

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.

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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 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