule. Both of these two developments depended upon literate Africans to function in practice. The ways in which these Africans were recruited and educated, and the testy issue of whether such use of indigenous auxiliaries solved Belgian colonial problems or merely created more, provides the focus of this chapter.

The expanding purview of the Belgian colonial state in its Congo colony created a need for more administrative employees but, as will be discussed below, there was a shortage of Belgians willing to take up such roles. In response to this, the colonial administration endeavoured to fill these vacancies with Congolese clerks, who were to be educated along very specific lines by both the official and the mission schools. One of our aims here will be to examine the motivation behind this strand of education policy and the level of success achieved in implementing it. We will also address the relationship and the level of cooperation between the colonial administration and the Catholic missions in meeting these instrumental educational needs. There will, in addition, be some consideration of the type of students recruited into this stream of education, with particular focus on the case of mixed race boys.

The introduction of elements of indirect rule, through the devolution of some administrative duties back to indigenous communities brought with it the need for amenable and literate tribal chiefs and auxiliary assistants or clerks, as the colonial authorities would only allow those it deemed to be 'safe' to wield influence. We must also, therefore, consider the continued demands from various quarters during this

period that special educational opportunities should be provided for the sons of tribal chiefs and notables in order to produce a group of Congolese leaders favourable to Belgian ideas and able to carry out administrative tasks delegated to them. Arguments for and against such education will be considered, as will the material impact of attempts to introduce it.

Finally, this chapter will ask whether the colonial administration, through its education policies, created new social strata within Congolese society, particularly an 'évolué' class, and, if so, whether such consequences of education policies were deliberate or not. The chapter thus aims to determine whether the colonial administration could control the social consequences of education programmes, which initially had very specific aims – namely, to remedy staff shortages or to run native tribunals – or, alternatively, whether the results of the creation of these literate strata within Congolese society could not be anticipated.

6.2: Aspects of State Development

6.2.1: The Expansion of Colonial Government

During the existence of the C.I.S., the colonial regime established by Leopold II was largely devoted to the expansion and then the economic exploitation of the territory under its control. This had been achieved through more or less constant use of a military force, the Force Publique, and through the gradual consolidation of a small government-general based at Boma. After the territory was annexed by the Belgian state on 15 November 1908, the new colonial government assumed more widespread responsibilities in areas of social policy and educational provision. This shift was meant to signify that the new Belgian Congo would be governed on a different basis from the C.I.S. Stengers writes that there was an expectation that the government would adopt 'a new policy, breaking with the past.'⁵¹⁹ The intention was that the new regime would depart definitively from old policies, and especially from the practices which had provoked the Congo Reform Association's vehement campaign against the Leopoldian state and which had inspired international revulsion towards it. Education and

⁵¹⁹ Jean Stengers, *Congo: Mythes et Réalités*, (Brussels: Editions Racines, 2005), p.127.

healthcare, for instance, were among the areas into which the new colonial administration began to expand, determined to demonstrate its enlightened and 'improving' attitude towards its colonized subjects.

This extension of colonial administrative responsibilities was one reason why its personnel requirements increased so markedly. Another, broader factor at work here was that the period after 1908, and more particularly that during the interwar years, was one of implantation and consolidation for the colonial state. The C.I.S. era had been a time of territorial expansion and political conquest during which the territory had been only lightly occupied by relatively few Europeans, thinly spread across the vast terrain. Problems of accessibility ensured that large areas remained unexplored and unoccupied, and certainly not brought to submission. The expansion of the rail network, and the increase in industrial and commercial activity which accompanied it, dramatically extended the reach of colonial state structures throughout the colony. Many more administrative stations were created, and there were also very significant population movements into urbanized and industrialized centres. All of these developments meant that the administration required a much larger workforce than had previously been the case.

6.2.2: Shortages of European Staff.

The need for an expanded colonial corps posed intractable difficulties for the Belgian government as persistent problems were encountered in attracting Belgians into the colonial service. Annual Reports on the colony, presented to the Belgian parliament by the Colonial Minister, illustrate the gathering force of this issue in the early 1920s, a time when manpower questions were further complicated by an exodus of colonial officials returning to Belgium on leave at the end of the First World War. The 1920 Annual Report suggested that what had been a very difficult situation in 1919, had improved during 1920 and insisted that numbers recruited would have been higher were it not for the fact that the Ministry of the Colonies had decided to seek 'quality more than quantity.'⁵²⁰ This assertion is, however, challenged by views expressed in contemporary British Foreign Office reports in which the quality of those employed in

⁵²⁰ AA/RA/CB/58/7, (1920), p.13.

the Belgian colonial corps in Africa was often deemed to be generally unsatisfactory and inferior to their British counterparts.⁵²¹ National sentiment and a certain bias may have influenced such comments from Britons, but, in his work on Christian missions in the Congo, Markowitz concurs that the Belgians struggled to attract recruits, especially good quality recruits to take up positions in Africa. He argues that 'there was little of the economic dissatisfaction or lack of opportunity at home that spurred many British, Italians, and others to seek their fortunes outside their native countries. [...] most Belgians could find satisfaction of their needs within the confines of their own borders.'⁵²²

The Annual Report for the following year, 1921, suggested that the situation in 1920 had amounted to 'a crisis' generated in large part by the war, but exacerbated by previously poor pay and pensions. Although the 1921 Report insisted that this crisis had been surmounted by the end of that year, it still acknowledged that the number of administrative agents had yet to reach the quota set.⁵²³ Shortages persisted into 1922, although the quota was almost reached with 1,885 positions out of a quota of 1,934 having been filled.⁵²⁴ The 1922 report also acknowledged that Provincial Governors had continued to complain about shortages. It was therefore envisaged that the number of administrators would increase from 150 to 180, and the number of territorial agents would be augmented by 48 to 480.⁵²⁵ The planned increases notwithstanding, these numbers illustrate just how thinly spread was the European colonial corps in the Congo. Put simply, the colonial state employed fewer than 2,000 Belgian full-time staff across a territory with a population of approximately 10 million people. Moreover, of those 2,000, only about 600 were directly engaged in district level administration. Although the numbers employed by the Colonial Ministry to work in the Congo continued their gradual increase year on year, they also continued to fall short of the set quotas; 16.49% or 117 less than the prescribed number of functionaries and territorial agents were in place in 1925, for example.⁵²⁶

⁵²¹ See, for example, a report by British Consul John P. MacGregor dating from 1924, TNA/PRO/FO/371/10529/W10614.

⁵²² Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.19.

⁵²³ AA/RA/CB /58/8, (1921), p.6.

⁵²⁴ AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), p.10.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁶ AA/RA/CB /58/12, (1925), p.5.

These figures demonstrate that recruitment to the colonial service was an ongoing problem for the Colonial Ministry, just as the demands of administering the Congo were increasing and the need for administrators was growing. Two policies were initiated in response during the early years of the Belgian Congo, their aim being to ease the pressure on the small number of Belgian administrators working in Africa. The first of these had the relatively straightforward intention of training African clerks to fill subaltern positions within the European administrative structures. The second marked a more far-reaching policy departure: it introduced some notions of indirect rule to the Congo, shifting responsibilities for indigenous justice, population counting and – eventually – tax collection, to African authorities. This, in turn, heightened the need for literate Africans who could act as clerks of the court in the indigenous tribunals, and educated chiefs who could implement Belgian policies and ensure their subjects' compliance.

6.3.1: African Clerks and the 'écoles des candidats-commis':

The education of African clerks for work in subaltern levels of the colonial administration was not unprecedented. A less ambitious form of the policy was pioneered, albeit in a very limited manner during the C.I.S. period. In 1890, '*colonies scolaires*' were established by Royal Decree. More vocational than scholastic organisations, these rudimentary training centres generally accepted as pupils children who had been designated as orphans, freed slaves or victims of war.⁵²⁷ Busugutsala has written that the purpose of these establishments was strictly limited to the preparation of future soldiers for the Force Publique or of employees for the civil administration.⁵²⁸ This initiative was further advanced by the opening of the first official school in the then capital Boma in 1906 which drew its pupils from the town's *colonie scolaire*. The new school had a secular teaching staff whose sole aim it was to educate literate clerks or *candidats-commis*.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁷ Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre*, p.78.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.80.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.80.

The training of African clerks received added impetus after the annexation of the Congo by the Belgian state. As mentioned in chapter three, the issue predominated among the questions included on a questionnaire about education provision circulated by the Belgian government-in-exile in 1916 and 1917 amongst its colonial administrators in the Congo.⁵³⁰ A letter sent by Minister for the Colonies Jules Renkin to the Governor General of the Congo, Eugène Henry, dated 30 December 1916, makes clear that the idea for the questionnaire, and, therefore, the catalyst behind this wartime push to reorganise education in the colony, was the Minister himself.⁵³¹ Renkin stated that his desire to reform the education system was motivated by recognition that low level European employees in the colonial service were expensive and mediocre. His conclusion was that 'if we manage to replace them with black clerks and artisans, it would be an enormous progress from a financial and economic perspective.'⁵³² Questions number twelve and thirteen of the survey asked what for jobs and in what quantities each year students leaving primary, professional or clerks' schools could be employed. More striking, perhaps, is the question twenty-three which asked whether the administrators estimated that some white artisans and subaltern agents could be replaced by Africans, and what the advantages or disadvantages – beyond the economic considerations – of such a policy might be.⁵³³ This specific request to look beyond the economic factors involved, confirmed the clear inference in Renkin's letter; namely, that the Minister had already decided that use of black clerks would be financially and politically beneficial.

Three versions of this education questionnaire were issued: one to businessmen with interests in the colony, another to missionaries involved in education, and a final version to civil servants working as District Commissars and Higher Deputies in the colony's territorial administration. It is not entirely clear how many of the questionnaires were distributed to each group, or how many respondents took part.

⁵³⁰ Various examples of this questionnaire are to be found in AA/M/645.

⁵³¹ AA/M/645/2, Renkin to Henry, dated 30/12/1916; Jules Renkin (1862-1934; Minister for the Colonies 1908-1918); Eugène Henry (1862-1930; Governor General 1916-1921).

⁵³² AA/M/645/2, Renkin to Henry, dated 30/12/1916.

⁵³³ Question 23 reads: "Seriez-vous d'avis que certains artisans blancs et des agents subalternes pourraient être remplacés par les indigènes? Indépendamment de la question d'économie, quels seraient les avantages et les désavantages de cette élimination?" – Are you of the opinion that certain white artisans and subaltern agents could be replaced by natives? Apart from the matter of economy, what would be the advantages and the disadvantages of this elimination?

However, those responses still extant offer some insight into the variety of opinions which colonial agents themselves held about the Colonial Minister's eagerness to employ African clerks.

The Higher Deputy of Sankuru was enthusiastic about the idea, at least insofar as it would enable him to replace some European subalterns with black clerks responsible for typing, general office work, and collecting native taxes. He also favoured trained black artisans assuming the physical duties of European tradesmen which, he explains, the climate made much more difficult for them to complete. However, the Deputy added the proviso that these black replacement workers, whether artisans or clerks, should always be under 'the direct supervision' of a European to ensure that they did not abuse their status. This distrustful attitude towards native workers was expressed in numerous other responses, despite the general preference for replacement of lower level European staff with Africans.⁵³⁴

Whilst not universally approved of – the District Commissar of Bas-Congo, for instance, stated that, actually, very few Africans could replace whites in this way – the proposal was generally warmly received.⁵³⁵ The Higher Deputy of Tanganyika-Moëro opined that such a policy would allow European agents to supervise the collection of the indigenous tax, for instance, without being so closely involved in the actual practical business of extracting the money. Furthermore, he believed that European agents' time was being wasted at high cost on such lowly administrative matters which could be left to African clerks, allowing the colonial agent to regain 'his necessary prestige, as much in the eyes of the Europeans as of the Africans.'⁵³⁶ He went on to stress that the European agent was 'already so rare', therefore implying that the employment of more black clerks in junior administrative positions would allow the promotion of the European staff to fill vacant positions further up the administrative hierarchy without leaving the lower levels short-staffed. It seems that, in the main, the largely positive responses received were motivated by practical considerations more than political preference or fears of upsetting the colony's strict racial hierarchy. The plain fact was that the territorial administration was chronically overstretched. The European staff

⁵³⁴ AA/M/645 (booklet).

⁵³⁵ AA/M/645.

⁵³⁶ AA/M/645 (booklet)

closest to this problem understandably welcomed the government's attempts to remedy the situation.

6.3.2: Moves to increase the numbers of African clerks:

As has already been seen, limited provision had already been made for the education of black clerks from the time of the C.I.S. but its numbers and scope were small. The clerks' school at Boma also proved extremely problematic during the First World War, and it is interesting that the government was apparently keen to extend the education programme aimed at training black clerks at the very same time that what might be termed the prototype for this was experiencing major difficulties. Letters exchanged between the Governor General and the Minister for the Colonies illustrate that the school's fundamental purpose was still being debated, but also emphasize the government's determination to further its development. A letter from Renkin to the Governor General, sent in May 1916, noted that the government saw the role of the school as being limited to training its pupils to fulfil very specific tasks. The Minister wrote of the school that: 'Its role is not to give the pupils an extended culture, but rather to teach them a specialism. It is intended to form subaltern clerks, good copyists, able to take on simple office tasks.'⁵³⁷ Renkin went on to complain that the skills demonstrated by the pupils were inadequate and that if the eight who were in the final year of their studies managed to pass all their exams, the school would, at last, have furnished the administration with eight clerks – implying that it had failed to provide any at all previously.⁵³⁸ Despite this, and the fact that at the time the school had only fourteen students in total, the Minister insisted that, once war's end brought a return to normality, further development of the institution would be a priority. He even stated that "one should envisage a time when copying work and low level jobs will be given to indigenous clerks, to the exclusion of Europeans."⁵³⁹

It is therefore clear that, at the beginning of the period under consideration, the Brussels government remained determined to pursue the training of African clerks both as a solution to its Belgian recruitment problems and as a cost-cutting measure.

⁵³⁷ AA/M/651, letter dated 24/05/1916.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

However, it is also evident official concerns persisted about the school's management and its very small number of students. The Governor General's response recognised these problems, commenting that between them, he and the school's director M. Pierot, had already revised the school's programmes along the lines suggested by the Minister, focusing closely on typing and copying exercises and extending the programme of studies from two to three years.⁵⁴⁰ The Governor conceded that the poor quality of the recruits from the Boma *colonie scolaire* had caused the failure of the clerks' school to produce any graduates, and stated that only at the end of 1917 would better educated candidates come from the primary school under the direction of the Brothers of Christian Schools.⁵⁴¹ The shortage of recruits was behind the decision to temporarily close the school during 1917, and, though not fully trained, some of the existing pupils were employed by the administration – ten in the typing service, three in the telegraph section, and one by the medical service.⁵⁴² It seems that it was during this interval that the Governor-General took the opportunity to transfer management of the school to the Brothers of Christian Schools, who were already in charge of Boma's 'official' primary school.⁵⁴³

At this stage, Renkin underlined his view that the school's aim should only be to produce clerks and that it had to succeed, suggesting that once in employment African clerks should not merely be tolerated, but rather encouraged by European agents. To grease the wheels, he added that some financial incentive might help to encourage the Europeans to help train the new clerks to an acceptable standard.⁵⁴⁴ Moreover, he stated that for the school to fulfil its goal, it should produce at least twenty-five clerks per year.⁵⁴⁵ Clearly then, the training of Africans to replace Europeans in subaltern administrative roles was a priority for the central colonial administration in Brussels, despite the fact that the local administration was finding even relatively unambitious targets extremely difficult to achieve at this stage. The development of the school at Boma and others set up in its wake was to be a recurrent problem for the colonial administration.

⁵⁴⁰ AA/M/651, letter dated 06/07/1916.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴² AA/M/651, letter dated 26/03/1917.

⁵⁴³ AA/M/651, letter dated 08/03/1917. Schools referred to as 'official' were administered by members of pedagogically trained religious orders, and fully funded by the state.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

6.3.3: The further development of the 'official' schools.

The shortages in European personnel during the early 1920s identified above, and the resulting decision to increase the number of African clerks drove government policy in relation to two of the types of schools established in the Congo. From 1925, in a number of the 'official' schools, where the colonial administration directly influenced the curricula followed, sections were opened to train clerks. These were modelled on the clerks' school at Boma, and provided an additional two or three years of post-primary education for those deemed able to progress to the standard required for working in the European administration. In 1925, such sections began to operate in Elisabethville, Stanleyville, Libenge, and Coquilhatville, alongside the original school at Boma. Though figures are lacking for some of these locations, it seems that the total number of boys enrolled in this stream of education at this time reached never exceeded one hundred across the whole colony.⁵⁴⁶ The Annual Report for 1926 stated that during the year the unification and organisation of educational programmes had begun in order to facilitate standardization and, of course, to ensure that they encapsulated the government's own priorities.⁵⁴⁷ Whilst details of the programme for the official schools are lacking, it seems highly probable that they would follow the same prescriptions that had been laid out in 1925 for subsidised schools, as that programme embodied the state's principal concerns in the field of education. The 1926 Annual Report certainly seemed to confirm that all the official schools had adopted a uniform training regime, which, in the higher years, emphasised the use of French as the language of instruction, so that those who were 'to enter the service of the administration or private companies as clerks or artisans' would now receive an education which was 'effectively the same across the colony.'⁵⁴⁸ However, the same Annual Report also recorded that some of these schools which were allegedly delivering the same programme of education, provided that education for anything from one to four years. Despite this confusing variation, there is no doubt that the colonial administration attempted to solve its staffing problems by increasing the number of establishments training clerks during the 1920s.

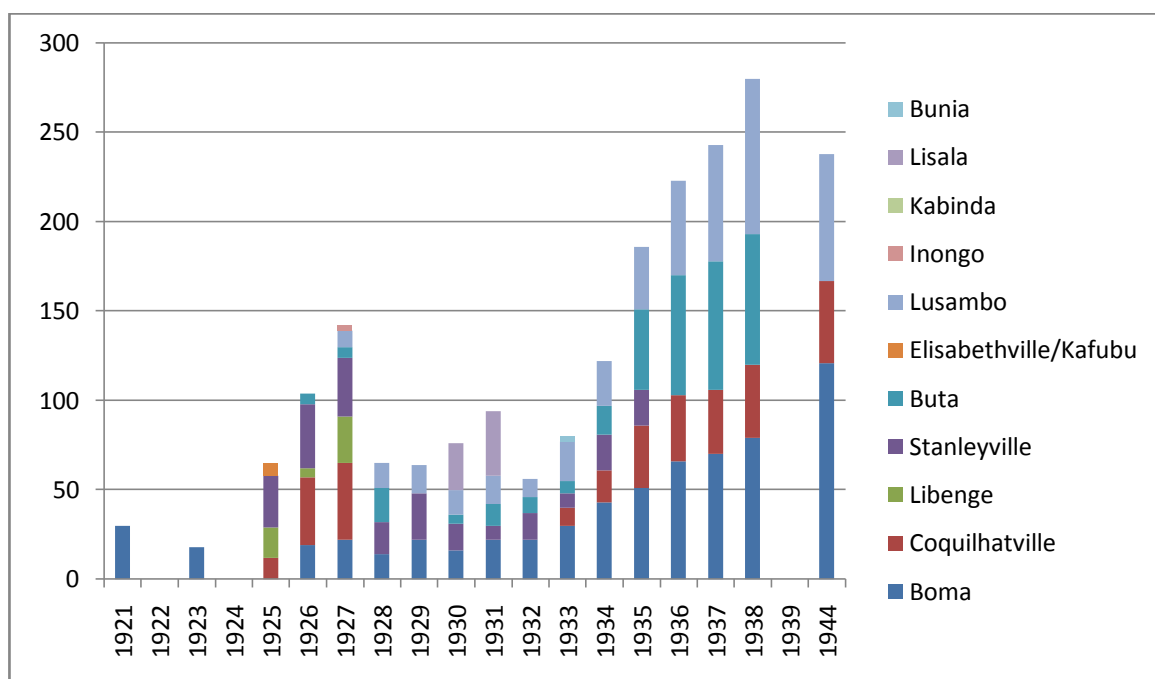
⁵⁴⁶ See AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), pp.138, 160-1.

⁵⁴⁷ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.19.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Figure 5, below, shows the known numbers of pupils enrolled at the clerks' schools, which became known as *écoles moyennes* from 1936. The chart was compiled from figures contained within the Annual Reports and is produced here to illustrate the general trends in the development of this stream of education provision. Precise figures are problematic as, particularly during the 1920s, the different provincial administrations compiled their own sections of the annual reports often providing data in different formats. During part of this period, for example, the Equateur province often failed to give the numbers of students attending its individual schools (Coquilhatville, Inongo, Libenge, and Lisala), and in 1925-1927 the Coquilhatville figures made no distinction between those training to become clerks or artisans. As a result, the figure shown here is inflated, whilst the 1927 report only recorded that three pupils from Inongo had been employed as clerks instead of how many were enrolled there in total. It bears emphasis, however, that the fragmented nature of the information contained in the annual reports during the 1920s and early 1930s actually reflects the changes undergone by these schools during the period. New official schools were opened, some – such as that which began its life in Elisabethville and later moved to Kafubu – stopped training clerks, and others closed altogether or were transferred to subsidised school status. Despite these reservations, the figures used to compile this table retain value. The table clearly illustrates that the official system for the education of clerks stabilised during the latter part of the 1930s and that the numbers being trained were steadily increasing.

Figure 5: Known numbers of African students enrolled in 'official' *écoles des candidats-commis/écoles moyennes*.



Additional factors must also be taken into account when considering these figures, such as the fact that, on occasion, such as in 1930 for instance, the colonial administration itself recruited students from the *école des candidats-commis* before they had completed the full programme of studies.⁵⁴⁹ This somewhat distorts the statistics available, but again mirrors the staff shortages then being experienced by the administration. The annual reports also reveal that some of those who trained at these schools went on to be employed as school tutors not clerks, perhaps due to their failing the final diploma examinations. This means that the figures shown for the numbers of clerks being trained should be treated as the highest possible figure, particularly for the 1930s when the statistics were being recorded in a more standardized manner. What remains clear is that overall numbers of clerks being trained were never very large, despite the needs of the colonial administration and the emphasis placed on the expansion of this type of education in the annual reports of the period.

⁵⁴⁹ AA/RA/CB/59/4, (1930), p.69.

6.3.4: Educational Content

Those students who were accepted into an *école des candidats-commis* could expect to receive highly instrumental, targeted instruction. From the outset, the focus was vocational. Much as in subsidised mission schools also educating clerks, the new schools taught pupils how to complete specific office tasks such as typing letters, replicating documents and completing forms. Marked exam papers from the Boma school in 1917 highlight this process in action, showing that pupils were tested through dictations and copying exercises all of which dealt with administrative matters, such as typing speeches and filling out birth certificates.⁵⁵⁰ As previously mentioned, French was the vehicular language for teaching in these schools as it was anticipated that the students would eventually work in a francophone environment. Furthermore, as was made clear in the 1925 project for subsidised schools, (and, it may be assumed, also applied in the official schools) pupils were expected to adopt European modes of behaviour, from their style of dress to their use of cutlery.⁵⁵¹ Pupils were also given European forenames.⁵⁵² These measures were essentially intended to ensure that these African clerks would be more readily accepted by those Europeans with whom they would have to work. There was no provision for any wider cultural development for the students, suggesting that the schools were not wholly integrated into the wider cultural objectives of Belgian colonialism. Rather, the aim of the Belgian colonial administration in Brussels, which devised the programme, was simply to provide literate clerks in order to combat its endemic staffing shortages.⁵⁵³ Former Minister of the Colonies Louis Franck did identify a social and political function of the training of clerks, when he wrote, in 1929, that Congolese would prefer to deal with administrators of their own race; not that he foresaw independence of course, rather that indigenous subalterns might ease the operation of Belgian power and make it more acceptable to those under its control.⁵⁵⁴ Beyond this, there was no clear intention

⁵⁵⁰ AA/M/651 (Annexes to letter 325A, dated 14/06/1917).

⁵⁵¹ *Projet d'organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo belge avec le concours des Sociétés nationales*, p.5. Phyllis M. Martin has written convincingly of the role of clothes as a site of contest between Europeans and Africans, arguing that urban Africans were often keen to adopt European styles of dress and considered such clothing to be a sign of 'évolué' status, whilst European missionaries sought to control access to desired items of clothing in order to maintain racial distinctions. See 'Contesting Clothes in Colonial Brazzaville', *Journal of African History*, Vol.35, No. 3, (1994), 401-426.

⁵⁵² AA/M647/22 (Inspection report on Buta school, 1929?).

⁵⁵³ For Kita's description of the programme for these schools see *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.179.

⁵⁵⁴ Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 1, (Brussels: Renaissance du livre, 1929), pp.295-6.

to develop a new class of African *'évolués'*; quite the reverse: the limitations placed on the educational scope sought to ensure that trainee clerks did not develop a sense of themselves as being closer to their European employers than to their Congolese compatriots. However, it now seems remarkably short-sighted of the Belgian policy-makers to have assumed that they could dictate and limit the ways in which educated Congolese would develop distinct identities informed by a sense of cultural separation from traditional society. Jeremy Rich, writing about the experience of clerks in colonial Gabon, has identified them as developing a 'hybrid lifestyle which drew on both indigenous and imported cultural influences' and inevitably set them apart from their compatriots.⁵⁵⁵

Roger Anstey's writings on the emergence of an *évolué* class in the Belgian Congo in the post-Second World War period argue convincingly that, through work and training, the Congolese who identified themselves as being part of such a class, had 'become more directly aware of European ways and culture, and had been drawn more closely into the new way of life.'⁵⁵⁶ They could engage with the francophone world around them, they generally lived in the larger administrative centres, and their ties with traditional African society had been loosened. Though there was no intention to do so, the training of clerks, and to a lesser extent artisans and school tutors, to work alongside Europeans during the interwar period helped precipitate the stratification of Congolese society which would lead to the emergence of the *évolué* class identified in Anstey's work.

6.3.5: The types of students being trained as clerks: a focus on the *métis*.

Interestingly, although the Belgian colonial government was determined to avoid the development of a Congolese *évolué* class, the emergence of a particular social group made this task still more problematic. Children born of relationships between Europeans and Africans – almost without exception between European men and African women – were already distinctive – culturally, biologically and, ultimately

⁵⁵⁵ Jeremy Rich, 'Troubles at the Office: Clerks, State Authority, and Social Conflict in Gabon, 1920-45', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (2004), 58-87,(p.60).

⁵⁵⁶ Roger Anstey, 'Belgian Rule in the Congo and the aspirations of the 'evolue' class', in L.H. Gann and T.E.R. Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960, Volume 2: The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1914-1960*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp.194-225, (p.199).

politically. Known in the Congo as *mulâtres/mulâtresses* or *métis*, these mixed-race progeny traversed the existing categories in the colonial racial hierarchy, and could not simply be designated as African or European.⁵⁵⁷ Ann Laura Stoler has written perceptively on the impact of *métissage*, stating that it was ‘conceived of as a source of subversion, it was seen as a threat to white prestige, an embodiment of European degeneration and moral decay.’⁵⁵⁸ Every aspect of these children’s existence was difficult for colonial authorities to address, including, of course, their education and the related matter of their future roles in colonial society.

The reality of this problem was acknowledged early in the period under consideration, in an article written in 1922 by Edouard De Jonghe. He described the question of the *métis* as ‘one of the most delicate problems raised by the contact between two races as different as the white and the black’ and alluded to problems that could occur if a European fathered a mixed race child and then returned to Europe leaving the child with its African mother. De Jonghe suggested that the child would be rejected by indigenous society and would be deemed a ‘*déraciné*’.⁵⁵⁹ He outlined – and the section of his article dealing with this issue only takes up fifteen lines of more than thirty pages – the government’s solution to the matter as being to train mixed race boys for administrative roles.⁵⁶⁰ Figures from the annual reports show that some mixed race boys were already receiving education at official and mission schools. Interestingly, all of the forty-eight mixed race boys who were enrolled at the Boma *colonie scolaire* in 1919 were boarding pupils.⁵⁶¹ Both this and the channelling of these students towards administrative training and eventual employment within the European administration seem to fit Stoler’s analysis of colonial administrations decrying the ‘abandonment’ of such children to what was termed the indigenous *milieu*, and their determination to

⁵⁵⁷ For more on such relationships, see Amandine Lauro, *Coloniaux, ménagères et prostituées au Congo Belge (1885-1930)*, (Brussels: Editions Labor, 2005).

⁵⁵⁸ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p.80.

⁵⁵⁹ Edouard De Jonghe, ‘*L’instruction publique au Congo Belge*’, (Bruxelles: Goemaere, 1922), p.29.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.* See also Lissia Jeurissen, *Quand le métis s’appelait le ‘mulâtre’: société, droit et pouvoir coloniaux face à la descendance des couples eurafricains dans l’ancien Congo Belge*, (Brussels: Cahiers Migrations, 2003), p.85, and on the wider experience of mixed-race people in colonial Congo, though the book says little about education specifically; Owen White has identified the same tendency to channel mixed-race boys towards subaltern administrative careers in French West Africa, in his *Children of the French Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.63-68.

⁵⁶¹ AA/RA/CB/58/6, (1919), p.21.

remove them from its perceived moral degeneracy.⁵⁶² The colonial administration in the Belgian Congo certainly attempted to remove mixed race children from the influence of their African mothers, hoping, by doing so, to nullify any threat of subversion by containing and controlling these children's upbringing.

In 1919 Boma was the only official school to accept mixed-race boys as pupils.⁵⁶³ However, their treatment by the administration became more sophisticated as time went on. Evidence of this may be seen in the development of a subsidised school in the Eastern Province. Run by the Holy Ghost Fathers, the school was originally based at Kindu before later moving to Lubunda. It was in operation by 1920 when it counted seventy mixed-race students of both sexes as pupils.⁵⁶⁴ In 1924, the school sent twelve *métis* to the official school at Stanleyville, where they were placed in the *section normale* to train as clerks.⁵⁶⁵ The school – sub-divided, as was typical, into one for boys and one for girls - transferred to Lubunda in 1924. Reports from the Legal Representative of the mission, dating from 1929, show that the channelling of the oldest male students towards the official school at Stanleyville was an established policy 'so as to give them direction in life.'⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, these pupils were encouraged to maintain contact, in the form of letters and visits during school vacations, with the mixed-race girls at the neighbouring school run by the Daughters of the Cross (*Filles de la Croix*), as the missionaries – and presumably therefore the colonial administration who subsidised the schools – hoped that this continued contact would eventually result in the formation of '*foyers mulâtres*.'⁵⁶⁷ These mixed-race households were, it can be assumed, supposed to ensure the containment of the *métis* 'problem', and were clearly also intended to occupy a place in society set apart from both the indigenous and the European populations. That mixed-race boys were to be trained as subaltern auxiliaries for the state, receiving the best education available from the colonial school system, meant their social standing would be greater than that of the wider population.

⁵⁶² Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, pp.87-89.

⁵⁶³ AA/RA/CB/58/6, (1919), p.21. Note that mixed-race girls were accepted into the Moanda *colonie scolaire*, which provided primary education.

⁵⁶⁴ AA/RA/CB/58/7, (1920), p.71.

⁵⁶⁵ AA/RA/CB/58/11, (1924), p.62. Note that although a *section normale* would usually train teachers, in the figures given for the Stanleyville school at this stage pupils training to become clerks and teachers were grouped together under the term.

⁵⁶⁶ AA/M/648/16, report dated 16/01/1928.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

By the mid-1930s, the debate over the status of *métis* in the Congo had progressed considerably and some were demanding that children of mixed European and African parentage should have access to schools that catered for European children. An undated document, grouped with others dating from 1936-1938, notes that such demands had already been made, on the basis that *métis* recognised by their fathers were accorded European status, but that such requests had been met with hostility by the European population.⁵⁶⁸ A letter from Governor General Pierre Ryckmans, dated 1936, advised that mixed-race boys should no longer be sent to Lubunda but rather educated in local mission schools, and that those with special aptitudes should be sent to what were by then known as *écoles moyennes* on completion of their primary education.⁵⁶⁹ But the Annual Reports for the colony make clear that the school did stop accepting mixed-race boys as pupils in 1937 in conformity with the Governor General's letter.⁵⁷⁰

It is clear, then, that increasingly disparate views about the position of mixed-race children in colonial society endured, and considerable changes had taken place for the matter of their admission to schools for Europeans even to be under discussion. Yet, the fact that such admission remained an emotive and divisive topic among officials and settlers indicates how limited such progress was. Whilst the channelling of the *métis* towards the *écoles moyennes* - which were the highest level of the general education system in the Congo – highlights the widespread official assumption that mixed-race infants were racially superior to blacks, opinions recorded by a member of the colony's education service illustrate that this was not always the case. G. Morteihan noted that one educator working in the colony, Brother Secondien, believed that *métis* were 'morally tainted', and that another, M. Houzaert, believed them to be 'physically and intellectually inferior to blacks.'⁵⁷¹ Morteihan distinguished between two categories of *métis*: those who had been recognised by their father and those who had not. He argued that for those who had not been recognised, there should be separate schools where they could be raised and educated separately from black pupils.⁵⁷² He went on to note that those who had been recognised by their fathers were legally judged to

⁵⁶⁸ AA/AIMO/4674/14, (subfolder on *enseignement* marked V).

⁵⁶⁹ AA/AIMO/4674/14/V, (letter dated 21/03/1936).

⁵⁷⁰ AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), p.75; AA/RA/CB/59/12,(1937), p.80.

⁵⁷¹ AA/AIMO/4674/14/V, report by G. Morteihan, dated 4/04/1938.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*

have European status and, therefore, could claim the right to enter official or subsidised schools for European children. Having consulted several people on this matter – including the head of the education service in the Congo, Nicholas Welvaert, various missionaries, and some parents – he reported that all but one had concluded that allowing entry to European schools would be problematic, and that this was also the view of the Governor General.⁵⁷³ This document also makes clear that the colonial government was offering financial incentives to fathers who recognised their *métis* offspring, presumably to try to avoid greater cost to the state if they went unrecognised.⁵⁷⁴

This seemingly contradictory mix of policies and attitudes meant that by the late 1930s, the situation in the Belgian Congo regarding the education of *métis* was increasingly complicated. The policy of directing male *métis* towards ‘elite’ schools, in order that they would be employed in junior administrative roles, had been pursued in concert with efforts to encourage them to marry their female counterparts. When combined with later financial incentives for fathers who recognised their offspring as European, this served to create a situation in which the *métis* increasingly identified themselves, and were seen by others, as a distinct group within society. Furthermore, the broad thrust of these policies also marked them out as being superior to black Congolese, although prevalent attitudes and moralising condescension among the elite and Europeans clearly qualified this view in practice. The solution offered by Mortehan largely depended on determining the actual numbers of *métis*, both recognised and unrecognised, but at its core was a double-edged proposal: to found separate schools for the non-recognised, while offering recognised *métis* the option to attend these. Recognised *métis* were still refused admission to European schools in practice. Consistent with Stoler’s analysis of the situation in Dutch Indonesia and with Owen White’s evaluation of the ‘*métis* problem’ in French West Africa, it was widely held that even those children recognised by their fathers would still most likely have been raised by their indigenous mothers, and that, therefore, paternal recognition was no guarantee of moral purity.⁵⁷⁵ Furthermore, attempts would be made to contain, if not to solve, the problem by removing it: as Mortehan suggested, material advantages

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁵ Owen White, *Children of the French Empire*, p.77.

might be confined to those *métis* who were removed from the colony and educated in Europe.⁵⁷⁶

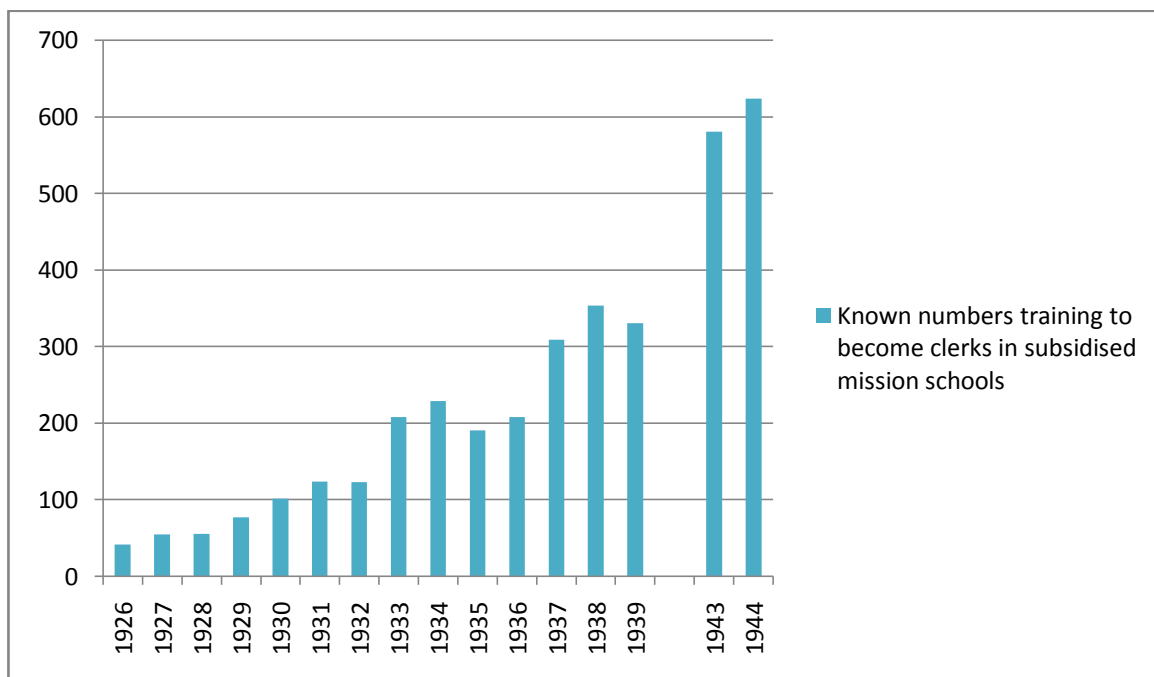
As so often in colonial affairs, the outcome of such tortuous debate was a hotchpotch. In fact, it seems that the strategy eventually recommended for adoption did allow for the admission of recognised *métis* to schools for Europeans, as long as they met certain stringent criteria regarding their upbringing. A policy document prepared for the Governor General shows that this would apply in cases where the child had been raised by 'a European household' and not by the white father and the black mother.⁵⁷⁷ It was also extended to apply to non-recognised *métis* raised by Europeans. Furthermore, the European responsible for the child had to agree to take them to Europe should they themselves leave the Congo before the child had completed their studies. This would allow them 'to create for themselves a position equivalent to that of a European'. Alternatively, in the event of the guardian's departure, the mixed race child was to be transferred to the care of an establishment that would continue to educate the child, preventing them from returning to the indigenous community. For others, who did not meet the criteria on upbringing, there would be the separate schools, with boarding facilities, much as Morteihan had described. Despite the dehumanised treatment of these children, this does seem to be a significant shift, allowing *métis* broadly equivalent educational access to that afforded to European children. However, it seems likely that this was predicated on the knowledge that the numbers of *métis* children who would meet such criteria were very small. Moreover, this policy was not implemented before the Second World War. But the very fact that discussions on the matter were so far advanced illustrates the difficulties that the growing demands of the *métis* were causing the colonial administration. Heightened demands emanated from a desire for recognition which itself was provoked, at least in part, by the administration's earlier policies.

⁵⁷⁶ AA/AIMO/4674/14/V, report by G. Morteihan, dated 4/04/1938.

⁵⁷⁷ AA/AIMO/4674/14/V, note to Governor General, dated 12/07/1938.

6.3.6: Subsidised *écoles des candidats-commis*.

Figure 6: Known numbers training to become clerks in subsidised mission schools.



The table above illustrates the known numbers of pupils training to become clerks in subsidised mission schools. Again, these figures come from the various annual reports dealing with the period in question and are, in some ways, problematic. They detail the numbers of pupils enrolled in these schools rather than the numbers completing their studies successfully and entering employment as clerks. However, the problem of a significant difference between enrolment figures and actual attendance, which exists when considering many statistics relating to primary schools, is greatly lessened because these *écoles des candidats-commis/écoles moyennes* were run as boarding schools. As a consequence, pupils' attendance was assured.

This table clearly shows that by the mid-1920s mission involvement in the training of clerks was minimal, notwithstanding the government's determination to expand this area of education. In order to put the development of subsidised clerks' schools into context, it is probably most valuable to compare them to subsidised normal schools and professional schools, with which they were grouped as special sections in the highest tier of education catered for under the subsidy system as delineated in the 1925 project. From the partial figures that are given in the 1926 Annual Report for these other types of schools, we can deduce that there were over 200 pupils enrolled

in professional training and over 500 enrolled in the normal schools destined to become teachers.⁵⁷⁸ Several factors can be identified which might have contributed to this large disparity: for example, professional training in trades such as carpentry, metalwork, and tailoring was widely encouraged by missionaries as it was believed to be 'improving'.⁵⁷⁹ Additionally, some of the schools included in these figures may not, in fact, have been boarding schools and their enrolment figures may not have accurately reflected attendance. However, in relation to the question of mission involvement in the training of African clerks, the much higher enrolment figures in the normal schools, and indeed the higher number of this type of school established in the colony, is highly significant. It underlines the centrality of mass primary education to the missionaries' evangelical philosophy as the pupils of the normal schools would form a Christian vanguard, disseminating the tenets of their education as *moniteurs indigènes*, or native tutors, in rural primary schools.

As Stengers and Busugutsala have suggested, for the missions the main focus of education was inevitably the same as the main focus of all mission work: evangelisation.⁵⁸⁰ In order to achieve this, their preference was to expand the lowest tier of the education system, that providing a rudimentary and strongly religious education, so that they might reach as many Congolese as possible. Whatever its effectiveness as a conversionary tool, this policy, though, would not produce the skilled workers that the colonial administration needed. It is clear, therefore, that in the 1920s at least the views of the colonial administration in Brussels and those of the Catholic missions diverged markedly on this issue. Though chapter four has shown that the state wanted the missions, as in the case of the White Fathers, to focus more on training teachers than priests, it is evident that the state also valued the formation of clerks highly – and far more than did the missions.⁵⁸¹

Stengers has suggested that in the Congo, as regards education, 'all initiative had been left to the mission and the government confined itself to subsidising that which the

⁵⁷⁸ AA/RA/CB/58/14, figures compiled from pp.54, 73, 87, 109.

⁵⁷⁹ See chapters four and five for more on missionary educational theory.

⁵⁸⁰ Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre*, pp.41-42 ; Jean Stengers, *Congo : Mythes et Réalités*, (Brussels : Editions Racine, 2005), p.208.

⁵⁸¹ See chapter four.

missions created.⁵⁸² Other parts of this study have already established that this was not the case, and it was not true of the training of auxiliaries either. During the 1930s government pressure compelled the Catholic missions to expand their educational provision for clerks, suggesting that the colonial administration had much more influence on the development of the colonial education system than Stengers allows. The 1935 Annual Report reiterated the need to further develop the clerks' schools in order to furnish the colony with literate Africans to replace subaltern European administrators. The Report stated that the programme in the official schools had been increased to three years in 1935, and would be further extended to four years from 1936.⁵⁸³ Furthermore, it stressed that this new programme had been communicated to those mission groups responsible for the organisation of subsidised schools of this type.⁵⁸⁴

The 1936 Annual Report went further, stating that the government had proposed to the missions that their schools, by now known as *écoles moyennes*, should adopt the same extended programme as the official schools, and that the school at Elisabethville, run by the Benedictines, and that at Leopoldville, run by the Scheut Fathers, had already done so.⁵⁸⁵ The report then goes on to state that the reorganisation was being successfully implemented, predicting that it would be entirely complete within a couple of years.⁵⁸⁶ This ready adoption of a government-proposed programme indicates that, probably thanks to the subsidy system, the colonial administration could in fact impose its preferences in the development of the education that Catholic missionary organisations were providing. At the very least it shows a far greater degree of cooperation than Stengers concedes. Figure 6 illustrates that the implementation of the 1935 programme in the subsidised schools and, especially the extension of their programme to four years, marked the beginning of a period during which the number of African boys receiving this type of education increased dramatically. We may conclude from this that the colonial government's political concerns, and its need for administrative workers in particular, did have a strong impact on the missions.

⁵⁸² Jean Stengers, *Congo : Mythes et Réalités*, p.208.

⁵⁸³ AA/RA/CB/59/10, (1935), p.61.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁵ AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), p.78.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

6.3.7: Further developments: African girls and the *écoles moyennes*

There was no provision for African girls to be trained as clerks or secretaries during the entire period under examination in this study.⁵⁸⁷ However, the Annual Report issued in 1947 to summarise developments in the colony during the Second World War, indicates that the question of creating *écoles moyennes* for girls was at that time under consideration by the government.⁵⁸⁸ The reason cited for this transition was, not a need for more employees, but the growing educational gap between Congolese men and women.⁵⁸⁹ The education offered in the *écoles moyennes* in the post-1945 period was not so narrowly focused on employment in the European administration though, as a new level of schools was created to fulfil that aim, and differences in the education offered to boys and girls remained.⁵⁹⁰ Whilst this development is slightly beyond the chronological scope of this study, its significance lies in the fact that it indicates some belated recognition on the part of colonial policy-makers that they were fostering a more educated elite of Congolese men, and that, in order to maintain social harmony, these men might require educated, and, perhaps just as importantly, Europeanised, wives. This is itself indicative of a deeper acknowledgement by the Belgian colonial authorities of a nascent *évolué* class in the Congo.

6.4: Indirect rule and the *écoles des fils de chefs*.

6.4.1: Significant aspects of indirect rule.

The indigenous population of the Belgian Congo was organised into *chefferies* (chiefdoms) and *sous-chefferies* (sub-chiefdoms), according to a decree issued in May 1910.⁵⁹¹ This provision was updated by a decree issued by Louis Franck in 1920, which instituted a policy that aimed to reconstitute the *chefferies* along traditional lines, reversing previous policies that had seen politically malleable figures installed in

⁵⁸⁷ See chapter seven.

⁵⁸⁸ AA/RA/CB/60/2 (1939-1944), p.95.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.212. See also chapter seven for more on gender and education generally.

⁵⁹¹ Decree dated 02/05/1910, for more on this reorganisation see Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 1, (Brussels: Renaissance du livre, 1929), pp.49-50; Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, p.370.

positions of authority despite lacking traditional authority.⁵⁹² Franck sought, where possible, to restore those with traditional authority to their former positions and to harness their authority thus allowing indigenous communities some administrative control over their own affairs without compromising overall colonial power. Restored elite auxiliaries would also perform valuable administrative functions, such as census compilation and tax collection on behalf of the European administration. Franck's 1920 initiative was followed by a 1926 decree instituting indigenous jurisdictions to operate tribunals within each *chefferie* where possible, or else for a number of smaller *chefferies* grouped together as a *secteur*.⁵⁹³ These tribunals were to form a distinct, local tier in the colonial judicial system to deal with disputes between Africans, basically according to principles of customary law. Taken together, these policy initiatives represented an attempt by the Ministry of the Colonies to transplant to the Congo certain principles of indirect rule that had been instituted in neighbouring British and French colonies.⁵⁹⁴

For the Colonial Ministry, the policy was probably motivated less by ideology or conviction than by a desire to save money and help overcome the abiding shortages of European administrative staff discussed above. Delegating some of the tasks associated with the administration of the colony to the indigenous population would, it was hoped, lighten the load on the colonisers. However, this policy was not without controversy – some clearly distrusted the idea of handing any power, however superficial, to the Congolese – and implementation of the scheme brought with it new demands in terms of educational provision.⁵⁹⁵ In order for the chiefdoms and the tribunals to fulfil the roles that the Ministry of the Colonies hoped to be able to assign to them, they needed literate Congolese administrators and clerks who could both

⁵⁹² In despatch dated 8/11/1920, see AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.70.

⁵⁹³ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.70.

⁵⁹⁴ See, for example, Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, pp.149-152; Patrick Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, 1880-1995*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.77; Seppo Sivonen, *White-Collar or hoe-handle? African education under British colonial policy, 1920-1945*, (Helsinki, 1995), pp.37-39.

⁵⁹⁵ See, for example, AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.107, for the view of the Katangan provincial administration on indigenous jurisdictions, which suggests chiefs and notables were motivated by venality and superstition; AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1927), p.127, also gives discussion from Katanga administration on this policy and suggests that difficulties introducing chiefdoms and tribunals were being encountered in industrialised areas of the province, as well as that the whole principle of the policy was still open to question. Notably this report proclaims the success of delegating tax collection to indigenous authorities.

communicate with the European administration and record tribunal proceedings, as well as undertaking other key administrative tasks such as gathering census information. Furthermore, the colonial administration, at both metropolitan and local level, became keen for indigenous authority figures to receive an education that would indoctrinate them appropriately, ensuring that they were loyal to their colonial masters. These were the motives behind attempts throughout the 1920s and 1930s to organise schools intended to educate the sons of chiefs and village notables so that the next generation of Congolese leaders would be raised within the confines of the colonial system.

6.4.2: The concept of the *écoles des fils de chefs*

It must be acknowledged at the outset that many of the documents relevant to the development of the *écoles des fils de chefs* are missing from the archives. Those that remain can, however, be used alongside the information contained within the colony's annual reports to yield analysis of the purpose and content of this type of education. Kita identifies that the idea of a specific educational focus on the sons of chiefs had developed under the C.I.S. and led to the opening of dedicated sections at schools in Buta in 1913, and later at Stanleyville and Lusambo.⁵⁹⁶ However, he then states that this type of education was deemed a failure and that after 1918, 'no annual report made further mention' of these schools.⁵⁹⁷ The analysis below shows that this was not in fact the case and that, whilst this stream of education continued to be a source of difficulties, the idea of inculcating indigenous leaders with Belgian ideas continued to exercise the imagination of colonial administrators well into the interwar period.

In this vein, Eugène Henry, then Governor General, wrote in his section of the annual report for 1919, published the following year, that in order to have chiefs worthy of the title 'we must train them [...] we must prepare them for the task they are later to fulfil in indigenous society.'⁵⁹⁸ When considering the development of this type of educational provision during the inter-war period, we must thus be alert to the interplay between the role that the Belgian colonial authorities had in mind for the

⁵⁹⁶ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.146-7.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.149.

⁵⁹⁸ AA/RA/CB/58/6,(1919), pp.14-15.

leaders of indigenous tribes and the consequent design and curriculum content of such an educational programme. The practicalities of establishing such a programme when educational provision was generally problematic and resources so thinly stretched added another level of complexity to the matter.

Little was achieved in the way of organising distinct schooling for the sons of chiefs during the early 1920s when education in the colony was still provided on something of an *ad hoc* basis. There were sections for the sons of chiefs in operation at the official schools at Buta and Stanleyville in the Province Orientale, where eighty-two and sixty-one sons of chiefs were enrolled respectively in 1922. Another such section existed at the government-run school in Lusambo, but there was no concrete, colony-wide policy in place.⁵⁹⁹ However, the idea did feature in discussions over the reorganisation of education in the Congo, which led to the 1925 programme for subsidised mission schools. Edouard De Jonghe, for example, included a section on the subject in his 1922 article on education in the Congo. Notable for his role in determining education policy at the Ministry of the Colonies, De Jonghe made clear in his article the dual nature of the perceived benefits of educating the sons of chiefs in this way. Firstly, he wrote that future native chiefs would 'receive the instructions of the authorities' and implement them, which implies that the Belgians planned to acculturate indigenous rulers to their way of thinking through education before relying on them to enact and to support aspects of the colonial project.⁶⁰⁰ In addition to their ideological support for the colonial system, De Jonghe further anticipated that indigenous chiefs and their auxiliaries could provide practical relief for some of the problems faced by the short-staffed and under-funded European administration in the colony. He noted that so long as white agents were responsible for collecting the native tax (*impôt indigène*), a large part of the monies remitted were absorbed by the costs of their own collection. These costs would be lessened if the collection of the tax were delegated to African chiefs.⁶⁰¹ Delegating collection of the native tax, or 'head tax' as it had previously been known would be a highly significant development because of its critical importance in underpinning the structure of the colonial state. As well as providing a large part of the

⁵⁹⁹ AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), p.65. On Lusambo: Edouard De Jonghe, '*L'instruction publique au Congo Belge*', (Brussels: Goemaere, 1922), p.14.

⁶⁰⁰ E. De Jonghe, '*L'instruction publique au Congo Belge*', (Bruxelles: Goemaere, 1922), p.14.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*

colony's finances, the native tax was a vital expression of the colonial state's power over the colonised populations. For Crawford Young, the collection of revenue was one of the six essential elements of colonial state logic and the principal means through which the colonial state would fund its other activities.⁶⁰² The delegation of its collection to the African chiefs may have represented a way for the Belgian authorities to save money, but it was a crucial step that would only be taken if those made responsible for it could be sufficiently trusted or controlled.

It is therefore evident that specialised education for future chiefs was an attractive option for the Ministry of Colonies for several reasons. However, De Jonghe also sounded a note of caution on the practicalities of organising and effectively targeting such an education. For one thing, he noted that the very phrase '*fils de chefs*' was problematic because someone might be the son of a chief and yet never succeed to their father's position because of the complex nature of tribal successions, which varied amongst tribes. For another, De Jonghe believed that education provided to those who did not eventually go on to become chiefs themselves would not necessarily have been wasted as they could still take up positions, and wield influence, as advisors.⁶⁰³

Despite these early expressions of interest in the idea of dedicated schooling for the sons of chiefs, there is no evidence of a concerted effort being made to develop it until after the decree of 15 April 1926, which created indigenous tribunals.⁶⁰⁴ From 1926 onwards the provincial sections of the annual reports often contained complaints that the organisation of these tribunals was being hindered by a lack of literate Africans able to administer them.⁶⁰⁵ In the 1926 report, the Deputy Governor General of the Congo-Kasai Province noted that chiefs were ill-equipped to explain the government's native policy to their subjects, still less to implement it. He recommended that chiefs' sons should thus receive an education encompassing Belgian social, moral, political and economic reasoning, which should be provided in an official school in each district.⁶⁰⁶ However, as will be seen elsewhere, this recommendation conflicted with the thrust of

⁶⁰² Crawford Young, *The Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, pp.35-38.

⁶⁰³ E. De Jonghe, *L'instruction publique au Congo Belge*, (Bruxelles: Goemaere, 1922), p.14.

⁶⁰⁴ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.8.

⁶⁰⁵ See for example: AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1927), p.6; AA/RA/CB/58/16, (1927), p.127; AA/RA/CB/59/1, (1929), p.6; AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.103.

⁶⁰⁶ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.50.

colonial education policy which sought to devolve responsibility for running schools to the Catholic missions in return for subsidies, rather than increasing the number of official schools.

As noted above, it is difficult to trace the impact of these complaints and the development of schooling for the sons of chiefs during the later 1920s as the detailed information needed has not been recorded. The most probable reason for this omission is that the figures for sons of chiefs being educated ceased to be recorded separately by the schools and the education service because these pupils were now being sent to their local missionary run schools. Demands for specific educational opportunities for the sons of chiefs and notables continued, however, culminating in a long-running debate on the matter between 1930 and 1932. The issue reached the apex of the colonial administration, with the *Conseil du Gouvernement* debating the optimum form of educational provision for this constituency of native opinion. Several documents survive which detail the various options considered.⁶⁰⁷ The first of these, from 1930, records the views of J.B. Hautefelt, the Inspector General of the colony's education service, who stated that the existing *écoles des fils de chefs* – i.e. the sections of the official schools and some subsidised schools - were ineffective primarily because they brought their students to the urban centres where they came into contact with 'every unhealthy pleasure' and then had little desire to return to their villages.⁶⁰⁸ He suggested two possible systems – either a series of state-run secular schools or a series of mission-run schools, both of which would be based in indigenous centres. He went on to point out that the second system would be significantly cheaper, and that it should involve the foundation of first and second level primary schools followed by a separate section for the sons of chiefs and notables which would focus on agricultural and administrative education.⁶⁰⁹ Another, partial, document from the *Conseil du Gouvernement*, also dated 1930, states that the matter had been put before the Provincial Governors for consideration and that their opinions on the issue varied considerably.⁶¹⁰ The Governor of Congo-Kasai province suggested a system in which pupils attended subsidised primary schools and then a special programme

⁶⁰⁷ *Conseil du Gouvernement* was an advisory council made up of Governor General and Vice Governors General.

⁶⁰⁸ AA/AIMO/1385/3, note by J.B. Hautefelt, dated 1930.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ AA/AIMO/1385/3, partial document, dated 1930.

lasting for two years, preferably state-run. The Governor of Equateur province argued that the concept of educating the sons of chiefs was redundant in his province because of the nature of the system of tribal succession; his preference was therefore for schools training court clerks and chiefs' assistants, which were judged more necessary.⁶¹¹

The discussion moved forward in 1931 with an exchange of views between Henri Jaspar, Minister for the Colonies, the Governor General, Auguste Tilkens, and the Provincial Governors. In a letter dated 19 May 1931, Jaspar also cited the difficulty of predicting tribal lines of succession as an obstacle, but stated that it need not be an insurmountable one.⁶¹² Jaspar commented, too, on the dangers of removing pupils from their traditional environment and he also identified a significant paradox inherent in a colonial education for the sons of chiefs. The Belgians' aim was to modify the way in which indigenous societies were administered by introducing their own innovations – such as the tribunals – but without destroying customary institutions. Essentially, they were trying to introduce elements of modernity without irreparably damaging the chiefs', or their subjects', belief in traditional systems of social control and juridical regulation. Jaspar also argued that the Belgian policy of trying to mobilise the chiefs as an intermediary between the European administration and the mass of the colonised population could create "permanent antagonism" between the chief and his subjects, as they would know he was acting on behalf of the coloniser.⁶¹³ He felt that it would be better to focus on training auxiliaries and clerks who could hold positions of influence around tribal chiefs without the added complication of a family link between them.⁶¹⁴

Jaspar's letter was discussed later in 1931 by *Conseil du Gouvernement* members, most of whom were largely dismissive of the Minister's concerns.⁶¹⁵ In his reply to the Minister, which recounted the discussion of the council, the Governor General summarised their views: schools for the sons of chiefs and notables should indeed be created, pupils should be admitted whether or not they were actually destined to become a chief, and this education should take place as near as possible to the pupils'

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² AA/AIMO/1385/3, letter from Jaspar to Tilkens, dated 19/05/1931.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ AA/AIMO/1385/3, dated 11/07/1931.

place of origin in order to avoid removing them from traditional surroundings. Finally, the council accepted that the only way of realising this would be to implement such an educational programme in certain existing subsidised second-degree primary schools.⁶¹⁶ Unfortunately, we lack the documentary evidence to be certain these plans did indeed come into effect. That the matter was subject to such prolonged discussion, and was an evident source of disagreement between Jaspar and those in the colony itself, illustrates the difficulties in instituting any system at all. It also speaks to the relationship between the central administration in Brussels, and the peripheral authorities, as each sought to impose its own will on the situation.

Further references to the education of the sons of chiefs can be found in some of the annual reports from the later 1930s. They suggest that the question remained unresolved. These references indicate that the training of chiefs, notables, and their sons was, by then, being carried out by territorial administrators. Sons of chiefs were receiving their basic education in rural schools and then being instructed in matters of administration directly by these European agents.⁶¹⁷ The Annual Report for 1936 clearly indicates that this was the case in the provinces of Elisabethville and Stanleyville, although no information is given on other areas.⁶¹⁸ It seems that, while a clear need for such educational provision existed, as well as a prolonged official desire to organise it, the practical problems of doing so, and the potential political ramifications of alienating chiefs from their subjects, meant that the matter was not satisfactorily resolved during the inter-war period. Indeed, the 1938 Annual Report makes clear that this issue was still being considered by the colonial authorities, as problems began to emerge over a divergence between customary authority and tribal life, as opposed to the frustrations this lifestyle was thought to engender amongst younger Congolese who had come into more regular contact with Europeans.⁶¹⁹

Attempts to create – or at least to manage - an intermediary class, suspended between the European coloniser and the rural mass of the Congolese population, therefore, seem to have been unsatisfactory from the Belgian point of view. The colonial administration needed reliable intermediaries to administer Congo's complex

⁶¹⁶ AA/AIMO/1385/3, letter from Tilkens to Jaspar, dated 25/07/1919.

⁶¹⁷ AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), p.9.

⁶¹⁸ AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), pp.9-10.

⁶¹⁹ AA/RA/CB/60/1, (1938), p.7.

indigenous society because of shortages of European staff. Furthermore, there was persistent official anxiety to avoid the 'Europeanisation' of the majority Congolese population by maintaining tribal hierarchy in rural areas. Not surprisingly, urban centres where Africans lived outside the reach of traditional society were consistently typecast as potential centres of unrest and subversion. It is clear from the debate over the education of the sons of chiefs that this was a powerful determinant of Belgian policy. Education was supposed to resolve matters by training and educating these intermediaries in the desired fashion, in such a way as to ensure their loyalty and support. It also evident, however, from the continued references to the matter in the Annual Reports that no satisfactory or effective way to achieve this goal was found.

6.5: Conclusion.

It is clear that there were attempts in the Belgian Congo to mould some strands of education policy in order to provide support for political and administrative aims. Staff shortages within the European administration and limited funding led both to the drive to train literate African clerks to work in the subaltern levels of that administration, and also drove forward the implementation of elements of indirect rule. This in turn led to demands to educate the sons of chiefs and notables along specific lines in order that the upper echelons of traditional indigenous societies would be both able to act as intermediaries for the Belgians, and also willing to do so. It is now necessary to consider how successful the Belgians were in implementing these specific strands of education policy and what the consequences of their introduction were.

The education of black clerks to fill positions within the European administration was fuelled by the immediate pragmatic and financial concerns of the metropolitan government in Brussels. Staff shortages and a desire to cut costs made it an attractive option and, after the initial problems of setting up and standardizing programmes during the early 1920s, the figures given in the annual reports show that the official schools, and later the subsidised schools, did succeed in producing a greater number of clerks, although it must be acknowledged that the numbers were never very large. It is clear, therefore, that despite claims that the government held little sway in the

development of the education system in the Congo, it was in some cases able to develop and implement policies that responded to a need.

More significant, though, is the fact that despite its intentions, the colonial administration could not control the impact that the provision of such education would have. Although the scope of the instruction given to the pupils of the *écoles des candidats-commis/écoles moyennes* was closely regulated and was severely limited to only basic skills, such as developing a command of the French language and the ability to type, for example, and the way in which it very deliberately avoided providing any wider cultural education, the colonial authorities were unable to inhibit the development of an *évolué* class in the long-term. The removal of the pupils from their traditional environments, and the emphasis placed on ensuring that they could work and live in close contact with Europeans, actually made it inevitable that those who received this type of education would come to see themselves as different and separate to other Congolese.

Furthermore, the confusion over the place of the *métis* within colonial society and the resulting attempts to channel them into the elite schools in order that they, too, might become clerks in the European administration, alongside the simultaneous rejection of them by most Europeans, meant that there was a further distinct group within the Belgian Congo with which the authorities struggled to cope. Again, attempts to contain the problem by ensuring that mixed-race boys and girls inter-married neither resolved nor removed the problem. It remained the case that, by the end of the period under examination, there were groups within the colony – the *évolués* and the *métis*, both congregated in urbanized areas – of whom the colonial authorities were suspicious, and whose acculturation they had failed to direct as originally intended.

Impelled by their desire to avoid, more than was absolutely necessary, any expansion of urban areas or the separation of the Congolese from their traditional environments, the Belgian colonial authorities introduced some elements of indirect rule. For the institutions at the heart of these initiatives, such as the chiefdoms and the indigenous tribunals, to function as elements of the colonial administration, forming an intermediate level between the Belgian colonial state and customary society, appropriate education for clerks and leaders of the traditional societies in practical

administrative methods was essential. More ambitiously, colonial education was meant to ensure the support of these tribal leaders for Belgian colonial rule. However, it is evident that, although demands for such an education programme were expressed by many individuals at various levels of the colonial administration in both Brussels and the Congo, there was no consensus on the form that it should take. Legitimate fears were expressed over the dangers of removing the sons of chiefs and notables from their locale to receive instruction, as it was indeed possible that they would not want to return. But no way was found to provide an established network of instruction at a local level across the colony. Though it is not entirely clear from the available documents, it seems as though territorial agents in some provinces ended up providing some instruction but that no formal system was developed. This suggests that lack of direction in this matter from central administration led those in the colony to take their own path, training indigenous leaders as they felt necessary.

More significantly, perhaps, the very idea of indirect rule was predicated on using traditional indigenous power structures to administer colonial territories in quotidian matters. Through changing the nature of some of these structures, and through trying to educate to ensure that chiefs were favourable to their policies, the Belgians risked damaging them irreparably. However, during the latter part of the period under examination it seems that the Belgians feared the breakdown of traditional rule because of the developing aspirations of young Congolese who were looking beyond tribal authority. In this case, it seems that both action and inaction could have brought about undesirable consequences for the colonial regime, as it attempted to maintain traditional structures whilst also altering them.

Whilst the education of administrative clerks related more to the urbanized sphere of the Belgian Congo and the education of the sons of chiefs and notables was envisaged as a way to maintain and make use of rural societies, both seem to have raised the same main issue for the colonial authorities. Whilst they may have had success in training clerks to fulfil administrative positions, yet failed to adequately organise the education of indigenous leaders, what is more significant is the fact that the Belgians were unable to control the consequences of the policies that they did implement, and that it was apparently not possible for them to dictate the development of society, or of specific groups within it, through the introduction of specifically focused types of

education with politically motivated goals. The limits that they placed on the scope of these types of education did not allow them to ensure that the desired outcome would be all that was achieved through their introduction.

Chapter 7: Gender and Education Policies: Shaping Colonial Society

7.1: Introduction

Having already examined a number of aspects of the colonial education system in the Belgian Congo during the interwar years, it has become evident that there was a clear differentiation between the types of education provided for boys and girls. Much of the content of this thesis focuses on the education being provided for Congolese boys, such as the previous chapter discussing the schools for clerks and for the sons of chiefs, simply because these schools were far more numerous and more varied in type. However, a study of education in the colony during this period would be incomplete without a direct examination of the role of gender within the system, as it is clear that it was a factor in the formulation and application of education policies in the Belgian Congo. Therefore, this chapter seeks to show how several different conceptions of gender relations, emanating from the state, from missionaries, and from African parents and communities, combined to influence the development of the school system, and particularly those schools which sought to educate girls. In order to achieve this, examples of traditional gender roles in pre-colonial Congolese societies will be examined in order to establish the situation with which the colonial governments in the Congo Free State and then the Belgian Congo were faced. Then, the aims and ideologies of both the colonial administration in Brussels and those of the Christian missions will be looked at, with differences and nuances in their attitudes towards gender in the colony being identified and discussed. Once these motivations have been identified, this chapter will focus on the direction of the policies decided, and on the course of their introduction and development. Finally, this chapter will attempt to evaluate African reactions to these education policies and their gendered formulation, whilst acknowledging the difficulties in doing so with the sources available.

Through the structure outlined above, insights and answers to several questions will be sought and a number of areas of interest will be addressed. At the heart of these will be the identification of what elements of pre-colonial societies' understandings of gender roles the colonial government sought to alter and why such changes were

thought to be necessary. How the colonial administration of the Belgian Congo sought to define and shape gender roles, particularly in some sections of Congolese society, will be shown through the details and extent of various education policies and practices. The relationship between these changes to gender roles in the colony will be addressed in relation to contemporary conceptions of gender in the metropole, and the level of influence of Christian missions in the formulation of such policies will be considered alongside the identification of more pragmatic or political social motivations. In considering all of these elements, this chapter will argue that alongside the religious and moral agenda pressed by the missions, and which reflected metropolitan ideas of gender, there were other factors which motivated the Ministry of the Colonies in its introduction of gendered education policies. It will be shown that an administrative desire to maintain social stability and to extend the influence of the colonial regime into Congolese family life complimented Christian conceptions of gender, and motivated the development of programmes of education tailored to the differing roles which the colonial authorities intended Congolese men and women to fill. Finally, this chapter will evaluate the relative positions of male and female education provision in the Congo on the eve of the Second World War, and will assess how extensive and successful Belgian colonial administrators and missionaries had been in shaping Congolese society to their own ends through the use of education policies involving the delineation of gender roles.

7.2: Existing Literature

Questions of gender and colonialism have been considered generally in wide ranging recent works such as Philippa Levine's collection and Angela Woollacott's's monograph, both entitled *Gender and Empire*, and by Ann Laura Stoler in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, where she refers largely to the colonial experience in the Dutch East Indies.⁶²⁰ Such works have shown that matters of gender and sexuality were central to the colonial experience and played a significant role in shaping colonial governments' policies. In addition, these works and others, such as those contained within the collection *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch*

⁶²⁰ Philippa Levine (ed.), *Gender and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Angela Woollacott, *Gender and Empire*, (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

Colonialism, edited by Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, have focused on the interplay between conceptions of gender imported to the colonies by Europeans and those of the indigenous populations, and the generation in these circumstances of new understandings of gender within the colonial sphere.⁶²¹ Colonial histories focused on gender have been amongst the most successful in highlighting the impact of the encounters in the colonial periphery on attitudes in the metropolitan centre, through discussions of the experiences of white women who came into contact with colonized women for example, or of the use by colonizing governments of the fear of the sexuality of male colonized populations to reinforce restrictive metropolitan codes of behaviour for white women.⁶²² In addition, many of these same works consider the complex relationship between understandings of gender, race, and class within colonial contexts.

As well as these broad works on colonialism and gender, numerous articles have appeared addressing aspects of gender and education, many with a particular focus on girls' education and on the impact of missionary ideologies on gender differentiation in education, in various colonies.⁶²³ The reasons for this strong focus are likely to be that education represents for gender historians, a very clear example of gender differentiated policies, and for historians already focused on education, the discussion

⁶²¹ Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, (eds), *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1998).

⁶²² On encounters between European and indigenous women see, for example, Deborah Gaitskell, 'Female Faith and the Politics of the Personal: Five Mission Encounters in Twentieth-Century South Africa', *Feminist Review*, No. 65, (Summer, 2000), pp.68-91; Rita Smith Kipp, 'Emancipating Each Other: Dutch Colonial Missionaries' Encounter with Karo Women in Sumatra, 1900-1942', in Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, (eds), *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1998), pp.211-235; on the attitudes of colonizer's towards sexuality in colonies see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest*, (London: Routledge, 1995), pp.232-257; Pamela Pattynama, 'Secrets and Danger: Interracial Sexuality in Louis Couperus's *The Hidden Force* and Dutch Colonial Culture around 1900', in Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, (eds), *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1998), pp.65-83; Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, pp.79-111; Woollacott, *Gender and Empire*, pp.122-126.

⁶²³ See for example: Deborah Gaitskell, 'Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-39', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 24, No. 2, *The History of the Family in Africa* (1983), pp. 241-256; Sean Morrow, "'No Girl Leaves the School Unmarried": Mabel Shaw and the Education of Girls at Mbereshi, Northern Rhodesia, 1915-1940', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1986), pp. 601-635; Kathleen Sheldon, "'I Studied With The Nuns, Learning To Make Blouses": Gender Ideology and Colonial Education in Mozambique', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1998), pp.595-625; Peter Kazanga Tibenderana, 'The Beginnings of Girls' Education in the Native Administrative Schools in Northern Nigeria, 1930-1945', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1985), pp.93-109.

of girls' schools can be the only opportunity to focus on women, as so much of colonial education discourse was addressed at the male population. In this thesis, the discussion of girls' schooling here, and that of opportunities for women to train as midwifery assistants in chapter eight, are the only parts of the education system which were open to girls. In this chapter, as in many of the works already cited, a key concept when considering girls' education is that of 'domesticity', which governments and missionaries used to limit women's activity to the spheres of home and family, and which it will be seen was enshrined within the Congo's education system.

In terms of works addressing the Belgian Congo specifically, and particularly education policies there, it is a significant oversight of Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, in his *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre: de Léopold II à Mobutu*, that he fails to mention at all girls' education before 1945.⁶²⁴ The same can also be said of Jean Stengers' discussion of education development in the colony.⁶²⁵ However, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch's *African Women: A Modern History*, is useful both for its insights into traditional roles and for an interesting, though short, section on girls' education in the Congo.⁶²⁶ Also significant is Barbara A. Yates' chapter 'Colonialism, Education, and Work : Sex Differentiation in Colonial Zaïre' in which the main focus is on missionary conceptions of gender and how missionaries sought to alter Congolese society in order to implant these Christian notions.⁶²⁷ Yates rightly argues that the separation of the sexes practised at most levels of the colonial school system, and the differing content and scale of the education provided to boys and girls led to Congolese women being disadvantaged in comparison to their male counterparts as well as being excluded from the emergent modern economy. Yates also correctly identifies the focus of the education provided by missionaries to Congolese girls as being aimed at ensuring that they would grow up to become Christian wives and mothers. However, she does not consider the role of state expectations or preferences in her analysis of girls' education.

⁶²⁴ Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre: de Léopold II à Mobutu*, (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1997).

⁶²⁵ Jean Stengers, *Le Congo Belge: Mythes et Réalités*, pp.200-219.

⁶²⁶ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, translated by Beth Raps, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997).

⁶²⁷ Barbara A. Yates, 'Colonialism, Education, and Work: Sex Differentiation in Colonial Zaïre', in Edna G. Bay (ed.), *Women and Work in Africa*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), pp.127-152, (pp.127-8).

Pierre Kita Masandi has produced an article on gender and education in the Belgian Congo entitled '*L'Éducation féminine au Congo Belge*' which, though based on limited primary source materials, is a welcome addition to the historiography on the subject and represents something of a remedy to the very limited discussion of girls schools in his earlier book *Colonisation et Enseignement*.⁶²⁸ His article focuses on the differentiation between the types of education provided for boys and girls in the Congo under Belgian rule, and argues that it served to reinforce a pre-existing marginalisation of women. Though covering much of the same basic ground as this chapter, with a similar focus on the development of the system put in place in the colony, Kita limits his argument to a focus on the marginalisation of women by that system, and though he recognises that one intention was to maintain women in their assigned place within colonial society, his conclusion does not go as far as that made here, which addresses more deeply the motivations behind girls' education and argues that the colonial authorities sought to use women to support its own hegemony by carrying its ideals into the heart of African families.⁶²⁹ Moreover, whilst Kita is content to consider the state and the Catholic missionaries' conceptions of gender, and motivations for educating girls, as being homogenous, this study suggests that, at least in terms of motivations, there was a distinct difference raised by the socio-political aspect of the state's policy identified here.⁶³⁰ Another work which focuses on women's education in the Congo is Gertrude Mianda's chapter '*Colonialism, Education and Gender relations in the Belgian Congo: The Évolué case*', part of a collection on women and colonialism, in which she focuses on the impact of Belgian education on how Congolese men perceived women in the post-World War Two period.⁶³¹ The relevance of Mianda's work to this study is in her portrayal of the continued effects of the policies analysed here.

In keeping with the focus on differentiation in these works, this chapter will consider why such concepts arose and how they were enshrined in colonial education programmes. Particularly, attention will be given to the interplay between state and

⁶²⁸ Pierre Kita Masandi, '*L'Éducation féminine au Congo Belge*', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol.40, No. 4, (Aug. 2004), 479-508.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.482, 507-508.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.482-483.

⁶³¹ Gertrude Mianda, '*Colonialism, Education, and Gender Relations in the Belgian Congo: The Évolué Case*', in Susan Geiger, Nakanyike Musisi, Jean-Marie Allman, (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp.144-163.

mission conceptions of women's place in colonial society, and it will be shown here that the colonial authorities' aim was that educated women should provide social stability and therefore support the continuation of the colonial system, especially in the indigenous quarters of the colony's urban centres, whose populations were a perennial cause of concern for Belgian authorities.

7.3: Pre-Colonial Gender Roles in the Congo

The sheer size of the territory which became the Belgian Congo makes it impossible to identify a single pre-colonial society, with unified customs and beliefs. The territory was inhabited by people living in a variety of tribal groups, each with their own practices, and the roles of men and women varied among these societies, with differences in models of marriage, childcare, and work practices, as well as a number of different ways of ordering societies so that in some power transfer might be the result of election, whilst in others it might be decided according to principles of heredity. Indeed, as Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch reminds us in her insightful survey *African Women: A Modern History*, it must be remembered that the 'pre-colonial era' actually lasted for thousands of years, during which African societies were not static, and so gender relations within them would have changed over time.⁶³² For want of a better term, 'pre-colonial' or 'traditional' will be used here to refer to that which existed on the eve of European conquest, though it must be recognised that African communities and their practices continued both to exist, and to change, after European rule was established. Whilst this thesis is concerned primarily with developments during the colonial era, and therefore cannot accommodate a full survey of these pre-colonial societies and their development, it is necessary to consider some examples – using primary and secondary sources – as without doing so it would not be possible to understand the motivations behind, implications of, and reactions to, later Belgian policies.

Most primary evidence relating to pre-colonial practices in the Congo is found in reports produced by Europeans who came into contact with these indigenous

⁶³² Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, p.3.

societies, and is therefore problematic. It is always possible that observation causes those being observed to modify or exaggerate behaviours, and it is also very likely that European observers might have misunderstood or misrepresented practices and customs which were alien to them. However, it is possible to gain some insights into pre-colonial customs by using with caution the descriptive information contained in such reports, whilst trying to detect and avoid adopting any judgement which the observer may have made. European attention often focused on indigenous social structures and customs, and gender roles played an important part in such observations. Keen to assert their own superiority, and to reinforce the importance of the 'civilizing mission' as a justification for colonial expansion, European observers often reported on matters deemed to be 'uncivilized', such as polygamy and indigenous dress. Such sources can contain useful material, as long as their provenance is borne in mind and the somewhat second-hand, reported nature of the information is taken into consideration.

Some Congolese peoples lived in traditional societies that were patriarchal and patrilineal, such as the Mongo people of the Tshuapa region of the Congo basin, described by Samuel H. Nelson in *Colonialism in the Congo Basin, 1880-1940*.⁶³³ Nelson writes of the Mongo as having a society in which a man's social status was determined by a number of factors including heredity, wealth, and achievement.⁶³⁴ Food production and acquisition were central to daily life and tasks were assigned according to gender, with men responsible for trapping, hunting, and clearing land, whilst women were responsible for gathering foodstuffs, the planting and tending of crops, and seasonal fishing.⁶³⁵ This type of division of labour between men and women is stated by Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch as having been a typical aspect of traditional societies in central Africa.⁶³⁶ Nelson also records the existence of several different methods of forming marriages, and notes that some households were polygamous.⁶³⁷

⁶³³ Samuel H. Nelson, *Colonialism in the Congo Basin, 1880-1940*, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1994).

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.27-30; for more on complexities of Mongo social structures see also Wyatt MacGaffey, 'Lineage Structure, Marriage and the Family amongst the Central Bantu', *The Journal of African History*, Vol.24, No.2, *The History of the Family in Africa*, (1983), pp.173-187, (pp.185-6).

⁶³⁵ Samuel H. Nelson, *Colonialism in the Congo Basin*, pp.19-23.

⁶³⁶ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, p.10.

⁶³⁷ Samuel H. Nelson, *Colonialism in the Congo Basin*, pp.32-34.

Other Congolese peoples lived in societies that were matrilineal or in which women could hold positions of considerable authority. Though Coquery-Vidrovitch questions how far matrilineal principles of inheritance really bettered women's position in society, as she argues that men remained dominant though women may have had slightly better rights.⁶³⁸ For example, Ann Hilton has described how a similar division of labour as that described among the Mongo by Nelson existed in Kongo clans, but that there were differences in political organisation as clans or *kanda* had both a male and female chief simultaneously, though she argues that by the 19th century, the male chiefs had become dominant.⁶³⁹ Furthermore, Annie M. D. Lebeuf has described certain groups among the Luba in the Katanga having a female hereditary chief, typically because 'the spirit of a female ancestor is believed to reside in the place where the woman is chief.'⁶⁴⁰ Also, Lebeuf cites examples of women holding positions which conferred upon them considerable power albeit in a less formal sense than a chieftom, such as the position of *hohombe* or *ngalababola* (or 'wife of the village') recognised by the Pende, Bunda, Dinga, and Lele peoples of the Congo until its abolition by the Belgian colonial government in 1947.⁶⁴¹ In a chapter forming part of a collection tinged with the feminism of the 1960s, Lebeuf points out that it was only recently that French women such as herself had achieved formal electoral parity with men, and that informal, ritual, or supportive modes of exercising political power, such as those she describes in traditional African societies are worthy of recognition.⁶⁴²

As mentioned earlier, works on pre-colonial societies often draw on work undertaken by colonial era ethnographers. Both Nelson and MacGaffey, make particular reference to men such as Van Wing, Van Reeth, and Van Der Kerken, and illustrate that their analyses of Congolese social structures were flawed as they were based on limited research and that their findings were often shaped by European conceptions of

⁶³⁸ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, pp.16, 19.

⁶³⁹ Ann Hilton, 'Family and Kinship among the Kongo South of the Zaïre River from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 24, No.2, *The History of the Family in Africa*, (1983), pp.189-206, (p.193).

⁶⁴⁰ Annie M. D. Lebeuf, 'The Role of Women in the Political Organization of African Societies', in Denise Paulme (ed.), *Women of Tropical Africa*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963) , pp.93-119 (p.110).

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.111-112.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, p.93.

society, power, and heredity, for example.⁶⁴³ This is significant in terms of colonial administration, as these ethnographic surveys were the same sources that the European authorities relied upon when determining policies.

Those European observers who came into contact with indigenous societies often seem to focus in their reports on matters relating to marriage and childbirth, as well as styles of dress. A good example of this is contained in a report sent to the Foreign Office in 1924 by the then British Consul in the Congo, John P. MacGregor.⁶⁴⁴ Although by 1924, there had been a sustained European presence in the Congo for a number of decades, many areas and their populations had remained relatively isolated, and it was only as railway- and road-building programmes increased Belgian penetration into the colony's interior that these areas became better known by Europeans. MacGregor wrote that the route he followed from Elisabethville to Boma had not been travelled by many white men, and he described some customs of the Baluba tribe whom he encountered in the Katanga region as being as yet unmodified by contact with Europeans. These included the practice of polygamy, which he said was encouraged by a system of birth spacing in which women would be sexually inactive for three years after the birth of a child.⁶⁴⁵ He also wrote that the men wore short kilt style garments while the women wore a string of beads around their waists with a strip of cloth between their legs.

MacGregor's report serves to illustrate the preoccupations of Europeans when confronted with indigenous culture. Gender roles, marriage, and sexuality, were often at the forefront in European ethnographic studies, reflecting the importance of strict moral codes in contemporary European culture and the idea that it was the colonisers' role to bring civilisation to 'primitive' indigenous peoples. The principle proponents of such ideas were of course missionaries, and their attitudes towards morality and

⁶⁴³ Samuel H. Nelson, *Colonialism in the Congo Basin*, pp.11-13; Wyatt MacGaffey, 'Lineage Structure, Marriage and the Family amongst the Central Bantu', *The Journal of African History*, Vol.24, No.2, The History of the Family in Africa, (1983), pp.173-187, (p.175).

⁶⁴⁴ TNA/FO/371/10529/W10614.

⁶⁴⁵ For more on Congolese birth-spacing and European opposition to it see Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p.244, and, same author, "'Le Bebe en Brousse": European Women, African Birth Spacing and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1988), 401-432.

gender played a major role in shaping the provision of different styles of education for boys and girls. Coquery-Vidrovitch, addressing the problems presented by source materials relating to African women, identifies missionaries as having been 'the most curious' observers where women were concerned, but that 'their critical observations mainly stigmatized what they considered pagan attitudes: bare breasts, an often exaggerated sexual freedom, polygamy.'⁶⁴⁶

This focus on polygamy and indigenous dress as symbols of the supposed immorality and degeneracy of indigenous peoples would come to be at the forefront of the missionaries' efforts in the Congo, as in many other colonies. However, marriage was a much more complex matter in the Congo than most early observers allowed for.

Polygamy was certainly practised by some members of some groups but it was by no means universal, and polygyny was also not unknown, although it was rare.⁶⁴⁷

Marriages were formed in a number of ways and for several reasons, and often carried a wider significance, whether political or economic. Coquery-Vidrovitch argues that women were valued because of their capacity for production (working the land) and reproduction (bearing children) and that this often lay behind both polygamy, as more wives could mean more wealth, and behind the practice of the groom and his family paying a bride-price to the woman's family, to compensate them for the loss of her productive capacity. She also notes that women were often able to leave their marital home and return to their parents, either temporarily or permanently, though this would necessitate the repayment of the bride-price.⁶⁴⁸ Marriages could also have had strategic importance, creating strategic ties or merely goodwill between groups. Of course, such motivations for the formation of marriages were by no means uniquely African.

Generally, it seems that whilst African men were dominant in society, gender relations in traditional societies were more nuanced than this suggests. Anthropologist Denise Paulme wrote that an African woman's contribution to her society was 'direct and

⁶⁴⁶ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, p.3.

⁶⁴⁷ Annie M. D. Lebeuf, 'The Role of Women in the Political Organization of African Societies', in Denise Paulme (ed.), *Women of Tropical Africa*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963) , pp.93-119, (pp.111-112).

⁶⁴⁸ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, pp.19-20.

to indispensable, and her husband is in just as much need of her as she is of him.’⁶⁴⁹ This may seem to be a truism, but in this context has an underlying meaning: through the division of labour between men and women, both played vital roles in the maintenance of their way of life. Furthermore, Coquery-Vidrovitch and Paulme agree that the delineation of areas of responsibility gave African women some autonomy from their husbands in the domestic and agricultural sphere, and meant that women could spend large periods of time living with other women rather than their menfolk.⁶⁵⁰ This meant that ranking of seniority amongst these groups of women, for example according to kinship rules, could have almost as great a meaning for women as their relationship to their husband. However, despite this apparent degree of autonomy and the separation of men and women according to their tasks, male dominance meant that girls’ education, informal initiation and transfer of knowledge from their elders, was essentially ‘an apprenticeship in subjugation to male power’ and in her survey of sub-Saharan African women’s lives, Coquery-Vidrovitch argues that this was the case in the Congo, where women were taught to be reticent, and was especially true of the eastern areas of the territory, such as Kivu.⁶⁵¹

It is clear, therefore, that within the indigenous communities of the Congo, there existed a broad range of attitudes towards gender roles, and that, whilst women were often of lower social status than men, this was not always the case. Also highlighted is the importance of women’s productive capacity, and their role in providing food through agricultural work. Having briefly considered these matters, this chapter will go on to examine how the European colonial administration and Christian missionaries viewed gender relations in the Congo, how their policies were shaped and with what aims – particularly in terms of girls’ education, and how the Congolese reacted to these policies.

⁶⁴⁹ Denise Paulme (ed.), ‘Introduction’, *Women of Tropical Africa*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p.4.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.6-8; Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, p.15.

⁶⁵¹ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, p.56.

7.4: Gender and the Early Development of Formal Education

During the Congo Independent State period 1885-1908, the Leopoldian administration was largely focused on the economic exploitation of the territory, and endeavours such as healthcare and education were not priorities. Education provision during this period was limited and mostly lacked central organisation. There were a few official state-funded '*colonies scolaires*' which educated children deemed to be orphans, abandoned, or freed slaves. Only one of these, that at Moanda, accepted girls as pupils during this early period. Run by the nuns of the Sisters of Charity of Ghent (*Soeurs de la Charité de Gand*), for native or mixed-race girls, by 1919 it counted 102 pupils including 42 '*mulâtresses*'. The school was only open to girls placed in the care of the state, and the pupils received an elementary primary education given in Lingala, as well as being taught dressmaking, cooking and agriculture.⁶⁵²

Catholic and Protestant mission societies also set up some schools, reflecting a shift in missionary policy. Initially, the missions had sought to convert local populations to Christianity through mass evangelisation achieved by preaching the gospel. Later though, they shifted the focus of their efforts on to inculcating children with Christian principles and morals, hoping that they would be raised as Christians and start Christian families, and that the population would gradually be converted in this way.⁶⁵³ These methods were common to both Catholic and Protestant missionaries, as was the basic content of the education which they provided in the schools they set up during this early period. These schools were either within the mission station itself or were very rudimentary village schools. There was a strong religious focus, children were taught basic literacy, and there was usually some provision for boys to learn trade skills, such as carpentry or metalwork, as such skills were required by the missionaries and the colonial authorities.

⁶⁵² AA/RA/CB/58/6, (1919), p.25. See also Kita's comments on the early development of this school, '*L'Éducation féminine au Congo Belge*', p.482.

⁶⁵³ Patricia Grimshaw, '*Faith, Missionary Life and the Family*', in Philippa Levine, (ed.), *Gender and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.260-280, (p.272)

7.5: Christian Missions and Gender: Missionary Ideologies

The Christian missionaries' approach to education was always bound up with their primary aim: the conversion of indigenous populations to Christianity. This was significant in terms of their introduction of gendered education provision. Christian mission organisations played a major role in determining the debate over 'appropriate' gender roles and suitable content of education for boys and girls in the Belgian Congo, as in other colonies. Their desire to convert Africans to Christianity also involved encouraging them to adopt European models of marriage, as living according to prevalent Western moral codes was an integral part of conversion. Some even apparently felt that the African colonies represented a new chance to create a truly Christian society that had been lost, or sullied, in Europe although they did not seek the complete Westernisation or assimilation of indigenous populations, and rather sought to implant Christianity into the colonies whilst maintaining rural communities and avoiding the supposed dangers of urbanisation.⁶⁵⁴ There is a large body of existing literature focused on the motivations behind missionary endeavours to spread Christian morals to the colonial possessions of various European countries, including many works which address the issue of colonial gender roles. James P. Daughton has explored the work of missions in the French empire and Andrew Porter, for example, has surveyed the development of British missions up to 1914.⁶⁵⁵ Much of this work has illustrated that for both Protestant and Catholic missionaries, instilling European modes of behaviour – particularly sexual practices – was a major concern, seen as a vital part of bringing civilisation to the colonies. Much energy was expended on eradicating the practice of polygamy, and much of the focus of these efforts was directed at women in the form of education programmes for girls provided by orders of nuns, in the case of Catholic missions, or by the wives of missionaries, in the case of

⁶⁵⁴ See chapter six.

⁶⁵⁵ James P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion 1700-1914*, (Manchester University Press, 2004).

Protestant groups. This focus on polygamy and sexual practices was a common theme of missionary work not just in the Congo, but also in other colonial possessions.⁶⁵⁶

From the founding of the first mission stations just before and during the C.I.S. era, in the 1870s and 1880s, both Protestant and Catholic missions began to open schools in and around their mission stations. As the Leopoldian colonial authorities were largely absent from the organisation of schools, with the exception of the limited number of *colonies scolaires*, it was the missions' ideologies and understandings which coloured the content and range of education provided, and which set the pattern for the continued development of the school system in the Congo. As the mission schools were inextricably linked with the process of conversion, matters of morality played a vital role in determining how Congolese children should be educated. Reference has already been made to the attention paid by early European observers to polygamy, sexual freedom and supposedly 'immodest' dress, and these matters would assume great importance in the education programme. In her own study of gender and education in the Belgian Congo, Barbara A. Yates argues that the social conservatism of the Belgian Catholic missionaries, who predominantly came from rural Flanders, was even greater than was true generally of missionaries during the period and impacted upon the type of morality with which they tried to instil their pupils.⁶⁵⁷ Furthermore, she rightly stresses that they did not want to achieve 'Westernization' alongside Christianization, as it was thought that assimilation would prove dangerous for their converts, and provoke unnecessary materialistic desires.⁶⁵⁸ Kita too has identified the formative influence of Catholicism in the metropole upon the concepts and education structures which were exported to the colony.⁶⁵⁹

As the Catholic schools system developed, pupils in all but the lowest level rural schools – which came to be led by indigenous catechist-teachers – were separated according to sex and taught by either an order of missionary monks or priests, or one of missionary nuns. Yates states that this meant girls were taught less literacy skills

⁶⁵⁶ See for example: James P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided*, p.43, pp.131; Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State: Essays on Gender and Modernity in the Netherlands Indies, 1900-1942*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press), p.190.

⁶⁵⁷ Barbara A. Yates, 'Colonialism, Education, and Work: Sex Differentiation in Colonial Zaire', in Edna G. Bay (ed.), *Women and Work in Africa*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), pp.127-152, (pp.127-8).

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.129.

⁶⁵⁹ Kita, 'L'Éducation féminine au Congo Belge', p.482.

than boys as the Catholic missions both thought it unessential for religious conversion and also because male missionaries or catechists were not allowed to teach girls any subject other than religion, and there were considerably less female than male missionaries.⁶⁶⁰ The male and female missionaries often lived on separate compounds, although they might maintain links with one another. For the Protestant missions, the teaching system developed a little differently, as it was considered favourable for a male missionary to be accompanied by his wife.⁶⁶¹ This was partially because of concerns that some male missionaries had taken indigenous wives during the nineteenth century, in some territories, and also because of both the women's practical value as teachers for girls, and the positive example of a Christian married couple that the missionaries were thought to present to the local populations whom they hoped to convert. At the same time, single women hoping to work in the mission field were opposed by many until the early 20th century, as their presence was considered dangerous – either because they might become sexually involved with indigenous men or because they might inspire resentment from the married female missionaries who were not paid for their work. However, a growing need for teachers and nurses saw these women being accepted in much larger numbers.⁶⁶² The Protestant missions groups taught children either together or separated them according to gender depending on the staffing of the mission.

For both Catholic and Protestant missionaries the content of the education they provided was decided according to the sex of the pupils. For boys, the focus was on trade skills such as carpentry, metalwork, and brick-making, whilst girls were taught domestic skills, religion, morality, as well as gardening and some animal husbandry. Domesticity, as understood by the European missionaries and as advocated by them in various colonies, was the goal of the instruction given to African girls.⁶⁶³ The divisions according to gender would be maintained, even strengthened, throughout the period

⁶⁶⁰ Barbara A. Yates, 'Colonialism, Education, and Work: Sex Differentiation in Colonial Zaire', in Edna G. Bay (ed.), *Women and Work in Africa*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), pp.127-152, (p.134).

⁶⁶¹ Patricia Grimshaw, 'Faith, Missionary Life and the Family', in Philippa Levine, *Gender and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.260-280, (pp.264-5).

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, p.266.

⁶⁶³ Angela Woollacott, *Gender and Empire*, (NewYork/Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), p.97. See also Deborah Gaitskell, 'Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-1939', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (1983), pp.241-256, (p.242).

under examination, and suited both the missionaries' evangelical aims, and the political aims of the colonial authorities.

7.6: The Colonial Authorities and Gender

As has already been seen, the Leopoldian authorities during the C.I.S. era were not greatly concerned with the provision of education for the Congolese population and left the development of the education system largely in the hands of the various missionary groups. As has been examined elsewhere in this thesis, there was a growing sense of government interest and involvement in education provision which began with Leopold's conclusion of an accord with the Vatican in 1906, but which became really significant only after the annexation of the colony by the Belgian government in 1908. However, initially at least, the focus of this interest was on boys' education only – Yates estimates, though precise figures are not available, that in 1908 less than fifteen percent of the 46,000 Congolese attending schools were girls.⁶⁶⁴ It is also noteworthy that there was no mention at all of girls' education in the questionnaire which the Ministry of the Colonies distributed among interested parties in 1917.

At both individual and collective levels, the colonial authorities may well have shared the Christian missionaries' desire to create a Christian society in the Congo, and to instil European morals in the population. However, it is also clear that there were more prosaic reasons why the Ministry of Colonies introduced policies which reflected that desire. Firstly, the Ministry was, as has been seen in previous chapters, in no position to provide any kind of mass education programme without the support of the Catholic missions. Secondly, this programme was seen as a means of establish its modernizing and civilizing credentials during the interwar years in order to distance itself from the earlier Leopoldian regime. Finally, and most importantly, it saw girls' education as a way to create suitably educated wives for those Congolese boys who trained to become auxiliary clerks, teachers, or tradesmen, and therefore increase social cohesion and stability.

⁶⁶⁴ Barbara A. Yates, 'Colonialism, Education, and Work: Sex Differentiation in Colonial Zaire', p.135.

Though female education had not merited any mention in the 1917 government questionnaire, the responses to that survey did generally support the emphasis that was placed on manual skills training for boys. For the missions, this manual work was believed to be a vital element in improving character amongst the African population, whom racial stereotyping often deemed to be innately indolent.⁶⁶⁵ As the number of schools in existence gradually increased during the period between 1908 and the publication of the programme for government subsidised Catholic schools in 1925, there was more attention focused on girls' education and how its content should compliment that of the boys' schools. This greater focus on girls' education was not limited to the Belgian Congo or to the Catholic mission groups, as it was also a matter under discussion in British colonies and by Protestant missionaries.⁶⁶⁶

In relation to the development of girls' education, in the both the specifically Congolese as well as wider contexts, several significant publications appeared in the early 1920s, which shed some light on the formulation of Belgian government attitudes on the content of such education. One of these was the report of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission published in 1922, in which the need to educate African women was stressed as being important for the positive social development of colonial populations.⁶⁶⁷ Following on from that report, and containing multiple references to its ideas, were the findings of the consultative committee set up in Brussels under the auspices of the *Congrès Colonial National*, to examine the issue of education in the Congo. This committee consisted of missionaries and colonial administrators, and their report contained a section specifically addressing the matter of girls' education in the colony. This explicitly stated that education should not be reserved for one sex only, but rather that it should aim to develop the two sexes simultaneously.⁶⁶⁸ The committee's primary motivation for emphasising the necessity of female education was that it was necessary to provide suitable wives for young Congolese who had been educated, and who would take their places at a level of society higher than that of the

⁶⁶⁵ See responses to 1917 questionnaire on education in the Congo (for example that of *Mission du Katanga Nord, Braine l'Alleud St Joseph*, 7/01/ 1918) as contained in AA/M/645.

⁶⁶⁶ Seppo Sivonen, *White-Collar or Hoe Handle? African Education under British Colonial Policy, 1920-1945*, (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1995), pp.152-157.

⁶⁶⁷ See further discussion of importance of Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission and the concept of 'adapted' education in the introduction and chapter five.

⁶⁶⁸ Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question de l'enseignement au Congo*, (Bruxelles: Goemaere, imprimeur du Roi, 1922), p.28.

mass of the population.⁶⁶⁹ Again the importance of encouraging monogamous marriages was stressed, as was the Congolese woman's role as a transmitter of Christian, 'civilized' values, who would be 'the guardian of the home, the teacher of the children, and the assistant charged with presiding over the blossoming of indigenous society.'⁶⁷⁰ However, whilst this report clearly emphasized the concept of domesticity, it said little about what the content of girls' education should be, though it went into a good deal more detail on the various types of training that should be available for boys.

In addition to these reports, an article written by Edouard De Jonghe and published in 1922 also commented on the development of education in the colony, including that of girls.⁶⁷¹ In common with the report of the *Congrès Colonial* committee discussed above, the vast majority of De Jonghe's article focuses on the education that was being provided for Congolese boys, and the section referring to female education is brief and left until the end of the piece. He echoed the sentiment contained in the earlier report, that educated men needed adequately educated women to marry, so that the benefits from the effort spent training them should not be lost, and stated that wherever possible there should be a girls' school next to each boys' school.⁶⁷² He elaborated a little on the content of the education then being provided to girls in the *colonies scolaires* at Moanda and now also at Nouvelle-Anvers, and by Catholic missions, stating that it was in large part dedicated to domestic skills, sewing, animal husbandry and agriculture.⁶⁷³ By the early 1920s therefore, the strong focus on 'domesticity' which would be the defining feature of Congolese girls' schooling was already in place in the colony, and clearly supported by both the administration and the missions.

These documents were part of a process of debate and consultation that signalled a growing government interest in education. The reasons for this growing interest in education – its economic benefits, its potentially favourable impact on Belgium's

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., p.28.

⁶⁷⁰ Bureau du Comité permanent du congrès colonial national, *Rapport sur la question de l'enseignement au Congo*, (Bruxelles: Goemaere, imprimeur du Roi, 1922), p.28.

⁶⁷¹ Edouard De Jonghe, 'L'instruction publique au Congo Belge', (Extrait de 'Congo', *Revue Generale du Congo Belge*, Bruxelles: Goemaere, 1922).

⁶⁷² De Jonghe, 'L'instruction publique au Congo Belge', (Extrait de 'Congo', *Revue Generale du Congo Belge*, Bruxelles: Goemaere, 1922), p.28.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

image as a coloniser, and fears of subversion – are discussed at length elsewhere in this thesis but largely relate to the education of boys. However, it is clear from the statements made in the Annual Reports on the administration of the colony, as identified below, that the colonial government had a very particular objective in mind in when focusing its attention on girls' education. It has been seen that the Christian missions were concerned with the conversion of Congolese peoples to Christianity and especially the introduction of Christian modes of marriage and sexual behaviour, and that they believed educating girls in the ways of domesticity was a vital part of this process. In the documents discussed above, the Ministry of the Colonies – in the form of senior civil servant De Jonghe – aligned themselves with this position. However, it can be shown that the Ministry of the Colonies and the colonial government had a further aim, which, though it was complemented by the aims of the missions, cannot be considered to be homogenous with them.

The Annual Report on the development of the colony in 1925 stated that the government was particularly keen to improve the provision of education for girls in the colony's urban centres, and that the subsidies given to missions operating there would be increased, and that an additional 'official' school would be created in East Leopoldville.⁶⁷⁴ The necessity of strengthening girls' education in the urban centres would come to be a recurring theme in the sections of the Annual Reports dealing with education, and again highlights the disparities between education provision in the colony's urban and rural areas, as discussed in the Introduction.⁶⁷⁵ Repeated references were made to the need to provide wives with a similar degree of education to the growing number of educated Congolese boys emerging from the school system so that they might form the elite in Congolese society, which echoed missionary sentiments.⁶⁷⁶ As has been seen elsewhere in this thesis, the Belgian authorities had no intention of creating an *évolué* class of assimilated Congolese but they realised that the European presence, and especially the growth of urban and industrial centres where increasing numbers of Congolese people were living beyond traditional authority, were unavoidably altering African society. Their education policies, and

⁶⁷⁴ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.89.

⁶⁷⁵ See the introduction of the thesis.

⁶⁷⁶ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.161.

particularly their focus on educating girls in the urban centres, aimed to shape or channel these changes in directions thought favourable. For the colonial government, this meant trying to produce educated women who would serve to uphold social stability as the domestic heads of European-style family units.⁶⁷⁷

The importance to the colonial government of educating girls in the urban centres was thus highlighted because the presence of 'good' wives and mothers, educated according to a European model of domesticity, was seen as a way of countering the potential for subversion and unrest which was perceived as being an almost constant danger in the urban centres. The presence of these women was intended by the colonial government to provide social cohesion and stability, and in doing so to remove a threat to the colonial power's hegemony in the colony.⁶⁷⁸ This reflected a change in colonial policy, as initially the colonial government and the concessionary companies had tried to avoid women migrating to urban or industrial centres alongside men.⁶⁷⁹ Once it became apparent that this was in fact undesirable, as large numbers of mostly young, single men were deemed to be more dangerous to the colonial project, women were encouraged, as long as they were the right kind of influence.⁶⁸⁰ The colonial government would encourage married women to accompany their husbands to the towns in order to maintain family structures. The education the women and their daughters received from the missionaries was also supposed to ensure that they did not themselves succumb to the 'pernicious influence' of the indigenous quarters (*cités indigènes*).⁶⁸¹ This means that whilst Congolese boys were being educated in order to fulfil the economic needs of the colony, Congolese girls were being educated in order to fulfil a socio-political objective.

⁶⁷⁷ AA/RA/CB/59/12, (1925), p.79; AA/RA/CB/58/17, (1928), p.88; AA/RA/CB/60/1, (1938), p.80.

⁶⁷⁸ On importance of hegemony of colonial state see Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, pp.35-6.

⁶⁷⁹ See the Benedictine case study in chapter four for more on the UMHK; see also Nancy Rose Hunt, 'Hommes et Femmes: Sujets du Congo Colonial', in Jean-Luc Vellut, (ed.), *La Mémoire du Congo, Le Temps Colonial*, (Ghent: Éditions Snoeck/Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 2005), pp.51-57, (p.52).

⁶⁸⁰ On wider issues of women's status especially in the urban centres see Nancy Rose Hunt, 'Noise over Camouflaged Polygamy, Colonial Morality Taxation, and a Woman-Naming Crisis in Belgian Africa', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1991), pp. 471-494; on prostitution in the Congo and Belgian legislation see Amandine Lauro, *Coloniaux, ménagères et prostituées au Congo Belge (1885-1930)*, (Tournai: Editions Labor, 2005); See elsewhere in thesis for more on Belgian attitudes towards Congolese urban populations.

⁶⁸¹ AA/RA/CB/59/1, (1929), p.70.

7.7.1: The 1925-1929 Reorganisation and its Impact on Girls' Education

The Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission Report, the report of the *Congrès Colonial* committee and De Jonghe's *Congo* article on education all formed part of the process of formulation that led to the publication of the 1925 project for subsidised Catholic schools. It is on these schools that the next part of this chapter will focus. Partly through necessity, as while Protestant mission groups continued to educate girls and boys, the figures available for them do not differentiate between the numbers of each sex involved, though it is evident that the content of the education provided – especially to girls – remained broadly similar to that provided by the Catholic schools. Moreover, this thesis is focused primarily on the development of education policies and how this impacted upon the development of the colonial state and society in the Belgian Congo and that naturally means that more attention must be paid to the colonial authorities' position and that of the Catholic mission schools who worked in co-operation with, and were funded by, that colonial government.

The 1925 project formalized the arrangement under which Catholic mission groups had received subsidies to fund the running of their schools. The programme would delineate for the first time exactly which Catholic schools would be eligible for subsidies, and schools would have to meet certain criteria to be awarded government funding. As well as having to enrol a certain number of students, the schools would have to provide the specific types of education detailed by the programme. As has already been seen, in many respects this was simply a case of codifying that which was already being taught. There was no radical change of direction in terms of the aims of education, and the co-operation between Catholic missions and the state continued. However, the Programme was highly significant because it represented the first time that the Ministry of Colonies had so specifically stated what it wanted to achieve through education in the Congo.

As described in the Introduction to this thesis, the 1925 project introduced a pyramidal system of education with 3 levels of subsidised schools, and rudimentary rural schools below them. At everything but that lowest, non-subsidised level, boys and girls were to be taught separately. Boys and girls were, according to the 1925 project and the 1929

programme which completed the reorganisation, supposed to receive largely the same education in the first and second degree primary schools, which ran for two and three years respectively. Some additions were made to the programme for girls' schools though, particularly of needlework and infant care.⁶⁸² At the highest level of the system, the special sections, girls could enter either normal schools where they trained to become teachers, or *monitrices*, and the domestic-agricultural schools, whilst boys could train in professional schools, as clerks, or as teachers. In their normal schools, girls were to be taught the same programme as boys but again with the addition of the subjects they would have to teach their future charges, needlework and childcare.⁶⁸³ Kita argues that the differentiation of content was most obvious in the programmes for the respective agricultural sections and that girls were taught less subjects, due to the focus on boys becoming employees whilst girls were intended to run the home.⁶⁸⁴ Whilst agricultural education covered a broad range of crops and animals, women's was specifically limited to food crops and medicinal plants, and small animals, clearly because knowledge of these would be relevant around the home.⁶⁸⁵ The major part of the programme for girls focused on the preparation of food and the making of clothes. Furthermore, French was compulsory for boys in agricultural schools but optional for girls. The system therefore enshrined the principle that boys were destined for employment by Europeans, whilst African girls were to be confined to the domestic sphere.

Interestingly, whilst the introduction to the 1925 Programme admitted that a disparity had developed between the numbers of boys and girls being educated in the Congo, it blamed this on the unwillingness of African parents to allow their female children to attend school. The report alleged this unwillingness was due to parental fears that girls would learn independence and would refuse to accept arranged marriages. This argument would be presented repeatedly during the course of the period before the Second World War, as will be discussed later. The 1925-1929 reorganisation also reiterated the importance of educating women being that they should become

⁶⁸² *Organisation de l'Enseignement libre au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi avec le concours des Sociétés de Missions nationales*, (Brussels: Verviers, 1929), p.14.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.22.

⁶⁸⁴ Kita, 'L'Éducation féminine au Congo Belge', pp.485-487.

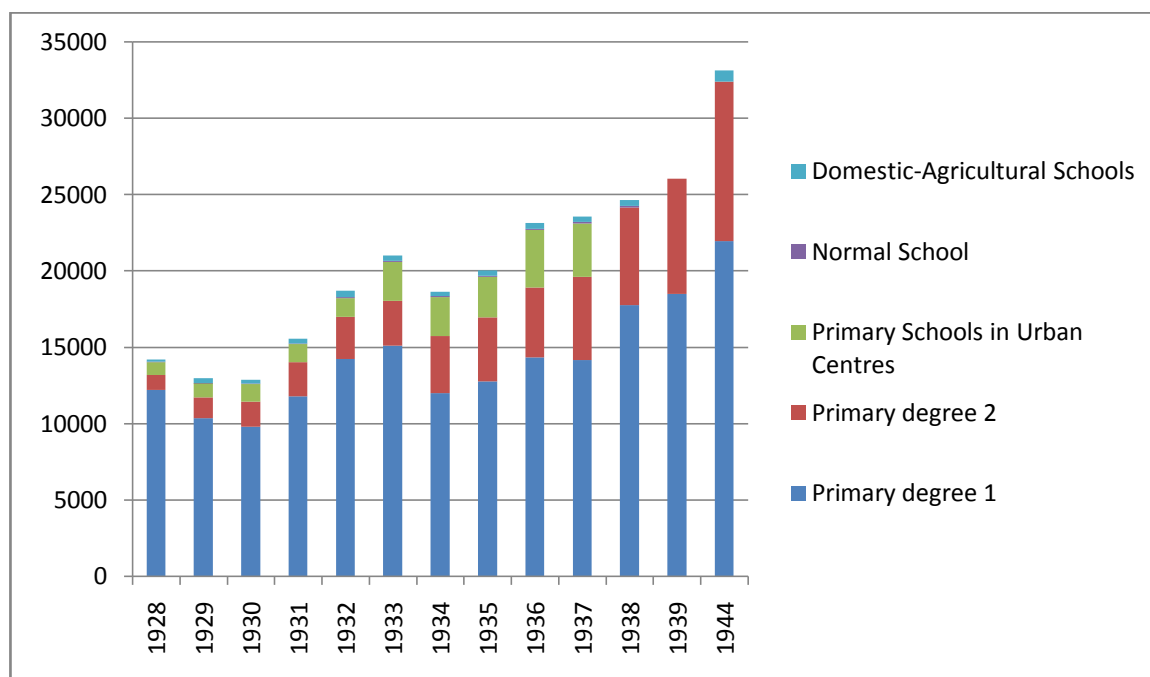
⁶⁸⁵ *Organisation de l'Enseignement libre au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi avec le concours des Sociétés de Missions nationales*, pp.27-28.

suitable wives and mothers, and therefore a positive social force. When discussing boys' education, the focus is much more on the economic value of their training, and its objective being that they should fulfil jobs useful to colonial businesses or the administration, either as clerks or as workers and artisans. It is clear that in the 1925 Project and throughout the interwar years, missionary reasons for educating girls and boys in the way it prescribed – emphasizing Christianity, morality, domesticity and the improving experience of manual labour – complemented, in almost all aspects, the needs of the colonial authorities. However, as has been shown above with reference to the Annual Reports on the development of girls' education made by the colonial government in the years up to the Second World War, the colonial government's motivation for educating women was more pragmatic than simply converting them to Christianity.

7.7.2: The Impact of the 1925 Project and Subsequent Development

As has been shown, since their installation in the Congo the missions had developed a system of education which educated boys and girls differently because of idealised notions of domesticity and manual labour. The 1925 Project signalled the adherence of the Ministry of Colonies to these principles, and formalized the arrangement they had made with the Catholic mission groups regarding the provision of this education. During the period between 1925 and 1929, when the project became law, the programme began to be implemented by the Catholic missions in order to ensure that their schools qualified for the subsidies made available by the colonial government. Accurate figures for the number of boys and girls attending these schools are difficult to find, particularly with regards to the girls' schools before 1928. This is because of the time taken to reorganise schools, and because before that point many of the figures returned to the Ministry of Colonies by the missions were incomplete or varied in format so that they cannot be collated into meaningful statistics. It must also be noted that accurate figures were never available for the numbers attending rural schools. However, from 1928 onwards there was a clear progression in the number of girls attending Catholic subsidised schools in the Belgian Congo, as shown below:

Figure 7: The number of girls attending subsidised Catholic mission schools:



Using figures collated from the Annual Reports on the administration of the colony, this chart shows the numbers attending first degree primary schools, second degree primary schools, the normal schools, and the domestic-agricultural schools. It also includes figures for the numbers attending primary schools in urban centres, which were simply schools that taught both the first and second degree primary programmes, and whose attendance figures were divided between those two categories from 1938 onwards.⁶⁸⁶ These figures are not entirely complete – due to some being missing in the reports themselves – but they are the best available, and were the figures that the colonial government itself was using. Furthermore, it must also be stated that these figures should be treated as the maximum figures, as they are based on enrolment numbers not daily attendance numbers, which could it seems sometimes be as much as fifty per cent lower.⁶⁸⁷

The chart illustrates that the numbers of girls in 1st degree primary schools rose from 12,217 girls in 1928 to 21,951 in 1944. Though to put this figure into context, there were over 220,000 boys in schools of that level by 1944. Similar disparities remained at all levels in the system. However, the colonial government and the Catholic missions

⁶⁸⁶ See individual reports contained within files AA/RA/CB/58, AA/RA/CB/59, and AA/RA/CB/60.

⁶⁸⁷ The disparity between enrolment figures and actual attendance has been discussed in the Introduction.

did make some progress in increasingly the proportion of those girls who entered education who were able to move on from the 1st degree primary schools on to the second degree schools. This proportion increased from around just a tenth in 1928 to around half in 1944. The numbers of girls reaching the higher tiers of the system remained tiny throughout the period, with only 728 girls attending the domestic agricultural schools and 120 in the teaching schools in 1944. These were exclusively in the main urban centres. These numbers were obviously very small when it is considered that the colony's total population was estimated to be around ten million people. However, despite the increases in the numbers of girls attending school and progressing beyond the first degree primary schools, the disparity between the levels of education between Congolese boys and girls remained. In 1944, the colonial government both recognised and declared itself to be unsatisfied with this situation, however it considered as it had always done that the causes of this issue lay in the attitudes of Congolese parents.⁶⁸⁸

7.8: Reactions to Girls' Education

7.8.1: The Colonial Authorities' View

The Annual Reports illustrate that the colonial administration repeatedly portrayed itself as being committed to the extension of the provision of educational opportunities for Congolese girls. Figure 1 has shown the extent to which the number of girls attending the subsidised schools actually increased up to 1944. Whilst there was undoubtedly an increase, the Ministry of Colonies repeatedly asserted the view that its efforts, and those of the Catholic missions, were being hampered by the opposition of Congolese parents to the education of girls. It has already been shown above that this view was expressed in the introduction to the 1925 Programme. Throughout the twenty years which followed the publication of that document, Congolese parents continued to be accused of blocking their daughters' access to education because of fears that it would lead them to gain independence, and mean that their parents lost out on the receipt of a bride-price for them.⁶⁸⁹ This sentiment

⁶⁸⁸ AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1944), p.94.

⁶⁸⁹ See for example: AA/RA/CB/58/17, (1928), p.88; AA/RA/CB/59/1, (1929), p.90; AA/RA/CB/59/6, (1932), p.142;

was perhaps most strongly expressed in the Annual Report for 1926, which stated that to the Congolese 'a girl is a source of wealth.'⁶⁹⁰ Furthermore, the Annual Report for 1928 explicitly states that recruitment for the girls' schools was easier in urban centres, because almost all families were monogamous, and that the problem in other areas was largely due to polygamous marriage practices.⁶⁹¹ In fact, as has been seen already, resources were focused on the urban areas already, as this was where the state felt girls' schools could make the greatest impact in its favour. Evidently, it was far more convenient for the colonial authorities to blame Congolese parents and communities for the limited growth of girls' education than for them to acknowledge their own role, but it is necessary to examine whether there was any truth to such claims.

7.8.2: African Reactions (European Sources)

As previously mentioned, one of the major issues when considering how African parents and their children responded to the colonial government's education policies is the fact that the source materials available are documents – typically reports, letters, and articles – that were produced by Europeans. This means that their content is coloured by contemporary racial and cultural stereotypes, and that there is a danger that these may have distorted that which has been recorded. However, if one is aware of these issues, it is still both possible and worthwhile to consider the information these sources contain. This section will consider how two types of source produced by Europeans working in close contact with schools in the Congo undermine the colonial authorities' repeated assertion that Congolese parents were opposed to their daughters receiving an education because they were afraid of losing the bride-price.

Firstly, documents from the archives of the Baptist Missionary Society show that the situation with regards to the education of girls and women was perhaps more complex than the government allowed for. These documents show that the B.M.S. missionaries placed the same importance on educating girls and women, and hopefully converting

⁶⁹⁰ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.19.

⁶⁹¹ AA/RA/CB/58/17, (1928), p.88.

them to Christianity, as their Catholic counterparts did. The Annual Report for 1924 from the B.M.S. station at Upoto on the Upper Congo, stated that: 'No work [...] will have more vital influence on the future of the Church than this service amongst the women folk and girls of the district.'⁶⁹² The hope was that these women would have a Christian influence on their families, and moreover that some women, usually the wives of male trainees, would train to become girls' tutors.⁶⁹³ Some of the B.M.S. documents show that their work educating girls was popular with African parents, such as a letter from Allan Burnett Palmer, stationed at Yalamba, to the B.M.S. General Secretary C.E. Wilson stating that the station, again on the Upper Congo, had rebuilt and extended its girls' boarding school in 1924, so that it could accommodate 'the sixty girls who were brought to us by their parents.'⁶⁹⁴ A further letter from Palmer states that this number of pupils had been attracted to the school in just a few weeks in 1928.⁶⁹⁵ This suggests that hostility to girls' education was perhaps not as widespread beyond the urbanised areas of the Congo as the colonial government's annual reports seemed to imply.

Other B.M.S. documents, however, do show that difficulties were encountered by those endeavouring to provide education for girls. Mention is indeed made of the opposition of some Congolese men to women's education, and particularly to their conversion to Christianity, due to fears that they might leave their husbands.⁶⁹⁶ This does echo official complaints that tradition was responsible for blocking the development of girls' education. However, these records also suggest that other reasons might lie behind problems of attracting girls to school and keeping them there, particularly that both girls and boys were missing school to go and pick coffee for which they would be paid, albeit unofficially, by the plantation owners, or that girls were missing school to work in their gardens or to sell produce in the markets.⁶⁹⁷ These documents clearly show that personal economic concerns and traditional duties

⁶⁹² BMS/A/65, Upoto Station Records 1877-1953, annual report 1924.

⁶⁹³ BMS/A/65, Upoto Station Records 1877-1953, annual report 1933.

⁶⁹⁴ BMS/A/48/1(XXX), letter from Allan Burnett Palmer (stationed at Yalamba) to C.E. Wilson (General Secretary of B.M.S.) dated 17/7/1924.

⁶⁹⁵ BMS/A/48/1 (LI), dated 4/7/1928.

⁶⁹⁶ BMS/A/56/7, circular letter from Lydia Mary de Hailes (posted at Bolobo), dated 8/01/1925.

⁶⁹⁷ BMS/A/134, Yakusu Correspondence and Prayer Letters 1931-1959, letter from Kenneth Parkinson to Dr. Adam, dated 26/01/1934; BMS/A/134 Yakusu Reports and Related Papers 1929 & 1939-1954, Annual Report on the work of the B.M.S. in the Yakusu area, dated 30/11/1939.

were also responsible for girls staying away from school, and that the reasons for lack of attendance were more complex than simple parental hostility and concern over the bride-price.

Whilst these B.M.S. documents illustrate that the situation surrounding girls' education was complex, it could be argued that their experiences were not reflected in those reports because the activity of the Protestant missions was not recorded there in detail, as the focus was on the government-subsidised Catholic schools. However, the reports compiled on individual Catholic-run schools by missionary-inspectors and provincial inspectors also show that the situation at a local level was much more nuanced than the colonial government recognised in those annual reports. The missionary and state provincial inspectorates were set up as part of the 1925 Project, and have already been discussed in the Introduction and in Chapter Four.⁶⁹⁸ The use of their reports as a source material is complicated by the fact that only partial records remain: inspections reports are not available for all schools, nor are there reports showing development over a number of years unfortunately, as most of the reports held in the African Archives of the Belgian Foreign Ministry date from the years 1926 to 1930, but there is often only one report for one year for each school that is covered at all. However, with reference to both these categories of school inspection report, it is evident that the situation regarding African reactions to girls' education were varied and influenced by a number of factors.

As has already been shown above, the Ministry of Colonies' own annual reports claimed that recruitment was easier and attendance was better at girls' schools in the Congo's urban centres because African families were often monogamous and more inclined to educate their daughters. However, a report on the operation of the urban girls' school at Basankusu, in the Equator province, expressed similar concerns about school attendance to those seen in the documents of the B.M.S missionaries. The head of the provincial education service, Jardon, cited parental opposition as being a problem but also mentions girls missing weeks or even months of schooling to go fishing, or because of going to work alongside their mothers or to care for younger children in the family. Jardon even suggested that attendance might be made

⁶⁹⁸ See chapter four.

compulsory in centres such as Basankusu.⁶⁹⁹ Attendance was also evidently a problem at the urban girls' school in West Leopoldville, where a report recorded that only 42 pupils of the 97 officially enrolled were actually present on the day of the inspection.⁷⁰⁰ There were, therefore, problems of attendance at some girls' schools in urban areas, just as there were at rural girls' schools, and indeed at boys' schools across the colony. In the case of girls' schools though, it was more convenient for the state in its published annual reports to blame African parents and their supposed 'greed' for the bride-price, than it was to address other reasons why recruitment for girls' schools might have been difficult and attendances low. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch has argued that whilst parental distrust of the schools, and not necessarily because of fears over the loss of bride-price, might have been an issue early in the colonial period, this lessened over time; moreover, it is clear that the clash between Christianisation and traditional culture was an issue, as well as clashes between the conflicting demands of schooling and commitments under the traditional division of labour.⁷⁰¹ These commitments may also have become even more important as more and more men were engaged in waged labour. Kita suggests that, when it existed, Congolese resistance to girls' schools might be read as a form of anti-colonial resistance, and that furthermore, the schools were not considered to be useful.⁷⁰² Clearly, whilst the attitudes of Congolese families were important, there were also other problems equally deserving of attention if the Belgian authorities were concerned only with improving education for girls.

Alongside girls' economic activity, such as fishing or selling produce in markets mentioned previously, and their domestic tasks, there was also the issue that some schools' activities were less about education and more about commerce. Jardon's report on the urban school at Stanleyville, for example, mentioned that its workshop could not be described as an educational endeavour as it was focused solely on 'intensive production' which profited the order of nuns running the school.⁷⁰³ This is an

⁶⁹⁹ AA/M/647/2, dated 29/04/1929.

⁷⁰⁰ AA/M/647/9, dated 13/02/1928.

⁷⁰¹ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*, pp.143-144.

⁷⁰² Kita, 'L'Éducation féminine au Congo Belge', p.483.

⁷⁰³ AA/M/647/2, dated 29/04/1929. Criticisms of this type were also made about other schools in the colony, as the comments made in the Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission report about the B.M.S. schools showed. See chapter five.

example of a problem which is frequently noted in the inspection reports available – that girls' schools were not being run according to the provisions of the 1925 programme. However, as the expansion of girls' education in the Congo only really began from 1928 onwards, it is also often recorded that girls' schools were still in the process of being properly established when these inspections were carried out. A lack of further reports means it is difficult to know if the descriptions of greater conformity with the 1925 programme contained in the annual reports can be relied upon.

On the other hand, just as the B.M.S. documents recorded enthusiasm among some populations for the education of girls, so too did the inspectors of subsidised schools. The schools run by the Daughters of the Cross (*Filles de la Croix*) in Lubunda and Kindu, for example, were described in glowing terms by the missionary-inspector G. Haezaert, as conforming as closely as possible to the 1925 programme, in his reports on their operation in 1930, and as being well run with good staff and able students.⁷⁰⁴ The Kindu report stated that attendance reached ninety percent and that the girls 'now come spontaneously, for pleasure.' However, it does also acknowledge that its pupils were recruited only from central Kindu and not from the surrounding rural area, despite the fact that the local boys school could recruit from both.⁷⁰⁵ The question again is how far the school was encouraged to recruit from rural areas, and whether the central administration would have in fact appreciated its focus on the urban sphere. Essentially, what the documents from the B.M.S. and the inspection reports pertaining to subsidised Catholic schools show is that the situation regarding girls' education in the Congo was much more complex than the comments in the colonial government's annual reports allowed. Whilst parental mistrust and fear of Christian conversion may well have made recruitment more difficult, particularly in rural areas, it was not the only reason for such difficulties. Congolese girls retained the productive, economic role they had played in traditional society and this could interfere with school attendance. There may also have been reluctance to attend schools where it was perceived that they would simply be acting as labour for the nuns.

⁷⁰⁴ AA/M/635/II, Lubunda report dated 4/01/1931, Kindu report not clearly dated.

⁷⁰⁵ AA/M/635/II Kindu.

It is clear that there were a range of possible reactions from Congolese families, particularly meaning Congolese men, to girls' education. Gertrude Mianda's recent work has added an interesting dimension to this discussion, suggesting that one effect of the system implemented in the interwar period was that those Congolese men who had been educated to the highest standard allowed by the Belgians internalised the conceptions of gender it promoted.⁷⁰⁶ This, she argues, led male *évolués* to argue in favour of better education for their daughters, feeling for example that they should be taught French in keeping with their relatively elevated social position, but that the emphasis should remain on domesticity.⁷⁰⁷ These aspirations were recognised by the colonial authorities in the revised school programme introduced in 1948, which acknowledged the growing significance of this social group, and also further established the division between rural and urban Congolese women.⁷⁰⁸

7.9: Conclusion

This chapter has explored issues surrounding the introduction of gender differentiated education policies in the Belgian Congo, with particular emphasis on the extent and content of education provided to Congolese girls. It is evident that some elements highlighted here with regard to the education of girls in the colony were, in fact, common to the education provided to both sexes, such as the highly significant role of missionary beliefs, especially with regards to morality. However, it is also clear that whilst such themes may have been present in all education, there was a particularly strong emphasis placed on them in girls' schools, as the missions and the colonial government sought to alter traditional African societies through education. The role of female pupils as future wives and mothers, and their potential influence over future generations of children, was at the root of European aims to inculcate them with attitudes considered to be desirable.

⁷⁰⁶ Gertrude Mianda, 'Colonialism, Education, and Gender Relations in the Belgian Congo: The *Évolué* Case', in Susan Geiger, Nakanyike Musisi, Jean-Marie Allman, (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp.144-163, (pp.149-150).

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid, p.148.

The introduction of the highly gendered school system set out in the 1925 Programme codified Belgian efforts to expand education provision in the colony for both boys and girls. For most boys, the central element was to be manual labour and skills training – even for those training to be teachers – whilst for girls the defining ethos was an idealised notion of domesticity. This chapter has shown that the subsidised schools established or restructured after 1925 embodied, in terms of girls' education at least, the differing but complementary aims of the Catholic missions and the colonial authorities. The missions wanted to convert Congolese girls to Christianity so that they might grow up to establish Christian households and, in doing so, widen the Church's membership and increase its influence. Both the Ministry of Colonies and the colonial government in the Congo sought to educate girls to be compliant, European-influenced, wives and mothers who would exercise a pacifying influence on their families. In essence, the government hoped that educated women would carry Belgian-imparted attitudes directly into their households and that they would therefore extend colonial power into the domestic sphere. For the colonial authorities, particular emphasis was placed on educating girls in the urban centres, such as Leopoldville, Stanleyville and Elisabethville, as the African populations in these towns were considered to be especially unsettled and potentially subversive or disruptive. This further emphasized the division between rural and urban which marked the education system in the colony.

The success of these policies and the achievement of the aims which lay behind them are difficult to determine though, as are the reactions which they provoked among the Congolese populations. The state repeatedly blamed the greed of Congolese parents, and their supposed desire to protect the system of the payment of bride-price upon marriage, for the lower numbers of girls attending schools. In truth, missionary records and even inspection reports from the lower/more local levels of government show that the situation was far more complex than that. Whilst some parents may have refused to educate their daughters, others were evidently more supportive of schooling. Furthermore, where there was hostility to girls' education – whether in the form of refusal to educate or as shown by poor attendance figures – it was not necessarily due to a desire to protect the bride-price. Other matters, especially arising from girls' traditional duties, such as fishing or harvesting, or from new economic

pressures, such as the absence of wage-labouring men meaning more agricultural burden on women, or the employment of girls in crop picking, also impacted on school attendance. Resistance to the influence of the colonizer might also have been a factor. Finally, in some cases, a perception that schools were profiting from their pupils rather than educating them also led girls to avoid school. However, some documents show that there were schools in which girls were eager to learn and in which attendance was high.

The development of girls' education up to the eve of the Second World War remained limited numerically in comparison to provision for boys, although the gap closed proportionally, and in terms of content instruction for girls remained wedded to nineteenth century ideals of domesticity. The intention of the system was evidently to limit female aspirations solely to the realms of home and family, where their purpose was to be twofold – to spread Christian values on behalf of the missions, and to ensure stability on behalf of the state. The state's priorities in this respect are made clear by its particular focus on educating women in the urban centres, as that is where fears of potential unrest were greatest, and where the educated male population was concentrated. In this sense it is clear that girls' education was important to the colonial authorities' for specific socio-political reasons, and that it was seen as having the potential to contribute to the maintenance of Belgian colonial power if female attitudes could be moulded as desired.

Chapter Eight: Sickness and the State: The Training of Indigenous Healthcare Workers

8.1: Introduction

For the vast majority of those who entered formal education in the Belgian Congo, schooling ended after either the first degree or second degree primary schools, where they would have received up to five years tuition, focused on developing rudimentary literacy and practical skills. A minority might continue through the 'specialist' sections which provided a further three years of training for boys as tradesmen, teachers, or clerks, and for girls in domestic skills. However, throughout the inter-war period, a small number of pupils were accepted into specialist establishments which were founded to train indigenous healthcare workers. This chapter examines the development of these establishments, which came to be known as the '*écoles d'infirmiers*' and '*écoles d'assistants médicales indigènes*' (schools for nurses and schools for indigenous medical assistants), and their place within the educational structures of the colony.

This chapter begins by considering the rationale behind the foundation of these schools. It will explain where and when they were opened, and will analyse the expectations that the Ministry of the Colonies and the colonial government in the Congo had of them. It will then review certain common difficulties that were encountered in the operation of these schools, especially the recurrent problem of finding sufficient recruits for them, before examining the major disputes that the opening of these institutions occasioned, largely as a result of the decision to found a senior AMI school in Leopoldville in 1936. In addition, the chapter will discuss the case of independently-run schools for medical assistants, focusing on questions surrounding their funding, with particular attention being paid to the *Fondation Médicale de l'Université de Louvain au Congo* (medical school) at Kisantu and the Baptist Missionary Society's school at Yakusu. Finally, the chapter will revisit initiatives to train African women as midwives, the only post-second degree primary education that was available for women outside the domestic-agricultural schools.

The strong focus placed on the development of these AMI schools by the Belgian Ministry of the Colonies was part of a wider prioritising of public health and hygiene

services in the Congo, which was indicative of the colonial state's attempts to prove its own legitimacy through 'improving' social endeavours. Indeed, the idea that the colonial state would ameliorate the lives of indigenous populations through the introduction of Western medicine was integral to what Crawford Young identifies as the state's 'legitimising creed'.⁷⁰⁹ Moreover, the colonial authorities had a further interest in endeavouring to improve healthcare as it was imperative for the colony's indigenous population to supply the burgeoning industrial, agricultural, and commercial interests operating in the colony with a healthy and, therefore, productive workforce. This was, of course, fundamental to the promotion of economic growth in the colony from which the state itself would profit, strengthening its revenue streams both as exports increased and as more Congolese became waged workers, consumers and taxpayers.⁷¹⁰

Yet, although the colonial authorities attached high priority to these schools, which were essentially the highest rung of the colonial education system in the Congo during this period, their development and operation was fraught with difficulties and controversies. Problems of recruiting students for the schools highlighted chronic deficiencies in the lower levels of the pyramidal education system, and the form and content of the education programmes which the schools should teach were hotly contested by state officials, missionary educators and others. It was perhaps little wonder, then, that the training of indigenous medical assistants became another issue around which the antipathy between Catholic missionaries and their Protestant counterparts crystallized. Moreover, and more unusually, the matter aroused discord between the Catholic missionaries and some colonial officials, and also highlighted differences between the hygiene service and the education service of the Ministry. A key purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to illustrate that the AMI schools became a site around which the boundaries of colonial power were tested both by missionaries of both denominations, and amongst colonial officialdom in Léopoldville and Brussels. At issue was the matter of which Belgian figures – religious or secular - should exert most influence over indigenous populations. As we shall see, it was by no means clear

⁷⁰⁹ Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, pp.37-38.

⁷¹⁰ Again Young cites 'the revenue imperative' and the accumulation of economic wealth as being amongst the defining elements of state logic; see '*...The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*', pp.38-9.

where the balance of power between these parties lay. Crucially, the debates over the role of the Protestants in this strand of education and over the subsidy system of funding, both matters that will be examined in detail, were precursors to wider developments in Congo's post-Second World War educational system, which would see the eventual extension of subsidies to Protestant schools in 1948.

This chapter will also demonstrate that the difficulties in recruiting competent students for the medical schools illustrated the inadequacy of the wider education system in the Belgian Congo. Beyond this, it will be shown that the inclusion of the Protestant missions in the provision of healthcare and in the training of indigenous healthcare workers – particularly the eventual funding of this training – belied the argument made by the Belgian Ministry of the Colonies that funding should only be given to schools run by 'national' organisations, and showed that this discrimination was the result of a deeper denominational prejudice within the education service of the Ministry. Moreover, by throwing the spotlight on hygiene service involvement in this strand of education provision and examining the internal disagreements amongst colonial officials that multi-agency involvement generated, the chapter will reveal that frictions over the funding issue and over the predominance of the Catholic missions were already entrenched in the inter-war years. The point is significant because it suggested that the reforms instituted by the Liberal Belgian administration in 1948 were not as abrupt a rupture with the past as is commonly assumed.⁷¹¹

8.2: Existing Literature

To understand the matters at issue in this chapter, we need to make some reference to specialist literature on colonial medical history, though this is not in itself where the

⁷¹¹ The post-war Belgian Liberal government took the decision to extend education subsidies to Protestant-run schools in 1946 and this decision came into operation from 1948 (see conclusion for more on this). Markowitz identifies this policy shift as having first been expressed by Pierre Ryckmans in 1944, but does not address the precedent set by the funding of Protestant medical training in the 1930s: Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p.65. Jean Stengers has written that in 1945 the suggestion of modifying education funding to include Protestants was considered 'scandalous', see Jean Stengers, *Congo: Mythes et Réalités*, p.218. In his survey of the development of education in the Congo, Gabudisa also identified 1948 as having seen a break from the former policy; Busugutsala Gandayi Gabudisa, *Politiques éducatives au Congo-Zaïre*, p.46.

main focus of this work lies. It would be impossible to locate the development of the training of African healthcare workers in the Belgian Congo in its proper context without an understanding of the place of medical services generally in the colony, and more widely an overview of the development of colonial medicine in Africa. Much of the published work on the development of colonial medical services has sought to identify the presumptions and practices that constitute a specifically 'colonial' or 'tropical' medicine, with works such as David Arnold's *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth Century India* examining the role of statist medical intervention, and particularly large scale campaigns against epidemic or endemic diseases, in the extension of the hegemonic power of the colonial state.⁷¹² Rita Headrick has produced an exhaustive case study of such processes in the relatively under-studied colonies of French Equatorial Africa.⁷¹³ Megan Vaughan has also explored the relationship between medicine and power in colonial Africa in works such as *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, and addresses the significance of racial and cultural difference for European medical policymakers and practitioners, as well as for their African patients.⁷¹⁴

In terms of the Belgian Congo particularly, two relatively recent works stand out as being highly significant for this study, though neither addresses in much detail the training of Congolese medical assistants as discussed here. Maryinez Lyons' *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness in Northern Zaire, 1900-1940*, adapted from her doctoral thesis, offers vital background and useful analysis of the development of Belgian medical services in the Congo. As with Arnold's work, Lyons concentrates on epidemic disease by examining the Belgian colonial authorities' campaigns against sleeping sickness in the colony. Although she highlights the competition over personnel and resources between healthcare workers involved in targeted sleeping sickness campaigns and the rest of the medical service, her work also provides valuable insights into the place of medical provision within the broader range

⁷¹² David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁷¹³ Rita Headrick, *Colonialism, Health and Illness in French Equatorial Africa, 1885-1935*, (Atlanta, GA: African Studies Association, 1994).

⁷¹⁴ Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), and 'Health and hegemony: representation of disease and the creation of the colonial subject in Nyasaland', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks, (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, (London: British Academic Press, 1994), pp.173-201.

of Belgian colonial priorities. Lyons has also written a chapter that compares the experience of Congolese medical auxiliaries with their counterparts in Uganda, the conclusions of which are directly relevant to this chapter.⁷¹⁵

Nancy Rose Hunt's *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo*, as well as her articles on the same subject, provide a useful account of services surrounding childbirth. This work is especially pertinent to the chapter section below which addresses the training of indigenous midwives and midwives assistants, but it is also valuable in considering the relationships between Catholic and Protestant missionaries. Hunt makes great use of the archives of the Baptist Missionary Society, which will also be referred to here, and concentrates in particular the work of Dr Clement Chesterman at the B.M.S.'s Yakusu station. Chesterman was a central figure in the controversies over the funding of Protestant training of medical assistants by the Belgian authorities and his activities are, therefore, critical to the work presented here.

Midwifery is another area of medical development that has attracted considerable scholastic interest, perhaps because of the growth of women's studies and feminist history whose practitioners have seen the examination of the training and work of indigenous midwives as a means to 'reinsert' female subjects into colonial history.⁷¹⁶ Much of this literature focuses on the tensions generated by European distaste for indigenous birthing practices and the increased medicalization of childbirth by colonial regimes, along with the reactions to such policies. As with other strands of historiography concerned with Western medicine in colonial contexts, there is a strong focus on how healthcare policies were used as instruments of social control. Pierre Kita Masandi has discussed the development of midwifery training for women in the Congo as part of an article on the educational opportunities for girls in the Congo generally, which does not address the wider significance of midwifery within the colonial project,

⁷¹⁵ Maryinez Lyons, 'The Power to Heal: representation of disease and the creation of the colonial subject in Nyasaland', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, (London: British Academic Press, 1994), pp.202-226.

⁷¹⁶ As well as Hunt, *Colonial Lexicon*, and 'Le bébé en brousse: European Women, African Birth Spacing and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1988), pp.401-432; see also Jane Turriffin, 'Colonial Midwives and Modernizing Childbirth in French West Africa', in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp.71-94; Geraldine Forbes, 'Managing Midwifery in India', in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (eds), *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, (London: British Academic Press, 1994), pp.152-172; Mor Ndao, 'Colonisation et Politique de Santé Maternelle et Infantile au Sénégal (1905-1960)', *French Colonial History*, vol. 9, (2008), pp.191-211.

in which he argues that the restriction of opportunities for women to work within the healthcare system to roles relating to birth saw them again confined to a female sphere.⁷¹⁷ He also states that although midwifery training was presented as the pinnacle of the education system for women, it did not differ from the wider education as it still restricted women to the lowest rungs of the medical system.⁷¹⁸ Whilst Kita is correct to suggest that in comparison to those available for Congolese men, the opportunities for women within the medical system were limited, this chapter will suggest that midwifery training did differ considerably from the wider education system because it offered a different choice to women, one not based solely upon principles of domesticity, and because it represented a further attempt by the colonial authorities to use women to further the spread of colonial ideology.

8.3: Government Medical Education

8.3.1: Initial Foundation and Development

The training of indigenous healthcare workers began in the Belgian Congo before 1909 with the establishment of a school for nurses at Boma, then the colonial capital.⁷¹⁹ Though in some instances in the early 1920s this school was referred to as being an '*école d'assistants médicaux*' it cannot be considered to have fulfilled the role which this description would come to signify. Rather, the Boma school should more properly be regarded as a school for nurses (*une école d'infirmiers*), which offered a 'superficial and especially a practical instruction', training nurses to work under the direct supervision of European medical staff. It was in this more functional, vocational language that it would more typically be described during the later years of the period, once the distinctions between 'medical assistants' and 'nurses' had been more clearly codified and demarcated in policy.⁷²⁰ What bears emphasis is that the somewhat confused beginning to the training of indigenous medical auxiliaries fits a broader

⁷¹⁷ Kita, 'L'Éducation Féminine au Congo Belge', *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 40, no. 4, (Aug., 2004), 479-508, (p.501).

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, Vol. 1, p.357.

⁷²⁰ AA/RA/CB/58/10, (1923), p.31; AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.26; Note that the confusion in terminology between '*écoles pour assistants médicaux indigènes*' and '*écoles pour infirmiers*' was a feature of documents produced during the 1920s.

pattern, as identified in Maryinez Lyons' account of the early years of the health services in the colony, in which a combination of confusion over status and conflicts over limited resources were exacerbated by the lack of an autonomous medical department. It was not until such a department was created in 1922 that matters slowly began to change.⁷²¹

The increasingly well organised *Service d'Hygiène* in Brussels, and the corresponding services in the colony, mirrored the development of other colonial services, such as the education department, during the 1920s. All formed a part of the expanding colonial state in the Congo as the Belgians embedded and extended their occupation, thereby increasing the scope of their formal interactions with the indigenous populations. A specific example of this extension during the 1920s was the decision to increase the number of schools for indigenous medical auxiliaries in the Congo. The impetus behind this initiative stemmed from the Governor-General, Eugène Henry, and Louis Franck, who served as Minister for the Colonies from 1918 to 1924. It was Franck who later wrote that he had recognised the importance of the Boma school and had decided to establish a school for indigenous medical auxiliaries in each of the colony's provincial capitals.⁷²²

Greater training for indigenous medical auxiliaries was also indicative of an increasing official focus on hygiene and medicine as a vital part of the colonial endeavour in the Congo. Hunt argues that the early 1920s witnessed a fundamental shift in state emphasis on healthcare provision as rudimentary welfarist initiatives broadened from exclusively caring for the European population and on those 'Congolese workers and soldiers living in state posts' to a broader interest in reaching the wider Congolese population.⁷²³ The underlying context for this policy shift as represented by the development of hygiene and healthcare services during the 1920s and 1930s was, as with so much state activity in the colony, grounded in economic imperatives. Central to Belgian colonialism was the concept of '*mise en valeur*,' which essentially meant the economic exploitation of the colony, and rested on the need for an able workforce.⁷²⁴

⁷²¹ Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness*, pp.105-6, 157-8; see also Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon*, p.176; AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.9.

⁷²² Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge : Tome I*, (Brussels : Renaissance du Livre, c.1929), p.358.

⁷²³ Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon*, p.176.

⁷²⁴ See chapter one for more on the general significance of this concept.

Lyons locates Belgian healthcare policy and, more specifically, the fight against endemic sleeping sickness, in the setting of colonial political economy or, crudely put, of the need to maintain a healthy and therefore viable pool of labour for various economic concerns, such as mines, plantations, and factories, whose output was critical to the colony's economic survival.⁷²⁵ Written on the eve of the depression, Franck's own book on the colony's development confirmed this as the motivation behind his own desire to expand the medical service, arguing that any delay would adversely affect the wider objective of more effective economic exploitation of the territory.⁷²⁶

Beyond the economic reasoning for extending healthcare provision for the wider Congolese population, it can also be argued that additional, cultural motivations came into play. These arose from a belief that the spread of Western medical science was pivotal to the 'civilizing mission'. It was hoped that the diffusion of Belgian medical practices would help to establish the superiority of European methods in African minds, thereby lessening the importance of traditional medicine within indigenous cultures, something seen as desirable by colonial authorities concerned by the enduring potency of traditional beliefs.⁷²⁷ This motivation was evident in a letter written by Franck to Henry in 1920, in which the Minister expressed the view that, in addition to their regular student cohort, the medical schools should aim to recruit 'the sons of indigenous notables and above all the sons or nephews of Nganga sorcerers.'⁷²⁸ However, it must be noted that Lyons, Hunt, and Luise White have all convincingly argued that the Congolese populations frequently spurned contact with European medical services. Furthermore, as White in particular has demonstrated, contrary to the colonial authorities' hopes and expectations, the Congolese often assimilated understandings of western techniques and medicines within traditional belief systems.⁷²⁹ Such Africanization of western medicine was also rendered more likely by the persistent shortages of European staff, a problem endemic throughout all

⁷²⁵ Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness*, pp.25-36.

⁷²⁶ Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge : Tome I*, p.358.

⁷²⁷ Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness*, p.172.

⁷²⁸ AA/H/4440/697, undated letter; see also Maryinez Lyons, 'The Power to Heal', pp.217-8.

⁷²⁹ Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness*, pp.179-195; Luise White, *Speaking With Vampires: Rumour and History in Colonial Africa*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), pp.95-121, esp. p.97; see also Jude C. Aguwa, 'Mission, Colonialism, and the Supplanting of African Religious and Medical Practices', in Chima J. Korieh and Raphael Chijioko Njoku (eds), *Missions, States and European Expansion*, (NY/London: Routledge, 2007), pp.127-145, (p.143).

services of the colonial administration, which made increased training for indigenous auxiliaries both imperative and unavoidable.

Though, as mentioned above, Franck cited his recognition of the importance of the Boma school for nurses as the inspiration for his decision to expand the training of indigenous healthcare workers, it is indicative of future problems in this sector that the functioning of the original school was beset with difficulties. These problems were retrospectively acknowledged by Franck and were also noted at the time in the administration's Annual Report for 1921 which acknowledged problems in the recruitment of sufficient pupils with the requisite abilities desired.⁷³⁰ Despite these major problems with the original school, the colonial authorities in both Brussels and Boma were keen to extend this stream of education. In a letter to Franck, written in August 1920, Henry discussed the proposal to open a school for indigenous medical assistants in each province and argued for the creation of a dedicated diploma, something that would also necessitate a uniform programme to be followed by all the schools. Henry therefore recommended that a manual detailing such a programme should be written.⁷³¹ His letter also stated that, prior to this, in conformity with an *ordonnance* of 3rd October 1917, the programme of studies for the Boma school had been determined by the director of the establishment itself. In addition, the same *ordonnance* had stipulated that pupils recruited to the school should have completed six years of primary education – somewhat remarkable considering how limited education provision in the colony was at that stage. That said, it must be assumed that pupils were to be drawn from the Boma *colonie scolaire* and Henry accepted that this stipulation could not in fact be met for all recruits because rigid adherence to it would severely limit the number of candidates.⁷³² Furthermore, the Governor General went on to say that “for several more years, we should accept those pupils knowing only how to read and write and of whom many will understand French only imperfectly”, a comment that clearly illustrated how modest official expectations of the school system in the colony at that time actually were.⁷³³

⁷³⁰ Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 1, p.358; AA/RA/CB/58/8, (1921), p.58.

⁷³¹ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, letter dated 19/08/1920. Note that this file is labelled as here in the Archives catalogue but that the actual physical file is marked E1/VIII and dates from the C.I.S. era.

⁷³² AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, letter dated 19/08/1920.

⁷³³ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, letter dated 19/08/1920.

Also included as an annexe to Henry's letter was a report by the director of the *Service d'Hygiène* in Brussels, Dr. Rhodain, which ran to eighteen pages in length and foresaw the transfer of the troubled Boma school to Léopoldville (mirroring the transfer of the colonial government there too).⁷³⁴ In this document Rodhain laid out a timetable for the opening of the new schools during 1920 and 1921 in Léopoldville, Coquilhatville, Stanleyville, and Ibembo. The latter school was to be founded specifically to provide auxiliaries destined to join the fight against sleeping sickness in the Uele district.⁷³⁵ The obvious omission here was Katanga province, where, apparently, no plans were yet in place for the establishment of a school. According to Rhodain's proposals the aim of the schools was to be to train auxiliaries to assist doctors in hospitals and dispensaries, and to take over routine jobs, to serve in infirmaries in rural areas, and to aid the campaign against sleeping sickness by training up an itinerant workforce to travel around treating '*les Trypanosés*'.⁷³⁶ The main focus of the education on offer would thus be confined to major diseases, namely sleeping sickness, syphilis and other venereal diseases, pneumonia, malaria, and dysentery, and the training programme was to last for two years, one of which would be devoted to practical experience.⁷³⁷ The new schools for indigenous medical assistants were to be funded initially with money from the '*Fonds Spécials*', a budgetary reserve awarded by the Belgian monarch each year for special projects in the Congo, which would allow 117,000 francs for the task in 1921.⁷³⁸ As well as the five schools eventually to be opened in the Congo – those listed above as well as an additional establishment at Elisabethville – there was also to be another opened at Gitega in what was by then Ruanda-Urundi, a territory then governed by Belgium under League of Nations mandate.⁷³⁹

It was hardly surprising that as the expansion of the AMI schools was being planned in the years 1920 to 1921 close attention was paid to the central problem of recruitment in this stream of education. One result was that colonial officials met with the

⁷³⁴ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, annexe to letter dated 19/08/1920 (p.1). See Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness*, pp.158-160, for more on Rodhain who was director of the Hygiene Service from 1918 to 1924, when he was promoted to Inspector General, a post he held until 1930.

⁷³⁵ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, annexe to letter dated 19/08/1920 (p.1).

⁷³⁶ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, annexe to letter dated 19/08/1920 (p.2).

⁷³⁷ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, annexe to letter dated 19/08/1920 (pp.3-7).

⁷³⁸ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, note from Van Campenhout to Kervyn dated 22/09/1921; and copy of *Arrêté Royal* authorising spending dated 30/1/1921.

⁷³⁹ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, note dated 9/12/1920.

superiors of the religious missions to encourage them to support the new schools and to send pupils to them.⁷⁴⁰ Lists were compiled of the numbers of students each mission could potentially furnish for the AMI schools, and the languages spoken by those pupils.⁷⁴¹ Significantly, in addition to detailing the numbers of potential recruits from Catholic mission-run schools and the 'official' government schools, these lists also included a number of Protestant missions such as the Baptist Missionary Society, the Congo Balobo Mission, and the Garenganze Evangelical Union.⁷⁴² So keen was the government to recruit pupils from the Protestant missions that in 1923 Franck wrote to Henri Anet to query why the Protestants had not sent any pupils from their schools in the Equateur province to the AMI school at Coquilhatville in 1921. Franck insisted that the original official request to do so should be reiterated.⁷⁴³ Clearly, then, at least in respect of education in healthcare the colonial authorities, both in Brussels and in the colony itself, anticipated the inclusion of Protestant-educated Congolese from the outset. It remains more difficult to establish whether this desire merely reflected necessity, and was a response to inadequate student recruitment from Catholic sources, or whether state interest responded to the Protestant missions' proportionately greater contribution to developing healthcare services in the colony.⁷⁴⁴

Beyond the simple issue of recruiting students to AMI courses in large enough numbers – although the targets were in fact initially no more than ten pupils per year in each school – lay more complex matters which would come to be at the heart of problems which developed in this sector. Already in 1921, at which point the government's project was still in its infancy, Catholic missionaries expressed concerns about the nature of the programme and especially about the prospect of students having to move to government-run schools in the large urban centres, where they would come into contact with non-Catholics and people of 'doubtful morality'.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴⁰ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, letter to Franck from Mortier dated 18/10/1920.

⁷⁴¹ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, letter to Franck from Mortier dated 18/10/1920; also note dated 14/12/1920.

⁷⁴² AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, letter to Franck from Mortier dated 18/10/1920.

⁷⁴³ AA/H/4555ter/1477/ file within 1920-1923. Letter dated 13/02/1923.

⁷⁴⁴ Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.46-47. Markowitz identifies the Protestants missionaries as being more active than their Catholic counterparts in providing healthcare in the Congo until at least the mid-1920s.

⁷⁴⁵ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, letter from De Vos the Prefet Apostolique of the Kwango to a priest, dated 4/02/1921.

Officials in the Congo responded to this by offering an undertaking that the government would morally protect the students they recruited, but this issue was one which would not be so easily resolved.⁷⁴⁶

One man would come to be at the centre of the disputes that would arise over the participation of Catholic mission educated students in the government run AMI schools – Monseigneur Roelens, of the White Fathers, who served as *Vicaire Apostolique* (bishop) of the Upper Congo from 1896 until his death in 1947.⁷⁴⁷ During the years 1920-1923, when the establishment and opening of the new provincial AMI schools was underway, correspondence between Roelens and various members of the colonial government and of the Ministry of the Colonies shows that he was the most outspoken critic of government plans. At the heart of his concerns was the issue of moral guidance for the pupils recruited to the schools and it seems that for him, even having pupils recruited from the schools of the White Fathers to the nascent AMI school at Elisabethville placed in the care of the Salesiens, another Catholic mission, was not enough of a guarantee.⁷⁴⁸ He raised questions about the contact pupils would have with other inhabitants of the city, and demanded that the religious and moral instruction of the pupils should be a high priority in the AMI schools.⁷⁴⁹ Franck recognised Roelens' influence when asking the Vice Governor General for the Katanga, Rutten, to mediate between the White Fathers and the Salesiens in the matter in order that the school in Elisabethville might start to operate.⁷⁵⁰ This particular dispute illustrates that schools, in this case the AMI schools, could become the focal point of tensions, not just between the government and missions, or between Catholic and Protestant missions, but between one Catholic mission and another as they vied for continued control over the pupils once they had been recruited. For Roelens, those pupils were the product of years of education in the mission schools whose primary goal had been to convert them to Christianity and it is clear that he feared the diminution of mission influence over them. Eventually, though, Roelens' concerns over placing pupils in the care of the Salesiens would evaporate when faced with the

⁷⁴⁶ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-23, letter to Franck from Mortier dated 18/10/1920.

⁷⁴⁷ For more on Roelens see chapter four.

⁷⁴⁸ AA/H/4555ter/1477/ file within 1920-1923, letter to Governor General from Roelens dated 21/11/1921.

⁷⁴⁹ AA/H/4555ter/1477/ file within 1920-1923, letter to Governor General from Roelens dated 21/11/192

⁷⁵⁰ AA/H/4555ter/1477/ file within 1920-1923, letter from Franck to VGG Rutten dated 22/02/1922.

alternative solution proposed by Dr Rhodain who suggested the foundation of a secular boarding house for pupils operating beyond the supervision of the missions.⁷⁵¹ During 1923 this proposal was extensively debated between the various parties but the Catholic missions united against it and plans for such boarding houses were put on hold.⁷⁵² However, the question of students' accommodation and the level of missionary involvement at the AMI schools would arise again during the 1930s and the disagreement begun between the Catholic missions under Roelens and the Hygiene department under Rhodain would be exacerbated further.

8.3.2: Development during the later 1920s

As has been shown already, the initial stages of the development were complicated by both criticism from Catholic missionaries and, most especially, by the thorny issue of the recruitment of students. This would come to be the dominant theme in official references to the provincial AMI schools during the 1920s, with the cause of the problem most often being cited as the lack of sufficiently well-educated pupils emerging from the colony's schools. Indeed this reasoning was expressed in somewhat formulaic fashion in several Annual Reports on the administration of the colony for the years 1926-1931.⁷⁵³ Of course, the AMI schools established in the provincial capitals did manage to recruit some pupils, and complaints were largely directed at the perceived lack of ability of the students and the lack of choice of recruits. Table 1, below, shows how many pupils were attending each school during the 1920s and the 1930s.

⁷⁵¹ AA/H/4555ter/1477ter/1923-1926, letter from Roelens to Rhodain dated 9/10/1923; Rhodain's note annexed to this.

⁷⁵² See various documents within AA/H/4555ter/1477ter/1923-1926.

⁷⁵³ AA/RA/CB/58/14, p.13 ; AA/RA/CB/58/16, p.16 ; AA/RA/CB/59/1, p.16 ; AA/RA/CB/59/4, p.16 ; AA/RA/CB/59/5, p.24.

Figure 8: Number of pupils studying in the AMI schools:

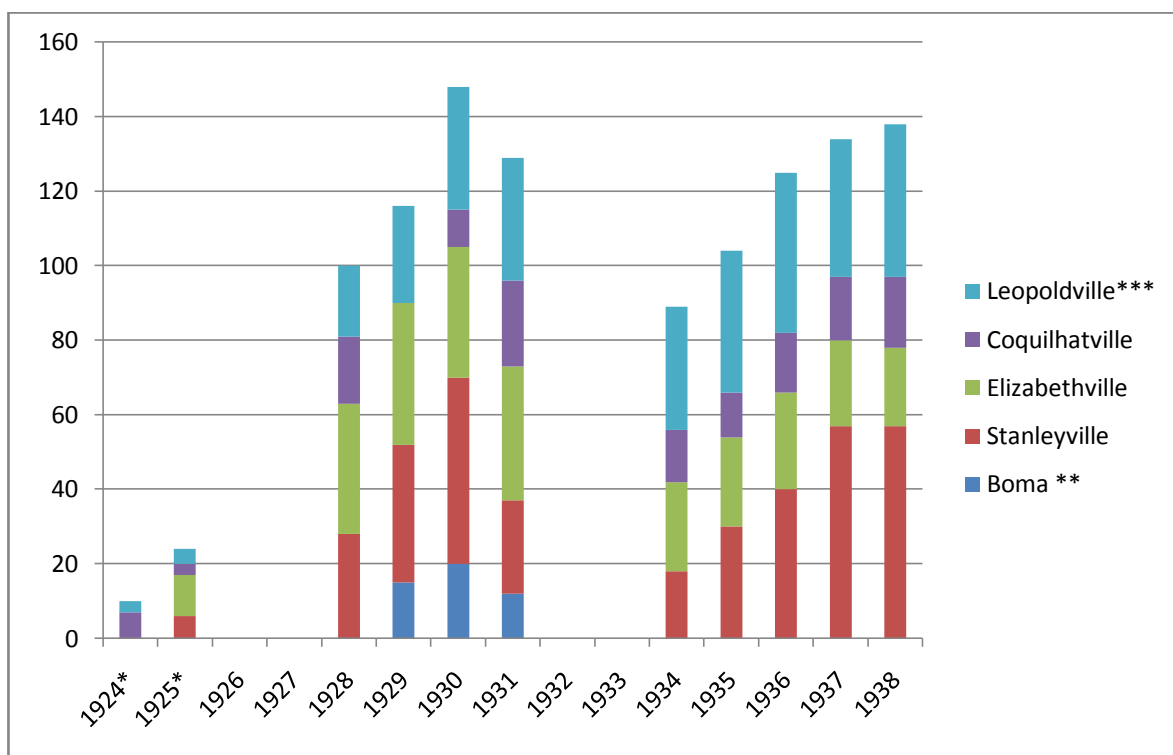


Figure 1 Notes: * Figures for these years refer to pupils receiving diplomas, other years give total enrolment figures; ** Boma school was referred to as an 'école d'infirmiers' throughout its existence;*** Figures for Leopoldville school in 1929 and 1930 combine those enrolled as 'infirmiers' and those enrolled as 'assistants médicaux'; Figures for 1932 and 1933 are not known.

The table is compiled from figures contained within the Annual Reports on the administration of the colony, where these are available. It shows a considerable increase in the numbers of pupils attending training as medical assistants after the 1920 decision to create a school in each of the provincial capitals. Though the creation of a temporary school at Ibembo or Buta was authorised as part of that decision, as outlined above, no attendance figures for it are given and its existence is not mentioned after 1925.⁷⁵⁴ The original Boma school continued to struggle and eventually, in 1931, the decision was taken to close the school and to merge it with that in Leopoldville, a decision which led four existing pupils to give up their studies

⁷⁵⁴ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), pp.26, 160.

rather than move with the school.⁷⁵⁵ There is no information given in these reports as to whether the colonial authorities did actually attempt to target the relatives of notables and particularly of practitioners of indigenous medicine to the schools, but it is possible that such people may have been among those who were enrolled after finishing their prior education, as the government did target sons of chiefs and other notables for recruitment into the schools for clerks in the major cities.⁷⁵⁶ A comment in the Annual Report for 1931 stated that 'current conditions', meaning presumably the developing global economic depression, would allow for those pupils who might have been trained to fill such positions being available for recruitment into the AMI schools.⁷⁵⁷ A further interesting point to be made is that among those who were recruited into the AMI schools were some who had attended the '*petit séminaire*' run by the White Fathers at Lusaka, in Katanga, but who subsequently chose not to pursue, or were not accepted for, the priesthood and so enrolled into the AMI school at Elisabethville.⁷⁵⁸ This is significant as the pupils of the seminary received a more intensive education than those in the wider school system.⁷⁵⁹

8.3.3: Reorganisation and the École Unique des Assistants Médicaux Indigènes at Léopoldville

The continued problems surrounding recruitment, accompanied by a sense that those who were receiving diplomas as medical assistants were not as well qualified or effective as the authorities hoped, brought about a significant restructuring of medical education in the Belgian Congo. Discussions about this reorganisation seem to have begun in 1929, as illustrated by a letter from the then Governor General, Auguste Tilkens, to the Minister for the Colonies, Henri Jaspar, which again recognises the contradiction between the Belgians' desire to improve the medical schools and their

⁷⁵⁵ AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.24.

⁷⁵⁶ See chapter six.

⁷⁵⁷ AA/RA/CB/59/5, p.24.

⁷⁵⁸ AA/RA/CB/58/17, p.132.

⁷⁵⁹ Those who did chose to pursue the priesthood went on to the *grand séminaire* at Baudouinville. See Méthode Gahungu, *Former les prêtres en Afrique: Le rôle des Pères Blancs (1879-1936)*, (Paris :L'Harmattan, 2007), pp.116-136 and pp.245-270, for more on these institutions.

lack of success in doing so.⁷⁶⁰ This letter stated that this situation had led the Chief Doctor in the colony, Van Hoof, to call a meeting at Léopoldville of all the directors of the medical schools, and discussed the ideas arising from this meeting. The most notable suggestion, and the one which would come to dominate the situation in the following years, was that a single school at a superior level should be created in order to train a higher calibre of medical auxiliary.⁷⁶¹ Tilkens disagreed with this idea, arguing that removing the best pupils from the provincial schools, if indeed they could be convinced to leave their regions of origin, would destroy the existing establishments. Instead, the Governor General felt that it should be possible to improve each of the existing schools in turn. He also added that as the colony's wider school system began to improve, there would be 'more and more candidates' for recruitment.⁷⁶²

The school directors themselves acknowledged that it was too soon to create a single superior school at that time but that it was desirable in the longer term.⁷⁶³ In the meantime, they wished to see an extension of the programme in the existing AMI schools from 3 to 5 years, and that those trained as medical auxiliaries should then be required to stay in government service for ten years. Tilkens stated that was excessive and unrealistic, and that two years service would be in line with that expected from apprentices in manual trades. The doctors also argued in favour of creating boarding facilities at the schools, run in accordance with military discipline, so that there would be no further need to rely on the missions in this area.

In his reply to this letter, Paul Tschoffen, who served as Minister for the Colonies in 1929, and from 1932 to 1934, aligned himself with Tilkens against the ten year service proposal but stated that he understood the need for a single superior school.⁷⁶⁴ He suggested that official, Catholic, and Protestant schools could all provide recruits for the proposed new establishment and that pupils could be housed in boarding

⁷⁶⁰ AA/H/4440/698 : Ecoles Infirmiers et d'Assistants médicaux indigènes ; letter dated 25/07/1929 (originally numbered as 139G). Tilkens was Governor-General from 1927-1934; Jaspar (1870-1939) was Minister for the Colonies from 1927-1929, and again from 1930-1931, on both occasions serving simultaneously as Prime Minister.

⁷⁶¹ AA/H/4440/698 : Ecoles Infirmiers et d'Assistants médicaux indigènes ; letter dated 25/07/1929 (originally numbered as 139G).

⁷⁶² AA/H/4440/698 : Ecoles Infirmiers et d'Assistants médicaux indigènes ; letter dated 25/07/1929 (originally numbered as 139G). The wider school system was improving and expanding, especially in the form of subsidised Catholic schools, during the late 1920s after the introduction of the 1925 Project.

⁷⁶³ AA/H/4440/698 : Ecoles Infirmiers et d'Assistants médicaux indigènes ; letter dated 25/07/1929 (originally numbered as 139G) ; document detailing doctors' meeting is annexed to this letter.

⁷⁶⁴ AA/H/4440/700 : Ecole Unique d'Assistants Médicaux à Léopoldville, letter dated 16/12/1929.

accommodation according to their confession. Tschoffen also highlighted an issue which would become increasingly significant in discussions about the new school when he questioned why the colony's doctors seemed determined to reduce to a minimum the contact between the missions and their former pupils, stating that their attitude did not reveal a spirit of collaboration and that it risked alienating the missions. The minister declared 'there is no room for antagonism.'⁷⁶⁵

Under the proposals which Tschoffen favoured, there was to be a new *École Unique des Assistants Médicaux Indigènes* in, what was by then the colonial capital, Léopoldville. The existing AMI schools were to have their status downgraded to that of nurse schools (*écoles infirmiers*) and below these were schools for nurses aides (*écoles des aides-infirmiers*) were to be created. Following Tschoffen's decision, a sum of 31,000 francs was allocated for the construction and equipping of the new school, which opened on 1st April 1936, following an *ordonnance* issued on 12th March that year.⁷⁶⁶ Recruits to the new school were required to have received an education equivalent to that offered by the '*écoles moyennes*' and the training offered would last for six years, of which four were to be theoretical classes at the school itself and two were to consist of practical experience in clinics and laboratories.⁷⁶⁷ The school had five pupils in its first year of operation, twelve in 1937, and fourteen in 1938.⁷⁶⁸

8.3.4: Debate over Boarding Arrangements at the École Unique

Following the opening of the *École Unique* in Léopoldville in 1936, and the restructuring of the medical training system which preceded it, the colonial authorities might have anticipated that debates surrounding medical education would subside. However, this was not the case as, during the late 1930s, the new *École Unique* itself came to be at the centre of a bitter dispute centred on living arrangements for its pupils. Whilst this may seem a minor topic, in fact it provoked disagreements between Protestant and Catholic missionaries, between colonial officials and missionaries of

⁷⁶⁵ AA/H/4440/700 : Ecole Unique d'Assistants Médicaux à Léopoldville, letter dated 16/12/1929.

⁷⁶⁶ AA/H/4440/700: Ecole Unique d'Assistants Médicaux à Léopoldville, letter dated 14/01/1935; same file contains copies of newspaper articles from '*Le Courrier d'Afrique*' detailing the opening. See also AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), p.44.

⁷⁶⁷ AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), p.44.

⁷⁶⁸ AA/RA/CB/59/11 (1936), p.44; AA/RA/CB/59/12 (1937), p.41; AA/RA/CB/60/1, (1938), p.45.

both confessions, and – more unusually – between the education and the medical services within the Ministry of the Colonies.

The unfolding of this episode in the history of the Belgian Congo vividly illustrates how education was used as a means to influence the consciences of individual Congolese, especially when those Congolese – the medical students in this case – would themselves wield influence over others in turn. The fierce disagreements over which party – Catholic, Protestant, or government – should be entrusted with responsibility for the moral guidance of the *École Unique*'s students shows that the boundaries of colonial society cannot be drawn with as simple a categorisation as European/African. This binary demarcation fails to recognise a more complicated situation amongst both African and European populations. In this instance, the question of living arrangements became a site where the 'spheres of influence' of various colonial power systems – administrative, religious, medical – were in confrontation with each other.

The debate in this instance centred on the question of whether students enrolled at the *École Unique* should be lodged according to their religious denomination, or in a government-run boarding house, and in the latter case whether the missions would have any access or involvement. In some respects, this debate echoed that which had attended the opening of the AMI school in Elisabethville in the early 1920s between Mgr Roelens and Dr Rhodain, as discussed above. Again, one of the issues highlighted by this debate over arrangements in Léopoldville is the Catholic missions' animosity towards Protestant involvement in medical education, and, by extension, in any education in the Congo at all.

On the establishment of the *École Unique*, it was intended that boarding would be obligatory during the four years of theoretical study which students would undertake.⁷⁶⁹ However, it is clear that the school opened without any definite arrangements for the students' accommodation having been made. In 1937, the Apostolic Vicar of Léopoldville, Monsignor Six, wrote to the Minister for the Colonies, Rubbens, about his involvement in discussions about this issue.⁷⁷⁰ Six represented his position as having been misrepresented by Van Hoof and insisted that he had not said he was opposed to the admission of Protestant pupils to a Catholic-run boarding

⁷⁶⁹ AA/RA/CB/59/11, (1936), p.44.

⁷⁷⁰ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter dated 6/08/1937.

house, and that it was the government's decision as to whether to open one or two houses, but that he had merely expressed some ideas 'of a national character' in favour of a single establishment.

This had indeed been how Six's position was described by the Governor General Pierre Ryckmans to Rubbens a month previously. In stressing Six's apparent attempts to stymie Protestant involvement in the project (by allowing Protestant pupils but not missionaries access to proposed Catholic-run boarding house), Ryckmans expressed his own favourable attitude to the admission of Protestant pupils to the *École Unique*, stating:

'They are no less than the other natives of the colony, the moral and intellectual evolution of whom merits our attention.'⁷⁷¹

This strongly implies that Ryckmans was in agreement with the Protestants' argument on the situation in the Congo - that their missionaries might indeed be foreigners, but that their indigenous converts were as Congolese as their Catholic compatriots and deserved equal opportunities.⁷⁷² Chapter five of this study has already shown Ryckmans' sympathy with this position in the wider debate over schools subsidies at this time.

Others involved in the voluminous correspondence on this issue which flew between Brussels and Léopoldville during the summer months of 1937 were Van Hoof and Duren of the medical service. Van Hoof favoured a secular, government-run boarding house but this was unacceptable to Six, who would not countenance Catholic pupils lodging in such an establishment.⁷⁷³ With the secular option eliminated due to Catholic opposition, the medical service shifted its support to a system with one boarding house for Catholics and another for Protestants.⁷⁷⁴ Ermens, the Vice Governor General of the colony who took on Ryckmans' duties for part of this period whilst the latter was on leave in Belgium, reported that some in the medical service were unhappy that the Catholics deemed them incapable of moral supervision, whilst others were afraid that they would lose much-needed recruits if the Catholics were not placated and decided

⁷⁷¹ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter dated 22/07/1937.

⁷⁷² See chapter on Missions and Government for more on this Protestant view.

⁷⁷³ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from Ermens to Ryckmans, dated 22/05/1937.

⁷⁷⁴ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from Duren to Ermens, dated 11/08/1937.

to send potential medical auxiliaries to FORMULAC at Kisantu instead of to Léopoldville.⁷⁷⁵ Ermens also stated that questions had been raised as to what would happen in the event of Muslims being recruited to the *École Unique*, though he dismissed this concern out of hand due to the lower rungs of the education system being almost entirely in the hands of Christian missions.⁷⁷⁶ Other documents suggest that Six's objections were motivated by a general disagreement with Protestant involvement in any aspect of the AMI system.⁷⁷⁷ Van Hoof and Duren seem to have resented Catholic insistence on continued involvement in the lives of medical trainees, whilst Ryckmans showed some sympathy with the Protestant position.

The correspondence during this debate shows some discord between the medical service (both in the colony and in Brussels) and the education service itself. A note prepared by the latter stated that such difficulties as had arisen over the *École Unique's* accommodation were the reason that the education service avoided the boarding system wherever possible.⁷⁷⁸ The note further suggested that Mgr Six's views were in fact 'conciliatory', illustrating again the strong Catholic sympathies within the education service. Moreover, reference was also made to a proposal made by the education service in early 1935 for a finishing school for medical auxiliaries in their region of origin. Therefore it seems that the education service had never been supportive of the concept of the *École Unique* anyway. The response of the Ministry's Hygiene Service to this note was blunt and forthright, deeming it to be a 'useless' contribution to the debate and stating that:

'The Second General Direction [*the education department*] still seems convinced [...] that we are facing a total failure. They resign themselves to watching the experiment take place.'⁷⁷⁹

Eventually, after much cyclical argument between the various parties, Paul Tschoffen – returning as Minister – took the decision, despite his own personal preference for a single boarding house, not to have any boarding houses specifically catering for the

⁷⁷⁵ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from Ermens to Ryckmans, dated 22/05/1937.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁷ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from Duren to Ermens, dated 8/09/1937; also, within same file, minutes of meetings between Six and Van Hoof in May 1937, annexed to Six's letter to Ermens of 6/08/1937.

⁷⁷⁸ AA/H/4440/702/6, note dated 13/09/1937.

⁷⁷⁹ AA/H/4440/702/6, Hygiene service note, dated 16/09/1937.

students of the *École Unique*, but rather to admit to the school only those who were lodging in a home depending on either a Protestant or a Catholic mission.⁷⁸⁰ There was to be no direct system of subsidies to the missions though students were to receive money with which they would have to reimburse the mission for their accommodation expenses.

However, despite this decision by Tschoffen, later reaffirmed by his successor Rubbens, not to build any dedicated boarding facilities for the *École Unique*, the matter was not closed. In Brussels, it is significant that there seems to have been dissent from the Liberal Senator Robert Godding, whose support for the Protestants' point of view – perhaps better described as his anti-clericalism - would result in great changes to the education system in the Congo when he attained the office of Minister of the Colonies in the post-Second World War period.⁷⁸¹ His concerns over the possible exclusion of Protestants in this instance were firmly rebuked by the Minister of the Colonies, Albert de Vleeschauwer, who argued that a small country such as Belgium must stifle foreign influence in its colony.⁷⁸²

Whilst the Ministry of Colonies in Brussels had reached its decision, there were those in the colony who remained dissatisfied. Ryckmans wrote to de Vleeschauwer in April 1939 stating that Mgr Six was unwilling to pay for the construction of the necessary accommodation at Catholic mission stations, and that he and Mgr Dellepiane (Apostolic Delegate to the Belgian Congo) remained in favour of a single 'national' boarding house.⁷⁸³ The debate reopened – along much the same lines as before – and the options of a single or two separate boarding houses were raised again.⁷⁸⁴ This time, however, the debate over the accommodation of students at the *Ecole Unique* took on an international dimension, as shown by a letter from Wakelin Coxhill (Secretary General of the *Conseil Protestant du Congo*) in which he argued that the Protestant missionaries wanted a single, non-denominational boarding house with complete religious freedom and with no administrative involvement by Catholic missionaries.⁷⁸⁵ Coxhill also argued that the Belgian government was obligated under

⁷⁸⁰ AA/H/4440/702/6, document dated 6/10/1937.

⁷⁸¹ See the conclusion for further reference to Godding.

⁷⁸² AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from de Vleeschauwer to Godding, dated 10/10/1938.

⁷⁸³ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from Ryckmans to de Vleeschauwer, dated 25/04/1939.

⁷⁸⁴ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter to Duren, dated 6/05/1939.

⁷⁸⁵ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from Wakelin Coxhill, dated 5/05/1939.

the terms of international treaties, such as the Berlin Act 1885 and the 1919 St Germain-en-Laye Convention, to allow religious freedom (for Christian groups) and that this should include freedom for the medical students to live according to their chosen confession. Coxhill copied his letter to the United States and the British consuls, and to the Secretary General of the International Mission Council.

At this stage, the situation was deadlocked: the Protestants would not accept a Catholic-directed boarding house, whilst the Catholics remained strongly in favour of a single 'national' establishment – which clearly signified a considerable Catholic influence if not outright Catholic direction.⁷⁸⁶ In 1940, de Vleeschauwer – himself a member of the Catholic Party - decided the solution was to establish a boarding house for single students in the proximity of the school, run with the assistance of an order of Catholic teaching brothers, to aid tuition and moral guidance, paid for by the government.⁷⁸⁷ Protestants could send their students to this boarding house or, if they objected, they could choose to accommodate them elsewhere, though in such cases their expenses would not be paid by the government.

Once more, despite this apparent decision, no action was taken in Leopoldville to put this scheme into practise, at least until 1946.⁷⁸⁸ This further delay may have been due to further prevarication by the various interested parties in the colony, but of course it may also have been a result of the war shifting both funds and attention elsewhere. As shown earlier, the *École Unique* was functioning at Léopoldville despite the fact that the accommodation arrangements for its pupils were undecided – although it is not recorded, it must be assumed that they were lodging with their missions in the meantime. The significance of the tortuous debate over those living arrangements is not therefore to be found in its impact on the operation of the school, but rather in the effort which each party put in to trying to shape the arrangements to suit their own preference. The energy expended by the medical service in the colony, the Catholic and the Protestant missionaries, to either gain or to retain influence over the moral and intellectual development of the students of the school clearly illustrates that it was anticipated that as medical auxiliaries, these Congolese students would be able to influence the communities with which they came into contact. The trainee medical

⁷⁸⁶ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from Duren to Minister, dated 27/05/1939.

⁷⁸⁷ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from de Vleeschauwer to Ryckmans, dated 6/01/1940.

⁷⁸⁸ AA/H/4440/702/6, letter from Governor General to Minister, dated 7/01/1946.

auxiliaries were seen by their European teachers (whether religious or medical) as agents through whom they could ensure the further spread of their viewpoint, and therefore their hegemony. In introducing western medicine, medical practices, and beliefs on disease and potentially religion, these Congolese auxiliaries were intended to be the African faces of European power. Maryinez Lyons has stated that ‘the cultivation of character in Congolese was a major theme of Belgian colonial rhetoric’ and that the emphasis on moral guidance in the training of medical auxiliaries formed part of this.⁷⁸⁹ However, the debates discussed here show that each faction wished to ensure that it was their own particular variant of colonialism which would be assimilated by the medical assistants, to be carried with them once they embarked upon their careers in the villages, and that there was therefore no uniform Belgian policy in this case.

Crystallized within these discussions are many of the attitudes and relationships which shaped the education system, and the wider colonial project, in the Congo during this period. Importantly, whilst in other areas the symbiotic relationship between the education service and the Catholic missions was generally typified by co-operation, in this instance the involvement of members of the colonial medical service, such as Van Hoof and Duren, shows that not all colonial officials were determinedly pro-Catholic. Furthermore, the divergence of views between the medical service and their counterparts in the education service, the apparent sympathy of Governor General Ryckmans towards the position of Congolese Protestants, and the intervention of Senator Godding, all mark this debate as being a part of the beginning of the end of the near absolute fidelity of the Belgian Ministry of Colonies to, and also its dependence on, the Catholic missions in the sphere of education.

It is not surprising that these issues surfaced around the topic of health education. This was an area in which the Protestants – especially under Chesterman at Yakusu – had always been interested, and perhaps even more advanced, than their Catholic counterparts. It was also an area of colonial development in which the Belgians had, contrary to their usual policies, accepted and encouraged Protestant involvement from the outset. This predictably provoked objections and a defensive response from the Catholics, as typified by Six’s objections. The debate surrounding the accommodation

⁷⁸⁹ Maryinez Lyons, ‘The Power to Heal’, p.213.

arrangements for the *Ecole Unique* was, however, not the only instance during the 1930s when the role of the Protestant missionaries in medical education in the Congo would provoke controversy.

8.3.5: Midwifery Training

Alongside schools for male nurses, medical assistants, and sanitation guards, there were also schools for female indigenous midwives and birth assistants. The development and expansion of these schools mirrored closely that of the main AMI schools during the 1920s and 1930s, and similar problems – particularly that of recruitment – arose.

The first midwifery training schools funded by the colonial government were established in 1924 in Baudouinville, Boma, and Léopoldville, and placed under the direction of European nuns who also practised midwifery.⁷⁹⁰ A standardized programme was formulated by the medical service in order to ensure that the same training was given in all locations.⁷⁹¹ There were to be two grades trained in these schools: birth assistants (*visiteuses*) and midwives (*sage-femmes* or *aides-accoucheuses*).⁷⁹² Further schools were opened in Stanleyville in 1925, and in Elisabethville in 1935, along with others training assistant midwives in Fataki, Buta, Niangara, and Wamba, in what was by then Stanleyville Province. These latter schools operated during the late 1930s but did not fulfil all the government standards.⁷⁹³ The table below shows the numbers of women training as midwives in the main schools during the interwar years.

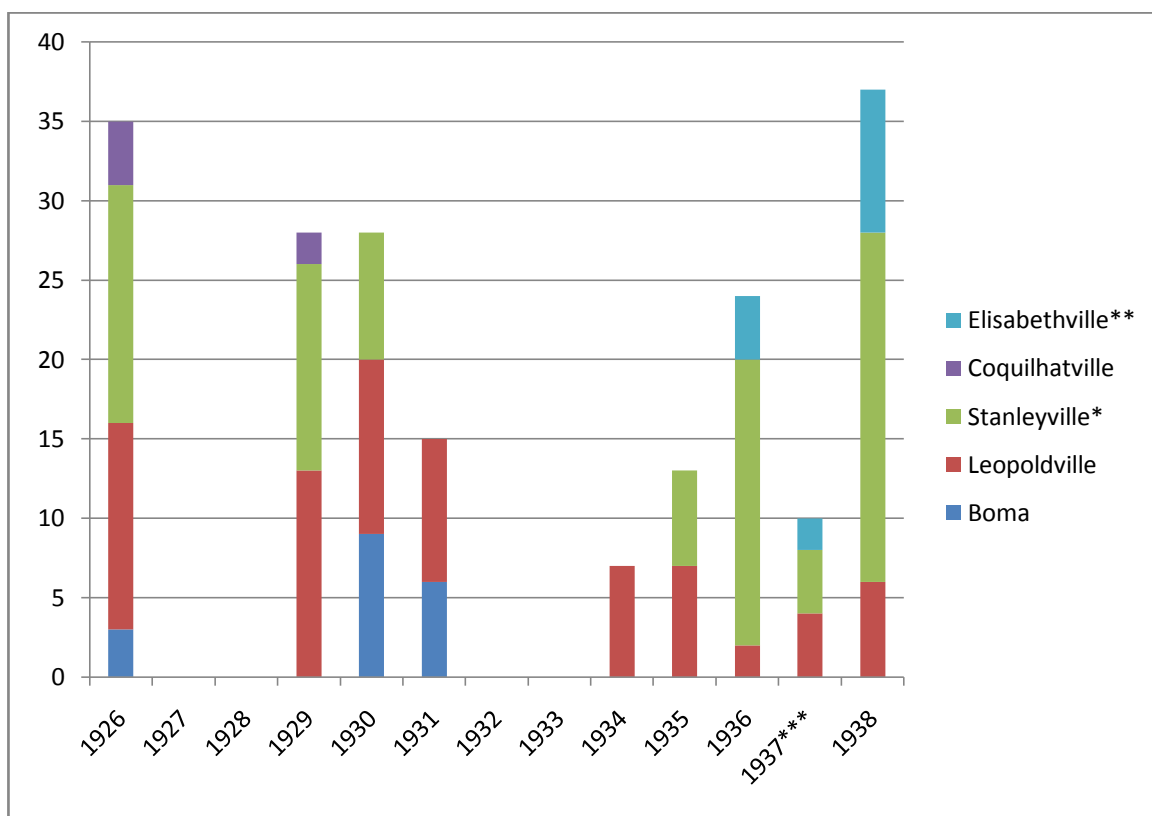
⁷⁹⁰ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), pp.26-7.

⁷⁹¹ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.27.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*

⁷⁹³ AA/RA/CB/59/10, (1935), p.44.

Figure 9: Women training as midwives or midwifery assistants.



* Stanleyville school was closed during 1933 and 1934 due to lack of students.

** Elisabethville school opened April 1935.

*** 1937 figures are for those achieving their diplomas, all others are for enrolled pupils.

Alongside the domestic-agricultural schools, midwifery training represented the highest rung of the colonial education system for women but differed in that the medical schools aimed specifically to recruit women into paid employment, and into the service of the state, rather than educating them to fill a particular function in society through marriage. Though initially the students recruited were deemed to be eager to learn, problems soon arose with regards to recruitment for the midwifery schools.⁷⁹⁴ Recruiting students for this brand of medical training was repeatedly reported to be 'even more difficult' than finding students for the other AMI schools.⁷⁹⁵ Whilst recruitment had been open to both married and single women, who would be

⁷⁹⁴ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.27.

⁷⁹⁵ AA/RA/CB/59/1, (1929), p.16; AA/RA/CB/59/4, (1930), p.16; AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.24.

placed in the care of European nuns, the Annual Report on the administration of the colony for 1931 stated that only married women actually entered the schools.⁷⁹⁶ This was cited as a source of difficulties as the women, residents of the *cités indigènes*, could have to abandon their studies if their husbands had to move, and during the economic depression of the early 1930s instability was a problem for urban Congolese populations as they moved to find work or returned to rural communities with stronger support networks.⁷⁹⁷ The midwifery school in Stanleyville was forced to close during 1933 and 1934 due to a lack of students.⁷⁹⁸

There also seems to have been some early confusion about the role which indigenous midwives would be expected to fill upon qualifying. Some of them were sent to work in hospitals serving the European populations of the major urban centres, whilst others were assigned to rural areas.⁷⁹⁹ Their presence in the villages and in the urban hospitals for Africans was intended to draw women towards Western medicine and to increase the indigenous populations' confidence in its methods, again weakening ties to traditional beliefs.⁸⁰⁰ However the recruitment of women from the urbanized areas surrounding the schools apparently caused difficulties here too, as they either did not want to leave for a more rural situation, or they could not do so because of their husbands' commitments.⁸⁰¹

As the table above shows, the numbers entering midwifery training each year in the Congo were small, never reaching above forty during the interwar period.⁸⁰² The significance of the programme though is not just its position as the highest level of education for women, but also that it formed part of what Maryinez Lyons has referred to as the 'horizontal expansion' of medical services in the Congo in the period after 1930, as the areas in which the state took an interest widened.⁸⁰³ The training of Congolese midwives constituted part of Belgian pro-natalist policies motivated by long-

⁷⁹⁶ AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.24.

⁷⁹⁷ AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.24; for example of discussions on the impact of the economic depression on urban Congolese populations see Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville*, pp.123-127.

⁷⁹⁸ AA/RA/CB/59/9, p.28.

⁷⁹⁹ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.13.

⁸⁰⁰ AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.12.

⁸⁰¹ AA/RA/CB/59/5, (1931), p.24.

⁸⁰² See also Kita, 'L'Éducation Féminine au Congo Belge', p.501.

⁸⁰³ Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease*, p.226.

standing concern over a perceived low birth rate in the colony.⁸⁰⁴ In the early 1920s in particular, a low birth rate, along with high rates of infant mortality, was stressed as being a major hurdle to the development of the colony as the economic exploitation of the Congo would require 'many hands'.⁸⁰⁵ These concerns over population size echoed those which had taken hold in Belgium itself, and in France and Britain in the early twentieth century, and the expansion of midwifery training was accompanied by other initiatives aimed at medicalizing childbirth and infant care which were also transposed from Europe into the colonial sphere, such as infant health programmes and the discouragement of breast feeding.⁸⁰⁶

The impact of this concerted effort to intervene in childbirth and childrearing - Nancy Rose Hunt has written that the Belgians 'intervened more substantially and on a wider scale' in these issues than other colonial regimes in sub-Saharan Africa – is not, though, within the scope of this study.⁸⁰⁷ It must be assumed, in fact, that the impact of those midwives trained in the government-run schools detailed here was not great, as the numbers were so small, but the significance of their being trained at all remains. The midwifery schools opened up a new level of education to Congolese women and saw them also being expected to assimilate European medical ideas so that they might transmit them to a wider audience.

8.3.6: Colonial Comparisons

An additional element of the development of Belgian policy worthy of brief examination was the way in which the Ministry of Colonies in Brussels sought information and advice from other colonial powers on the administration of healthcare and medical education in their colonies. As soon as impetus was given to the idea of expanding the system of medical training in the Congo, the Ministry of Colonies began to seek out examples of the types of systems operating in other empires. Information was gathered on the training of indigenous healthcare workers in the Dutch East

⁸⁰⁴ Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon*, pp.241-246.

⁸⁰⁵ AA/RA/CB/58/9, (1922), p.5.

⁸⁰⁶ Nancy Rose Hunt, 'Le bébé en brousse', pp.402,405; Alison Bashford, 'Medicine, Gender, and Empire', in Philippa Levine, (ed.), *Gender and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.112-133 (pp.124-6).

⁸⁰⁷ Nancy Rose Hunt, 'Le bébé en brousse', p.402.

Indies, where such programmes dated back to 1851, French West Africa, and Madagascar.⁸⁰⁸ These comparisons stressed the need to emphasise the practical elements whilst giving instruction and to avoid an education that was too '*livresque*' or 'bookish'.⁸⁰⁹ Belgian documents from the early 1920s emphasize the belief that it would be impossible to replicate for many years to come the more advanced elements of programmes such as that of the Dutch East Indies where indigenous doctors were being trained.⁸¹⁰ The relative immaturity of the educational infrastructure in the Congo meant that Belgian aims were more limited, but Maryinez Lyons has argued that there was also opposition to the idea of opening up access to European medical knowledge to Africans, both because of the power which such knowledge was believed to convey, and because Belgian doctors were keen to protect their own hard-won professional status.⁸¹¹

Further requests for information were made to other colonies during the 1930s, with the Ministry of Colonies receiving information of the operation of British medical schools in Lagos and Khartoum, and further pamphlets detailing medical education in French West Africa, in preparation for the opening of the *École Unique* in Léopoldville.⁸¹² These requests for information from other administrations were certainly not unique to the field of medical education, but they are indicative of how the Belgian administration sought inspiration from others who they perhaps considered more experienced in such areas than themselves, and they show how colonial policies and initiatives were subject to wider influences than simply those originating in Brussels or the Congo itself.

Interestingly, whilst it seems that the Belgian Ministry of Colonies felt that it lagged behind others at the start of the interwar period, and that their efforts to introduce and expand medical education in the Congo were beset by difficulties – especially those regarding recruitment – Lyons writes that by decolonisation in 1960, the Belgians 'were confident that their medical service was outstanding in all of colonial

⁸⁰⁸ AA/H/4440/697, document dated 26/10/1920; AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-1923, document dated 8/11/1920.

⁸⁰⁹ AA/H/4440/697, document dated 26/10/1920.

⁸¹⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹¹ Maryinez Lyons, 'The Power to Heal', pp.210-213.

⁸¹² AA/H/4440/700: Ecole Unique d'Assistant Medicaux a Leopoldville: letter from Esmond Ovey at British Embassy in Brussels dated 10/01/1935; French pamphlets also contained within this file; see also H/4440/704 for documents relating to medicals schools in Kenya and Uganda, 1928-1931.

Africa.⁸¹³ Whilst the medical service generally was much more than just the programme for the education of indigenous auxiliaries, it is not clear how much of a success this programme can have been deemed to be during the period up to the Second World War. The numbers passing through the various schools each year were small, but by 1947 there were 2,549 indigenous auxiliaries in government service, apparently increased from just 247 in 1937.⁸¹⁴ This figure most likely refers not only to nurses and medical assistants but also to sanitation guards and others, but nonetheless, it suggests that, despite the problems and disputes detailed here, the Belgians had managed to establish a cadre of indigenous medical auxiliaries to promote Western medicine across the colony. It therefore seems as though Lyons is correct in her assertion that, although Belgian reluctance to provide higher education for Africans meant that there were no trained Congolese doctors by independence, their focus on the lower levels of medical education had resulted in 'an extensive primary health care infrastructure'.⁸¹⁵

8.3.7: Medical Auxiliaries as Agents of Hegemony?

Whilst it is apparent that despite problems of recruitment, the Belgian colonial authorities did manage to train indigenous medical assistants, nurses, and midwives, it is far more difficult to establish how those who were recruited into these roles responded to their medical training and whether in fact such auxiliaries did indeed act as the agents of colonial power that they were intended to be. It has already been seen that in the early 1920s, Belgian opinion on the abilities of colonized subjects was that they were incapable of assimilating theoretical concepts and that their training would therefore have to be of a practical basis.⁸¹⁶ However, the foundation of the *École Unique* in Léopoldville whose programme had a more strongly theoretical basis suggests that this view had been modified somewhat by the mid-1930s. Medical education, with its emphasis on Western practices and the stress placed on the moral

⁸¹³ Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness*, p.223.

⁸¹⁴ *Plan Décennal, 1949: Chapitre 5, Santé*, published by the Ministry of Colonies (<http://www.urome.be/fr2/ouvrage/pdsante.pdf>, (retrieved 05/02/2009); AA/RA/CB/59/12, (1925), p.29.

⁸¹⁵ Maryinez Lyons, 'The Power to Heal', p.223.

⁸¹⁶ AA/H/4555ter/1477/1920-3, note by Rhodain, annexed to letter from Lippens to Franck dated 19/08/1920. This view echoes racial stereotypes explored in other chapters in this thesis.

guidance of the pupils, was clearly aimed at producing Congolese who has assimilated European values and become *évolués*, and at the *École Unique* it was stressed that there would be a focus on ‘developing the general culture of the candidates’ and that a strict process of selection would ensure that those not deemed to be ‘elite subjects’ were eliminated.⁸¹⁷ This somewhat contradicts Belgian reluctance to pursue a general policy of assimilation, but it appears that when Africans were required to assimilate European values, practices, or modes of behaviour in order to fulfil a specific function – as was also the case for those training as administrative clerks - then such reluctance could be overcome.⁸¹⁸

A lack of sources makes it very difficult to assess whether the indigenous auxiliaries actually assimilated the values which the Belgian authorities hoped that they would. Professor Fernand Malangreau, who taught at FORMULAC for ten years, wrote in 1934 in a note criticising the colonial government’s efforts to train medical assistants, that the pupils in the government’s schools were ‘morally no better than any other native’, though his strong preference for the system established at his own school may have motivated such a statement.⁸¹⁹ Lyons, however, believes that ‘some Africans successfully internalized the values of their rulers’, believing medicine to be a noble occupation, whilst others were attracted to auxiliary roles through a desire for status.⁸²⁰ Both she and Nancy Rose Hunt have also illustrated that the ways in which Congolese auxiliaries operated once in employment were often far more complicated than merely adopting completely European views and methods, and that rather it was common for European medical knowledge to be combined with African beliefs in practice.⁸²¹ This mixing of ideas and cultures suggests a far more complicated situation evolved than that which the Belgians had intended to create, as indigenous medical auxiliaries did not always work to replace traditional beliefs with European ones, as it had been hoped they would. Instead, it suggests that they perhaps identified themselves as being able to move between the two cultures to which they were exposed.

⁸¹⁷ AA/RA/CB/59/12, (1937), p.41.

⁸¹⁸ See chapter on state administrative structures and education for more on the training of clerks, and see part one of this thesis for more on Belgian attitude towards assimilation generally.

⁸¹⁹ AA/H/4440/699, note by Malangreau. The note itself is not dated, but information within it and responses to it in the same file prove that it must date from 1934.

⁸²⁰ Maryinez Lyons, ‘The Power to Heal’, p.218.

⁸²¹ Maryinez Lyons, ‘The Power to Heal’, p.220; Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon*, pp.159-172.

8.4: Funding of Independent Medical Education

Running parallel to the colonial government's own attempts to train African medical auxiliaries, were similar efforts organised by Protestant missionaries and by the Catholic-backed *Fondation Médicale de l'Université de Louvain au Congo* (known as FORMULAC) which established a medical school at Kisantu in 1927.⁸²² As the government-run schools struggled to attract recruits, and therefore to train the desired number of indigenous medical auxiliaries, these other sources of medical auxiliaries drew the attention of the colonial authorities. In common with other areas of education provision in the colony, the involvement of Protestant missionaries in, or even the recruitment of students educated by them, for the official AMI schools stirred controversy. This was equally true of the idea that the Belgian colonial authorities should reimburse the Protestant missionaries for their efforts in their own medical schools.

Healthcare and medicine provision was another area of colonial life where Christian mission involvement was widespread, alongside evangelism and education. It has already been seen that the training of indigenous medical auxiliaries was one area where the colonial government encouraged Protestant involvement from the outset despite opposition from prominent figures such as Mgrs Roelens and Six. However, this encouragement was aimed at recruiting Protestant-educated Congolese into the government-run system of AMI schools. The operation of separate mission-run establishments – especially Protestant ones – was an altogether different matter and proved to be the source of considerable vexation for the Belgian authorities.

Protestant missions in the Congo were particularly active in the sphere of public health from the early years of their activity there.⁸²³ In terms of the training of Congolese medical auxiliaries – as opposed to providing healthcare through European staff and/or largely untrained African assistants – there were some Protestant missions whose work was particularly important. These were the American Foreign Baptist Mission Society (A.F.B.M.S.) at their Sona-Bata station and the Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.) at Yakusu. Yakusu in particular, under the direction of Dr Clement

⁸²² Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, p.505.

⁸²³ See for example Louis Franck, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 1, pp.315-316; Brian Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, pp.356-7; also Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp.46-47.

Chesterman, would come to rival FORMULAC's achievements in this field.⁸²⁴ Yakusu, which had 19 students in its AMI section in 1925, was the subject the following year of favourable, almost envious, references by the colonial government on the subject of its medical infrastructure, staffing levels, and establishments.⁸²⁵ The Yakusu school's development continued and, on the eve of the reorganisation of the government's own AMI schools, it was referred to in 1934 as an '*école d'infirmier*'. In the annual reports on the administration and development of the colony, both Yakusu and FORMULAC at Kisantu were referred to throughout the 1930s – often together – in a way which seems almost to incorporate their achievements into the government's own narrative of progress in the field of hygiene/healthcare. Publicly therefore, it seemed of little importance to the Belgian authorities that Yakusu was a Protestant establishment. However, privately the colonial authorities were engaged in fierce debate with the B.M.S. about the status of the Yakusu school and, most importantly, about its funding.

This debate centred, as did others between Belgian colonial policy-makers and Protestant missionaries, on issues of official recognition and concomitant access to subsidies, but – as with so much in the colonial era – the issues ran deeper than this. For the Protestants, their perception of themselves as victims of an alliance between the Belgian Ministry of Colonies and the Vatican had become an important part of their group identity in the Congo. Complaints about their status had been a regular feature throughout the 1920s but the Protestant campaign for equality with their Catholic counterparts became more insistent and organised during the 1930s, as discussed in chapter five. The debate surrounding the funding of Protestant-run medical schools formed a small but significant part of that campaign.

For the Protestant missionary movement, the Belgian government's refusal to officially recognise and subsidise Protestant schools in the same manner as it did Catholic establishments amounted to a failure to meet obligations to guarantee religious freedom set out in international treaties, particularly the Berlin Act of 1885. From the point of view of the Ministry of Colonies, these treaties were interpreted to mean that

⁸²⁴ Chesterman arrived at Yakusu in 1920 as the station's first resident doctor, and founded a hospital there. See Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society*, p.357, and Nancy Rose Hunt, *Colonial Lexicon*, pp.94-95.

⁸²⁵ AA/RA/CB/58/12, (1925), p.161 ; AA/RA/CB/58/14, (1926), p.88.

they had to allow the Protestants to operate in the colony without hindrance, not that they were obliged to provide support to them, financially or otherwise. Of course, in the terminology employed by the Belgian colonial authorities, the distinction in their policies was drawn between foreign and national missions, not between Protestants and Catholics, though in reality this amounted to much the same thing.

For the Protestants, acquiring funding and recognition for their work was a necessary step as they battled to extend their influence and to spread their evangelical message, whether through education or healthcare. Official recognition (which was signified by the term *agr  * meaning approved) would mean that students who were awarded diplomas by their schools were deemed to have reached the standards required by the government and would therefore make such an education more desirable to Congolese students as they would improve their employability. The *  cole d'infirmiers* at Yakusu was awarded '*agr  *' status in 1932 but it did not receive any funding at this stage.⁸²⁶ However, it is evident that Dr Chesterman at Yakusu was aware that the FORMULAC school was being paid 10,000 francs for each nurse trained at Kisantu, whether or not they went to work for the state or were employed by the foundation itself.⁸²⁷ FORMULAC, founded by professors Fernand Malangreau and L  on Dupriez of the Catholic University of Louvain, was backed by Catholic missionaries and had attracted positive attention from the outset for its hospital and medical school from the colonial government.⁸²⁸ In 1937, with the original school deemed to be an *  cole d'infirmiers*, FORMULAC founded its own *  cole d'assistants m  dicaux indig  nes* to educate auxiliaries to the same level as the *Ecole Unique* at L  opoldville.⁸²⁹

Chesterman, of course, argued that the B.M.S. should receive the same funding for the nurses they trained, as did Dr King on behalf of the A.F.B.M.S. at Sona-Bata, and Reverend Wakelin Coxhill on behalf of Protestant missions in general.⁸³⁰ Van Hoof, who - as has been shown above - vigorously supported the idea of recruiting for the

⁸²⁶ AA/H/4440/698, letter from Chesterman to Administrator General dated 17/12/1937.

⁸²⁷ AA/H/4440/698, note from Van Hoof to Duren, dated 7/11/1936, attached to a letter from Min Rubbens to GG Ryckmans dated 8/11/1937.

⁸²⁸ AA/RA/CB/58/17, (1928), p.18; see also Isidore Ndaywel    Nziem, *Histoire G  n  rale du Congo*, p.505.

⁸²⁹ AA/RA/CB/59/12, (1925), p.41.

⁸³⁰ AA/H/4440/698, note from Van Hoof to Duren, dated 7/11/1936, attached to a letter from Min Rubbens to GG Ryckmans dated 8/11/1937; AA/H4440/703/7, letter from Ryckmans to Rubbens dated 05/1936; letter from Ryckmans to Rubbens dated 13/05/1936; letter from Ryckmans to Rubbens dated 28/02/1936.

government's own AMI programme from Protestant schools, and who was therefore by no means an entrenched supporter of the Catholic missions, feared problems if the Protestants won payments, although it not clear whether he was against the idea or simply wished to avoid confrontation with the Catholics over the issue.⁸³¹ Ryckmans saw such payments to Protestants as being a purchase fee (*rachat*) for the trained nurse rather than as a subsidy for the training.⁸³² He argued that such a system had been used with private enterprises and that the move was justified by the shortage of medical auxiliaries.⁸³³

However, despite the willingness of the head of the colonial government to entertain the idea of paying the Protestants for their efforts in this field, the Minister for the Colonies, then Rubbens, felt that this would be 'a derogation of the policy of unilateral support for the national missions' and also stated that there were few Protestant missions which could operate a medical school conforming to the terms laid out by the state.⁸³⁴ This latter point was somewhat disingenuous as the only other establishment which was able to do so was FORMULAC at Kisantu, but a policy had been determined with regards to their efforts. The Minister's first point about the potential damage to the longstanding policy of exclusively funding 'national' education provision is far more significant.

Van Hoof, despite his misgivings, recognised that the state might need to employ Protestant trained nurses in order to counter shortages, and that this would engender meeting the Protestants demands for compensation.⁸³⁵ He argued that there should be no advance payments but that Protestants should be asked to meet a quota and paid for this predefined number of nurses once they were employed by the state. He also suggested limiting the number of Protestant medical schools achieving '*agr  e*' status: Yakusu and Sona-Bata already met that standard, Rethy and Bolobo, and possibly Bibenge had the potential to do so in future. In November 1937, therefore,

⁸³¹ AA/H/4440/697, note from Van Hoof to Duren, dated 7/11/1936, attached to a letter from VGG Ermens to GG Ryckmans dated 8/11/1937.

⁸³² *Ibid.*

⁸³³ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.* See also, AA/H4440/703/7 letters from Rubbens (or representatives such as P. Charles the Administrator General of the Colonies, within Minister's office) dated 27/01/1936; 21/2/1936; 6/4/1936; 7/05/1936.

⁸³⁵ AA/H/4440/697, note from Van Hoof to Duren, dated 7/11/1936, attached to a letter from VGG Ermens to GG Ryckmans dated 8/11/1937.

Paul Ermens wrote as acting Governor General to Rubbens to say that a decision had been taken to pay Yakusu 1000 francs per year per nurse employed by the state. He stated that other missions were not yet in a position to claim the same reimbursement.⁸³⁶ The following month, the colony's medical service wrote to Chesterman detailing this arrangement and making clear that it was to be considered a purchase and not a subsidy.⁸³⁷

Nancy Rose Hunt has described how co-operation between the B.M.S. at Yakusu and the colonial state increased during the interwar years, as did the 'capacity for Yakusu's doctors to act as the state' so the dispute examined here constitutes an interesting example of Chesterman fighting against the representatives of the colonial state in order to win for himself and his colleagues the right to act for the state.⁸³⁸ The relationship that emerged between the colonial state and the Protestant missionaries in the Congo was, therefore, a far more complicated one than is often been allowed for as the two parties were certainly not always in opposition to each other, at times co-operating, with each at times needing the other in order to operate as they desired.

The emphasis on terminology, and the stressing of the distinction between 'subsidy' and 'purchase fee', may at first seem to be merely semantic, but it was hugely important to the colonial government not to undermine the Ministry of the Colonies' policy of exclusively subsidizing 'national' missions. Much of the dialogue referred to above between Ryckmans in the colony and Rubbens in Brussels centred on the Ministry's determination to uphold and protect this policy. However, the funding for nurses trained by Protestants did represent a crack in the previously impenetrable facade of this policy. The motivation behind the decision was clearly pragmatic – the colonial government's own AMI schools were beset by recruitment problems and could not train enough medical auxiliaries themselves. The implications though were much wider – official recognition that Protestant education was of the same standard as that provided by Catholics and by the government itself; the willingness of the state to employ those previously deemed tainted by foreign influence; and the added impetus given to the Protestant campaign for parity in other areas, especially in the wider education system.

⁸³⁶ AA/H/4440/697, letter from Ermens dated 8/11/1937.

⁸³⁷ AA/H/4440/697, letter dated 15/12/1937.

⁸³⁸ Nancy Rose Hunt, *Colonial Lexicon*, p.94.

8.5: Conclusion

This chapter has considered several disparate elements of the development of medical education in the Belgian Congo, the significance of which resides in the potential of each stream of this education to become a means through which Europeans – whether state functionaries or missionaries – could extend their power over indigenous populations. The medical auxiliaries being trained in the schools discussed above were intended to be conduits through which European ideas and medical practices would be spread into local communities, and through whom conformity to European standards and norms would be encouraged and sometimes even enforced. The potential power and influence with which medical auxiliaries were felt to be imbued gave rise to the fierce debates which arose in the Congo over the moral guidance that such auxiliaries would receive whilst undergoing their training. As has been shown above, the development of medical education during the interwar period was punctuated by bitter disputes between various parties – missionaries of both confessions, and the medical and education services of the colonial government and the Ministry of Colonies – about who should receive this training, where it should be given, who should pay for it, and who should oversee the lives of the students during this training. These debates clearly centred on the issue of which variant of colonialism the students should be encouraged to carry with them during their future careers in the village dispensaries, as each faction aimed to extend its own influence as far as possible.

However, it is also clear that the success of these attempts, by government or missionaries, to disseminate their ideas through indigenous proxies was limited, because Congolese medical auxiliaries did not always respond as desired. Rather, as has been suggested in other sections of this thesis, colonial educators found that they were unable to control or direct the manner in which their pupils reacted to the training that they received. Attempts to enhance colonial power through indigenous intermediaries resulted instead in new and old ideas being combined in various ways, rather than in the replacement of one by the other. This illustrates again that no boundary can be drawn neatly between African and European, and that instead a far more complex series of social and cultural categories must be considered.

Furthermore, the debates over the involvement of Protestant missionaries in the training of indigenous medical auxiliaries, both through their own schools such as Yakusu, and through the recruitment of Protestant-educated pupils into the government-run medical schools, contributed to the wider dispute between the Belgian authorities, the Catholic missionaries and the Protestants about the status of the latter within the colony. This dispute was a central feature of the development of the wider education system, as Belgian colonialism defined itself in part by its close ties with the Catholic missions. However, the involvement of Protestant missions in medical education, and the emergence within the disputes detailed here of discord between the education and medical services within the Ministry of Colonies, clearly show that by the late 1930s the situation was not so clear-cut as has been assumed. As well as illustrating that there was no singular Belgian colonialism, not even within the Ministry itself, the roots of the post-war decision to extend education subsidies to Protestant missions can be seen within these disputes. Overall, medical education was supposed to form part of a narrative of progress, in which Western medicine would bring benefits to colonized peoples as part of the wider 'civilizing mission'. However, it is clear that the definition of progress was contested, both among various groups of Europeans, and also by the medical auxiliaries themselves.

Chapter Nine: General Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the relationship between the formulation and implementation of education policies in the Belgian Congo, and the development of the colonial state in that territory during the interwar period. Having presented this analysis in the form of six thematic chapters, it falls to this general conclusion to draw the strands of these analyses together, and to establish the wider relevance of this work. Two main contentions have been pursued throughout this work: the first being that during the 1920s and 1930s, the central colonial administration in Brussels took a far greater direct interest in education policy and provision than has previously been considered to be the case; the second being that the formulation and application of education policy was a process subject to negotiation and compromise between the major European parties involved. Whilst a superficial view of education provision in the colony during this period might focus solely on the role of the Catholic missions and the subsidy system, this study has demonstrated the possibility of attaining a more nuanced understanding of the operation of colonial power in these circumstances. The far-reaching influence of the school system, with a significant number of Congolese passing through educational institutions of one type or another, ensured that colonial educational initiatives would have enduring ramifications.

Throughout the period under consideration, and in the post-war years, the extent of the education developed in the colony was a source of considerable pride to the administration, as the increasing proliferation of the pyramidal school system, particularly at its lower levels, was compared favourably to that achieved in other colonial empires.⁸³⁹ Yet, as we have seen, the story behind the statistics was more complex. By 1939, there were seven official primary schools, four official *écoles moyennes* and four official professional schools with a total of 4188 pupils enrolled in this stream of education.⁸⁴⁰ In marked contrast to this relatively slow growth, the subsidised Catholic school system had expanded enormously, counting nearly 4,500 schools at the first degree level with 195,401 pupils; above this, there were 640 second

⁸³⁹ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.258; M.A. Buisseret, *The Policy of Belgium in Her Overseas Territories*, (Brussels: Information and Public Relations Office for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi, 1957), pp.15-16.

⁸⁴⁰ AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1944), p.89.

degree primary schools with 47,000 pupils.⁸⁴¹ The gender gap remained strongly apparent throughout. The number of girls included in these enrolment figures was only 18,503 in the first degree, and 7,563 in the second; moreover, girls' education remained concentrated in the urban areas.⁸⁴² The pyramidal format of the system remained intact, with only 3023 Congolese enrolled in the special sections, of whom the large majority were in the normal schools. The Protestant missions counted 46,827 pupils in those of their schools that were equivalent to Catholic schools eligible for subsidies.⁸⁴³ The Catholic and Protestant missions also provided education to approximately 450,000 other Congolese children in rudimentary village schools.⁸⁴⁴

If establishing the proportion of the population reached by this education is difficult, due to the lack of solid data on the numbers of inhabitants, some attempt can be made using the figures given in the annual reports regarding the colony's administration. In 1938, the total Congolese population of the colony was estimated to be 10.3 million of whom just over four million were children.⁸⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the definition of a child is not given but one might assume that the classification refers to those under fourteen years of age (equivalent to the legal position in Belgium), and if we consider the potential length of time that a Congolese pupil might attend school to be eight years at the most, this gives us a potential school population of 2 million pupils at most, between the ages of around six and fourteen years.⁸⁴⁶ In sum, the figures given above suggest a total of around 12.5% of the school-age population were enrolled in either the official or the subsidised Catholic schools in 1939, with a total of around 37% if the numbers enrolled in non-subsidised schools are included as well. Of these, evidently only a very small number were enrolled in the highest levels of the system, in line with the state's desire to avoid the broad expansion of higher level secondary education. The focus on expanding primary level education whilst restricting the growth of the special sections, through a rigorous policy of selection of pupils, was intended to introduce European colonial ideology to as many Congolese as possible,

⁸⁴¹ AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1944), p.89.

⁸⁴² AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1940), p.94.

⁸⁴³ AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1940), p.98.

⁸⁴⁴ AA/RA/CB/60/2, (1939-1940), pp.96-98.

⁸⁴⁵ AA/RA/CB/60/1, (1938), p.21.

⁸⁴⁶ The lack of a defined age at which pupils started school is also a problem in establishing the percentages enrolled. No statistics relating to the ages of pupils are given in any of the annual reports for this period, so the percentages given here are estimates.

albeit without presenting opportunities for social mobility to the majority of people. The intention was to ensure that the mass of the population expressed a new colonial loyalism within the confines of traditional society.

In this respect, the policy must be counted a failure. The education system which developed in the Belgian Congo during the interwar years did not endure much beyond the end of the Second World War, as significant changes were made to its funding and content during the late 1940s and 1950s. In 1946, the Liberal senator Robert Godding became Minister for the Colonies and took the decision to extend the subsidy regime to schools run by the Protestant mission societies. In doing so, he acknowledged the demands which those missionaries had been making for years. This change came into effect in 1948, upon the introduction of a new school programme which revamped the colonial education system, both in terms of structure and content.⁸⁴⁷ Concessions were made to the demands of the colony's emergent *évolué* population as the new programme instituted a selection process before the second degree primary schools which would see pupils in the 'selected' stream receiving a broader literary education aimed at preparing them for roles as auxiliary employees of the European administration or businesses, with study of the French language at its core, whilst those in the 'ordinary' degree were destined for positions within the African administration, as tribunal clerks, for example, or as tradesmen. A similar division was also introduced into girls' education, although the emphasis on domesticity remained, with employment opportunities as teachers or midwifery assistants remaining the only options deemed suitable. Further change came in 1954, when, under the leadership of Auguste Buisseret as Minister, state-run secular schools for Africans were opened in Leopoldville, Luluabourg, and Elisabethville, followed by four more the following year.⁸⁴⁸ These schools focused on introducing the metropolitan education programme into the colony, a trend which mission-run schools were encouraged, but not compelled to follow, from 1958.⁸⁴⁹ By the time of independence then, the school system had diversified and expanded somewhat, though its pyramidal structure

⁸⁴⁷ *Organisation de l'enseignement libéré subsidié pour indigènes avec le concours des Sociétés de Missions chrétiennes. Dispositions Générales.* (Brussels: 1948).

⁸⁴⁸ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, p.226.

⁸⁴⁹ Kita, *Colonisation et Enseignement*, pp.230-231. See also M.A. Buisseret, *The Policy of Belgium in Her Overseas Territories*, (Brussels: Information and Public Relations Office for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi, 1957), pp.15-16.

remained intact, with 1.45 million pupils enrolled in primary schools, out of a total of just over 1.5 million.⁸⁵⁰ The Catholic missions had opened the University of Lovanium at Leopoldville in 1954, and this was followed in 1956 by the opening of the Université Officielle du Congo at Elisabethville. In 1958, the total number of Congolese enrolled in university education was 290, and by independence there were only fourteen graduates in the Congo, a notoriously low figure much cited as a major element in Belgium's failure to adequately prepare for the transition to independence.⁸⁵¹ Most significant amongst the post-war developments for this study, perhaps, is that after 1945 the links between the state and the Catholic missions, so central to the Ministry of Colonies' policy throughout the interwar years quickly fell by the wayside.

This discontinuity is typically ascribed, first to the impact of the war, on both European and African views of the colonial situation, and, second, to a mounting recognition from the mid-1950s onwards that decolonization was imminent. Typically, then, the education policy of the post-1945 years is viewed as an abrupt departure from that which had been in place before 1940. However, the analysis of official discourse on the policy of subsidizing only Catholic missions which took place during the 1930s, discussed in chapters five and eight with regards to the international Protestant campaign against exclusion and their involvement in training healthcare workers respectively, shows that the deeper roots of change can be traced to the interwar years. With regards to the issue of subsidies at least, it is evident that some, such as Pierre Ryckmans and certain members of the colonial hygiene service, remained unconvinced by the case for excluding the Protestants from educational provision. Ryckmans, in particular, seems to have been swayed by the argument that Congolese Protestants were being discriminated through the existing policy. Those who rejected the dominant position of the Catholic missions in the 1940s and 1950s, were not, therefore, without their predecessors in the 1930s.

⁸⁵⁰ Office de l'Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 2, (Brussels: Information and Public Relations Office for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi, 1960), pp.146-147.

⁸⁵¹ Office de l'Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, *Le Congo Belge*, vol. 2, (Brussels: Information and Public Relations Office for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi, 1960), p.147; Crawford Young, 'Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi', in Michael Crowder, (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa: From 1940-1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.698-654, (p.750).

Such debates during the 1930s serve to highlight one of the central contentions of this thesis, which posits that the Belgian colonial authorities did not constitute a unified force, acting with singular intent, with regards to education policy. Whilst overall direction certainly emanated from the metropolitan centre, and most especially from the office of Edouard De Jonghe, there were numerous occasions when policy decisions became sites of contest between the bureaucrats in Brussels and administrators in the colony itself. A further example of this can be seen in the reaction of the Ministry's education service to the operation of 'official' rural schools in the Eastern Province, as described in chapter three. However, discord over education policy arose not just between different elements within the state authorities, but also between the state and the Catholic missions, as evidenced by the criticisms levelled by state officials at the White Fathers' teaching priorities and school organisation, as discussed in chapter four. In addition, the Catholic missions have also been shown to be a disparate collection of groups, whose outlooks and modes of action varied according to their particular religious ethos and educational preoccupations. These instances of discord show that any presumption that education in the Belgian Congo in the 1920s and 1930s developed as a result of a straightforward collaboration between the state and the Catholic missions should be revised to recognise that education policy and its application resulted from protracted and often adversarial negotiation between a multitude of parties.

Even more in need of revision is the assumption that the subsidy system was analogous with the state's surrender of colonial education provision to the initiative of the Catholic missionaries, after which officials took no more than an indirect interest in its evolution. Chapter three of this work identified a range of issues which caused the Ministry of Colonies to maintain its direct and constant interest in the content and application of education policy. The fear of potential anti-colonial sedition within Congolese civil society was stoked by the emergence of messianic sects, such as Kimbanguism and Kitawala, which soon took on political dimensions. These governmental anxieties were also intensified by the spectre of internationalist movements whose ideologies sought to undermine colonialism, as in the cases of communism and pan-Africanism. Most of all, the strongly Catholic education service of the Ministry of Colonies remained opposed to the involvement in education of the

Protestant missions, no matter that their views on education for Africans were not markedly different from those held by the Catholic missions. In this instance, fear of potential unrest - fuelled by the links between Protestant teaching and Simon Kimbangu, as discussed in chapter five - combined with paranoia over the prospect of foreign intervention in the colony, leading the education service to portray the Protestants as an alien 'other' within colonial society, and as a force to be opposed rather than conciliated.

At the heart of these fears was the notion that unfettered access to education could result in unsanctioned ways of thinking amongst the colonized people of the territory. Set against this were the economic imperatives of colonialism which dictated that wider educational provision was an unavoidable obligation as demand grew for more skilled workers to aid the colony's exploitation or the administration. The only choice, therefore, was for the state to regulate education so that workers could be trained without any unwanted repercussions. This was the logic which determined the establishment of the three tiers of subsidized schools, through which only a relatively small number would progress to a level of education deemed adequate for employment as a clerk, an artisan, or a medical assistant. The vast majority of those who entered the school system were limited to two or three years' education in the rural first degree primary schools, where they would be brought into contact with European ideas and the hierarchies of colonial rule, whilst remaining in their traditional social *milieu*.

In addition to these essentially negative official impulses which set narrow parameters to permissible education, and viewed it with fear, elements of the school system introduced by the 1925 project were altogether more positive, seeking to shape colonial society to fulfil the desires of the colonizer. Prominent examples of this include the state's adoption of the missionary concept of domesticity as the paradigm for girls' education, as the inculcation of such notions into the minds of young Congolese women, especially those dwelling in the urbanized centres, was intended to ensure their futures as Christian wives and mothers who would head stable families, and who would prevent their husbands or sons from joining or causing any unrest in the cities. Another example of the power with which some felt that education was imbued is seen in the case of the medical auxiliaries discussed in chapter eight. These

colonial employees were supposed to spread Western medical knowledge through the populations with which they came into contact, and in doing so were intended to combat the strength of traditional beliefs and healing practices, which were deemed to be an expression of residual anti-colonial power. As well as the girls who lived in the colony's cities, other specific groups within the population were also targeted by specific types of educational provision, which were intended to have specific outcomes. Several examples of these target constituencies have been identified in this study, such as the *métis* and the sons of chiefs, as discussed in chapter six, and the populations of areas where Kimbanguism flourished and official primary schools were opened to combat the movement's influence, as described in chapter three. These examples remind us of the overriding social, political, and cultural imperatives that motivated official efforts to manipulate certain groups through particular forms of schooling.

The Ministry of Colonies, and especially its education service, always viewed schools policy as their primary means of social engineering. Basic education was designed to ensure that the Congolese population would fulfil the functions the state demanded of it, whilst internalizing some notions of colonialism, and being insulated from any prospect of accessing 'dangerous' material. Analysing the reactions of this system's pupils and African communities more generally towards such crudely deterministic education is a difficult task, especially for a period and a place where the major source materials are written documents produced by Europeans. Chapter seven, in its discussion of girls' education, has shown that a broad range of factors affected Congolese enthusiasm for education, such as traditional understandings of gender roles, responsibilities for food collection or farming. But the chapter also illustrated that the state's claims that African parents resisted attempts to school their daughters were not universally true at all. In addition, complaints by the state and by missionaries that Congolese pupils were leaving school before their studies were complete in order to take up positions with European businesses, show that Africans were not passive recipients of colonial education, as they actively sought to use the tuition they received to make the best of the system within which they found themselves, most likely in order to meet the financial pressures engendered by the increasing burden of taxation imposed upon them.

Alongside the difficulty of giving a voice to those subject to the colonial education system, this study has encountered others during the course of its production. In some cases these are due to the scarcity of complete documentation or to the inherent failings of some source material, such as the unreliability of some enrolment figures, for example. In addition to these practical research problems, which have been acknowledged in the main body of the study where relevant, the thematic structure through which this research has been presented has also resulted in a more extensive analysis of some aspects of the colonial education system than of others. For instance, despite their numerical superiority, less has been said about the development of the professional schools and the normal schools, though each have been referred to in places. If the choice of which elements of education to focus on was guided, in large part, by the strength of the material available, it also reflects the ideological and political importance of the types of education in question. In a thesis focused solely on economic issues, the training of artisans would most likely have played a larger role, but the strictly utilitarian nature of this training – whose direction was concentrated in the hands of the state’s official schools – was subject to far less controversy than other types of education, whose content was deemed to have a significance beyond simply its didactic elements.

Despite such constraints, the preceding chapters have comprehensively analysed the driving forces behind the Belgian colonial authorities’ efforts to expand particular forms of education in the colony during the 1920s and 1930s. We are left with a deeper understanding of the tense relationship between the necessity of educating skilled workers to meet the colony’s economic and administrative needs, and attendant official fears that more widespread schooling would unlock the door to mass anti-colonial engagement. Moreover, the study has demonstrated the importance of interwar educational developments as illustrative of changing forms of colonial hegemony over Congo’s population and, in the longer term, as a critical factor in the emergence of the very political opposition that colonial schooling was meant to prevent.

This does not though mean that there is nothing more to be said on the subject of education policy in the Congo, and its relationship to the development of the colonial state, whether during the interwar period or throughout the entire colonial period. For one thing, the changes made to that system after 1945, which have only been briefly described here, offer an avenue for further investigation, particularly with regards to the breakdown of the relationship between the state and the Catholic missions, and the scope of efforts made to prepare the Congo for independence. A comparative analysis of education policies would also be valuable, and might best be focused upon the comparison of Belgian efforts in the Congo with those pursued in Ruanda-Urundi, the territories for which Belgium assumed control from the Germans after the First World War and administered under a League of Nations mandate. Consideration of the policies adopted there was not considered within the scope of this study, largely because of the differences in the two territories' early histories and in their political status during the interwar years. Particularly interesting would be the extent to which Ruanda-Urundi was subsumed within the administration of the Congo – for example, the 1929 *brochure jaune* applied across the board – as well as the differences in policies, particularly the role of Belgian Protestants in providing subsidised education in Ruanda-Urundi. Moreover, a comparative analysis of the impact of a change of colonial ruler on education policies might evaluate the development of the systems introduced by the Belgians in Ruanda-Urundi and by the British in Tanganyika. Already, valuable work has been done in this vein by Kenneth Orosz, who has focused on language policy in German and French Cameroon as a source of dispute between missionaries and state authorities before and after the First World War.⁸⁵² Further analysis of Belgian education policies in colonial Central Africa would, therefore, complement the research presented here, and allow the extension of our understanding of how education was employed by European powers as a tool with which to control the populations of their colonial possessions.

What, then, has been proved? The power of education to shape people's understandings of the world meant that colonial education policy became a matter of central importance to those who wished to remould the Congolese people to serve their particular interests, whether material, political or religious. Colonial schooling

⁸⁵² Kenneth Orosz, *Religious Conflicts and the Evolution of Language Policy in German and French Cameroon, 1885-1939*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

became an arena in which state and missionary conceptions of colonialism were sometimes in agreement, and sometimes in opposition to each other. The determination with which the parties pursued their agendas with regards to educational provision, and the tenacity with which the Ministry of Colonies and the Catholic missions resisted the efforts of others, especially the Protestants, to influence the Congolese population through the classroom, are indicative of the central role of education within the Belgian colonial project. However, the extent to which Europeans, no matter which variant of colonialism they represented, succeeded in inculcating Africans with their desired values and loyalist outlooks is open to question. Evidently the education system failed in its underlying goal to prevent the emergence of an *évolué* class within the colony. So, too, it failed to contain the proliferation of a number of anti-colonial messianic sects during the interwar years. Finally, the education system which was, at root, designed to bolster the hegemony of the colonial state and thus ensure the perpetuation of colonial rule helped hasten precisely the opposite outcome.

Appendix A: Timeline showing Belgian Monarchs, Ministers for the Colonies and Governors General of the Belgian Congo.

Year	Monarch	Minister	Governor General
1908	Leopold II	J. Renkin (Christian Democrat) 13.10.1908	T. Wahis
1909	Dec 1909: Albert		
1910	II		
1911			
1912			Félix Fuchs (20.05.1912)
1913			
1914			
1915			
1916			E. Henry (05.01.1916)
1917			
1918		Nov. 1918: L. Franck (Liberal)	
1919		(21.11.1918)	
1920			
1921			M. Lippens (30.01.1921)
1922			
1923			M. Rutten (24.01.1923)
1924		H. Carton (Roman Catholic) (13.05.1924)	
1925		M. Houtart (RC) 20.05.1926	
1926		E. Pécher (L) 15.11.1926	
1927		H. Jaspar (RC) 18.01.1927	A. Tilkens (27.12.1927)
1928		P. Tshoffen (RC) 19.10.1929	
1929		H. Jaspar 26.12.1929	
1930			
1931		P. Charles 16.05.1931	
1932		P. Crokaert (RC) 06.06.1931 P. Tschoffen 23.05.1932	
1933			
1934		P. Charles 20.11.1934	P. Ryckmans (14.09.1934)
1935	Feb. 1934: Leopold	E. Rubbens (RC) 25.03.1935	
1936	III	A. de Vleeschauwer (RC)	
1937		15.05.1938	

1938		G. Heenen 22.02.1939	
1939		A. de Vleeschauwer 16.04.1939	
1940			
1941			
1942			
1943			
1944			
1945		E. De Bruyn (12.02.1945) R. Godding (02.08.1945) L. Craeybeckx (13.03.1946)	
1946	Prince Charles (regent 1945-1951)	R. Godding (31.03.1946) P. Wigny (20.03.1947)	E. Jungers (31.12.1946)
1947			
1948			
1949		A. Dequae (16.08.1950)	
1950			
1951			
1952		A. Buisseret (23.04.1954)	L. Petillon (01.01.1952)
1953	July 1951:		
1954	Baudouin I		
1955			
1956			
1957		L. Petillon (05.07.1958) M. Van Hemerlijck (06.11.1958)	
1958			H. Cornelis (05.07.1958)
1959		A. De Schrijver (03.09.1959) R. Scheyven (17.11.1959)	
1960		W. Ganshof Van der Meersch (16.05.1960)	

- See E.H. Kossman, *The Low Countries*, 716-732; Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale du Congo*, pp.375-376; Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo*, p.149.

Appendix B: Extracts from Relevant International Treaties

The Berlin Act 1885:

GENERAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE AT BERLIN OF THE PLENIPOTENTIARIES OF GREAT BRITAIN, AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, BELGIUM, DENMARK, FRANCE, GERMANY, ITALY, THE NETHERLANDS, PORTUGAL, RUSSIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN AND NORWAY, TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES RESPECTING: (1) FREEDOM OF TRADE IN THE BASIN OF THE CONGO; (2) THE SLAVE TRADE; (3) NEUTRALITY OF THE TERRITORIES IN THE BASIN OF THE CONGO; (4) NAVIGATION OF THE CONGO; (5) NAVIGATION OF THE NIGER; AND (6) RULES FOR FUTURE OCCUPATION ON THE COAST OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

[Signatories: United Kingdom, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, USA, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Ottoman Empire]

PROVISIONS RELATIVE TO PROTECTION OF THE NATIVES, OF MISSIONARIES AND TRAVELLERS, AS WELL AS RELATIVE TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Article VI

All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization.

Christian missionaries, scientists and explorers, with their followers, property and collections, shall likewise be the objects of especial protection.

Freedom of conscience and religious toleration are expressly guaranteed to the natives, no less than to subjects and to foreigners. The free and public exercise of all forms of divine worship, and the right to build edifices for religious purposes, and to organize religious missions belonging to all creeds, shall not be limited or fettered in any way whatsoever.

Source (retrieved on 14/05/2007):

<http://ocid.nacse.org/qml/research/tfdd/toTFDDdocs/4ENG.htm>

1906 Convention between the Congo Independent State and the Vatican:

[extracts and translations]

Convention entre le Saint-Siège et l'Etat
Indépendant du Congo, signée le 26 mai 1906.

“Le Saint-Siège Apostolique, soucieux de favoriser la diffusion méthodique du catholicisme au Congo, et le Gouvernement de l'Etat Indépendant, appréciant la part considérable des missionnaires catholiques dans son oeuvre civilisatrice de l'Afrique Centrale, se sont entendus entre eux et avec les représentants de missions catholiques du Congo, en vue d'assurer davantage la réalisation de leurs intentions respectives.”

“A cet effet, les soussignés:

[...] sont convenus des dispositions suivantes:”

The Holy See, keen to encourage the methodical diffusion of Catholicism in the Congo, and the government of the C.I.S., appreciating the considerable role of the Catholic missionaries in its civilizing work in Central Africa, are in agreement with each other and with the representatives of Catholic missions of the Congo, in order to ensure the realisation of their respective intentions.

“To this effect, the undersigned [...] have agreed the following terms:”

“1) L'Etat du Congo concèdera aux établissements de missions catholiques au Congo les terres nécessaires à leurs oeuvres religieuses dans les conditions suivantes:”

The Congo state will concede to Catholic mission stations in the Congo the land necessary to their religious work on the following conditions:

2) Chaque établissement de mission s'engage, dans la mesure de ses ressources, à créer une école où les indigènes recevront l'instruction. Le programme comportera notamment un enseignement agricole et d'agronomie forestière et un enseignement professionnel pratique des métiers manuels;

Each mission station undertake, according to its resources, to create a school where the natives will receive instruction. The programme will consist notably of an agricultural education and 'forest cultivation' and a practical professional education in manual trades.

3) Le programme des études et des cours sera soumis au gouvernement général et les branches à enseigner seront fixées de commun accord. L'enseignement des langues nationales belges fera partie essentielle du programme;

The programme of studies and lessons will be submitted to the general government, and the subjects to be taught will be fixed by agreement. Teaching of the Belgian national languages will be an essential part of the programme.

4) Il sera fait par chaque supérieur de mission, à des dates périodiques, rapport au Gouverneur Général sur l'organisation et le développement des écoles, le nombre des élèves, l'avancement des études, etc.

Each mission superior will, periodically, make a report to the Governor General on the organisation and development of the schools, the number of pupils, the progress of studies, etc.

[The remaining articles of this accord focused the payments to be awarded to missionaries for linguistics works, etc.]

Source (retrieved 30/08/09):

www.abbol.com/commonfiles/docs_projecten/colsschoolbks/Convention%201906.pdf

Convention of St. Germain-en-Laye 1919:

Convention revising the General Act of Berlin of 26 February 1885 and the General Act and Declaration of Brussels of 2 July 1890
(St. Germain-en-Laye, 10 September 1919)

Signatories: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BELGIUM, THE BRITISH EMPIRE, FRANCE, ITALY, JAPAN AND PORTUGAL

Article 11

The Signatory Powers exercising sovereign rights or authority in African territories will continue to watch over the preservation of the native populations and to supervise the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being. They will, in particular, endeavour to secure the complete suppression of slavery in all its forms and of the slave trade by land and sea.

They will protect and favour, without distinction of nationality or of religion, the religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized by the nationals of the other Signatory Powers and of States Members of the League of Nations which may adhere to the present Convention, which aim at leading the natives in the path of progress and civilization. Scientific missions, their property and their collections, shall likewise be the objects of special solicitude.

Freedom of conscience and the free exercise of all forms of religion are expressly guaranteed to all nationals of the Signatory Powers and to those under the jurisdiction of States Members of the League of Nations which may become parties to the present Convention. Similarly, missionaries shall have the right to enter into, and to travel and reside in, African territory with a view to prosecuting their calling.

The application of the provisions of the two preceding paragraphs shall be subject only to such restrictions as may be necessary for the maintenance of public security and order, or as may result from the enforcement of the constitutional law of any of the Powers exercising authority in African territories.

Source:

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1920/17.html> , retrieved 13/08/2009.

Appendix C:

1925 Subsidy Agreement:

[Example, containing extracts and translations]

'Entre la Congrégation des Soeurs de..... représentée par sa Supérieure.....

Et la Colonie du Congo Belge, représentée par M. le Gouverneur Général, il a été convenu ce qui suit:

1° La Colonie rétribuera la Mission des SS à raison des écoles subsidiées qu'elle dessert dans sa sphere d'action, au taux prévu au règlement d'organisation de l'enseignement libre subsidié, ci annexé. Toutes les écoles subsidiées de la Mission seront ouvertes à la visite de M. l'Inspecteur provincial'

[...]

Between the congregation of the sisters of represented by their Superior....
And the colony of the Belgian Congo, represented by the Governor General, the following has been agreed:

1) The colony will reimburse the Sisters for the subsidised schools that they run in their sphere of influence, to the level foreseen in the rules for the organisation of subsidised education, [...] All subsidised schools of the Mission will be open for the Provincial Inspector to visit.

[...]

5° La Mission fournira annuellement le tableau statistique de ses oeuvres et un rapport général sur les progress réalisés, à son intervention, dans le domaine tant moral que matériel, par les populations indigènes.

Each year, the mission will provide a statistic table of its works and a general report on the progress made, due to its intervention, in both moral and material domains, by the native populations.

6° La présente convention est faite pour une durée de vingt ans.

This convention is to last for a duration of twenty years.

[...]

Source (retrieved 30/08/2009):

www.abbol.com/commodities/docs_projecten/colschoolsbks/Projet%20d'org%201924.pdf

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