When Congo Wants To Go To School – Educational Organisation In The Belgian Congo (1908-1958)

Classroom rear view, Nsona Mbata (Matadi), 1920

Contexts

The first part of this study will concentrate on the wider environment within which daily practice of colonial education is situated. It progresses in three stages in accordance with the aim of the research. Three chapters correspond with these three stages. The general, macro-institutional context of the phenomenon of colonial education is considered in the *first chapter*. This includes a discussion of the organisational development and politico-strategic factors that influenced this phenomenon. The development of the educational structures is indicated from the angle of the interaction between state intervention and the Catholic initiative. Within that framework the major themes in the content and emphasis of colonial lesson plans are also considered, as are the opinions on these subjects. Finally, figures are given to allow an estimate of the quantitative development of education in the colony. The *second chapter* shifts the focus to Belgium. The preparation, training, ideas and worldview with which the missionaries left for the Belgian Congo will be considered more closely. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part considers a number of broad social and historical factors that played a part in the formation of the missionaries' general intellectual baggage. Mainly results of existing research are presented and discussed in this part. The second part takes a closer look at the people who are of specific interest to us, covering the preparation and training given to the Sacred Heart Missionaries in

Belgium and using specific source material. In the *third chapter* we make the journey to the Congo together with these missionaries. A number of elements are given in a short outline that also constitute the direct context of their work. Firstly, a description is given of the creation and growth of the mission region in which they were active. Then follows the introduction of the other missionary congregations, with which the Sacred Heart Missionaries cooperated. Finally, quantitative data are brought together with regard to the development of education, both for the mission region as a whole and for the various mission posts separately.

Educational organisation in the Belgian Congo (1908-1958)[1]
Before attempting to create an image of the educational development in the vicariate of the MSC on the basis of figures and other concrete data it is perhaps useful to consider the official educational organisation in the Belgian Congo.[2] The term 'official' should be taken with great circumspection in this. After all, the interaction between the state, which would logically be associated with the term "official" and the (catholic) missions, proved a constitutive element in the development of the colonial educational system. As a result an attempt has been made in this chapter to give an overview of Belgian colonial education from an organisational and politico-strategic angle, in which the relationship between the government and the missionaries is considered. The most extensive study of the development of the school curricula and school populations can be found in Pierre Kita's *Colonisation et enseignement*.3] Although his study is clearly much more extensive, gives a general overview and also emphasises the initial impulses of the development of education in the early years of Belgian colonisation, this chapter approaches from a different angle, namely the increase in state intervention in education and the development of the school network. In this way an attempt will be made using contextual (and statistical) data on the development of primary education to sketch a representative framework for the regional trends which are then described.[4]

Traditionally it is assumed that the colonisation of the Belgian Congo was the result of a convergence of three players: church, business and state. Each had its own interests and relied on the two others to support it. In order to understand the educational organisation properly it is only necessary to focus on two of these three players. The relationship between the state and the missionaries was certainly not unambiguous. The missionaries were divided into two large groups,

the Catholics, by far the majority in the Congo and the Protestants, traditionally well represented in Africa. This is unlike the situation in Belgium where the catholic church had developed to become the official state religion since independence and completely controlled education. The colonial administration was the requesting party for the collaboration with the missionaries, which does not mean that the relationship with those missionaries was always free from criticism or unchanging. In time different currents, preferences and political opinions started to become clear in relation to the colonial educational issue. For practical reasons the remainder of this thesis almost exclusively considers Catholic missionary education. Both non-denominational and protestant education disappear from sight in the following which does not however mean that there was no education other than Catholic education, let alone that it was of no importance.

1. First period: starting up education

1.1. The principle: the State proposes, the mission disposes

The earliest form of colonial education was based on an agreement between the king and the *Propaganda Fide*[5] in Rome and with certain congregations of missionaries. The political organisation of the colony was minimal in the initial period and it was centralised in Brussels. The king established his own colonial government that was responsible for the accounting for his company and contacts with the Congo. From 1885 a department of *Affaires étrangères, Justice et Cultes* was established. This does indicate that the missions immediately occupied an important place in colonial politics. The new administration of the Congo Independent State only had three departments (the other two were the Ministry of Home Affairs and Finance).[6] With regard to education a distinction was made between official schools founded by the state, for which missionaries were relied on and independent education, that was based on the personal initiative of the missionaries and the financial support of which was given by the government. The official schools were the original school colonies, institutions under a quasi-military regime, where children were given practical training under the guardianship of the government. These were also run completely by missionaries.[7] The first step was placed organisationally in 1906 when the predominantly informal agreements between the king and church resulted in the first official text: *"On 26 May 1906, the Holy See and the Independent State signed a Treaty according to the terms of which the Catholic missions, almost completely Belgian, were granted the land required for their work, under a set of*

conditions, notably the obligation of ensuring general, professional and agricultural education."[8] It is hard to assess the concrete importance of this Treaty, but according to Pierre Kita it should certainly not be considered the beginning of systematic state intervention. On the contrary, he claims, education was left completely to the initiative and means of the missionaries nor was the quantitative development of the schools stimulated by it. The importance of this treaty is consequently also much more at a political level because it indicated the direction in which education policy would further develop.[9]

On 15 November 1908 the Congo was officially declared a colony of the Belgian state. The administration of the state of Congo now fell under its own ministry, under the direction of a minister who, like the other Belgian ministers, was governed by the Belgian Constitution. After this transition the authority for education and missions remained in the same package, namely in the first general directorate of colonial management. After the First World War the administration was decentralised to the colony. This was accompanied by a reorganisation of the central services in Brussels, in which 'worship' and 'education' formed a separate directorate. The *Charte Coloniale,* to be considered the Founding law of the Belgian Congo, included the principle of freedom of education from the Belgian Constitution and the authority over education was placed completely on the governor-general: *"He protects and promotes without distinction between nationality or religion, all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and enterprises formed and set-up for this or intended to educate the natives and to allow them to understand and value the advantages of civilisation."*[10]

The concrete provision of education was left *de facto* to the people in the colony. It may be concluded from this that the Belgian government preferred to continue the informal method of Leopold II and to rely completely on the missionaries for the development of a network of schools, that was considered necessary to make it possible to deploy the population in the economic development of the colony. A general assessment for this first period is that education, and more specifically missionary activity, was considered important in the strategy for conquering the colony and the occupation of the territory. The statement from 1916 by the Minister for the Colonies Renkin in a letter to the governor-general is telling in this regard:[11] *"If we could manage to replace the white staff by committed and skilled blacks, the progress would be incredible from a financial, political and economic point of view."*[12] Education may have been presented as a means to

bettering oneself, in reality very utilitarian intentions were also involved. However, this double standard was not expressed explicitly. As such, education was not placed on the foreground. It was not made into an issue. It appeared as though education and politics formed a singled discourse. They thought they were both important, needed each other and reinforced each other. Nevertheless at some points major negotiating took place between certain congregations and the government. For example Jules Marchal extensively considered the conflicts relating to financial and organisational problems.[13] And within the administration itself a number of assumptions, prejudices and preferences were maintained, including in relation to the quality of education from certain congregations.[14] The cooperation between Church and State was not however questioned in itself, even though it functioned in a very implicit way, as there was no real legal basis for it. People supported each other: the Catholic missions did not desert Leopold II during the campaigns that arose against his regime and the government relied on the missions, if not from conviction, then at least on economic grounds. The rights of the strongest consequently played an important part in this.[15] The government prospered, the church could use this to the full and the government profited from that in its turn.

1.2. Beginning of government involvement

1.2.1. The Franck Commission

The *'laissez faire'* attitude that characterised the government's attitude to a great extent was really broken for the first time after the First World War by the liberal Louis Franck.[16] After the initially dismissive attitude of the Belgian government to take over the colony, this was the first time that a person at a government level saw a need also to invest in "the Congo" instead of simply extracting money from it. An economic and social development plan was also developed for the colony under his impetus. Education was also a part of that. Franck brought a commission of experts together to give shape to the colonial educational structure. On 10 July 1922 the "Franck Commission" as it would later be called, was formed. It comprised leading civil servants, people from the educational sector and delegates from various missionary congregations. As shall be shown below, the influence of the Catholics was very great in this commission. More generally, the question may arise as to what encouraged a liberal politician to support and develop catholic education. Numerous reasons have been given for this. Firstly there were grounds of a general political nature. In this way the liberal party was more than prepared in this period to compromise in relation to

enduring government participation.[17] In addition there were personal political motives: Franck wanted to secure his own ministerial seat and had to stay on good terms with the Catholics. In the early twenties there had been a serious incident between the governor-general appointed by Franck, Maurice Lippens,[18] whose ideas, e.g. relating to indirect management, conflicted severely with the forces of conservatism among the missionaries.[19] Franck's consideration and the influence of the missionaries may also be partly explained by that.[20] However, these political motives are not enough. One of Franck's most quoted statements relating to colonial education was that *"When concerned with the moral education of the natives, it is important to ensure that we do not transfer our European conceptions to Africa. (…) If Europe has perhaps passed the age of religions, Africa is certainly in the age of religions. No factor exists that may act with more energy and more power on the moral education of the natives than the religious action. (…) Consequently, we shall protect the evangelisation in Africa, without moreover establishing a distinction between the Christian religions.*"[21] Whether this truly related to a personal conviction or the simple far-reaching influence of the administration on the Minister will probably never be completely clear. A combination of both seems most likely. The fact is that it was already generally assumed at the time that this influence existed: the conventions that arose from the activities of the commission were called the "De Jonghe Conventions", referring to the director-general at the ministry for the Colonies. Finally, there were certainly also financial considerations in the proceedings. The cooperation with the missions was considered much cheaper than setting-up a complete own educational network.[22]

1.2.2. Edouard De Jonghe and his influence

If one person can be indicated as the defining influence on the development of "colonial education", both in the colony and in Belgium, it is Edouard De Jonghe.[23] De Jonghe was very industrious concerning the colonial curriculum from the end of the First World War. He published a few articles relating to the issue of the further orientation of the education even before the Franck Commission. Already in April 1922 he published an article in the periodical *Congo,* entitled *L'instruction publique au Congo belge*.[24] This article was probably inspired by the criticism that had been given by Lippens with regard to colonial education. De Jonghe even stated in the introduction that criticism could be heard from all sides because the government had done nothing for education and that there was no curriculum in the Congo. He also took responsibility for

ensuring more publicity for what he described as "*l'importance et la diversité de leurs oeuvres d'enseignement*", which was clearly referring to the missions. In the same article he gave a summary of the educational initiatives then existent in the Congo. He assumed the principle of a dichotomy between schools with a utilitarian aim and schools that attempted to perfect the Congolese. He did not want to use the then apparently already common division into 'official', 'subsidised' and 'independent' schools (*écoles officielles*, *subsidiées ou libres*). In his opinion this division did not have any official or legal basis but was a pure question of facts. Moreover the terms used were apparently also too unclear to base representative statistics on them. However, later in his article another, more strategic reason emerged. Citing the objectives of the Colonial University, De Jonghe assumed that a successful colonisation was only possible if the colonised people got equal or more advantages from it than the colonists. This then allowed him to indicate that the schools that did not have a directly utilitarian use for the coloniser were in fact almost all run by missionaries.[25]

De Jonghe would later also publish extensively on educational issues. A number of those publications shall be considered later in this study. It is clear that a number of De Jonghe's ideas, put forward in these articles, were finally also included in the school regulations. This is clear for example in relation to the use of language. Another element that must have contributed and that is not mentioned as such in any of the literature consulted, is the study trip De Jonghe made in the Congo, from July 1924 to January 1925. The trip took place at a time when the provisional *projet d'organisation* already existed. De Jonghe announced his trip to the rector of Leuven University, Mgr. Ladeuze in a letter from June 1924: *"I will end by informing you that Mr Carton would like to entrust me with the task of inspecting the education in the Congo with a view to the organisation of this and the remuneration of the national missions working in education in the Congo."*[26] The fact that this trip was announced barely a month before De Jonghe's departure, while De Jonghe and Ladeuze were in regular contact with each other, indicates that there was some urgency in the matter. However, it is not clear what the exact reasons or causes were for this.

De Jonghe kept a relatively detailed account of the entire trip.[27] It contains a wealth of information on a very extensive number of schools that he visited throughout the country. Occasionally, he also mentioned something about his meetings with specific people, usually missionaries. The report clearly shows that

De Jonghe did not hesitate to defend the missionaries and that he did not try to hide his own Catholic inspiration. At one point the account mentions a considerable increase in secular rural schools in the East province, financed by the receipts of the native courts. De Jonghe reacted categorically by stating that the territorial administration was not qualified to supervise the teachers in this type of school and that the education and training of the Africans presupposed the Christian faith, an element that was missing from the secular schools. He also added that the creation of such schools would necessarily result in conflicts with the missionaries.

The general considerations at the end of the account make it possible to deduce that this did relate to a type of inspection visit and that De Jonghe had been given the task of testing what people in the field thought of the project text and how it could be implemented. He described his objectives as follows: "*My objective was to collect general documentation on the schools in the Congo by visiting the schools established on my route, consulting the archives of the General Government and the provincial Governments, conferring with the religious authorities in order to see whether the adoption project for the schools of the national missions is feasible*."[28] It is striking that De Jonghe mentions *projet d'adoption* [adoption project] here, something that was not done in the public discourse relating to the project. It is consequently not surprising that the first conclusion of De Jonghe related to the enthusiasm of the missionaries concerning the financial side of things (the substantial increase and systemisation of the subsidies). Nor would he be stopped by less enthusiastic reactions. A number of smaller congregations expressed objections against the project because their material situation could not fulfil certain subsidy conditions. De Jonghe proposed to offer them a transitional period, so that they could get themselves in order and to give them a higher subsidy in the meantime. Furthermore he emphasised the need further to develop girls' education and consequently schools in the hands of female religious. A different bell was sounded in relation to the training of Congolese teachers. The missionaries felt that the demands set were too high in relation to their level of education and that they could not be expected to fulfil higher demands than Belgian teachers. In this De Jonghe wrote, "*Experience has shown that the black is not able to produce continuous effort. Left to himself, he will easily return to practices condemned by civilisation.*"[29] Partly as a result of this he believed it was better to have the schools run by missionaries instead of by lay people. Furthermore the missionaries mainly insisted on a regulation that

could be adapted very easily to local needs. For instance, the language used when teaching and the time schedules should be adapted in relation to the local situation. (Read: it was not desirable to teach French everywhere and the subsidies should certainly not be made dependent on teaching French). Finally it was also greatly desirable to provide more subsidies for so-called 'urban' schools (*écoles urbaines*) than for rural schools, because they had to comply with higher requirements and because they had to pay their teachers more because of competition with other employers.[30] That account would effectively be taken of these and other remarks, is finally apparent from the last sentence in the account: *"Some other remarks, suggested by the missionaries, have been recorded in the form of amendments to the project (attached) for the organisation of independent schools with the assistance of the national missions."*[31]

1.2.3. Antecedents

However, starting the history of the official school programmes with the activities of the Commission or Louis Franck's commission would not be exact. Although it is true that there is only a question of real organisation in the field from that moment, regulations on the matter had been discussed much earlier. In his work, Pierre Kita mentioned various initiatives, conversations and research that were launched from various directions during the period before the First World War. He also refers to the educational survey that was carried out during the war, originating from the ministry for the Colonies. It was aimed at company directors, government agents and missionaries. Fabian also refers to this survey in *Language and Colonial Power*. Based on what both authors say it may be concluded that the survey was rather indicative of the way in which colonial education was conceived in the metropole. The questions were apparently rather directional and a great preference was indicated for utilitarian education to the service of the colonisers.[32] Pierre Kita claims that the results of this survey were certainly an instrument of the Franck Commission. However I could not find any solid evidence of this. According to the information given by Fabian, the results of the survey were moreover much too disparate to allow any general conclusions to be drawn. Perhaps it did exercise some indirect influence via the proposals of the colonial administration in London.

In any event this 'London project' appears to be the most important of the proposals from the 1908-1918 period. During their exile in London the members of the ministry for the Colonies maintained negotiations with the mission

superiors, that concluded in a proposal for a curriculum which would be applied throughout the colony. Primary education of twice two years was central in this, possibly as a preparation for a number of 'special schools' (clerical school, teacher training or technical school) and a very strong emphasis was placed on manual labour: *"Two hours shall be spent per day on manual labour in both the teacher training school and the primary school. In the other schools 24 hours a week. Manual labour is obligatory to all pupils."*[33] For clarification: the planned total number of hours taught per day was four hours in primary education and five in teacher training. For the rest, concerning curriculum content, there would be a striking similarity between this project and the *Projet d'organisation de l'Enseignement libre au Congo Belge* published by the Ministry for the Colonies in 1925 and that was the first result of the activities of the Franck Commission.

The scheutist Rikken, who wrote a master's thesis on educational organisation in the Congo, quoted extensively from minutes of meetings of church superiors, both in Belgium and the Congo during the period 1918-1919, from which it is apparent that minister Renkin was responsible for belling the cat. He wanted to search for new and preferably more general systems of subsidisation. According to Florent Mortier,[34] who was chairman of the meeting of missionary superiors in Belgium, Renkin wanted to find a system that "(…) *could satisfy any government of any political leaning whatsoever. Moreover he wanted to take the number of missionaries, works undertaken and results obtained into account. Finally he considered that the State and the Government had a duty to subsidise the missions more extensively, this, with regard to the work in the peaceful penetration of education under all the forms undertaken by them. He believed that this measure was all the more necessary as the war had significantly reduced the resources of the missions and the alms of the faithful*."[35] In any event that seems to fit well with a statement by Renkin himself in a memo of January 1918 that stated, "*Granting subsidies is based on a simple promise. A political upheaval – this war is an example – may dry up this source. It is essential to ensure a more solid basis for this important work.*"[36] That again indicates that there was an issue very early on regarding the concern for the position of Catholic education in the colonial context. That attitude was also apparent at a meeting of the church superiors in the Congo itself: *"It would be better to ask the question today even under favourable conditions rather than exposing ourselves to a new struggle for schooling in African territory."*[37]

However, that did not mean that people were willing to accept any system. The missionaries specifically strongly resisted any interference by the state with regard to content. The fact that the missionary-inspector would have to comply with changes in the syllabus, timetable and methods imposed from above, as intended in the London project, was too much.[38] The first intention of the missionaries at this stage was to preserve their absolute authority and their absolute freedom with regard to education. The bishops in the Congo also assumed a much more combative and uncompromising attitude than the church superiors in Belgium.[39 Mortier tried to keep the church in the centre in a letter to the Congolese meeting: *"We believe that it must be noted that the meeting at Kisantu seems to have been mistaken of the true scope of the unofficial and confidential positions by the ministry under the administration of Mr Renkin. We would like to point out that it simply relates to starting talks preliminary to a project for a new division of subsidies and to lead the superiors of the missions to formulate their proposals in complete freedom. It would be a mistake to consider this as a sign of less respect for the work of the missions as such or as a risk to the freedom of education. The offices have already revised the document on multiple occasions after our own suggestions and they have shown themselves willing to follow up on any later observations."*[40]In any event it indicates that up to that point any form of general inspection or systematic regulation had been missing and that the financial support for missionary activities was realised unofficially via individual contracts and requests.

This is confirmed by other sources, cited by Lefebvre.[41] He claimed that the school convention of 1924 did not result in the first state intervention, or the first subsidisation of missionary education. This statement is not strictly incorrect but some of the conclusions Lefebvre drew in relation to the organisation existing at that point do make it possible to reduce the scope of that statement to the correct proportions. With regard to the system of 'acceptance' (and consequently of subsidisation) mentioned by the various parties involved and also by minister for the Colonies Renkin, he claimed: *"A first condition for acceptance was the acceptance of the curriculum drawn up by the State. It may be assumed that this only related to an approval of the curriculum, as the curricula of the various accepted schools were not identical. … That is even clearer from a letter from Reverend Fr. Declerck, who submitted a curriculum for approval and from a letter from the Minister to Mgr. Roelens in which the Minister approved a curriculum."*[42] Even if, when interpreting them, strong account must be taken

of the context in which such statements were made (Lefebvre was himself a scheutist, and the thesis was written in the fifties and consequently in the midst of the school struggle), it may still be deduced from it that strategic reasoning was present very early on with the Catholic missionaries in relation to their position in the colony.[43] Education then seemed an efficient lever to reinforce that position. The critics of the colonial regime and the missions consequently also emphasised the fact that the main intention of the Catholic missionaries consisted of evangelisation and not education, which was, moreover, not denied by them, …

Whether the London project proposal consequently had a decisive influence as such on the activities of the Franck Commission is not clear as yet. However it was cited by De Jonghe, who was clearly one of the decisive figures in the commission, in texts that were used as basic material. Except for this project text there was also a text written by De Jonghe himself and another project text by Florent Mortier,[44] a text that was drawn up following the colonial congress of 1921 and the report by the *Phelps Stokes Fund* on education in Africa.[45] This not only confirmed the predominance of catholic opinion within the commission. It also makes it clear that the supporters of adaptionism could make their influence count in relation to the concrete, contextual form of education. The *Phelps Stokes* report included an intense plea for adapting education to the concrete living conditions of the Africans: "*The wholesale transfer of the educational conventions of Europe and America to the peoples of Africa has certainly not been an act of wisdom, however justly it may be defended as a proof of genuine interest in the Native people.*"[46] The term 'adaptation' as defined in more detail in the report rather meant that account must be taken of problems set by the specific context and the specific environment, than that one had to use and show respect for traditions and customs, characteristic of the local population. The introduction of good hygiene, thorough training in agricultural techniques and the development of a healthy and good housekeeping fitted in that picture. For example emphasis was also placed on the fact that the participation of girls in education was much too low and that girls' schools were urgently needed, which would be primarily geared to the preparation of food, and then to 'household comforts' and thirdly to caring and feeding children "*and the occupations that are suited to the interests and the ability of women*."[47] The report also considered a number of concrete cases, including that of the Belgian Congo. De Jonghe had a French summary drawn up of that section and also had it published in the periodical *Congo*.[48] In the report that was published on 'the education and training of blacks' in the

report book of the second colonial congress of 1926 and that was undoubtedly also seen by De Jonghe, the readers were referred to the *Phelps Stokes* report with the reference *"They will see there that the English committee recognised an educational policy conforming to that which has been summarised above."*[49]

In the light of the other texts used and which were limited according to De Jonghe to four texts (*Phelps Stokes*, 'a' text of his own, the report of the permanent committee of the Belgian colonial congress and the London proposal), that statement must be interpreted with great circumspection. Recent research has indicated that there were real contacts between Louis Franck and Jesse Jones, the editor of the *Phelps Stokes* report.[50] They met in 1920, in Sierra Leone, before Jones travelled to the Congo. Franck supposedly used that opportunity to mention the idea of education in the native language, an idea that was allegedly later adopted by Jones and which was also present in the report. The adaptionist approach in general was also common to both. It consequently also seems that the guidelines from the foreign report were referred to on numerous occasions to give more weight to personal political choices.

The Franck Commission would finally make a number of recommendations relating to the principles on which Belgian colonial education should be based. The education was to be attuned to the environment of the Congolese and was not to start from a European perspective; moral education was much more important than (technical) education; education was to be given in the native language as much as possible; the cooperation with the missions with regard to education was to be given absolute priority.[51] The missions were clearly the means, *par excellence*, on which the government wanted to rely for the development of education in the colony. As De Jonghe stated: *"This policy should be preferred to that which would consist of organising an official educational framework. The latter would be very expensive for the Treasury, would not ensure continuity in educational practice, continuity which is an essential component for success and on the other hand, as the budget available is limited, would not succeed in reaching the majority of the natives."*[52]

The conclusions of this commission were published in a project text in 1925, *projet d'organisation de l'enseignement*.[53] However a final version of the curriculum was only produced four years later. As indicated the work of the commission also resulted in the conclusion of conventions between the state and the 'national missions', which assured these of subsidies for twenty years in

exchange for the provision of education. Because they had to comply with a number of conditions it almost always related to catholic missions in practice.[54] Protestant missions were, after all, almost without exception, foreign of origin and could consequently not comply with the nationality requirements imposed. This conclusion met the preoccupation already mentioned that was formulated by the Catholics immediately after the First World War to minister Renkin. The missionaries were concerned with truly securing the financial means made available to the missions. Until then there had only been a verbal undertaking to subsidise, which was indeed to be brought in line with the general obligations for the protection and development of evangelisation, as resulting from the international legislation. However any true legal basis was lacking. Ironically the liberal Louis Franck would consequently provide this basis, through the De Jonghe conventions.

1.3. The educational curriculum in 1929

The curriculum that resulted form the work of the Franck Commission, contained a rather modest educational structure which predominately provided for primary schools. A distinction was made between schools in the *centres européens* and rural schools. The latter were given a minimal curriculum and a duration of two years. This could be longer in the *centres*. The brochure in which the curriculum was published would quickly become known as the *Brochure Jaune*, a term that was also used for the curriculum itself.[55] The text of the *Brochure Jaune* is clear: "*The educational curriculum in rural schools must be based on generalities so that it does not restrict the scope of application. In a vast country like the Congo, a detailed, precise and restrictive curriculum could not be enforced uniformly. An average curriculum must only be given, which may be adapted to different environments. It may be brought into practice under the direction of a teacher with a barely developed literary training, provided that he is truly earnest about his educational vocation. In primary schools established in centres and close to the teacher training colleges, the part played by literary education may be more important.. Here it relates to preparing the pupils for more advanced studies*."[56]

Schools in city centres or at central missions could also be given a second grade, where motivated pupils from the lower grade could continue their education. "*Pupils in contact with a European element will have a greater ambition to become educated; often their ascendants are in the employ of the Europeans and*

they will encourage their children to go to school."[57] Furthermore the curriculum clearly shows that the members of the commission were conscious of the fact that they were creating a number of problems themselves by arranging education in this way. Specifically selection, which really had a purely utilitarian objective, was approached with some concern. The authors assumed that everyone would not finally end up in those *études plus avancées* and that there would consequently be a kind of surplus of better-qualified young people. That was to be absorbed by ensuring that the training could also be useful for those people and that was possible by emphasising willingness to work and practical skills: *"Consequently they must be given an education that is useful in itself and that will prepare useful men in the native environment. The habit of regular activity shall be a valuable tool for all. The same importance must also be placed on practical exercises as in the rural schools.*"[58]

In addition these schools had to serve as preparation for further specialised studies. The pupils which started those would in any event have to work with Europeans and the brochure emphasised that they had to be prepared properly for that: "*The recommendation is to insist even more here on the respect due to authority, to the European residents and to their property. The headmaster would do good work by stimulating feelings of mutual assistance and cooperation by means of causeries* (rhetoric) *and written assignments. Group role-plays should be organised and aimed at the same objective. It is best if theoretical precepts are used to develop honesty and propriety; they give the ability to make prompt decisions and encourage self-esteem."*[59] Schools that continued beyond the usual two or three years provided in the curriculum, were called *école spéciale*. These schools were intended to educate people who could work in sectors for which too few white workers could be found: office clerks, teachers and craftsmen.

The main lines of the content of the curriculum for all these schools were also set down in this publication. The subsidies and inspection, active intervention by the government in this educational structure were considered here. In any event the comment added to the detailed content of the school curriculum is telling: "*Designed as they are, the curricula appear applicable in all schools. In cases of need it would nevertheless be permissible to deviate from them. The Government inspectors, in agreement with the missionary inspectors, shall decide on any changes to be made to the Curriculum. They will in any event ensure that the*

modifications would not be such as to remove specific sections of the curriculum or significantly to reduce the quantity of matter to be taught.""[60] This assessment follows almost directly from comments relating to the smooth application of the curriculum indicated in the account of De Jonghe's travels. In other words a significant amount of space was left for interpretation and the concrete execution and there was no absolute authority from the state with regard to the implementation of the curriculum. The cooperation and agreement of the missionary inspectors was required for that.

Consequently, the system of inspection also showed the considerable power to of the missions. It has already been stated that inspection and control had been the biggest problem in the realisation of general regulations. This is expressed in the concrete organisation. An official state inspection was introduced: one general inspectorate in Léopoldville, together with provincial inspectorates in every province (four at that time) and in the mandate regions. In addition, at least one missionary inspector was appointed per ecclesiastical circumscription. The state inspectors were responsible for direct inspection in the official schools for the Congolese. In the other Congolese schools the inspection was carried out in the first instance by the missionary-inspector, who would then have to report to the state inspectorate. In reality the official inspectorate did not amount to much: after administrative reforms in 1933 the department was reorganised to such an extent that only three regional inspectors remained in office in addition to the central chief inspector and his deputy.[61] Liesenborghs, who was (had been) a state inspector himself but was also clearly in the Catholic camp, wrote in this regard in 1940: *"It may be hoped that the establishment and organisation of the official educational inspection, which is an essential element for progress in the field we are concerned with, may be the object of special concern of the Colonial authorities. In the same way, the missionary inspectors must be chosen with extreme care and must receive suitable preparation for the delicate task entrusted to them*."[62] It is difficult to establish whether this really implied a very subtle criticism of the operation of the inspectorate. In any event it is clear that the missions had succeeded in integrating a buffer in the system which made it very difficult for the state to intervene directly in their education and schools.

What were the main accents in this curriculum? The basic subjects were religious education, arithmetic and reading. In addition most attention was given to so-called *leçons d'intuition*, intended to familiarise the pupils with the most

divergent subjects (parts of the body, flowers, tools, etc.) and which was based on question and answer patterns. In addition there was *causeries* (rhetoric) and the more specific subject *hygiène*, which were both to be considered *leçons d'élocution*. The following didactic guidelines were also given in the brochure: *"In general, the teacher shall start by a concrete and dramatised account. For example, he may choose a child, who becomes the hero of all the narratives and who sees and does everything the teacher wants the pupils to see and do. He shall increase the adventures in such a way as to give his stories new matters of interest. After the narrative, he shall proceed to an analysis and summary, graduating his questions in the same way as he does in intuition lessons.*"[63] In addition the subjects 'Singing' and 'Gymnastics' were also included in the curriculum.[64]

Two subjects must finally be mentioned separately. Remarkably enough the curriculum also provided a course in *Français* for the first year of the first grade, but it was optional. The brochure does not consider it in detail but references may be found here and there. The language in which teaching was given was already a problematic issue at this stage. De Jonghe had already stated in his article in *Congo* that the educational language used should be dependent on the concrete environment.[65] The reactions from the missionaries in the account of his travels also leaned that way. The proposed curriculum from 1925 assumed that the Congolese should be taught in their local language (*dialecte indigene*) insofar as possible. The *lingua franca* could replace that local dialect if it was close enough to it.[66] It was claimed that education in a European language was against all principles of educational theory. Teaching one of the Belgian national languages (as a part of the curriculum) was finally only foreseen in schools for the second grade. It was only considered obligatory for urban schools, but was optional for rural schools. The issue of the educational language was dealt with in a single sentence in the final curriculum from 1929: *"Education may only be taught in a native language or one of the national languages of Belgium*."[67] It may also be concluded from this that the freedom and space for interpretation for people in the field was extended considerably. However, a lot of confusion arose from the fact that the introductory remarks with the curriculum also stated: *"Even slightly developed literary education to children from rural regions would be of little use. It is sufficient to teach them reading, writing, arithmetic in their dialect*."[68] This only related to rural primary schools and the formulation does not seem to imply any obligation. In any event it is clear that French was not supported as the

educational language.

Furthermore, it is striking how much attention was actually spent on manual labour and agriculture. It seems to have been a foregone conclusion that the education of the Congolese would include a considerable amount of manual labour, in any event, regardless of the situation or specialisation of the schools. The principle in the curriculum was that at least one hour must be spent on manual labour each day (and as already mentioned a school day was no longer than four or five hours) and that was usually an agricultural activity. However, that requirement also had to be met in the more urban areas. For that reason considerable attention was paid in the text of the curriculum in relation to the material infrastructure which the schools had to provide.

In any event this was a first curriculum implemented generally and imposed on the schools from above. This was the first time the state acted in a regulating way even if we may reasonably assume that the catholic missions were able to exercise considerable influence via the administration which was almost completely of the Catholic persuasion. Looking at the composition of the Franck Commission is sufficient for this; seven of the eleven members were clearly of the Catholic persuasion. Four of them were direct representatives of the missions.[69] We may assume that there was a *de facto* consensus on the existence and content of this curriculum. After all, the missionaries had been involved to a great extent in defining the content. Explicit financing undertakings were concluded for the first time between missions and state. Moreover these undertakings were explicitly linked to the nationality condition and consequently implicitly to the Catholic character of the missions.

1.4. Application and consequences: quantitative development of education

Taken together these elements ensured a very favourable context for the missions. Consequently a considerable flow of money was quickly initiated from the state to the missions. Four million Belgian Francs were already allocated in subsidies in 1926, thirteen times the amount allocated in 1924.[70] Missionary education gradually expanded during the thirties. Quantitative data relating to the evolution of education must however be considered with care. That will be shown clearly from the overviews given below. It is predominately difficult to find correct, complete and general data for the period preceding the introduction of the conventions and regulations. Reference may be made in that context to the statistics from the N.I.S. (National Institute for Statistics) which did refer to the

situation of colonial education from 1926 but only gave a few general estimates in relation to Catholic and Protestant education.[71] In the edition of 1927-1928 reference was made to the agreements concluded (the De Jonghe conventions), but apart from that only a few very incomplete figures were given. The consequences of the De Jonghe conventions were already making themselves known, in the sense that the comment was made that no account was taken either of schools that no longer complied with the curriculum (i.e. *"rural schools for which the curriculum is limited to teaching the rudiments of reading and writing in addition to religious education"),* or with schools run by foreign missions.[72]

In 1938 the N.I.S. published detailed figures relating to colonial education for the first time. No data is available for a number of the war years after that and figures were only published on an annual basis from 1945. Other figures were given in the *Annuaires des missions* and in a number of independent articles in the specialised press.[73] Some of these figures are given in appendix 1. There are a lot of differences in the presentation and composition of the groups and/or data presented, which makes it exceptionally difficult to draw up general overviews over longer periods.

Even if their accuracy must be handled circumspectly, the overall trend that becomes apparent from these figures for the thirties is relatively clear. Catholic education, if it needs to be said, made a great jump forward. This must be related to a great extent to the huge increase in the available budget. As already mentioned this was the immediate effect of the conclusion of the De Jonghe conventions and that is again illustrated in the figures cited by Liesenborghs in this regard, from which it is clear that the share of the total colonial budget that was paid in educational subsidies from 1926 was one percent higher on average than in the previous decade. Where the share of subsidies had risen by 0,85 percent between 1912 and 1925 to 2,33% and was approximately 1,6% on average, it suddenly jumped to over 3% in 1926. Despite a reduction in the mid-thirties, their share continued to be almost 3% on average until the war.[74]

2. Further development of the educational system

2.1. The thirties

This school curriculum was quickly modified and a new version was written in 1938 but was only applied after the Second World War. Traces of correspondence between the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the minister for the Colonies Rubbens,[75] indicate that there was some insistence for modifications and

reform of the education available.[76] Following this insistence a certain Brother Melage was sent on a study trip, and this trip and the report he made about it were used to legitimise the draft of a new curriculum.[77] This draft planned the further division of the types of schools. Paradoxically two different directions were taken: on the one hand the further implementation of generalisation, on the other side specialisation. The minimum curriculum was simplified even further. In addition a so-called 'selected' second grade was introduced in addition to the ordinary, one in which the education would become more theoretical, where teaching would be given in French and where it would be possible to prepare for secondary education.

This draft was only applied after the Second World War.[78] In the meantime the development of the catholic mission schools continued unabated. The catholic authorities in the Congo strongly resisted anything that could break their monopoly of education.[79] This also indicates that they were conscious of the fact that this was an exceptional position, which could be attacked. In a previous study I have already stated that the demand for education outside the catholic network had already been on the agenda before the Second World War.[80] Yet at that time little could be seen of that in practice. With the exception of a few disparate initiatives, the monopoly of the missions remained intact. Nevertheless the decision-makers were considerably concerned in that period by possible initiatives against this monopoly, as is apparent, amongst others, from the correspondence within the administration. It had already been noted in the Parliamentary Commission for the Colonies that there was a lot of appreciation for the work provided by the missions but that an important marginal note should be made: *"It should be understood however that this adhesion in principle may not be considered a road to the monopolisation of education by the missions. It is our country's duty to seek and further develop the assistance which it receives from independent education in the colony. But this is only a part of its duty. It must on its part increase its personal initiatives for public instruction and must, while avoiding a spirit of competitiveness, pursue the development, which now seems in a terrible state there, of official education in addition to independent education.*"[81]

However for the time being the catholic missions could rely sufficiently on their entente with the colonial administration and secure their position of authority in that way. This position of authority could in theory be threatened on two fronts.

On the one hand there were the Protestant missions which had also been present in the colony from the beginning and had even taken the lead in the initial period in the evangelisation of the Belgian Congo. On the other hand there was the fear of the establishment of an official and neutral educational system that would drain some of the financial means available to institutions not under the influence of the church.

2.1.1. The Protestant threat …

In the first instance it appears that the Protestants were not really considered a great threat. They were sidelined by the De Jonghe conventions, which had actually also ensured that their presence in colonial education stagnated, while Catholic education grew exponentially. Although a *de iure* monopoly was never explicitly mentioned, this was certainly what the Catholic missions had considered. This is proven by the opposition to awarding equal rights, which Minister Godding had intended to introduce in relating to subsidies after the Second World War. The Protestant missions had, nonetheless, opposed the *de facto* discrimination against their people with relation to the Catholics long before the Second World War. The joint spokesman for the Protestant missions, the *Conférence des missions protestantes au Congo Belge*[82] had already expressed the wish, in the early thirties, to be recognised and treated on an equal basis with the Catholic missions. Correspondence on this matter makes it clear that the administration had, for a long time, taken the same line as the catholic missions and that they simply continued to refuse to remove the discrimination. In 1932 the then Minister for the Colonies Tschoffen[83], was confronted when visiting the Congo with a memorandum on behalf of the Protestants which asked for a review of the policies of the Belgian government with respect to the Protestant missions and their task in the colony. When the representative of the Protestants wanted to come and defend this memorandum personally to the Minister, in Brussels, he was, in fact, promptly referred to the head of the administration. The administration refused to review its position. The question was finally laid before the King himself in 1934, through Emery Ross, the chairman of the *International Missionary Council*.[84]

In internal memoranda Edouard De Jonghe strongly emphasised the fact that no obligation existed to subsidise the Protestant missions. The argument made by the Protestants, arising from the obligations set down in the Colonial Charter and the Charter of Berlin, was disregarded in the interpretation of the Colonial

administration, these texts only contained an obligation to encourage mission work in general. It could not in any way be inferred from this that an obligation existed to treat everyone involved in mission work in the same manner. The consideration of such questions or not was completely under national sovereignty. And although there was therefore absolutely no obligation, the government could change to supporting foreign (and therefore also Protestant) missions. But, as De Jonghe put it, the government had then to understand that it took a large risk: "*If we were to yield to these two desiderata, it would then result in us subsidising foreign missions. And such a policy could seriously compromise the Belgian influence on the Congo. Belgium and its national missionaries are not powerful enough to fight with equal weight against the combined forces of foreign educators. Our educational organisation is still rather weak and imperfect.*"[85]

2.1.2. … actually a foreign threat.

The administration, and particularly De Jonghe, was therefore clearly very apprehensive that Belgian sovereignty would suffer, even a considerable time after the Congo had been taken over by the Belgian state. Indeed, it did not seem illogical that a territory eighty times larger than Belgium was hard to defend against possible foreign interests or aggression. Moreover, the bond, which existed between the Protestant missions and the Anglo-Saxon world, only added to this distrust. Great Britain was interested in the Congolese territory from the first and this interest continued after the First World War. According to De Jonghe:"*The periodic blooming of similar movements is always to be feared in the Protestant milieus because the Anglo-Saxon Protestants cannot get away from three characteristics that form their origins, namely: Free examination of dogma, the scriptural basis of their moral education, i.e. the Old Testament where the prophets rail against the oppressors of the chosen people take a major place and finally, the spirit of opposition against the work of Leopold II which is still traditionally the case with the Anglo-Saxons.*"[86] It was sometimes embarrassingly clear that the local administration in the Congo also took a dismissive and even disapproving attitude towards the foreign missionaries. In a memo from 6 January 1931 the inspector-general for education wrote to the vice-governor-general: "*There would moreover be a means of freeing ourselves from the requests from the Protestant missions: introduce a condition for obtaining subsidies in teaching French and in French from the 3rd year. The majority of the Protestant missions are dissatisfied people without any culture and who shall never know any French.*"[87] We can also refer to the 'Belgianisation', which was

organised in Katanga, because of the considerable influence of the English language exercised there through the large *compagnies*.[88] In any case it was clear that the colony must remain free of foreign influences, and must receive as much Belgian influence as possible: *"The colonial government must affirm its right to reserve government subsidies only for those schools committed to teaching subjects that are loyal and faithful to Belgium."*[89]

2.1.3. Secularisation

We have already referred to the attitude of the permanent committee of (Catholic) heads of the missions in the Congo, from which the concern for the Catholic character of education is clearly shown. The continuation of a system of subsidised education was greatly preferred to a parallel network of official schools, even though the leadership was systematically entrusted to congregations of religious. Here too, the message was that the existing system could be put at risk by a turning of the political tide.[90] The government had to be discouraged from organising official education, populated by religious orders ("brothers"). The fact that the government at that moment, in 1919, had already asked four congregations of religious to lead official schools, was in itself alarming enough to decide: *"The government is gradually embarking on the road of public education."*[91]

This total freedom incidentally ensured that the missionaries opposed every form of interference. Inspection by authority was also considered a bad thing. The government must give them money and then leave them alone, trusting that education was in the hands of experts. It is very significant that this expertise in no way rested on any educational qualities. This was also stated quite plainly. If the government was to provide lay teachers, then these would place much too much emphasis on sound character from a theoretical and educational point of view of education (which in their eyes would come down to emancipated education). And that was just what the Congolese did not need: *"It is important to draw the government's attention to the excessive tendency to educational theory in some administrative minds who believe they can see the secret to new prosperity in the colony through education. Education should be encouraged, certainly, but it must be done so with care. (...) Uprooting the native from the soil and manual labour would be to ruin the Colony and commit the native to misery. Education is almost always educational theory at excess."*[92]

Thus, two movements were already visible before the Second World War. On the

one hand there was the increasing concern of the government, who went from giving absolute *carte blanche* to the missionaries, to a more programmatic attitude. This was logical, because the budgets also began to rise, and the motherland was groaning under an economic crisis. On the other hand, from the Catholic side, there was very conscious consideration of how to strengthen and maintain the position of power that had been built up. This monopolistic attitude was questioned by the Protestants above all, and to a lesser extent by the freethinkers. The fact that matters did not lead to open conflict was due to several factors, of which the first is certainly – and it must not be overlooked – the limited interest for the colony on the home front. Apart from that, every protest still bounced off the wall of Church and State, which worked together in union, not least because of an administration predominately made up of Catholics.

2.2. Reform of the curriculum of 1938

2.2.1. Reform

In addition to the political and economic necessities, of which the importance for the evolution of the educational system is not to be underestimated, there was naturally also the implementation of the content of the 1929 curriculum. Melage's report from 1936 contained a number of remarks concerning educational practice. Among these, it was pointed out that the curriculum taught at that time was above the capacity of the Congolese. As far as language education and mathematics lessons were concerned, both had to be more practical and concrete and one had to move away from the excessively theoretical concepts being taught, for the Africans did not understand them at all. After all, it was said they were intuitive beings, who reasoned instinctively. That did not mean that it should be assumed that the Africans could not be educated, that they were unable to do any studying. The few exceptions who made it to priest or *moniteur* proved that it could be done. The blame for the relative failure of education had to be sought in the content and interpretation of the curriculum. The curriculum applied was reported to place much too much emphasis on instruction instead of training. This message seems rather contradictory, but can probably be explained on the grounds of the more general point of view that the reporter made with respect to the Congolese or Africans. He did not consider them immediately equal to the whites. For example, whenever he talked about 'native' art, according to him too much value and meaning was ascribed to it. According to him the plastic art of the Congolese did not succeed in expressing feelings in a successful manner. What some people called expressionism, he just considered failure. The African

was, in his view, a born imitator and had no higher feelings or ability for abstract thought.[93] That this opinion was widespread, and also shared, for example, in the administration, is apparent from the statements that Depaepe and Van Rompaey collected.[94]

The newly developed curriculum was already introduced into the field in 1938. That is apparent because of, among other things, the fact that a circular was then sent, signed by governor-general Ryckmans and the *chef de service* of the education department Welvaert. That memo, addressed to the heads of the missions, asked that they should gain knowledge of the new project and to let him know by return whether they were in agreement or not. Clearly the first reason for the curriculum not being applied immediately can be found here: probably not everybody could or would simply agree to this text and in this way they drifted into the war period. Nonetheless, this text was known. In the thesis by van Steenberghen which has already been cited, a (partial) comparison is made between the texts of the 1925 project, the 1929 curriculum and the 1938 text. This last text is described as a "*rewriting of the brochure jaune which was provisionally tested and undoubtedly finalised then.*"[95] The ambiguous status of this new document is also evident from a remark of the scheutist father Maus in an article in *Congo*, at the end of 1938.[96] He first remarks that the *Gouvernement Général* had just published a new curriculum, and names the 1938 curriculum explicitly. At the same time he indicates a remark in a mission newspaper of 1936 from which it is apparent that there was already a new curriculum being applied then, 'as a replacement for the *Brochure Jaune*.[97] The phrasing used by Liesenborghs in 1940 makes it possible to deduct that this was not the case officially, and that a new curriculum would only officially come into force in 1948: "*The organisation currently established* (1929, JB) *still governs public education for the natives in the Belgian Congo. Some modifications to detail are currently planned. They have been pompously called a reform. This description is at least exaggerated as it apparently does not in any way effect the general economy of the system that will be studied in this article*."[98]

This remark could at that moment have been a correct evaluation of the facts but with hindsight this seems to be a sort of intermediate phase towards the post-war changes to the education system. What were the most important changes in this proposal, and how were they regarded? The most important changes were indicated in the circular to the heads of the missions. With regard to the duration

of the education and types of school, the duration of primary school education was kept to five years. A sixth, preparatory year was indeed created, for middle school education. Furthermore, the distinction between rural and urban schools was maintained, moreover with a new division into central and 'subsidiary' schools (dependent on the presence or absence of a mission). The education in the rural primary schools remained preferably 'restricted to generalities'. From the second grade a strengthening in existing curricula was provided for, as a preparation for the so-called *écoles moyennes* or middle schools, which now received a broader scope than the already existing *écoles spéciales*, where only administrative assistants were educated. These schools were now given a longer curriculum (four instead of three years), but that did not apply to the teacher training colleges where the fourth year was optional.

In theory these new provisions substantially lengthened the maximum school time; instead of a maximum of eight there was now a maximum of ten years.[99] But the intention was certainly not for this to be general for the whole population. The main point of attention of the curriculum reform was with the primary schools of the second grade. According to the new brochure the best pupils from the first grade in the rural schools, together with the pupils from the urban schools should be brought together here (consequently provision was literally made for a first selection in the rural schools, while that was not so for the town schools). There was, however, an important reservation: not everyone who began the second grade would succeed in getting into middle school education later. This was why it was necessary to make sure that the school would give good preparation for the others, who were expected to be the majority,[100] for a life that was supposed to be lived in the region of origin.[101] For those who succeeded in getting into the second grade, education was provided that was aimed at providing a good general development, on the one hand and to provide a direct preparation for concrete tasks on the other, which were described as *"junior office positions in the employ of administrative, industrial and commercial bodies in the Colony."*[102] And as far as the *écoles moyennes* were concerned it was assumed that the pupils who successfully proceeded to and finished at these schools, would come into common contact with Europeans. Consequently it was also necessary that they would look decent, and that they would have good deportment. They had to be Europeanised to a certain extent. They were then supposed to wear European clothes and eat at a table with a knife and fork.[103]

Girls' education was handled separately in the new brochure. That was really the most important difference with the 1929 curriculum. A certain differentiation between the curricula was created from which it seemed that education for girls would be systematically less broad than that for boys. For the first grade schools the boys were systematically referred to with the remark "*The same curriculum as for the boys' school, except for the following points,*" where then only the course on handicrafts was indicated, which was filled in differently. This was also the case in the first year of the second grade, with the understanding that for a number of subjects a more limited curriculum was provided for girls (*arithmétique, système métrique* and *leçons d'intuition*). In the second year that difference became more outspoken. For example boys had to learn to count to a thousand, girls only to one hundred; boys had to learn measures of area, girls did not… The French course also differed at that level, in the sense that a broader vocabulary had to be learned for the boys from the second year on so that they could be given certain courses (such as arithmetic) in French from the third year. In the third year of the second grade the difference became greater still and while yet a sixth preparatory course was organised for the boys, this was the end of the ride for most girls. Besides the more general system of middle schools for boys there was only the domestic studies school for girls, an education of three years consisting only of subjects that had to do with learning domestic skills. The teacher training college also had a separate section for girls and here a similar system as in primary education was being applied: for a number of subjects the curriculum for boys was indicated, for a number of courses (those regarded as difficult or 'literary') a more limited curriculum was provided.

2.2.2. Reactions

The scheutist father Albert Maus, who was known as a fervent advocate of the adaptation principle, was the only person who publicised a thorough analysis of the new curriculum, not coincidentally in the periodical *Congo*. His point of departure was that retaining and developing the difference between mass education and elite education was a very good thing. In this context he found it very good that the curriculum literally took over a number of principles from the 1929 curriculum. In fact he really regretted that the original text from 1924, directly based on the text of the *Phelps Stokes* report, was not implemented. According to him, this still contained the most crystal clear arguments for the civilising role of the school in Africa that could be found at that time. The following passage was the relevant one, as it appeared in the summarising article

in the periodical *Congo*: *"It would be futile to transport the Belgian educational organisation to Africa… The Congo requires a special educational organisation, properly adapted to the environment. In Belgium the school is predominately required to instruct. In the Congo it must above all educate… The principal aim of the educator must be gradually to improve native morals; this is more important than the dissemination of instruction itself… The formation of character through religious morals and customs of regular work must be given precedence in all schools over literary and scientific branches… Education must be limited to concepts which the natives may find useful in their economic environment… It must reach the greater majority of children*."[104] Elsewhere Maus stated that primary education of the Congolese had to comply with three qualifications: "*universal, uniform and in the native environment*".[105] Unfortunately the 1929 curriculum had posed far too high demands. Happily the new curriculum, according to Maus, simplified the syllabus of a number of subjects in the first grade. Concretely he referred to 'Grammar', 'Metric system', 'Drawing', the disappearance of French as a subject, the concretising of the arithmetic lessons, the expansion of 'Causeries' (rhetoric), and the introduction of 'Modelage' (modelling) lessons.

In the case of agriculture, however, he found just the opposite to be the case, and he found that it would be better that some theoretical lessons could be given in the lower grade, which was now almost completely limited to practical applications. Maus reasoned as follows: seeing that agriculture was traditionally a female occupation, the men were very contemptuous about it. The idea was to make agriculture more interesting by associating it with a certain reward in the form of one's own yield. Whether this was realistic is another matter. On the basis of the description which was used it seemed more to do with yields which in the first place would benefit the mission, and not directly the pupils themselves. Further, the author drew parallels between the intellectual level of the Congolese and that of the masses in nineteenth century European society; to show that too intellectual an education was to be avoided. Maus himself nevertheless considered himself a moderate, and as a conciliator between two extreme tendencies, of which the one stood for a much more theoretical, and the other for an education directed exclusively towards agriculture (the professor at Leuven Leplae was used as an example of this).[106]

The author again found it a good thing that the more intellectual education should

now be further limited to the schools situated in towns. The old brochure had also provided for this broadened education in the lower levels of the teacher training colleges, but since these were often situated in the countryside, it was really superfluous and even counterproductive to provide too complex subject matter. After all, most of the pupils there would surely not come into contact with Europeans. Even at that time the more advanced education was still systematically designed to meet European needs. Maus's criticism of the new curriculum was mainly directed towards the internal contradictions. On the one hand a noticeable strengthening of the subject content was provided (for a number of subjects more subject matter was provided, or the subject matter was much more comprehensive or better structured). On the other hand the curriculum proposed that the pupils should get an education which would make it possible for them to fit in with the traditional social structures. Maus considered this nonsense and he was probably right in this criticism. The double aims that were demanded of the second grade education were clearly contradictory.

His criticism was really not directed towards the basic principles of the curriculum. The option to make a distinction between mass and elite was not questioned, unlike the hybrid character of the second grade as it now existed, because this would preclude being able effectively to attain the goals set. Maus proposed to move a number of subjects from the second grade to the first and *vice versa*. Supplementary to this he also suggested for the new second grade to split *de facto* into a 'heavy' and a 'light' version. The light version had to follow on from the simple first grade, directed at the masses, the heavy version would then serve those regions (particularly the urbanised areas) where streaming the pupils towards higher education was more in line with expectations. The principle of selection was very close to Maus's heart here. To avoid as much waste (literally "*déchets*") as possible, the selection had to be applied as strictly as possible between the first and the second grade. Concomitant with that, the qualities reached by the pupils must be taken into account, but also the preset quotas. He did feel instinctively that such a selection mechanism would lead to problems: "*We will not be able to stop the rise of a schoolboy who has done 2 or 3 years of primary education, it will be even harder after a complete 5 year cycle.*" But the intended elite training must in any case remain limited to a certain (and limited, above all) number of people.

Objections to the hybrid system to be organised also came from others. The fact

that further education would be limited led to problems, as was said by scheutist fathers working in the province of Kasaï.[107] It was assumed that people would be attracted to the central schools and would try to avoid the subsidiary schools. As a result the school age would increase again, because in order to allow their children to go to a central school where there was more chance of further education, many people would let their children travel greater distances, so they would wait until they were old enough. Perhaps it is indeed significant that Maus represented an opinion quite different from the ones in Belgium; He assumed that the Congolese were fatalistic and obedient. If there was no selective education or further education for the people in the countryside, the people would learn to live with it, he supposed. If one only decided soon enough where someone was to be allowed to study, he would be satisfied with it: "*Seeing a rare opportunity for emancipation definitively escaping him he would leave it, undoubtedly a little discontent, but not bitter or demeaned*."[108]

These sorts of critical opinions about the school curriculum are important, for they remove the impression that the ones making the criticisms were progressives in the sense that would be used today (that they would assume the principle of the equality of blacks and whites). To quote Maus one last time, in his criticism of the curriculum for the teacher training colleges that went too far: "*We confess we do not understand why an increase in these studies was considered opportune. On the contrary it is known that the native teacher has a habit, by ostentation, of teaching the subject above the ability of the children and the prescriptions of the Curriculum and an excessively broad knowledge would only push them more onto this unfortunate path*."[109] Or concerning women and education: "*Woman has no position to search for in the European centres by virtue of knowledge acquired at school, but she is to follow her husband and this obligation is imposed on her as indisputable.*"[110] In the overview of the education system that was given by Liesenborghs in 1940 it certainly seemed that at that moment no changes had occurred following this new curriculum. He was also certainly of the opinion that not too many intellectuals should be educated, and above all that the production of 'waste' should be avoided in the more advanced second grade. In this text too, which for the rest was rather businesslike and neutral, the view appears that the white man, in this case a colonial administrator, had of the relations between colonists and Congolese: "*It is not manual work … that attracts young men. It is 'intellectual' work, that pays better, that allows them to strut about in beautiful clothes, to 'ape' the prestigious white, who fascinates them*."[111]

It sounded quite different in an article which appeared right after the Second World War in the colonists' periodical *Les Vétérans Coloniaux*. Van Riel, a member of the *Commission pour la Protection des Indigènes*, criticised the false propaganda that the Minister De Vleeschauwer[112] had made during the war, according to him, by publishing a brochure in which it was said that more than a million children went to school in the Congo. He added subtly that if someone who had the official statistics in his head should visit the Congolese bush, he would quickly accept the same opinion. "*In effect it is a fact that the term primary school evokes something in the mind of a European or an American that is entirely different to that present in the Congo, both with regard to local schools and the educational material, the worth of the instructor, the quality of the education. As one travels further from the centres, it is unfortunately too often the case that only rudimentary instruction is taught in the rural schools.*" The assumptions of the author were very different to that of the sources cited earlier: here he spoke of emancipation, a word that was very expressly taboo for the pre-war writers. That did not preclude that educational principles were to be modified to the primitive mentality, which he called 'prelogical'. Modern civilization had to use the means it had available in this. By means of education in a European language and the use of cinema and radio as educational aids, it was possible, as it were, to tow the primitive people out of their old state, "*separate from the major movements of human history*".[113]

2.3. Further political developments

After the Second World War the political tide turned, including at the ministry for the Colonies. The Catholic missions biggest fear since 1919, now became reality: in the post-war governments of national unity, a freethinking liberal, Robert Godding became Minister for the Colonies.[114] The decisions he took concerning colonial education, which must be mentioned here, were of a dual nature. Firstly, he changed the subsidy programme established by Louis Franck 20 years earlier. Subsidisation became possible for all missions, without having to satisfy the nationality requirement. Secondly, during his term in office, construction work began on the first official state schools for whites.

As far as the subsidisation policies are concerned, as mentioned earlier, a considerable effort had been made before the war to convince the Belgian government of the necessity to treat both trends equally. The Catholic missions, however, watched scrupulously and became defensive as soon as they suspected

their privileged position to be in danger. An expression of this is the (hilarious) description given in the biography of Pierre Ryckmans, afterwards known as the war governor of the Congo. In 1937, Ryckmans, a good Catholic, suggested taking measures in certain areas with relatively more Protestant families, to make it possible to organise enough Protestant schools. The Catholic camp promptly set up all possible means of resistance. Aid for Protestants was not legal (which was correct according to legal provisions, considering the nationality requirement) and, moreover, it was simply *not done*. The bishops argued the question to the minister for the Colonies and the King. Especially Mgr. de Hemptinne, bishop of Katanga, inflated the case until it took on the proportions of a conspiracy against Catholics.[115] Ryckmans finally had to back down, withdraw the announced funding and justify himself before the King and the Pope![116]

Matters that had inexorably met resistance from the Catholics at that point, seemed to work during the war. The Protestant Council was heard, by the socialist deputy Camille Huysmans among others, who did not fail to address certain issues.[117] After the war the pressure, where possible, became even bigger and the governments for national unity then complied with the Protestant demands. Godding adapted the regulations for subsidies in such a way that 'nationality requirements' evolved into 'sufficient guarantees for the national character of the education'.[118] The Protestant missions could satisfy these new conditions far more easily. As far as the arrangement of neutral education is concerned, Godding took an important step, even though the missions did not contest the decision. For the first time, after all, the government was not limiting itself to the establishment of schools, but was actively engaged in the organisation of education. To populate these schools with lay teachers, Godding reached an agreement with the minister of education. In this way it became possible solely to allow staff in the Belgian state education to transfer to the 'neutral' education in the Congo.[119] The 'school funding controversy' about education in the Belgian Congo, which broke out from then on, has been discussed extensively elsewhere.[120] These would reach its zenith during Auguste Buisseret's term in office in the red-blue coalition of 1954 to 1958.[121]

There is no intention of considering the details of all these events here. What is important here are the consequences of this school funding controversy on the political decision-making concerning education. On the Catholic side there was heavy mobilisation from that time. I have already referred to the particularly

energetic reactions from the missionaries towards political decision-making and the allergy they displayed against any infringement of the absolute freedom given to them from the beginning in their missionary activity in the colony. Both the bishops in the Congo and their representatives in Belgium took up the cause for the mission schools, though it must be said that there was an important difference of nuance between the reactions of both groups. The bishops continued to demand complete freedom concerning education. The government was not permitted to intervene; it was that simple. For the political representatives in Belgium such a radical stance was far less obvious. They had to take the balance of Belgian politics into account and could not start from a protected area of authority, as in the Congo.

2.4. The new curriculum of 1948[122]

The 1938 curriculum was consequently never actually enforced. Van Hove suggested that the Service for Education of the General Administration made a new proposal in 1945, and that this proposal was enforced by the departments in Brussels, becoming effective on 1 January 1948. Not much is known of the circumstances under which this new, or at least adapted curriculum was realised. Its introduction was paired with a certain dissatisfaction from the missionaries, and there was a disagreement between the more progressively minded wing of the Catholic Church and the conservative circles inside the missions. The opinions had, however, been evolving since the thirties, even in the missions. Someone like Mortier, who was still very averse to the establishment of higher education in the thirties, would now argue for such a possibility.[123]

In August 1948 the new school curriculum came into force. The norms for the establishment of schools became considerably stricter and state inspection was expanded. The curriculum was further expanded and space was made for secondary education, following the Belgian model. It is certain that the government's grasp was effectively increased: inspection was expanded and subsidisation was subjected to stricter regulation. The mission superiors in the Congo immediately started to lobby against the, in their opinion, excessively far-reaching influence the government was acquiring over the missionaries. They demanded the minister to grant Catholic education a special status, comparable to the 'accepted education' in Belgium. The Protestants should of course not receive the same status. From 1950 the Catholics had more room for their demands, under the homogeneous CVP governments of Duvieusart, Pholien and

Van Houtte. The ministers for the Colonies Wigny[124] and Dequae[125] would also have to take into account the constant demands from the camp of the missionaries on the one hand, and the attentive and close inspection from the united opposition on the other.[126] In 1952 a new adjustment of the curriculum was introduced, which did partly answer the complaints of the Catholic missions. However, there was not much actual change as far as curriculum content was concerned.

2.4.1. Reform

Kita sees two fundamental characteristics in the reform of 1948. The map of the elite education was now drawn (as had already been the case partially in 1938), and the selection mechanisms were put in place. The latter element was already in place in 1938. The separation of the various levels was carried through in the teacher training, which the teaching staff had to participate in for the various types of schools.[127] The volume of school regulation increased considerably: as well as general regulations, separate brochures were published with regulations for boys and girls schools respectively.[128] In the brochure with general regulations, information concerning the new division of the education system was given. Concerning boys' education, the principle of the double aim was again expounded (general education and preparatory for further studies). This took the fact into account that there had to be a diversification at a certain point, where a clear choice had to be made between final education and preparatory education. In 1938 the idea was launched for a more thorough education in the second grade for possible further studies. This, however, would not at that time have led to a separation of the curricula. This separation was now carried out. This implied that after two years of primary education, the decision would be taken whether the students could continue studying or not.

As Kita expressed it, these students were being conditioned for a life in the fields. The official text posited that the emphasis in the second grade should, more than elsewhere, be on farming activity, and on the development of willingness to work. The essence of this education should lie, the text went on, in the formation of an adapted mentality, more than in learning practical skills. Whether it be farming or craft activities, the intention was not to train specialists in the given discipline, but to instil "*le goût et l'habitude du travail manuel*". Furthermore, it was very emphatically stated that the teachers should engrain the conviction in the students that their work was as valuable as any other.[129]

Concerning the ‘selected’ second grade (the classes the better pupils were sent to) far less explanation was given. It was stated that manual labour need not receive so much attention as in the ordinary second grade, but should none the less not be forgotten. The schools with this kind of second grade should preferably be run as boarding schools, unless they were situated in sufficiently populated centres that would attract enough children from the area. A quota restriction was also introduced, with a selection procedure in two phases: the first assessment of the suitability of the students to go on was in the hands of the missionaries who were authorised for the inspection of the schools involved. A second selection was carried out on the basis of an entrance examination. The results of this had to be presented to the missionary-inspector, and then the provincial inspector, *“with a view to verifying the importance of the quota*“, upon whom the provincial governor would exercise another inspection. The possibility of opening so-called *classes de liaison* was left available, in case there should be a need of it, to allow children to go from the normal second grade to the ‘selected’ second grade. All together, the choice made after the first grade seems to have been almost entirely irreversible.[130]

2.4.2. Types of education offered

In addition to primary education a more extensive range of training subjects were now offered, the difference in level between these varied, which was also the intention. It is not easy to find the way in this after the facts; the following overview is mainly based on the description given in the curriculum brochures.

Two education courses were provided in the curriculum:

– the *cours d’apprentissage pédagogique*, lasting two years, was intended to resolve the lack of teachers at that time insofar as possible. The entry conditions were: completion of at least two years of education in the second grade (ordinary or selective) and being considered old enough to be put in front of a class. People who had completed this training were consequently generally placed in classes in the first grade of primary education.

– the *école de moniteurs*, lasting three years, was intended to deliver teachers for the first grade and the ordinary second grade but due to the shortage of people this curriculum was temporarily also extended to the selective second grade. Entry depended on completion of a selective second grade, followed by the fourth preparatory year. Emphasis was again placed on manual labour and agriculture in the curriculum for this course.

In addition a number of other types of schools were also operational:
– *écoles pour auxiliaires*, lasting two years, accessible for anyone who had completed the second year of the ordinary second grade. The aim of this school was to train lower office workers or members of staff. The brochure described the curriculum itself as follows: *"The curriculum of studies shall provide pupils with general knowledge skills without pretension but sturdy; It will initiate them into the principal organisation and practice of various intellectual professions of local interest which may be offered to them."* The theory consequently also had to be limited to a minimum in favour of practical skills.[131]
– *écoles moyennes*, lasting four years, were also accessible for those who had followed four years of the second grade of primary education. They aimed slightly higher than the schools of the previous type: "*An education likely to provide pupils with a satisfactory general training and efficient preparation for the practice of occupations of junior office employment*." A number of sentences from the 1938 curriculum were copied, for example in relation to contact with Europeans and the rules arising from that in relation to the pupils' behaviour. Manual labour also remained mentioned here as an important factor in the education.

The *écoles secondaires* were one step higher and were an innovation in comparison to 1938. This related to a cycle of education of six years and the intent, at least as stated in the brochure, was resolutely oriented to the future. Four aims were listed:
1. providing a good general education
2. making the majority of pupils able to gain access to what were described as "*des emplois intellectuels intéressants*"
3. preparing a proportion of the pupils for higher education "*de développement modeste*"[132]
4. preparing an elite of pupils for university education that was to be established once circumstances allowed it.[133]

Considering that this relates to a true innovation a little more explanation was provided. This illustrated the considerable circumspection with which this new chapter in educational development was initiated. The emphasis was on the fact that the further educational opportunities, for which this type of education could be the preparation, did not exist at that time. The foundation of higher and university education even depended on the existence of a solid secondary

education. In short, the gradualism, which had really been the guiding principle in the Belgian attitude towards the colony and its emancipation since the Second World War, could be found completely in this. Finally secondary vocational education and adult education was also included in the curriculum.

This organisation only related to education for boys. A similar but more limited scope was drafted for the girls. Although this curriculum brochure started the chapter on girls' education by emphasising its importance the possibilities offered to them were considerably more restricted than those offered to the boys. Following tradition reference was made to native traditions and culture as an explanation and also to the less developed receptiveness of the girls in comparison to the boys even if it is not clear what that meant exactly. Like the boys the girls were given primary education made up of two grades. The first grade was similar to that in the boys' education, the second grade was new however. There was no use in making a distinction with the girls between an ordinary and selective grade. The reasons just mentioned played a part in that. In addition the main objective of girls' education was to train good mothers and housewives, who would still have a minimum of general knowledge. A further detailed intellectual development was not really mentioned in the curriculum.

The main form of so-called post-primary education, accessible to young women, remained the *école ménagère*. The entrance conditions, set for this type of school, give away to some extent how flexibly girls' education was approached. As a general rule the condition was set that at least five years of primary education had to have been completed to be allowed entry. But, as many girls only started school at an older age, a transition was made possible for those who were slightly older after the first grade of primary school. The *école ménagère* itself comprised three years and almost exclusively offered practical subjects. Practical skills and strong moral principles were the main objectives of this education. In addition educational training was provided at two different levels, as for the boys. The *cours d'apprentissage pédagogique* and the *écoles de monitrices* worked in a similar way as their male counterparts, naturally under reserve of the necessary modifications to content. These courses were for the same duration.

In accordance with the 1938 curriculum a more complex regulation was stipulated for the use of language in education than was the case in the original curriculum. One *langue véhiculaire* and one or more languages to be taught were set for each level of education. That indicates that there was still no unanimity in

relation to the use of language: the *linguae francae* and *idioms locales* were still being debated, and *souplesse* (flexibility) in application was still the much-used term in these texts. A resolute choice was made with both the boys and girls for the native language in primary education. French was much more present than before: from the first grade in urban primary education it was authorised as an optional second language. From the second grade it was introduced as an obligatory second language. The explanation given indicates the extent to which the new curriculum was already a balancing exercise, under pressure of the growing awareness of the Congolese. Moreover it is representative of the ambiguity in the attitude of the colonial authorities in relation to this social development: "*By mercilessly eliminating French from the 2nd grade rural primary school, we shall reduce the value of the education given there in the eyes of the Blacks; ultimately there could only be advantages to teaching our future citizens or village craftsmen some notions of a language which will give them the impression of social advancement and which would moreover form a true link between the European and the native. It goes without saying that the French course given here would only give a very modest development.*" This quotation not only expresses the intrinsic reticence to allow the population to 'develop' further but also the counterpart to that or the concern to keep that same population calm and not to antagonise them unnecessarily. Finally this statement also shows how limited the abilities of the Congolese were still considered at a time when striving for emancipation was gradually gaining shape. They were given a little French, under the assumption that this would keep them satisfied, while the intention was clearly to prevent large numbers of them acquiring sufficient knowledge and continuing their studies.

2.4.3. Reception of the curriculum

The highlights of the 1948 curriculum are consequently the development of post –primary or secondary education and the doubled second grade in primary education. The ideas of Albert Maus, already mentioned, again resurfaced here and there are indications that the text of the curriculum could also actually have been influenced by him.[134] Critical considerations were already being formulated at the time it appeared in relation to the selection process. Amongst others from Felix Scalais, the bishop of Leopoldville, who remarked that a doubled second grade was superfluous. Scalais was much more reserved and thought that primary education should also continue to provide real elementary education. He was moreover convinced that the system in which a uniform second

grade was implemented, had worked, contrary to the claims in the new brochure. The existence of so-called ‘relegates’ was minimised and he emphasised that a further generalisation of elementary primary education could only resolve that problem. Putting this system into practice seemed rather infeasible. There was the bureaucratic section of the proposed procedure, the psychological unrest and disruption it would cause with the unselected and the excessively young age at which the selection had to take place. Finally those selected would also have to cover too great a distance if they wanted to attend a school with a selective grade.[135] In this and in his own opinion he agreed with the comments of the bishops in the Congo, who had already considered the curriculum reforms in preparation in 1945. They had already argued for the preservation of the five-year structure, divided over two grades. However their report only stated with regard to selection that it should either be done at the end of primary education or even a little earlier but then in consultation with the Department of Education. The minutes of the meetings moreover stated that the bishops disagreed amongst themselves in relation to the correct moment at which the selection should be carried out. Some wanted to wait until the end of primary school, others preferred to see selection carried out sooner.[136] Hence the rather confusing conclusion, which was clearly cited by Scalais a few years later in support of his own opinion.

However, in any event, Mgr. Mels agreed with Scalais.[137] He also spoke out for a less utilitarian educational system in primary school and for postponing selection. He specifically felt that the new system would ensure that the central schools would invest more and more in primary education. That would be both a fatal blow to the rural schools (precisely the specialism of the Catholic missions) and remove the desire from pupils to return to the place of their birth. Which would consequently result in an even larger group of *déclassés*.[138] That was precisely one of the major points criticised in the previous curriculum. Mels already considered a primary school that wanted to educate people ‘for life’ as a utilitarian school, which clearly defines his criticism somewhat better. Paul Coppens, professor at Leuven University, was also extremely critical with regard to doubling the second grade and the early selection time.[139] That would even be too early in Europe, so it was definitely also the case in the Congo. He also remarked that the doubling and consequential increased complexity of the curriculum would be continued in post-primary education. A distinction was also made here between general and special education and that also only caused more difficulties. The criticism he voiced would also be formulated later by Pierre Kita:

Coppens talked of "*ces subtils compartimentations*", which was confirmed by Kita when he noted that "*This selection would, in fact, introduce social segregation. (...) The colonial will to stratify Congolese society would find support from the educational organisation in this way from 1948*."[140l] A few sections of education suffered in that development. In a recent study Kita claimed that the *écoles d'auxiliaires* and *écoles d'apprentissage pédagogique* established in it were less developed forms of education than their respective counterparts, the *écoles moyennes* and *écoles normales*, which could consequently be seen to fit perfectly in the framework of a stratification strategy or at least to be based on a strongly imperialistic inspiration.[141]

2.5. Further development of the curriculum after 1948

2.5.1. The Plan Décennal

Many authors speak of the 1948 curriculum in the same breath as the 'ten year plan' (fully titled the *Plan Décennal pour le développement économique et social du Congo Belge)* that was announced and published by the minister for the colonies Wigny in 1949.[142] However, it is not the case that the educational restructuration came about in the framework of the ten-year plan. There was one chapter of the plan dedicated to education, in the context of the section on social development.[143] In the framework of that plan a number of statements could be noted that made the government's aims and attitude towards the missionaries clear. Cooperation with the missions, it was estimated, saved the treasury 600 million franks annually, when compared to the price of working exclusively with lay staff. It was further argued that higher education needed development, as well as education for girls in general. The ten-year plan called unequivocally for education in French, although that privilege was saved for the elite.[144] The introduction to the chapter concerned also repeatedly emphasised that the economic situation of the colony in the post war period made further expansion of the education network a vital necessity. Even though it was said that the education of young people until then had been put far too much in the perspective of the expected economic return, the arguments in reply were very clear: the general dissemination of education would ensure that the population's standard of living would increase noticeably and would make that population more prepared to deliver economic efforts as well as generating higher incomes; mass education would increase the productivity of the entire population; industrial expansion was being held back by a lack of qualified staff; the curricula that were considered by the government (in the framework of the ten-year plan), presupposed a large

number of specifically trained help. The text clearly stated: "*The educational curriculum is intended gradually to fulfil these needs created by the Ten-year Plan itself*."[145] Concretely the plan especially looked forward to additional financial means. Around 7 % of the total budget, almost two thousand million Belgian franks, went to the educational section.[146] But the plan did not interfere with the educational content. The most significant concrete aim was the substantial expansion of the number of schools, more specifically the technical and vocational schools.

2.5.2. The 1952 curriculum

Besides the considerations on content Mels, Scalais, and many other church dignitaries also voiced a lot of politically charged criticism on the 1948 curriculum. The protection of their own position was often talked of and particularly the stipulations concerning subsidisation and inspection could raise tempers in that context. Criticism from the colony was also passed on more and more systematically to the metropolis and, in a context of ideological oppositions and political mobilisation, the new school curriculum, along with other elements, arrived in the currents surrounding the Royal Question and the Belgian school funding controversy. In the meantime the local population had become aware of the educational issue. From the end of the forties the demand for officially neutral education for the Congolese began to develop very clearly. Now this also became visible in the colony where the Congolese were represented, to a limited degree, in the provincial and government councils.[147]

Auguste Buisseret, who would conduct a very active education policy from 1954 onwards, already noted in 1947 that the Congolese asked him personally during a senatorial mission in the colony for the organisation of a "*secular education for the natives*".[148] The pressure grew together with the increasing consciousness of the Congolese population. The left, in the opposition, did not refrain from eagerly playing to this.[149] Buisseret himself would also switch to a higher gear later. Where Godding's action was limited to equal rights for Catholics and Protestants and the creation of some secular schools for whites it was clear from the start that Buisseret had principles that would have much further reaching consequences. His judgement in the report of the senatorial mission left no doubt about that. In it he gave candid criticism of the government's policy there. His analysis is familiar to the ears of the present day reader. He branded the policy that was followed a selective and controlled transfer of knowledge. The Belgians

taught the Congolese what they wanted to teach them and what was needed in the interests of colonisation. The existing education was not sufficiently inspected and the weaker groups in the population, namely the girls, were generally just left to their fate. In the same report he said explicitly that it was time the government finally showed some real initiative and that the role of the missions needed to be limited: *"Finally, we hope to reach a monopoly of state education for black secular people above the level of minor degree of the middle schools. In any event, we will announce that the right of the Blacks in the Congo to access the higher middle culture and the university courses is a right for pupils with the required talents and skills. But primarily, as for the education of administrative assistants and native chiefs, it is a matter that interests public authority and involves its responsibility. It cannot be left to competitions that could risk to lower the educational level and to submit, in fact, the leading black elite to unilateral influences."*[150]

After the Belgian elections of June 1950, that brought a homogenous catholic government to power, the bishops in the Congo got the chance to apply themselves much more freely to their complaints about the challenged educational restructuration. And the Catholic camp organised itself immediately: in 1951 the synod of bishops decided to set up a permanent consultative body towards the government, the *Comité Permanent des Ordinaires,* and more specifically concerning educational opportunities, the *Bureau de l'Enseignement Catholique.* These matters would lead to a number of modifications to the 1948 curriculum, made by the Catholic ministers for the colonies, Pierre Wigny and Andries Dequae. Albert Brys, another Scheutist, played an important role in the organisation and mobilisation within Catholic missionary education after the Second World War.[151] As the founder of the *Centre d'études, de documentation et d'informations congolaises* he also coordinated a large part of the demands and complaints from the missionaries in the field and was one of the contact points with the authorities. In the extensive documentation remaining of the *Centre* several traces can be found of criticism and lobbying formulated to the ministers concerning the curricula.[152] A first set of modifications was made by Wigny in the form of an appendix to the 1948 convention. These modifications did not have any real consequences with regard to content. The disagreement over the new clauses was conditioned much more by politics than by content and the modifications should also be situated in line with this. The period allowed to the missions to comply with these new clauses and consequently to be able to keep

their subsidies, was not reduced.[153] The job description of the inspection, that is the state inspection, was also heavily negotiated although it is unclear exactly what changes were brought about in this by Wigny.[154] With regard to the selection, the main stumbling block in terms of content, the transition between the two types of second grade was made somewhat more flexible in 1949. In practice this meant that students who wanted to go from the ordinary to the specialised grade would have to repeat a year, which did not constitute a solution in the eyes of the missionaries.[155] They thought it much better to unify the second grade again with the addition of a preparatory year in relation to secondary education.[156]

In a letter Brys himself announced his audience with Dequae in 1952 concerning the future policy the government would follow in terms of education. During this the minister is said to have assured him that the state would only set up its own schools in areas where missionaries could not manage and apart from this would only concentrate on some institutions for specialised education.[157] The new convention, which had been sought after since Wigny had been minister, arrived in 1952. The most important differences in comparison to 1948 can be summarised as follows. In primary education the selective grade was kept but a sixth and seventh year were introduced alongside it. These supplementary years were given a function in the framework of a more shaded form of selection. From then on there were three different possibilities for dividing primary education:
– either the students went from the first grade to the selected second grade, as before;
– or they went from the first or second grade to the ordinary second grade, in which case the principle was still that they would repeat the year in the selected grade;
– or they could be selected after the third and last year of the ordinary second grade and would then complete a sixth and seventh year in which subject matter was taught corresponding to the third and fourth year in the selected second grade.

The so-called ‘quota system’ of the students remained the prerogative of the missionaries themselves in the first instance, over which the government inspection only had a kind of judicial review.[158]

The remaining changes of content were generally smaller and less noticeable. In the section on primary education there was one noticeable passage added that

stated that primary education, although mainly a way of making a rough first selection, need not strive for a strictly utilitarian purpose. After which there was, strangely enough, reference to particular aesthetic principles that should be taught to the young Congolese.[159] Furthermore, extra attention was also requested for the technical education that students could undertake after the ordinary second grade. It may be deduced from the following passage that there were problems with the psychological effects of selection on the Congolese: "*No opportunity may be missed to emphasise the value of the professions and the professional education institutions for which the ordinary second grade schools constitute a preparation.*" With a by now classical pragmatism it was stated that this could be solved without much trouble: "*As an example natives could be referred to – preferably those from the region or those known to the pupils – who enjoy a certain level of prestige or are considered as having succeeded in life even though they did not attend secondary schools. In any event comparisons between the careers of those who left secondary education to those who only completed primary education or only received summary professional training must be systematically avoided.*"[160]

The girls now also received a selected second grade in primary education, and, witness to the changing customs and growing independence of the Congolese, the first *écoles d'auxiliaires* for girls were provided, which were to prepare them for such jobs as *office employee, shop assistant, cashier.* This training could be followed after primary school, as a modest level of education was sufficient for the companies, according to the curriculum.[161] The evolution of the attitude towards the French language in education is also striking. It is true that the discussion remained over the large amount of diversity concerning the use of language in education and particularly the relative importance of the use of European languages as opposed to native languages. But a newly added paragraph stated: "*The principal objective we must attend to in this field relates to teaching the subject matter stipulated by the curricula for French fully and effectively in the schools*", which clearly indicated the increasing need to learn French.[162] A final innovation of importance was the presence of *abbé-inspecteurs* in the regulation, besides the traditional *inspecteurs-missionnaires.* The church education in the colony had in the meantime evolved to such a degree that Congolese priests could be sent out who could also work in education. That was a logical progression: over a long period of time the seminaries and major seminaries had been the only form of education on the same level as Belgium

secondary school education.

A number of cases in this new brochure clearly betrayed the increasing 'presence' of the Congolese in their own society. From the end of the forties the so-called *évolués* began to receive a voice in government institutions (provincial councils, albeit in a purely consultative role) and in the press.[163] From 1945, the 'evolved' Congolese could voice their opinions and the fruits of their pens in *La Voix du Congolais*, even if there was an editing council to ensure that what was published was not offensive to the Belgian colonisers. They could undoubtedly make a number of demands heard which would then influence the changes recorded here in some way. The growing presence of the Congolese within the Catholic Church undoubtedly played a role in this as well. It is likely that everybody was not as sympathetic, but there really were missionaries who listened to the demands of the Congolese.[164] With regard to the content of the education, as stipulated in the 1948 brochures, nothing was mentioned.

2.5.3. Buisseret

Two years later the political roles in the metropolis were reversed. The CVP-government lost the elections, in the middle of the school funding controversy. In the red-blue coalition that came to power, under the leadership of the socialist Van Acker, the liberal Auguste Buisseret of Liege received the Colonies portfolio. In fact state intervention really only took shape during his four years as minister. From that moment on the government would take systematic initiatives for instituting and providing education. We can say that the most important achievements lay in two fields. Firstly, there was a significant expansion of the school population, although it is still hard to place a precise figure on this. Based on N.I.S figures it seems that between 1954 and 1958 the increase in the number of students was approximately 400 000. This was an increase by one third.[165] Secondly, the availability of education increased in several ways. Buisseret removed race segregation, among other things by introducing a transfer programme that would allow the Congolese to go to school with European children. In September 1955 the first interracial grammar schools were opened, in Leopoldville, Elisabethville and Luluaburg. This effort was continued over the following years and more new school complexes were opened, dispersed across the country.

In addition it was emphasized that higher education must be made accessible to everyone. However, the initiative for establishing higher (university) education

did not come from Buisseret. The plans for a Catholic university had already progressed a long way when he became minister and he had moreover formerly shown a very dismissive attitude to this initiative. The Lovanium university in Leopoldville opened its doors in 1954 and was followed a year later by the 'free-thinking' university in Elisabethville.[166] The figures publicised on this subject clearly show that participation of the black population in higher education remained minimal until the end of the colonial period.[167] This should not be surprising moreover as there was still insufficient secondary education available. The impulse for the development of a real secondary education was only put on the curriculum in 1948, six years before Buisseret came into office. An attempt was also made at qualitative modernisation, in official education at least (in a first period there was also talk of secular education, *enseignement laïc*). This came down to a generalised introduction of the Belgian curriculum, including French as the educational language. It seems that Buisseret realised that the position of the Catholic Church in the colony was much to powerful to confront directly and, for this reason, attempted to create a parallel education circuit. His experience had shown that the representatives of the missions resisted far-reaching attempts to interfere with the work of their missionaries. Their freedom was sacred to them. All events between 1954 and 1956, that are known as 'the school funding controversy in the Belgian Congo', had convinced him sufficiently of this.

In a nutshell it can be stated that this school funding controversy related to the fact that a fairly abrupt and particularly public end was made to the position of absolute power the Catholics had had in colonial education. The creation of an official network of schools over a very short period, together with the very public criticism and sometimes-aggressive policy of the administration often caused very strong criticism from the Catholic missionaries. Yet it can be said that Buisseret himself rarely abandoned the consensus model, that was also used as a crucial analysis model in the Belgian school funding controversy. Several commentators have said that this school funding controversy was more a battle of words than on the field. Buisseret did not touch the content of the curricula for independent education either, at least not directly. The discussions mainly centred on administrative badgering, subsidising regulations and more general ideological oppositions. Yet the influence of state intervention was not limited to the existence of its own mini-educational system in the shade of the giant that was missionary education. Kita has emphasised that in places where both were available a very clear influence was seen from the state schools (he mentions the

métropolisation of education). The independent schools took over the curriculum of the neutral schools by necessity since they held such a great appeal to the city's population.[168] The fact that Buisseret's approach had changed is illustrated by the fact that the independent subsidised (meaning 'Catholic') schools were invited to accept this curriculum in a circular letter of 17 September 1956, but no obligation was put on this since this would have infringed on the missions' cherished freedom.[169]

2.6. Quantitative data on education after the Second World War

2.6.1. Sources

As has been said several times already it remains difficult to quote precise numbers with reference to colonial education. Here again the N.I.S. statistics are referred to, which give a more complete picture for this period than for the pre-war period.[170] When reading this table it is important to bear in mind that four different types of schools are under consideration here:
– official state education, that was in principle maintained entirely by the state;
– 'congregational' education, referring to official schools under the direction of the missionaries;
– subsidised education, which should in principle include the Protestant missions;
– non-subsidised education, which should be a collection of company schools, private schools and mission schools that did not fulfil the subsidy requirements.

As far as the war period is concerned it is probably useful to add the numbers that were published in the *Plan Décennal* tothese statistics.[171] They show an evolution between 1930 and 1948, and so exactly cover the period which roughly coincides with the application of the first school conventions. The conventions, which were signed from 1925-1926, did indeed have an application field of twenty years, but we have already stated already that this period was somewhat extended due to the war. The figures in this survey are divided into three categories:
– official schools,
– subsidised schools
– 'Independent', so actually private schools.

2.6.2. Trends

The most noticeable trends to be observed in these data series are the following: from the *Plan Décennal* figures it seems that the increase in the number of students in the forties is mainly due to subsidised education. This is mainly

Catholic missionary education, but between 1945 and 1948 there is quite a steep increase in the number of schools as well as the number of students, that can only be explained by a change in the subsidy regulations, by which more Protestant schools are included in these numbers. It is noticeable that the school network stagnates in the period 1940-1948. This is probably the result of the politics of abstinence taken on by the government, as far as organising schools was concerned.[172] In addition the unsubsidised schools also develop strangely enough, but much less than the subsidised schools that had caught up a significant amount of their arrears by 1948. The difference in the number of schools and, as a result, the average number of students per school is striking in this. A small comparison, on the basis of the *Plan Décennal* figures:[173]

P.E. (primary education)	number of schools 1940	number of students 1940	average st/school 1940	number of schools 1948	number of students 1948	average st/school 1948
official schools	7	3 624	518	5	3 464	693
subsid. Schools	5 096	243 361	48	8 001	406 652	51
independent schools	17 910	463 950	26	19 072	513 049	27

Table 1 – Average number of students per school in the different networks, 1940-1948.

The evolution of the period between 1948 and 1958 can be seen clearly in the N.I.S. statistics.[174] The official education for the Congolese grew exponentially from 1948. Over a period of ten years it went from 11 to 225 institutions. I already determined in an earlier study that the most noticeable post war trend was the regression of unsubsidised education. This regression is probably to be explained for a large part by the changed subsidy regulations, since the number of students and schools peaks directly following the war years (1947) and the regression is most outspoken during the five following years (1948-1953). From 515 000 students and slightly over 19 000 schools in 1947 it went to approximately 370 000 students and 12 000 schools in the fifties. Consequently it is also clear that the quantitative expansion of subsidised education was not slowed under Buisseret, despite all real or imagined opposition on financial and material grounds.

2.6.3. After independence

Finally, a third set of numbers is placed beside this, dating from directly after the independence and collected by the *Bureau de l'Enseignement Catholique*.[175] These figures already form a transition to the third chapter, as they take data for the entire country and for the region of Coquilhatville (now Mbandaka), which shall be focussed on further. They also form the final piece of

this section since it concerns figures from directly after independence, that continue where the preceding statistics stop and are then, in a certain sense, to be regarded as the quantitative result of colonial education policy.

This final set of figures gives an image of the state of Congolese education between 1962 and 1963, a few years after independence. That is the time of the first educational restructuring within the independent republic of Congo. Namely, the restructuration of the secondary education beginning in the school year 1961-1962, with the most distinguishing characteristic being the introduction of the *cycle d'orientation*.[176] The structure of primary education was unchanged at that time. The image given here still shows a great dominance of Catholic education: approximately 75% of all students were in what is described as "*le réseau catholique*".[177]

NOTES

[1] This chapter is based on my article "De rol van de staat in de onderwijsorganisatie in Belgisch Kongo (1908-1958)", published in Boekholt, P., Van Crombrugge, H., Dodde, N.L. & Tyssens, J. (2003). *Tweehonderd jaar onderwijs en de zorg van de Staat, Jaarboek voor de geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs 2002*. Assen: Van Gorcum. p. 185-203.

[2] MSC is the official abbreviation for the congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jezus (Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu). Both to the congregation and the members of it, who are mentioned often in this thesis, will systematically be referred to by this abbreviation. The congregation was founded in 1855 in Isoudun, a village in the centre of France. The founder was the priest Jules Chevalier. The development of the Flemish province and the beginning of missionising in the Belgian Congo shall be considered more deeply in the third chapter.

[3] Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement*. Bukavu: Editions du Ceruki.

[4] For the readability of the text, the majority of figures in this and the following chapters have been included in the appendices 1 to 7.

[5] The "Sacred Congregation for the Dissemination of the Faith," the institutions within the catholic church responsible for mission activity, founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV.

[6] Van Hove, J. (1968). *Histoire du Ministère des Colonies*, Bruxelles: ARSOM, Classe des sciences morales et politiques. p. 9.

[7] Delathuy, A.M. (= Marchal, J.) (1992). *Missie en Staat in Oud-Kongo*

(1880-1914) Deel 1. Witte paters, scheutisten en jezuïeten. Berchem: EPO and Idem (1994). *Missie en Staat in Oud-Kongo (1880-1914) Deel 2. Redemptoristen, trappisten, norbertijnen, priesters van het H. Hart en paters van Mill-Hill*. Berchem: EPO. Jules Marchal(1924-2003), graduated as a doctor of arts from the K.U. Leuven. He was district commissioner in the Belgian Congo from 1948 to 1960. After independence he was technical advisor in the Congo for another seven years and then active as a diplomat in a number of African countries. From 1975 he published a number of historical works on Independent Congo and the Belgian Congo, firstly under the pseudonym Anne Marie Delathuy, in which he tried to bring a number of abuses to light, specifically relating to forced labour and financial exploitation. He also wrote a work in two volumes, stated here, relating to the beginning of mission activity in the Congo.

[8] Van Hove, J. (1968). *o.c.* p. 17. [Original quotation in French]

[9] Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 153.

[10] Law relating to the administration of the Belgian Congo of 18 October 1908, article 5, in Piron, P. en Devos, J. (1960). *Wetboeken en Wetten van Belgisch Congo*. Bruxelles: Larcier [original quotation in Dutch].

[11] Jules Renkin (1862-1934), doctor of law, barrister. Member of the Christian-democratic wing of the Catholic party. He became a member of parliament in 1896, which he remained until his death. He became minister of Justice in 1907. When the Congo was taken over by the Belgian government in 1908 he became the first minister for the Colonies, a position he held until the war in 1918. He became minister of Railways immediately after the First World War and he was Prime Minister from June 1931 to October 1932. cf. Dellicour, F. (1954). Renkin (Jules-Laurent-Jean-Louis). In *Bibliographie Belge d'Outre-Mer*. 747-753.

[xii] Fabian, J. (1986). *Language and colonial power, the appropriation of Swahili in the former Belgian Congo, 1880-1938*, Cambridge: University press. p. 50 ; Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 161. [Original quotation in French]

[xiii] Delathuy, A.M. (1992). *Missie en Staat.*

[xiv] For example, the presence of the Trappists was not very obvious in the region of the present-day Equator province. *Ibidem*; African Archives Brussels, "Fonds Missions", nr. 635, "Trappisten in Coquilhatville 1914-1940". And other orders, like the Dominicans, also experienced similar problems. A district commissioner wrote in 1925 to the central administration in Brussels that they were "*ne pas préparés pour l'enseignement*" and he explicitly asked for more specialised congregations to be sent to the Congo. KADOC, De Cleene – De

Jonghe Papers, nr. 95. “Nota’s van de districtscommissaris van Niangara, Uele, over onderwijs en missionarissen, 1925”.

[xv] Depaepe, M. & Van Rompaey, L. (1995). *In het teken van de bevoogding. De educatieve actie in Belgisch Congo (1908-1960)*, Leuven: Garant. p. 48. (cited below as Depaepe & Van Rompaey).

[xvi] Louis Franck (1868 – 1937). Lawyer, barrister, Flemish radical. He was the first liberal minister for the Colonies from 1918 to 1924. He later became the director of the National Bank of Belgium and the Bank of the Belgian Congo. He was also the co-founder of the colonial college of further education in Antwerp. Probably partially as a result of his interests in relation to international maritime law and trade law, he was already interested in colonial politics before the Congo was taken over by the Belgian state. Franck made two study trips to Africa. One in 1914, which he was forced to curtail due to the outbreak of war in Europe and one in his capacity as minister in 1920, during which he visited a number of English colonies in addition to the Congo. Walraet, M. (1952). Franck (Louis-Marie-François). In *Biographie Belge d’Outre-Mer*, III, 325-343.

[xvii] De Groof, R. en Tyssens, J. (1994). *De schoolkwestie in België*, Brussel: VUB-press. p. 36.

[xviii] Count Maurice Lippens (1875-1956). Doctor of law, barrister, liberal politician. After his first steps at a local and provincial level he became chairman of the board of directors of the Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l’Industrie. After the war he became the governor of the province of East Flanders. In 1921 he was appointed to the position of governor-general of the Belgian Congo by the new minister for the Colonies Franck. For as yet unexplained reasons he came into conflict with the Catholic opposition in early 1923 and finally also with Franck which resulted in his resignation. After that he was Transport Minister, Minister for the Arts and Sciences, senator and also director of a number of large companies. Van der Straeten, E. (1964). Lippens (Maurice-Auguste-Eugène-Charles). In *Biographie Belge d’Outre-Mer*, VI, 664-672.

[xix] And at a certain point resulted in the publication of a leaflet by the Committee of missionary-superiors, against Lippens: Comité des Supérieurs de missionnaires au Congo (1922). *M. le Gouverneur général Lippens et les missions catholiques du Congo*. Brussels: Vromant.

[xx] See e.g. Depaepe & Van Rompaey; Markowitz, M. (1973). *Cross and Sword. The political role of the christian missions in the Congo*. Stanford: University Press.

[xxi] *Handelingen*, Senaat, 1922-23, p. 318. Note that Franck does not make any distinction in this statement between the various religious trends. [Original quotation in French]
[xxii] Van Laere, M. (1986). *De schoolstrijd in Belgisch Congo onder Auguste Buisseret (1954-1958)*. Unpublished master's thesis K.U. Leuven.
[xxiii] Edouard De Jonghe (1878-1950). He studied in Leuven, where he achieved a degree of doctorate in philosophy and letters and where he also came into contact with Cyrille Van Overbergh, who involved him in the *Bureau internationale d'ethnographie*, an institution that was founded in the aftermath of the *Congrès international d'expansion mondiale* in Mons, which is mentioned again later in this study. At the formation of the Ministry for the Colonies in 1908, De Jonghe became the personal secretary to the Minister Jules Renkin. He successively became *chef de bureau* (1909) and *directeur-général de la deuxième direction générale* in 1928. That was the department which was responsible amongst other things for education. He also taught at the University of Leuven from 1908 and would continue to do so until his death. Amongst other things he lectured in general courses on ethnology, ethnography and more specific courses on the Congolese tribes, habits and cultures. In addition he was the founder and active contributor to two scientific colonial periodicals: *La revue congolaise* and *Congo*. He became general secretary of the Koninklijk Belgisch Koloniaal Instituut [Royal Belgian Colonial Institute], which he had also co-founded in 1929 and in which he accepted the important position of reporter to the publication commission. He was also connected to the Koloniale Universiteit [Colonial University] in Antwerp, which was founded in 1923 and was a member of the *Institut colonial international*, the *International African Institute* and the *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* amongst others. Furthermore De Jonghe was also a committed Catholic and that is an important element in this context. In combination with his key position at the Koninklijk Belgisch Koloniaal Instituut he was awarded the title of "*principal artisan métropolitain de l'ethnologie missionnaire*" [Principal metropolitan architect of missionary ethnology]. See Poncelet, M. (1997). *Une histoire sociale du siècle d'Africanisme Belge.* Lille: Atelier national de reproduction des thèses. p. 465-466; for biographical mentions by contemporaries: De Cleene, N. (1966). De Jonghe, Edouard. In *Bibliographie Belge d'Outre-Mer*, VI, 551-560; De Cleene, N. & Malengreau, G. (1950). In memoriam Edouard De Jonghe. In *Zaïre*, 2, p. 118-121.
Cyrille Van Overbergh (1866-1959). Doctor of law. Sociologist, professor at

Leuven University. He was the chairman of the *Société belge de Sociologie*, and secretary-general of the *Congrès d'expansion mondiale* that was organised in Mons in 1905. Van Overbergh was also chairman of the *Institut d' Ethnographie* mentioned here. In 1908 he became the closest assistant to Prime Minister Schollaert involved in the annexation of the Congo. See Gerard, E. (1990). Overbergh, Cyrille Justin, Médard van. In *Nationaal biografisch woordenboek*, XIII, 607-619.

[xxiv] De Jonghe, E. (1922). L'instruction publique au Congo belge. In *Congo*, 1922, III, p. 501-530. The article was also published separately in Dutch: De Jonghe, E. (1922). *Ons beschavingswerk in Belgisch Congo. Opvoeding en onderwijs*. Antwerp: Van Riet.

[xxv] Which was naturally a strategic distortion of reality as the other schools were usually also run by missionaries.

[xxvi] K.U.Leuven Archives, Paulin Ladeuze Papers, farde "école commerciale". Letter from De Jonghe to Ladeuze, 18 June 1924. The Catholic Henri Carton succeeded Louis Franck from 11 March 1924 as minister for the colonies. [original quotation in French].

[xxvii] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Papers, nr. 247. "Rapport de voyage (22 juillet 1924 – 21 janvier 1925)", typed, signed Edouard De Jonghe. 62 p. A critical edition of this text was published in Briffaerts, J. & Vinck, H., Les écoles au Congo belge en 1924. Le rapport De Jonghe. Présentation et Texte. In *Annales Aequatoria* 25 (2004), p. 451-492.

[xxviii] Ibidem, p. 59.

[xxix] Ibidem, p. 64. [original quotation in French]

[xxx] I use the terminology as used in the curriculum handbooks and literature from this period. In the 1929 curriculum a distinction was only made between *écoles rurales* and *écoles urbaines*, depending on whether a school was situated in the country or in an "urban" area. In 1948 the terminology had expanded considerable and become more complicated. The most frequently used categories were *centrale – succursale* (whether or not situated in a central mission) and *rurale-urbaine* (whether or not situated in a "European" centre).

[xxxi] Ibidem, p. 65. The account of his travels is filed in the archives together with a text that was typed on the same machine and annotated by De Jonghe. That text is the report of Florent Mortier, and is dated (in writing) on 1 August 1922. Depaepe & Van Rompaey claim that a first proposal was already drawn up in 1924. It is apparent from correspondence in the Scheut archives, also mentioned by them, that discussions relating to the project text were already in progress in

1924. Considering the annotations on the document in the De Jonghe archives, it does however seem likely that this is the *project* referred to. In any event the "final" project text was only published in 1925 or after De Jonghe's travels. [original quotation in French]

[xxxii] Fabian, J. (1986). *Language and colonial power.* p. 49-69; Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 163-165.

[xxxiii] Cited in Rikken, B. (1957). *De Eerste Schoolconventie tussen Staat en Missie in Belgisch-Kongo*. Unpublished master's thesis K.U.Leuven, p. 27-37. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xxxiv] Florent Mortier (1877-1963). Scheut missionary and orientalist. Ordained a priest in 1903. A missionary in China from 1905 to 1908. After his return to Belgium in 1909 he was appointed the general superior of Scheut (until 1920). In that capacity he also became a member of the Colonial Council and a member of the administration of the Colonial University, both until 1926, the year in which he left the congregation. He would then develop his career in Orientalism, in which he became a member of a whole series of scientific societies. Mortier spent the First World War in London and was in contact with the government. He was also a member of the Franck Commission. See Van Hecken, J.L. (1971). Mortier (Florent-Albert-Jozef). In *Belgische Koloniale Biografie*, VII A, 357-360. [Original quotation in French]

[xxxv] Rikken, B. (1957). *o.c.* p. 80. [Original quotation in French]

[xxxvi] See Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 168.

[xxxvii] "Verslag van de vergadering van kerkelijke oversten in Kisantu, juli 1919." Archives of the Scheut missionaries. Quoted in Rikken, B. (1957). *o.c.* p. 81. [Original quotation in French]

[xxxviii] Rikken, B. (1957). *o.c.* p. 81-82.

[xxxix] The fact that this really concerns a strategy is also apparent from a later statement by Mgr. Van Ronslé, who was part of the *comité permanent des ordinaires* in the Congo: "*The impossibility of being subsidised without inspection was clear for everyone at the meeting, only we wanted to start by taking a very reserved attitude in order to maintain as much freedom as possible.*" Letter of 8 December 1921 from Mgr. Van Ronslé to father Rutten, superior of Scheut (the successor to Mortier). Quoted by Rikken, B. (1957). *o.c.* p. 101. [Original quotation in French]

[xl] Letter from Florent Mortier, superior of Scheut, to Mgr. Vos, chairman of the *comité permanent* dated 12 December 1919, from the Scheut archives, quoted by Rikken, B. (1957). *o.c.* p. 95-96. [Original quotation in French].

[xli] Lefebvre, R. (1955). *De voorgeschiedenis der schoolconventie met de nationale missies in Belgisch Congo*. Unpublished doctoral thesis K.U.Leuven.
[xlii] Lefebvre, R. (1955). *o.c.* p. 153. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[xliii] The author specifically found it difficult to remain objective when mentioning the influence and activities of the Lodge, and "anti-clericalists" in general in the context of colonisation. Nevertheless he does his best to represent the ideas of the different parties in the debate. In particular the socialist Emile Vandervelde is relatively given a lot of attention with his criticism of mission education existing before the First World War.
[xliv] KADOC, De Cleene-De Jonghe Archives, nr. 247. "Ecoles agréées", typed document, signed "Fl. Mortier, dated 1 August 1922". See footnote 31.
[xlv] Jones, T.J. (1921). *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. At the request of the British missions and in consultation with the British government a research commission was sent to the colonies in Western Africa in 1920. The commission was financed by the Phelps-Stokes fund, a private philanthropic society in New York. The Phelps-Stokes fund that still exists today financed a series of similar commissions in the same period, which studied the social issues in the black population in Africa, the Caribbean and the United States. Collins, R. et alii (1994). *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa*. Princeton: Markus Wiener. p. 195.
[xlvi] Jones, T.J. (1921). *o.c.* p. 16.
[xlvii] Jones, T.J. (1921). *o.c.* p. 24.
[xlviii] The full title of the periodical was *Congo: Belgisch koloniaal tijdschrift* or *Congo: revue Belge coloniale.* The article concerned was published in September 1925. III, volume II, p. 193.
[xlix] Congrès colonial Belge (1926). *IIe Congrès colonial Belge. Bruxelles, 6 et 7 février 1926. première partie: rapports*. Brussels: Lesigne. p. 230. [Original quotation in French]
[l] Seghers, M. (2004). Phelps-Stokes in Congo: Transferring Educational Policy Discourse to Govern Metropole and Colony. In *Paedagogica Historica*, XL, 4, p. 69-113. **Thomas Jesse Jones** (1873-1950) was the director of the Hampton institute in Virginia, USA, and a supporter of Booker T. Washington, the advocate of the so-called Industrial Education for Afro-Americans. He would later write "Negro Education", in which he spoke out against academic studies and in support of teaching practical skills to the Afro-American population in the USA, as

a means to better integration in society. Also see Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 59; Crocco, M. & Waite, C. (2003). *Fighting Injustice through Higher Education*. Paper presented at the British History of Education Society Annual Conference, December 2003.

[li] De Jonghe, E., *L'enseignement des indigènes au Congo Belge. Rapport présenté à la XXIe session de l'institut colonial international à Paris, mai 1931*. Bruxelles. 1932.

[lii] *Ibidem*, p. 15-16. [Original quotation in French]

[liii] Complete title: "Projet d'organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo Belge avec le concours des Sociétés de Missions nationales".

[liv] The national missions were missions that could show a number of ties with Belgium. More specifically the headquarters of the mission society had to be located in Belgium, the mission had to be directed by Belgians and the majority of the members had to have Belgian nationality.

[lv] The official and complete title of the brochure was: *Organisation de l'enseignement libre au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi avec le concours des Sociétés de Missions Nationales*. Bruxelles, 1929. In the footnotes it will be further referred to as *Organisation …* 1929.

[lvi] *Organisation …* 1929. p. 2-3. [Original quotation in French]

[lvii] *Organisation* … 1929. p. 3. [Original quotation in French]

[lviii] *Ibidem*.

[lix] *Ibidem*. [Original quotation in French]

[lx] *Organisation* … 1929. p. 11. My underlining. [Original quotation in French]

[lxi] Liesenborghs, O. (1940). L'instruction publique des indigènes du Congo Belge. In *Congo: Revue générale de la Colonie Belge*. XXI. n°3, p. 255.

[lxii] Ibidem. [Original quotation in French]

[lxiii] *Organisation* … 1929. p. 12. [Original quotation in French]

[lxiv] With regard to these subjects of education see the following texts: On singing: Kita, P. & Depaepe, M. (2004). *La chanson scolaire au Congo Belge. Anthologie*. Paris: L'Harmattan; Kita, P. (2003). La chanson scolaire dans l'éducation coloniale au Congo Belge: Référentiel théorique. In Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita, P. & Vinck, H. *Manuels et chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*. Leuven: Universitaire Pers. p. 197-227; On physical education: Van Rompaey, L. (1992). Mission et éducation physique dans le Congo belge (1908-1960). In Monés, J. & Solà, P. (eds.), *Education, physical activities and sport in a historical perspective,* Rapport XIVe ISCHE Conference, Barcelona, 307-312.

[lxv] De Jonghe, E. (1922). L'instruction publique au Congo belge.

[lxvi] The term *linguae francae* designated four languages that, in the coloniser's opinion, were dispersed as a commercial language that exceeded the regional level. Concretely these were Tshiluba, Swahili, Lingala and Kikongo. For the origins of linguistic policy, the issue of the use and the artificial character, or not of these languages, cfr.Yates, B. (1980). The origins of language policy in Zaïre. In *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. XVIII, 2, p. 257-280; Ceuppens, B. (2003). *Congo made in Flanders? Koloniale Vlaamse visies op "blank" en "zwart" in Belgisch Congo*. Gent: Academia Press. p. 429-512; Nkongolo, J.J. (1998). Quelle langue d'enseignement pour la République Démocratique du Congo? Une enquête à Kinshasa. On *DiversCité Langues*. *En ligne*. *Vol. III*. www.uquebec.ca/diverscite.
[lxvii] *Organisation* … 1929. p. 45. [Original quotation in French]
[lxviii] *Organisation* … 1929. p. 1. [Original quotation in French]
[lxix] De Jonghe, E. (1932). *L'enseignement des indigènes au Congo Belge*, p. 12.
[lxx] Depaepe, M., Debaere, F., Van Rompaey, L. (1992). Missionary education in the Belgian Congo during the colonial period (1908-1960). In *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 48, p. 268.
[lxxi] "*Education is either taught in the official schools or the mission schools.*" … "*Education taught by the missions relates to a number of pupils that could be estimated at 130 000 in 1925 (95 000 in 1924) for the Catholic missions and at 100 000 for the Protestant missions (82 000 in 1924). These figures do not in any event indicate the total school-going population at the missions, as some of these failed to provide the requested registrations ; it may in any event be accepted that approximately 250 000 children were taught reading, writing and arithmetic in 1925.*"*Annuaire Statistique de la Belgique et du Congo Belge*. 1925-1926. CXIX. [original in French]
[lxxii] *Annuaire Statistique de la Belgique et du Congo Belge*. 1927-1928. CXIX. [Original quotation in French]
[lxxiii] There are two different sources with this name, both are important on the subject of this thesis. Both contain detailed administrative and statistical information on the missionary congregations active in the colony (colonies). The first edition is the *Annuaire des missions catholiques au Congo belge*, a book that was published three times. The first two editions in 1924 and 1935 by the Jesuit Corman, the third in 1949 by his successor Van Wing. The *Missiejaarboek van Belgie / Annuaire des missions de Belgique* is another yearbook, that was only published annually in the period 1952-1960, the publication of which was realised by Father Ceuppens, C.I.C.M., who was also the founder of a Catholic press agency in Leopoldville, the D.I.A. (Documentation Internationale Africaine).

However the information in this is rather more condensed and less detailed than that in the Jesuit publication.
[lxxiv] Liesenborghs, O. (1940). L'instruction publique des indigènes du Congo Belge. p. 266. Included in appendix 5.
[lxxv] Edmond Rubbens (1894-1938). Doctor of political and social sciences. Member of parliament for the Catholic party from 1921. Chairman of the Christian Workers' Movement from 1927. In 1934 he became minister for Labour and Social Services and in 1935 minister for the Colonies. In that capacity he died suddenly at 44 year of age. With regard to the missions Rubbens maintained precisely the same policy as his predecessors.
[lxxvi] Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 94.
[lxxvii] Melage [Frère] (1937). *Les écoles du Congo Belge. Rapport rédigé à la demande de M.E. Rubbens, ministre des colonies*. Manage: Masquelier-Tinsy.
[lxxviii] Reasons for the long delay in the implementation of the curriculum were not shown clearly at any point. According to Julien Van Hove the Department of education of the Gouvernement Général was only able to complete the planned reform in 1945 and the department for the Colonies could only set the implementation as of 1 January 1948. It is possible that this relates to the Senatorial mission to the Congo which was organised in 1947 and which also produced a report on the state of education in the field. Presumably the ministerial office of Godding did not expedite the approval process. Van Hove, J. (1954). Belgisch Congo en Ruanda Urundi. In D'Espallier, V. (ed.), *Katholieke encyclopaedie voor opvoeding en onderwijs*, 's Gravenhage: Pax, vol. 1, p.228-237.
[lxxix] Depaepe & Van Rompaey,p. 96-97.
[lxxx] Briffaerts, J. (1999). De schoolstrijd in Belgisch Congo (1930-1958). In Witte, E., Degroof, J. en Tyssens, J. (ed.), *Het schoolpact van 1958. Ontstaan, grondlijnen en toepassing van een Belgisch compromis – Le pacte scolaire de 1958. Origines, principes et application d'un compromis belge,* Brussel: VUB PRESS. p. 331-358.
[lxxxi] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Archives, nr. 107. "Extrait du projet de rapport de la commission coloniale à la Chambre, sur le projet de budget de 1926-1927 par m. Matthieu.", dated December 1926. See also Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 93, and Briffaerts, J. (1995). *Over Belgische politiek en Congolese scholen*. Unpublished seminar paper Vrije Universiteit Brussels. The "Matthieu" mentioned must be Jules Mathieu (B.W.P.-Member of Parliament from 1919 to 1937). [Original quotation in French]

[lxxxii] As early as 1902 missionaries from different protestant missions came together in conferences, which were organised every two or three years, and where the problems with which the missionaries had to reckon in their work of conversion were discussed. Irvine, C. (1978). *The church of Christ in Zaïre. A handbook of Protestant churches, missions and communities, 1878-1978*, Indianapolis. Introduction.

[lxxxiii] Paul Tschoffen (1878-1961). Lawyer. From 1919 he was Member of Parliament for the Catholic party. From 1924 he was senator. Tschoffen was successively Minister of Industry, Labour and Social Care, Minister of Justice. He was also Minister of the Colonies twice, from October to December 1929 and from May 1932 to November 1934. Tschoffen would, after the Second World War, also play a role in the Belgian Military Mission that represented the conservation of the parliamentary and legal regime, together with, among others, Walter Ganshof Van der Meersch.– (1930). Tschoffen, Paul. In *Le Parlement Belge*. Brussels: Editions Kryn. p. 239-241; Koller, F., De Maeyer, T. & Taylor, S. (ed.) (1959). *Who's who in Belgium*. Brussels: Universal Editions. p. 599; Vaute, P., L'euphorie avant l'épreuve. In *La Libre Belgique*, 1 September 2004.

[lxxxiv] The overarching organisation of protestant mission congregations.

[lxxxv] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Archives, nr. 251. "Note pour monsieur le Ministre", confidential memo, 17 October 1934, typed and annotated by Edouard De Jonghe. Even after the Second World War De Jonghe continued to insist that it was a risky decision to work together and support foreign missions, because a small and militarily weak country could not afford to give financial support to the missions of great powers (Ibidem, n°169, *Nota*, 31 October 1946). [Original quotation in French]

[lxxxvi] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Archives, nr. 169. "La politique scolaire coloniale. Exposé théorique.", Internal note P.S.C, Commission des colonies. Sous-commision enseignement colonial, 3 December 1946. This note is composed in the same words as other notes composed by De Jonghe which can be found in the same dossier. [original quotation in French]

[lxxxvii] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Archives, nr. 251. "Nota J.B. Hautefelt aan Vice-Gouverneur-generaal Postiaux", 6 January 1931. [original quotation in French]

[lxxxviii] See concerning this, in the context of language policy, Fabian, J. (1986). *Language and colonial power.*

[lxxxix] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Archives, nr. 169. "Note pour M. le ministre des colonies", 8 June 1945. [original quotation in French]

[xc] Scheut Archives, Rome, E.I.b.8.0.3, “Note concernant une base nouvelle à la repartite des subsides aux missions”, Kisantu, 1919, as cited in Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 56.
[xci] Ibidem.
[xcii] Scheut Archives, Rome, E.I.b.8.0.3. “Note concernant une base nouvelle à la repartite des subsides aux missions”, Kisantu, 1919. [Original quotation in French]
[xciii] Melage, [Frere] (1937). *Les écoles du Congo Belge.*
[xciv] Among other things the reference to the pronouncements of Schmitz, director at the Ministry of the Colonies, and others, in Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 120.
[xcv] Steenberghen, R. (1944). *Les programmes de l’école primaire indigène rurale au Congo Belge*. Unpublished Master’s thesis K.U.Leuven. p. 46. [Original quotation in French]
[xcvi] Maus, A. (1938, 1939). Le nouveau programme de l’enseignement libre. In *Congo: Revue générale de la Colonie Belge*. XIX, 10, p. 490- 525 & XX, 1, p. 1-20.
[xcvii] In the article concerned, published in the *Bulletin des Missions*, a Benedictine magazine, there was indeed a reference to a primary school where a curriculum of six years was taught: *“The complete primary school, consequently comprising six years, forms the second section, it follows a completely new curriculum implemented during this year in order to replace the ‘Brochure Jaune’ which had been applied until now.”,* and further: *“The year 1935 shall see this school of committed candidates transformed in a complete medium school requiring four years of studies (…) Four Fathers, including The Reverend Father Headmaster, are concerned with this school and follow the curriculum recently development for this type of institution.”* [original quotation in French]. It seems very unlikely that this was related at that time to official instructions, but the origin of the stipulation is unclear in any case.
[xcviii] Liesenborghs, O. (1940). L’instruction publique des indigènes du Congo Belge. In *Congo: Revue générale de la Colonie Belge*. XXI, 3. p. 246. [Original quotation in French]
[xcix] Ten years therefore amounted to a first grade of two years, followed by a second grade of three years, a preparatory year, and then the middle school lasting four years.
[c] Circular Ryckmans 1 July 1938, p. 3.
[ci] *Organisation de l’enseignement libre avec le concours des missions nationales*, 1938, p. 8.

[cii] *Organisation*, 1938, p. 10. [Original quotation in French]
[ciii] *Organisation*, 1938, p. 10.
[civ] Maus, A. (1938). Le nouveau programme de l'enseignement libre. p. 497 (ellipsis marks by the author). [Original quotation in French]
[cv] Maus, A. (1940). Raisons et modalités de l'enseignement aux indigènes. In *Grands Lacs*. DVI, 4-5-6, p. 48-57.[Original quotation in French]
[cvi] Edmond Leplae (1868-1941). Received the diploma of agricultural engineer at the University of Leuven, in 1891. Quite soon after receiving his diploma he was appointed as lecturer at the Agricultural Institute, where he gave courses in entomology and rural engineering. He became ordinary professor from 1898, and continued to give lessons until 1938. From 1910 he became responsible for the development of the agronomic services in the colony. Under his initiative the cultivation of cotton was strongly developed in the Congo.
[cvii] Archive Scheut Rome, P.II.b.10.1. Nota "Organisation scolaire au Kasaï face au nouveau programme", 1948, s.l., s.n.
[cviii] Maus, A. (1938). Le nouveau programme de l'enseignement libre. p. 523. [Original quotation in French]
[cix] Maus, A. (1939). Le nouveau programme de l'enseignement libre. p. 3. [Original quotation in French]
[cx] Maus, A. (1939). Le nouveau programme de l'enseignement libre. p. 8. [Original quotation in French]
[cxi] Liesenborghs, O. (1940). L'instruction publique des indigènes du Congo Belge. p. 258. [Original quotation in French]
[cxii] Albert De Vleeschauwer (1897-1971). Catholic Minister for the Colonies from April 1939 to February 1945. Was one of the ministers of the government in exile in London. After the outbreak of war he received the full lawmaking and administrative responsibility over the colony as administrator general of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. In this function De Vleeschauwer was co-responsible for signing the war conventions with the United States and Great Britain, which among other things arranged for the use of Congolese raw materials by the allies. This helped to make the production of atomic weapons by the United States possible. Later he became, among other things, Minister for Home Affairs and Agriculture. cfr. Gaus, H. (ed.) (1989). *Politiek Biografisch Lexicon 1960-1980*. Antwerpen: Standaard. p. 366-374.
[cxiii] Van Riel, J. (1946). La réforme de l'enseignement indigène. In *Les Vétérans Coloniaux*. XVIII, 10, p. 17-18. [Original quotation in French]
[cxiv] Robert Godding (1883-1953) was 62 years old when, in August 1945, he

became minister for the Colonies in the Van Acker administration. At that time, he already had a considerable career behind him, which he had divided between politics and the colonies. Moreover, Godding was a nephew of Louis Franck, in whose footsteps he began his career as a lawyer and subsequently as a politician and colonialist. Godding, J. (1976). Godding (Robert Georges Constant). In *Biographie Belge d'Outre-Mer*, V, 175-181.

[cxv] Jean-Félix de Hemptinne (1876-1958). Benedictine missionary. Over 48 years he was first apostolic prefect, then apostolic vicar and finally bishop of Katanga. Léon Pétillon described him as "one of the ultimate pioneering disciples of Leopold II". Undoubtedly this refers to his conservative beliefs concerning colonisation and evangelisation. He was considered one of the most influential people in the church, and in the colonial establishment in general. Pétillon, L. (1972). de Hemptinne (Jean-Félix). In *Biographie Belge d'Outre-Mer*, VII (a), 291-299.

[cxvi] Vanderlinden, J. (1994). *Pierre Ryckmans 1891-1959. Coloniser dans l'honneur*. Bruxelles: De Boeck Université. p. 365-371.

[cxvii] See Depaepe & Van Rompaey. p. 132-133.

[cxviii] To claim subsidies as a mission-congregation the following conditions were imposed: knowledge of one of the official country's languages, the 'national' character of the education given, approval of the schoolbooks used and a minimum residence of six months in Belgium with an accompanying training in education. The verification of these conditions was the duty of the state inspectors. *Handelingen*, Kamer, 1946-47, 5 December 1946, p. 11. [Original Dutch]

[cxix] Briffaerts, J. (1999). De schoolstrijd in Belgisch Congo. p. 341.

[cxx] The schools funding controversy in Belgian Congo, and certainly during the period under Buisseret, has been the object of several more detailed studies: As well as the aforementioned article, reference can be made to Van Laere, M. (1986). *De schoolstrijd in Belgisch Congo*; Block, J.P. (1992). *La guerre scolaire au Congo Belge sous Auguste Buisseret (1954-1958). Ses prémices et développements*. Unpublished master's thesis Université Libre Bruxelles; Briffaerts, J. (1995). *Over Belgische politiek en Congolese scholen.* See also, only partially: Cleys, B. (2002). *Andries Dequae. De zelfgenoegzaamheid van een koloniaal bestuur* (1950-1954). Unpublished master's thesis K.U.Leuven. (this thesis is published on the website http://users.skynet.be/st.lodewijk/e-thesis/index.html).

[cxxi] Auguste Buisseret (1888-1965) was a lawyer from Liege and a liberal

politician, successively active in local and national politics. He occupied several ministerial positions and was minister for education in the government of Van Acker I (February 1945 until March 1946), under which the ministry for the Colonies was led by Robert Godding from August 1945. This also explains his participation in the Senatorial mission to the Congo in 1947, where he led the "section" on education. He was subsequently minister for Internal Affairs (March 1946- March 1947), for public works (August 1949- June 1950). From 1954 to 1958 he was the last person to fulfil a complete term in office as minister for the Colonies. In 1959 he became mayor of Liege, but resigned from that post due to illness in 1963. Cuyvers, J.B. (1966). Buisseret, Auguste, Dieudonné, Eugène. In *Bibliographie Belge d'Outre-Mer*, VI, 136-145.

[cxxii] See appendix 6 for the diagram of the education structure in the 1948 curriculum.

[cxxiii] Mortier, F. (1953). *L'université Leopold II au Congo Belge*. Bruxelles: Imprimerie Louis.

[cxxiv] Pierre Wigny (1905-1986). After his legal studies he became secretary of the *Centre d'Etudes pour la Réforme de l'Etat* established by Paul Van Zeeland in 1936. After the Second World War he and Robert Houben together formed the basis for the "Christmas curriculum" of the new CVP. From March 1947 to August 1950 he was minister for the Colonies in three administrations: the Rome-red administration. Spaak II, the Rome-blue Eyskens I and the first Unitarian CVP-administration Duvieusart, which was only in power for two months. From 1958 to 1961 he was minister of Foreign Affairs and from 1965 to 1968 minister of Justice and French language culture. Wigny was also one of the founders of the European Coal and Steel Community. cf. Harmel, P. (1999). Wigny, Pierre, Louis, Jean, Joseph, baron. In *Nouvelle Biographie Nationale*, Bruxelles: Académie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts, V, p. 386-389.

[cxxv] Andries Dequae (°1915-2006). Studied economics at Leuven and became active in the Kortrijk textile industry shortly before the Second World War, more specifically within Catholic patronage. Through these posts, he was placed on the CVP-list for the lower chamber in 1946. In June 1950 he became first minister for reconstruction in the Duvieusart administration. When this administration fell after two months he became the minister for the Colonies in the new homogenous CVP-administration and he would remain so until the election defeat of the CVP in 1954. He later successively became the minister for Foreign trade, for Economic coordination and of Finance and was also the vice-chairman and chairman of the House. At the end of the fifties he started a second career within the Belgian

Farmers' Union, which he was chairman of from 1977 to 1981. Cleys, B. (2002). *Andries Dequae.* The information quoted here is given under the section "Andries Dequae, een biografische schets", that may be consulted at the following website: http://www.ping.be/~ls003528/dequae/ dequae_inhoud.htm (5/2004).

[cxxvi] Also described in detail in Depaepe & Van Rompaey, more specifically on p. 136-153.

[cxxvii] Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 214-218.

[cxxviii] Under the general title *Organisation de l'enseignement libre subsidié pour indigènes avec le concours des sociétés de missions chrétiennes* published in three brochures: *Dispositions générales*, 1948. Léopoldville: Service de l'enseignement; *Enseignement gardien. Enseignement général pour filles. Programmes d'études*, 1948; *Enseignement général pour garçons. Programmes d'études*, 1948. Léopoldville: Service de l'enseignement. Referenced below as "Dispositions générales 1948", "Garçons 1948" & "Filles 1948".

[cxxix] Dispositions générales 1948, p. 11-12.

[cxxx] The comments and criticism by Kita are also along these lines (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 201-203.

[cxxxi] Dispositions générales 1948, p. 16. [Original quotation in French]

[cxxxii] This description was explained later in the brochure. Education was conceived as "*very specialised conceived on the foundations that more or less reflect the organisation of higher education".* [original quotation in French]

[cxxxiii] Dispositions générales 1948, p. 19-21.

[cxxxiv] Gevaerts, F. (1952). *De zedelijke Vorming en Selectie in de inlandse Lagere School van Belgisch Kongo*. Unpublished master's thesis K.U.Leuven. The author of this thesis remarks in this regard (p. 164): "*The war from 1940-1945 prevented the development of the 1938 plan and the situation in the Congo had changed to such an extent in the meantime that a new one was drawn up. A. Maus clearly influenced this new draft both in the selection and organisation of girls' education and the language used for teaching in the schools, the latter is even taken literally from one of his articles."* Reference is made to an article by Duperoux, the director of education of the Union Minière in Katanga in support of this claim. However no evidence of this can be found in the article concerned. Dupéroux, A. (1950). Education et formation professionnelles au Katanga. In *Bulletin du CEPSI*, V, 14. p. 153-168.

[cxxxv] Scalais, F. (1950). La réorganisation scolaire au Congo Belge. In *Zaïre: revue congolaise*, IV, p. 421-428. The Félix Scalais scheutist would become the vicar apostolic from 1953 for Leopoldville, succeeding Mgr. Six. He was the

archbishop of Leopoldville from 1959 to 1964.
[cxxxvi] Van Schingen, H. (1945). Instruction généralisée et progrès de l'enseignement des Noirs. In *Troisième conférence plénière des Ordinaires des Missions du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi, 25 juin – 8 juillet 1945*. Léopoldville: le Courrier d'Afrique. p.147-162.
[cxxxvii] Bernard Mels (1908-1992), scheutist, was the vicar apostolic of Luluaburg from 1949 and archbishop of Kananga from 1959.
[cxxxviii] KADOC, Brys Papers, nr. 185.17. Memo from Bernard Mels to Félix Scalais relating to the new school curriculum, probably 17 November 1948. Also cited by Depaepe & Van Rompaey.
[cxxxix] Paul Coppens (1892-1969) was a fellow student and friend of Pierre Ryckmans (1891-1959), probably the best-known of the governors-general of the Belgian Congo. Coppens was a lawyer, like Ryckmans, and lectured courses on colonial law and other colonial issues at the law faculty and the "école commerciale et coloniale" at Leuven university. He would be substituted by Ryckmans while staying in the colony for a few years. When the latter left for the Congo in his turn to take on the position of governor-general, his teaching duties in Leuven were then taken over by Coppens. Stenmans, A. (1975). Coppens (Paul). In *Bibliographie Belge d'Outre-Mer*, VII B, 67-86; Vanderlinden, J. (1994). *o.c.* p. 1-260.
[cxl] Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 215. [Original quotation in French]
[cxli] Kita, P., Depaepe, M. & Briffaerts, J. (2002). *Lente éclosion de l'enseignement secondaire au Congo Belge: Histoire d'un enjeu politique*. Texte proposé au Congrès ISCHE à Paris, juillet 2002. p. 9.
[cxlii] See Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 193; Coppens, P. (1950). Le programme de l'enseignement d'après le plan décennal. In *La revue coloniale belge*, IV, 104. p. 79-81.
[cxliii] *Plan décennal pour le développement économique et social du Congo Belge*. tôme I. Bruxelles: Editions De Visscher, 1949. p. 62-82.
[cxliv] Wigny, P. (1949). *Plan décennal pour le développement économique et social du Congo Belge*. *Introduction.* Bruxelles: Editions De Visscher. p. XXIII-XXIV.
[cxlv] *Plan Décennal*, p. 62-63. [original quotation in French]
[cxlvi] This was the amount provided in the planning, to be allocated over a ten year period. Vanthemsche, G. (1994). *Genèse et portée du "Plan décennal" du Congo belge (1949-1959)*. Bruxelles: ARSOM. Classe des Sciences Morales et

Politiques, Mémoires in-8°, Nouvelle Série, Tome 51, fasc. 4. p. 38.
[cxlvii] In reference to this see also: Block, J.P. (1992). *La guerre scolaire au Congo Belge sous Auguste Buisseret.*
[cxlviii] Buisseret, A. (1947). L'enseignement au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi, in *Rapport de la mission sénatoriale au Congo et dans les territoires sous tutelle Belge*, Senat Belge, Bruxelles, p. 79-130. [original French]
[cxlix] Block, J.-P. (1992). *La guerre scolaire*; see also Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 152.
[cl] Buisseret, A. (1947). *L'enseignement au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi*, p. 92. [Original quotation in French]
[cli] Albert Brys (1900-1973). He was active in the colony (in the apostolic vicariate Nieuw-Antwerp, to the north of the MSC mission area) from 1927 to 1937 and from 1939 to 1946. Back in Belgium he occupied a series of posts, all in a colonial sphere. Apart from being director of the CEDIC he was also secretary general ofthe SIBELAC (*Service Interfédéral Belge de l'Enseignement Catholique au Congo*). In this capacity he was responsible for recruiting Belgian teachers for colonial education. Besides this he was also a member of the study commission for colonial affairs of the CVP. Storme, M. (1976). Brys (Albert-Jozef-Antoon). In *Biographie Belge d'Outre-Mer*. VII B. 40-42.
[clii] The following paragraphs are partially based on documentation from the Brys Papers, which are kept in the KADOC in Leuven. This documentation was consulted by myself during my research on the school funding controversy in the Belgian Congo, and by Lies Van Rompaey in function of the research for "In het teken van de bevoogding".
[cliii] These conditions had a lot to do with the lack of educational training of the majority of the missionaries. Buisseret had already pointed this out in his report in 1947. The new curriculum also imposed degree requirements on the missionaries, which they had to meet within a particular period.
[cliv] Van Laere, M. (1986). *De schoolstrijd in Belgisch Congo.* p. 50-60. In this reference is made to the so-called "Addendum à la convention d'intérêt scolaire passé entre le gouvernement de la colonie et les associations missionnaires".
[clv] KADOC, Brys Papers, nr. 185.17. "Note au sujet de certaines modifications apportées à la convention scolaire", Lisala, 25 mei 1950; Ibidem, Letter Permentier, W., missionary-inspector in the vicariate of Rwanda, to Albert Brys, 11 September 1950.
[clvi] KADOC, Brys Papers, nr. 185.17. Van den Bergh, R., apostolic vicar Lisala, "Note relative à l'addendum", in preparation for the general conference of

apostolic vicars, 27 December 1950.
[clvii] KADOC, Brys Papers, nr. 185.17. Letter from Brys, addressee unknown, 7 November 1952.
[clviii] Service de l'enseignement (1952). *Organisation de l'enseignement libre subsidié pour indigènes avec le concours des sociétés de missions chrétiennes. Dispositions générales*. p. 15. Referred to later as Dispositions générales 1952.
[clix] Dispositions générales 1952, p. 10.
[clx] Dispositions générales 1952, p. 13. [Original quotation in French]
[clxi] Dispositions générales 1952, p. 32.
[clxii] Dispositions générales 1952, p. 36.
[clxiii] The word "évolué" shows a junction in the relationship between the colonisers and the colonials in the Belgian Congo. In her book "Congo Made in Flanders?" Bambi Ceuppens clearly shows the content but also the ideological meaning that the concept always had: "*Until the Second World War the term "évolué" is exclusively used in its original function as an adjective, for instance, to refer to noirs évolués. As the number of "evolved" Congolese grows, as a consequence of the move to the cities before and during the war, the word is used more and more as a noun. From a Belgian point of view the "évolué" is the black man (women are never spoken of) who, by his actions, shows an honest desire to attain a higher level of civilisation. The criteria for receiving the official status of "évolué" are ambiguous and subject to change; the most that can be said is that a minimum of a few years of post-primary education is the lowest criterion*." Ceuppens, B. (2003). *Congo Made in Flanders? Koloniale Vlaamse visies op "blank" en "zwart" in Belgisch-Congo.* Gent: Academia Press. p. 148. From 1948 the évolué would be placed in a type of judicial framework The *carte de mérite civique,* introduced by the Decree of 12 July 1948, gave a kind of recognition of the fact that someone was "civilised". In the preamble of this decree the following passage was taken as the foundation of the law: "*Considering the evolution level of most of the natives, on an intellectual as well as moral level, their assimilation has not yet become possible; In expectation of a statute being created for the civilised Congolese population, the existing laws and regulations will bestow certain special rights on the natives whose level of civilisation justifies such.* (…)" There were however no legal advantages attached to this. Piron, P. & Devos, J. (1960). *Codes et lois du Congo Belge. tôme I. Matières civiles, commerciales, pénales.* Bruxelles: Larcier. p. 152-153. On the other hand, the "matriculation", introduced by the Decree of 17 May 1952, intended a real change. Those who had a *carte d'immatriculation* came under the same civil law as the white. This was

however preceded by a strict selection procedure, in which a thorough investigation of the persons' private life took place. The civil statute book literally stipulated: *"In order to attain matriculation they must (...) show through their education and way of life that they have reached such a level of civilisation as to be competent of enjoying the rights and fulfilling the duties stipulated by the written (*as opposed to the unwritten law, applicable to natives, JB) *legislation."* This stipulation was intentionally formulated vaguely and very generally as it was desirable for it to be adaptable in its application. The preparatory works foresaw that the administration of the law would have to complete the terms concretely. Piron, P. & Devos, J. (1960). *o.c.* p. 55-56.

[clxiv] It is sufficient for now to refer to the complaints of Jozef Malula, the later cardinal, to one of Brys' colleagues, besides other examples cited by Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 181-183. Malula complained that the évolués were not taken seriously by the Belgians.

[clxv] See the survey graph in appendix 2. Copied from Briffaerts, J. (1995). *Over Belgische politiek en Congolese scholen,* and based on the *Annuaire Statistique de Belgique.*

[clxvi] The university of Lovanium actually grew from the departments that Leuven professors had founded in the twenties in the Kwango region: FOMULAC (Fondation Médicale de l'Université de Louvain au Congo) and CADULAC (Centre Agronomique de l'Université de Louvain au Congo). The foundations only got a meaningful role in terms of research and education after the Second World War. cf. Poncelet, M. (1997). *o.c.* p. 384-385. University education that was available to everyone, both Belgians and Congolese, had to be awaited for another ten years. At the time of writing this thesis there had not yet been a systematic historical investigation into the foundation, preparation and operation of the university. See Mantels, R. (2007), *Geleerd in de tropen. Leuven, Congo & de wetenschap 1885-1960*, Leuven, Universitaire Pers, 352 p.

[clxvii] Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 209-215 gives a good overview of the case. Through the fragmented sources and the quasi-impossibility of verifying the validity of certain figures, putting together correct statistical surveys of the student numbers is a job that has barely started.

[clxviii] Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.* p. 223-240.

[clxix] Circular of 17 September 1956, see Kita, P. (1982). *o.c.* p. 231.

[clxx] See appendix 2.

[clxxi] See appendix 3.

[clxxii] Another terminological problem is posed here. It is unclear whether the

term “official schools” is still used in the *Plan Décennal* referring to what used to be called “official congregational education”. In the N.I.S. statistics numbers of the same size order were given for the amount of schools and the amount of students, but there was no separate category allocated for “congregational education” until 1949. From then on a distinction was made between “official” and “congregational”, which makes it clear that the last category designates the schools that were not run by the missions, because the announced numbers were not high enough.

[clxxiii] See appendix 3. Only the figures for primary education were withheld. Before 1948 the subsidised education includes the “sixièmes préparatoires”.

[clxxiv] See appendix 2.

[clxxv] Bureau de l’Enseignement National Catholique, *Annuaire Statistique 1962-1963*. Kinshasa: BENC. See appendix 4.

[clxxvi] Omakoko, A. (1999). *L’enseignement de l’histoire en République Démocratique du Congo (ex-Zaïre). Diagnostic (1960-1980).* Bern: Peter Lang. p. 59-62. See also in this sense Kita, P. (1982). *Colonisation et enseignement.*

[clxxvii] See appendix 4, table 1. These figures come from the *Ministère de l’Education Nationale*, as cited in the publication of the *Bureau de l’enseignement* (p. 19).

When Congo Wants To Go To School – The Missionaries And The Belgian Congo: Preparation, Ideas And Conceptions Of The Missionaries

Primitive School, Mission area MSC,
location and date unknown

"I have been interested in the Congo all my life, because I always wanted to be a missionary in the Congo, even as a little child. And so in a way I paid some attention to it, but only the achievements of my heroes at the time – a number of family members were missionaries and the mission exhibitions, the missionary action. The Congo came to us through missionary work and it was very heroic. …I remember the moment to the minute when I discovered the background or the 'depths' of the colonisation of the Belgian Congo. And then I got the feeling, which I still have today, that during my training, my education, I had been deceived about the Congo."[1]

Flemish and, by extension, Belgian missionaries left for the Belgian Congo in droves. The Statistical Yearbook of the N.I.S., which had a separate section for the colony, recorded a few tables with data about the 'white' population. As well as divisions on the basis of nationality, gender and place of residence, for a number of years it also included a "*class division*". In this table, the population was divided into three categories: 'civil servant', 'missionaries' and 'general public'. The presence of a separate category for missionaries points to the fact that they were very important in colonial society. On the basis of the available figures it can be posited that during the interbellum period, religious workers comprised 10 to 15% of the white population. This percentage was certainly not only men, the proportion of female religious workers was fairly stable throughout the colonial period and amounted to over 40%.[2]

The above quote, from an *'experienced expert'*, indicates that the conceptual world of the missionaries was not an empty page, that they did not leave without expectations and that they did not work in a vacuum. The colonial attitude in general has frequently been the subject of analysis. The question raised in this

chapter is more specific: what can be said about the conceptions and attitudes with which the missionaries left for the colonies? A number of aspects of missionary life have been the subject of research in recent years. Jean Pirotte, who wrote an important work on the mission periodicals in Belgium, gives a good overview of relevant research questions about the missionaries during the colonial period.[3] He divides these questions into a number of categories, more specifically: the interest in the missions, the 'agents' of missionary work, the support on the home front, the use of time and space, the missionary 'conscience' and the dialogue between societies. Further, a number of works have recently appeared which try to capture the missionary spirit, at least partially. It is certainly not the intention to deal with all these questions systematically in the framework of this thesis, let alone to answer all of them.

In any case, it is with the necessary reservation and some caution that we attempt the assessment of the 'intellectual baggage' of the missionaries who left for the colonies. Indeed, the difficulty with which this specific theme is dealt in the existing scientific literature is striking. When Depaepe and Van Rompaey discussed the ideas of the missionaries they talked predominantly about the appreciation of the black intellect and character and they supported themselves, necessarily, with the views of a pair of figures considered influential, namely Pierre Charles and Gustaaf Hulstaert.[4] Thus when, by way of conclusion concerning the missionary attitude after the Second World War, they make a pronouncement like "*Even so, most missionaries could still only muster very little appreciation for the traditional milieu*",[5] this can serve as the necessary correction to the still dominant view of the missionary as the 'friend of the Congolese'. Even so, the statement must at the same time be interpreted itself. The reality was, after all, more complex than that. It is not appropriate to paint all missionaries as uncompromising, dogmatic people, who did not want to learn about their surroundings, or at least did not try to understand them.

Moreover, it appears from the available literature that it is very difficult to pursue certain conclusions or hypotheses to the level of daily practice. Concretely, scientific literature about missionary work and mission history speaks a lot about 'missiology' itself. Missiology counts as the scientific approach to missionary work, which itself developed during the colonisation of Belgian Congo. This scientific transformation occurred at the University in Leuven as a result of the Jesuit Pierre Charles' initiative and the *Semaines missiologiques de Louvain*,

which he organised. The question of whether these theories and ideas actually found their way into the field is far harder to answer.

As an example: the CREDIC (*Centre de Recherches et d'Echanges sur la Diffusion et l'Inculturation du Christianisme*), connected to the University of Lyon, organised a colloquium in the early nineties of the twentieth century on the subject of the training of missionaries.[6] In the different contributions offered in the presentations of the colloquium, however, no clear link was established between the missiological science and work in the field. The question of whether there was an influence from the Missiological Weeks on the formation of missionaries is only formulated explicitly by one participant: "*Ultimately, what influence could the Missiological Weeks in Leuven have had on the preparation for missionary work given to the Misionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa? It is truly very difficult to establish this. Perhaps it may be labelled 'vital interaction'.*" The mission sister in question subsequently posited that the possible influences that came from missiology or from the themes discussed during the Missiological Weeks were, in any event, very indirect. In any case, they are not to be found explicitly in the archives.[7] There were various training initiatives covering the needs in the field but the same author mentioned that even after the Second World War "*the people responsible for training realised that all the Sisters had little culture: years of study were required before they could carry out the profession: nursing diplomas, primary school teachers, domestic education, English (necessary in Anglophone Africa). There was a sense of an immense need for training*." Taking into account that these assertions were made in the framework of a French congregation of sisters, which was active in other parts of Africa, we must ask ourselves if this tendency also recurs in the information and documentation about the formation of (primarily) Belgian missionaries in congregations which were active in the missionary region of Coquilhatville.

Lesson by a Father in the Equator
area

Closer to home, it also appears from recent research that the truth is certainly not to be found in the missiological discourse. Carine Dujardin, who did extensive research into the missionary work of Scheut in China, asked a number of former missionaries about the influence of the *Semaines Missiologiques*, which seemed to have been of national and even international renown at the time.[8] The answers she received confirm that this influence was almost non-existent. Dujardin cites a number of reasons for this: the rather more elitist character of the missiological movement, the isolation of most active missionaries, the seniority principle which obliged new missionaries to adhere to certain rules of obedience and the practically focused and even anti-intellectualist profile of most missionaries. She also gives a fifth reason: the education of the missionaries themselves, which was usually very elementary.[9]

If it is thus already clear that there is no necessary connection between the scientific mission discourse and that of the people in the field, how is a researcher to try and deal with this problem concretely? He or she can try to observe these people themselves and to look at their ideas in detail. I have in this case chosen to work in two phases. In the first phase, the situation with which the missionaries were confronted in the period preceding their 'career choice' was analysed. Firstly, as an introduction, I will give a short general sketch of colonial conceptualisation in the mother country. The image formed by a person about an *in se* unknown, distant and removed phenomenon will after all be greatly influenced by the ideas about it circulating in the society in which he or she lives. Secondly, a more specific examination will be made of the image that was entwined with that situation: the image of the missionaries themselves and of their activity. From this, presumably, it will be possible to deduct in a general way which considerations formed the basis for a person to leave for the Congo as a missionary. Logically, the question of where these images and ideas come from must also be asked. The answer to this question leads to the second phase: considering that conceptualisation is fundamentally influenced by education and training, the analysis of the general situation is followed by the analysis of the specific context in which the aspiring missionary was educated and trained. As part of this subject, a more specific examination will be made of the education of the people working in the vicariate of Coquilhatville. Furthermore, an attempt has

been made to complement and complete the written documentation as much as possible by means of personal testimonies.

1. The broader societal context as an influential factor

1.1. Promotion of the colony and missionary activity in Belgian education[10]

In any case, conceptualisation about the colony and missionary activity was clearly related to training at school and in particular with the intellectual framework given with this training. In his research into the origin of the vocation of missionaries, Claude Soetens posits that it was not the school as such that created missionary interest for the majority. According to him, school was an environment dominated by the religious workers. He posits that primarily through this, feelings of responsibility, service and selflessness could be developed in the young. That these values played a big role in choosing a missionary vocation can hardly be denied, although this statement, in our opinion, does not put enough emphasis on the power of societal pressure. The connection between the two is therefore not an automatism. As the Jesuit Joseph Masson said when asked in an interview about his memories of the beginning of the Missiological Weeks: "*In 1923, I was a pupil in third year Latin at the St-Servais College in Liège. I was undoubtedly already enrolled for the missions: sorting out stamps, collecting and dragging away old paper to help them.*"[11] This statement suggests that the environment in which people lived influenced the children to develop in a certain way, without this having to be decisive as such.

1.1.1. The government and the promotion of the colony at school

We can assume that the missionaries received the same schooling as the majority of other children and consequently also concerning their vision of Africa, the colonies and the Africans. There are clear indications that conscious effort was made early on to 'steer' the Belgian population in its view of Belgium's presence in the Congo. One of the themes discussed at the *Congrès colonial national*, organised in 1920, was how to imprint the population with a favourable stance towards the colony. It was posited: "*In order to educate the nation, encourage vocations, in short to form public opinion in a colonial regard, it is of primary importance to organise colonial education in the schools of all levels in an interesting and intuitive way.*"[12] Much earlier, in 1905, Leopold II had made his own attempt to impart more international sensitivity to his subjects via education. In that year, the Belgian government organised an international scientific conference in Mons on *L'expansion économique mondiale* (so-called 'world

expansion') and this at the instigation of the King.

Colonial politics as part of a broader expansionist idea was one of the central themes of the world expansion conference. One of the sub-commissions at the conference was, in fact, devoted to education. The central idea put forward there was to adapt the school curriculum in such a way as to make people more amenable to everything taking place outside their own direct and limited social environment. The possibility of emigrating abroad was then also included (for example to the colony). That this was not merely a gratuitous remark made at a conference can be seen from the fact that a brochure about the proposed reforms to the education system was published after the conference.[13] The option to make world expansion a permanent focus point in schools fitted a certain tradition.[14] For the time being it remains difficult to ascertain how far the proposed reforms were actually introduced. From the studies available on the subject it can be concluded that this certainly did not happen as planned by the government. However, it does appear that the colony was placed on the school curriculum. This can be deduced, for example, from the fact that at that time song lyrics about the Congo circulated in pedagogical periodicals on the home front.[15]

1.1.2. The Catholic Church and the promotion of the mission at school

The colony was also present in education via another route. The official mission propaganda was strongly connected to and interested in education. The 'Heilige Kindsheid' or 'Holy Childhood', founded in 1843, was an official organ of the Catholic Church[16] aimed at the education of children to the missionary spirit and cooperation, through prayer and material aid, to relieve the suffering of less fortunate children in mission countries. I refer to it because for years this organisation was responsible for the missionary idea being present very strongly in Belgian society and especially in education. In Flanders, it developed particularly quickly and was present in every Catholic primary school. By means of specific periodicals and pedagogical instructions it certainly had an influence in the classroom: The Priests' mission union, periodicals such as 'Annaaltjes van de Heilige Kindsheid', 'Tam-Tam', mission poems, mission songs, the 'Romereis' (trip to Rome), the 'Hemeltrap' (stairway to heaven), etc. The arsenal of pedagogical aids intended to produce support, respect and money for the missions was impressive. Apart from this, the mission idea was promoted on a large scale.

In a very extensive article in *De Vloed*, a periodical for missionaries in training,

the MSC Joris Vlamynck sketched an image of what was happening in Flanders in the field of missionary action in the second half of the 1930's. Vlamynck described both in-school and extra-curricular activities which were organised for the benefit of the missions or the theme of which was at least missionary. In the first part, about the Holy Childhood, it was stated that their proceeds for the Diocese of Mechelen were nearly one million Belgian francs in 1931, an enormous amount for that time. The article refers to the annual membership contribution of the Holy Childhood, to contribution cards, to offertory boxes. Furthermore, aside from the financial information in the article it is apparent that a lot of attention was paid to the missions. Missionary duty was, according to Vlamynck, forced upon educational personnel in pedagogical periodicals and at annual educational conferences.

Situated further outside the school environment were the 'Eucharistische Kruistochten' or 'Eucharistic Crusades', established by the Norbertines of Averbode in 1920.[17] The aim was, at first glance, primarily to keep the fire and enthusiasm for the missions burning through frequent prayer. However, Vlamynck posits that means other than prayer could be employed: "*Even the material mission action is included in the E.K. (Eucharistic Crusades) life: in the mission sewing circles the crusaders find a way to turn their apostles' spirits into deeds*." The financial aspect was not forgotten either: "*Through the E.K. management collecting boxes were made available from the E.K. departments; the profits, which were deposited by the members, went to the S.P.L. for training native priests in the mission*." The Eucharistic Crusades were apparently a well-structured organisation with 200 000 members at the time of Vlamynck's article. The movement must of course be situated in the broader societal context as part of the Catholic reaction to the progression of moral corruption. The Crusades were aimed at the whole population and had youth divisions and adult divisions, both supported by a solid press infrastructure. Among others, *Zonneland* and other publications from the *Goede Pers* (the editing house of the Norbertines in Averbode) were aimed at children. For the other groups there were also specific publications. Vlamynck furthermore mentions the organisation of divisions in the Congo, for which the Crusades on the home front supplied the necessary materials: "*To ease the task of the missionaries in establishing and leading the movement, the E.C. centrel of Averbode will provide all the necessary information about spirit and method and provides them with rich E.C. documentation and literature: books, brochures, papers, etc.*"

1.2. The Belgian Congo in schoolbooks

In the framework of this research the schoolbook can be considered the supplier of relevant information in two different ways. On the one hand, it was a tool used by the 'coloniser' to bring ideas, concepts and values across to the 'colonised'. We will come back to this concept later. On the other hand, of course, the schoolbook was at the same time used in the western education system, also to communicate ideas, concepts and values. Both these cases raise the following question: How much relevant information can we obtain concerning the formation of ideas as a result of the content of these schoolbooks? We will start here with the discussion of the schoolbook in Belgian education as a tool for the formation of ideas about an unknown culture, in this case, the Congolese.

1.2.1. Conceptualisation in schoolbooks

Scientific research concerning the formation of ideas about other cultures using the medium of Belgian schoolbooks is rather limited to date. The most extensive study available is the doctoral dissertation of Antoon De Baets, from 1988, about the influence of history textbooks on Flemish public opinion concerning non-Western cultures, using a study of the content of history textbooks from secondary education in the period 1945-1984. This study is interesting in this context for at least two reasons: Firstly, because it contains an overview of previous research on conceptualisation in history books in Flanders. Information on this subject gathered by the author confirms and strengthens for Belgian Congo what is generally applicable for other regions: very little scientific research has been carried out into conceptualisation in schoolbooks.[18] Secondly, the study is important because the author questions how what is learned at school influences the way people think about other cultures. Here he convincingly shows that research into the influence of a schoolbook on the formation of ideas puts this influence into perspective. On the one hand, it is clear that it is difficult to ascertain how certain ideas are retained from the texts of schoolbooks and the extent to which they are representative for more broadly applicable values and thoughts within a society. On the other hand, the medium of schoolbooks almost vanishes completely when the multitude of other media and influences affecting the children during and after their time at school are also taken into account.[19]

Schoolbooks can only provide information about the transference of values on a general level. The conclusions that can be drawn from the research into schoolbooks are never final, they are only indicative. The manner in which

schoolbooks deal with particular themes therefore only reveals something about what the makers of the book think. It does not necessarily tell us what the pupils who used the book did think. It can be assumed, however, that the information given in schoolbooks did, in general, fit with what was thought about those things in a broader social context. The producers of the schoolbook thereby functioned as a kind of mirror, reflecting current ideas via the book. The conclusion may be drawn that the same types of information or the same kinds of messages circulated via other media and other means and thus also reached the pupils.

1.2.2. The image of the Belgian Congo

As far as the Belgian Congo is concerned, there are strong indications that the same types of information circulated in various ways and that particular images and ideas were part of a whole concept that was fairly generally present in Belgian and Flemish society. This statement can be reinforced, for example, by investigating the ideas and concepts about the same themes in different milieus. For the missionaries, the strong interrelationship of education and church must have unmistakeably contributed to the unity of conceptualisation within certain social groups from which the missionaries were recruited. We have already pointed out that the image given of missionaries at school could largely have been created (and maintained) by the missionaries themselves. It suffices to point out parallels between the image given in mission periodicals and that shown in schoolbooks.

There is very little material available on the way in which the colony was presented in Belgian schools. One study was devoted to the aforementioned 'world expansion conference' (a very inadequate translation of *congrès d'expansion économique mondiale*). It is a master's thesis which examines the impact the plans, made in preparation for the conference on world expansion, had on the primary school curriculum. This research was done on the basis of reports from conferences on education and periodicals on education. In another master's thesis the phenomenon was approached on the basis of schoolbooks.[20] This research concerned the manner in which the colonial period was written about in a number of history books used in secondary education in the period between 1900 and 1980. The conclusions of this study, based on the contents of about sixty different textbooks, can be summarised as follows:

In the first period, from the beginning of colonisation until the First World War, hardly any attention was paid to the colony in the fatherland's history books.

Some events concerning the King were mentioned, of which the most prominent was about the protection and civilisation of the Congolese, the war against Arabian slave traders, evangelisation and the tapping of new markets. In the interbellum period, the approach changed to a more contextual one, in the sense of heightened interest, and the results of colonial action were further discussed. Devoting entire lessons to the colony only became the norm after the Second World War. A more detached approach to the first years of colonisation was introduced, especially compared to the heroic proportions the deeds of King Leopold II had taken on in earlier periods.[21]

In addition, there is also a study by Edouard Vincke from 1985 on the image of foreign cultures. This concentrated on Belgian French language geography textbooks, published in the period 1880-1980. His research, based on a representative sample of schoolbooks, also provides information on the image that Belgian pupils received about foreign peoples in distant lands. It is primarily a study about ethnocentrism, tracing the evolution of the concepts of 'race' and 'primitivism' over a period of 100 years. Vincke also researched a number of concepts that concerned the image of the Congolese. Regarding the assessment of the phenomenon of colonisation by the authors studied he states: "*It is possible to follow the changes of position regarding colonisation. During the first period, there is a direct panegyric for the possession and exploitation of riches. Then there is a panegyric for the humanitarian and economic work, the valuation of the spiritual and material welfare. Finally there is a panegyric for development in the modern sense. A fashionable polemicist (P. Bruckner) vehemently criticises Western culpability in relation to its old colonies and the Third World. This is a criticism from which the analysed authors escaped*." [22]

Marc Depaepe also paid attention to data about '*the colony at school*' in the study and exhibition '*Congo, a second fatherland*'. Based on his assertions, I can only draw the following conclusions from the above studies, which correspond strongly in a global sense. Though the emphasis was on progress and the results achieved through the civilising action, the basic position towards the Congolese remained fundamentally racist, even though this position was based on so-called scientific premises. The Congolese were stuck, according to this conceptualisation, between actual progress and inherent inferiority. This justified the continued presence of the colonisers, whose bravery and achievements, of course, were also endlessly praised. The Congolese were also praised insofar as they achieved the

image that the colonisers themselves wanted of them.[23]

The Groupe Scolaire Building in Coquilhatville

A striking example of this very ambiguous position is to be found in '*Taalwerkboek 5*', a textbook in Dutch for the sixth year of primary school, published in 1960. In this textbook, over a total of thirty reading lessons, three texts are devoted to the Congo. The first of the three is entitled "*Pioneering work in the Belgian Congo*" and deals with the creation of the colony, the role played by King Leopold II and the memory of a number of colonial heroes (De Bruyne and Lippens, Dhanis and Jacques). The heroic sacrifice of the missionaries is also discussed. Furthermore, it is posited that Leopold gifted the Congo to Belgium, to fulfil his initial purpose. The second lesson has the title "*A metropolis grows*" and considers the growth and prospects of Leopoldville. Finally, the third text describes a remote mission post. It is entitled "*Where the tam-tams drum*". Through their choice of vocabulary, these last two texts clearly illustrate the contrast created in the depiction of the colonial undertaking. Numerous strengthening adjectives were used in these texts to show this image as sharply as possible. In Leopoldville, at the 'wide' Congo River, 'spacious, beautiful' avenues formed a 'modern' city, with 'tasteful' buildings, 'luxurious' hotels, 'magnificent' bank buildings and 'well-kept' gardens, 'sober' school complexes and 'proper' hospitals. By contrast, many dangers had to be risked to get to the mission post in the bush, over 'winding, narrow' roads. However, the mission post itself was an oasis of civilisation, as literally stated, because "*the remaining, extensive mission territory is located even further away: thick woods along the hills and swamps in the valley. (…) Far away the dull, heavy beat of the tam-tams is heard. Over there, in that mysterious distance it is hard work; the fetish*

servants and the sorcerers still have great, ill-fated influence over the population. They are the worst enemies of the civilisation of Congo. Slowly we come to understand what mission work means."[24] Naturally, this kind of description shows how the authors, consciously or unconsciously, represented Congo as a distant exotic place. It was described as a place where only hardworking, motivated people could go to take part in a heroic but far from completed mission to alleviate the misery of the totally different people who lived there.

An important marginal note here: Congo and everything that had to do with the colony was, of course, only one of the topics considered in these books. Relatively speaking, the attention devoted to this topic was not so large.[25] This realisation also applies to the political interest in the Congo and perhaps to society in general. The colonial idea must have remained strange and mysterious in public opinion, far from the daily reality. Although the colonial propaganda reached even the smallest villages through education and missionary action, there is no doubt whatsoever that the image of the colony, as it came about through missionary and state propaganda, was essentially ethnocentric and certainly persisted until after independence. This image perfectly corresponds to the descriptions generally spread by the colonial propaganda services.[26]

1.3. Where did the missionary vocation come from?

The concrete situation that brought young people to the point of becoming missionaries can partially explain their intellectual frame of mind and the worldview from which they approached their job as missionaries. Since the beginning of the 1980s scientific investigation in this area has made clear progress in collecting and analysing the testimonies of those involved. However, there are as yet no coordinated studies published.[27] For the period preceding missionary life, including the motivational factors and the surroundings in which those involved grew up, two research projects can be cited in the Belgian context. In the first case there are a hundred testimonies from missionaries that were collected by the *Centre Vincent Lebbe* in French-speaking Belgium during the mid-eighties. This project had a historical nature; the intention was to determine what memories those involved still had of their lives as missionaries. The results of this research were seen as an initiative towards the creation of a 'database' of missionary testimonies. The second case concerns a survey of one hundred missionaries throughout Belgium at the end of the 1980s by Carine Dujardin. She was aiming specifically at the value pattern of the missionary population in the

year 1989 and their position in the context of changes made after Vatican II.

In both cases those interviewed were mainly African missionaries. Each time a number of general questions were asked concerning motivation, attitude, descent and such, that can offer us useful information in the context of our investigation. In both cases the researchers reached the conclusion that there are no general lines to be drawn concerning the descent or motivations of missionaries, although there are a few trends. For instance, it was found that the great majority of missionaries came from what was described as 'the higher middle class'. In the second investigation, which was geographically conducted over the whole country, there was also an overwhelming representation of people from the countryside.

The class-bound division of the missionaries may not seem significant but from the results of the two investigations it is apparent that the ideological base was clearly present in many cases, and this in a variety of ways. The Catholic action, which was fully developed during the interbellum period, was a meaningful framework of reference for very many missionaries during their youth. Catholic action and missionary action overlapped through this. School was also, in a great majority of the cases, taken into account as a stimulating factor when deciding to become a missionary. The Catholicism of the private life seems to connect to this easily in most cases.[28] From Soetens' research it is further apparent that there were many practical reasons to start work as a missionary. In this way the author emphasizes that school is often named as a stimulus in general but that there were mostly other, more exact factors that were mentioned: a particular religious person who exercised a decisive influence; older friends who took the same road; missionaries who came to give talks at school.

For Soetens, one of the most important conclusions is that among the reasons given there was almost nothing said about a broader church project. As a possible explanation he puts forward that the specific missionary training before departure was very brief or lacking entirely. Of course it is also possible that the nature of the research method used could have something to do with this: no doubt interviewees will sooner answer with facts to specific questions. When they are questioned about their motivation they might not spontaneously talk about a system or broader phenomenon but call on an individual person or concrete occurrences. Finally, it is a noteworthy conclusion that school had as good as no influence on religious women. The shorter school career and the fact that most

orders of teaching sisters had their own recruiting system and only had missions quite late (or not at all) would have been the cause.[29]

What was the image of the missionaries themselves in society? This too is a complex question. Keeping in mind the influence of the church structures on people's everyday lives, and considering the decisive influence of other missionaries at the origin of new vocations, it is likely that the image of the missionaries was shaped by the actions of missionaries. Also, this kind of literature, including the mission periodicals (and therefore the Catholic propaganda in the strict sense*)*, was itself a part of the influence on the creation of vocations in the younger generations of priests. In his study on the shifting mentality of Belgian mission periodicals during the first half of the twentieth century, Pirotte suggests that few countries had more different mission periodicals than Belgium.

According to Pirotte, the main aims of missionary action that were emphasised in the mission periodicals were proclaiming the message of salvation and establishing the church community in a strange territory. On the subject of the missionaries, Pirotte concluded: "*Firstly, there is an excessive simplification in the presentation of the missionary. This simplification is not only manifested in the absence of profound reflection but also in the dichotomy used between the good and the bad; the missionary, shown as the hero of good, facing the forces of evil represented by the enemies of God's work. A second conclusion is of diffuse romanticism which may be seen in the periodicals throughout the period studied*." From there, he appropriately concluded: "*Undoubtedly, a large number of missionary qualities may be exact and we certainly may not ignore their generosity and endurance; but, in part, this image appears tailored with a view to being shown as attractive to young people avid in their devotion and self-sacrifice*" Nevertheless, at the end of the interbellum period a critical tendency came about in the periodicals that opened themselves to deeper reflection (these were a minority) and turned against the overly sentimental, romantic and heroic image of the missionary and his task in a strange land. These kinds of periodicals are situated on the side of missiological science. After a global quantitative investigation Pirotte decided that in the mission periodicals, in general, the emphasis was sooner placed upon proselytism, the gospel and spiritual welfare rather than moral and humanitarian objectives. This conclusion was even more true of the Catholic than the Protestant periodicals.

2. Specific training for missionaries

2.1. General

Dujardin states that specific training for missionaries in the nineteenth century was very limited and was practically nonexistent. Most congregations only provided the normal priest training consisting of the noviciate, a number of years of philosophy and a theological education. Apart from this a distinction had to be made between the specific mission congregations and other religious congregations. For specific mission congregations, attention was only given to the place and circumstances in which the missionaries would find themselves in the future but this attention was very fragmented and certainly not scientific in nature. In the other congregations, particularly the women's congregations, the level was even lower. The ideas of missionary work and education did evolve over the course of the twentieth century, also influenced by a number of papal encyclicals (namely *Rerum ecclesiae* from 1926, *Saeculo exeunte* from 1940, *Evangelii praecones* from 1951 and *Princeps pastorum* from 1959). Apart from the fact that three of these four encyclicals could only have had an influence after the Second World War, it must be stated that Dujardin did not announce any changes in the condition of the missionary training and thus it seems that the nineteenth century situation endured in the twentieth. The development at or around Leuven University in terms of missionary training shall be considered in what follows. There are two reasons for this: firstly, MSC will be considered in particular with regard to the treatment of the concrete training initiatives in congregations. They undertook a great deal of their training in Heverlee, close to Leuven. Secondly, as a Catholic university, the University of Leuven was noticeably at the forefront in this regard. Pierre Charles has already been referred to, but to what extent his ideas and the activities he organised were applied in 'the field' will have to be investigated in more detail.

2.1.1. Towards a central missionary training?

Playground Girls School Sainte Thérèse in Coquilhatville, 1950s.

There were several attempts to create a general training institute for missionaries in Belgium. At the start of the colonisation of the Congo by Leopold II an African

seminary was founded in Leuven at the request of the King himself as part of the negotiations with and the search for Belgian missionaries. The seminary received the task, analogous to that of the American seminary, to train future missionaries for Africa. It functioned as a general training establishment for missionaries from December 1886 onwards but always suffered from a lack of resources and, particularly, a lack of students. In May 1888 it was taken over by the congregation of Scheut. According to Marcel Storme, courses in theology and the basics of African and Arabic languages were taught.[30] It may be assumed that, considering the early stage of the colonisation and the missionary work in the free state of Congo, there was no place for other subjects. The curriculum also included "*The concepts of hygiene and essential medicine in an equatorial climate*."[31]

A second attempt to set up a general training for missionaries took place in the 1920s. In March 1923 the so-called 'militia law' was passed in the parliament. This allowed missionaries to be released in part from military service, on the condition that they "(…) *spent one school year in higher education in a nurse-missionary training programme that is accepted by the Minister of Colonies and whose curriculum has received his approval*".[32] This centre for higher education was situated in Leuven and opened in November 1923. Strictly speaking the training was not a part of the university curriculum since it was very practical. The principle behind it can be seen from the words of Rector Ladeuze, who noted in early March 1923: "*The house has just voted that missionaries shall be relieved from military service on the condition of doing a year of colonial studies (in addition to a few months in the field). Reason: services that they may provide in the colony during wartime, or in the absence of doctors*".

It is clear from the existence of a complete curriculum that there were plans for a specific missionary training at Leuven University. This curriculum made a fairly global and wide impression and paid attention to history and languages, ethnology and teaching, agriculture, transport and engineering, besides a more traditional focus on the elements of medicine and hygiene. It was actually a slight extension of an already existing curriculum. Like other universities, the Catholic University played to the demand for staff with higher education when the Congo went over to the Belgian state in 1908. Training in colonial sciences was introduced, as in Brussels and Liege, in the framework of the *Ecole supérieure de sciences commerciales et consulaires,* where a degree in the *Sciences coloniales*

could be attained in one or two years. Considering its place in the organisation chart the training was more situated in the *'economic'* or *'commercial'* area.

One of the professors in this training course was Edouard De Jonghe. It has already become clear that he played an important role in shaping the colonial education system. However, De Jonghe was also very taken with colonial education at home in "the metropolis" and undoubtedly played an active role in the decision-making on this subject. At the same time it can be seen from his correspondence with Ladeuze that these two maintained very good relations. The question also arises as to whether the nurse-missionary training was set up following demands from Leuven University. This cannot yet be answered definitively on the basis of the available information.

The education in the colonial sciences mentioned here should also have formed the basis for the new 'missionary' study option, which Ladeuze and De Jonghe were aiming for. It appears from the correspondence between them that they had been planning this for some time. In a letter of September 1922 there was reference to the *programme du cours pour missionnaires* that would go together with the existing curriculum ("*notre programme*", which referred to colonial science), supplemented by current medicine, history of evangelisation methods and psychology, applied to the education of children. The intention was to have the missionaries receive one extra year of training in order to give them a real scientific and practical background: *"If they agree to sacrifice one year of apostolate this would be in view of a truly solid scientific and practical training."*[33] A number of congregations were positive about this type of training, although there were a number of complaints and uncertainties with regard to founding a general educational course. The Jesuits thought the curriculum too general in intent and too specifically intended for the Congolese situation. After some negotiation and lobbying, in which Ladeuze participated, the coordinating committee of missionary superiors did consent.[34]

The rector of Leuven University was apparently not opposed to such an initiative, although he did emphasise to De Jonghe that everything would have to be feasible, also financially. It was not the first time that De Jonghe found himself in this situation; he was also involved in plans to start anthropological training in Leuven. The key factor in finally deciding against teaching missionary studies at Leuven University is not clear from the few fragments that can be found on this subject in the De Jonghe papers. The only possible explanation that comes out

from this exchange of letters is the opposition of Alphonse Broden,[35], the director of the still starting *Instituut voor Tropische Geneeskunde* (Institute for Tropical Medicine) (at that time still in Forest near Brussels). Asked for his cooperation, De Jonghe is said to have received a principle promise from Broden, who was a well-known figure in scientific circles at the time.[36] However, in a later letter Broden showed some objections to founding a tropical medicine training section in Leuven. It is probable that this was due in part to his desire to protect his own department.[37]

Although this missionary training never came about there was an alternative: Broden had already written to De Jonghe in 1922 with a proposal for the education of *missionnaires-brancardiers.* As already mentioned, the work continued in this direction. After the approval of the militia law in 1923 De Jonghe and Ladeuze started work on the creation of the curriculum. It was approved by the Minister for the Colonies, Louis Franck, in August. In the following months there were negotiations with various professors but to start with the medical training would be almost exclusively provided by one person, Dr. Dubois, who was recommended to Ladeuze by Mgr. Rutten,[38] the Bishop of Liege. The training was started in the 1923-24 academic year, although the year started late on the third of November due to practical preparations and negotiations. Around fifteen missionaries were enrolled, including a number of Scheutists, a few Jesuits and also 4 MSC: Willem Huygh, Jan De Kerck, Paul Trigalet and Edouard Hulstaert.[39] It is also clear that the last three completed the year. All three of them received a distinction. The centre for nurse-missionaries had a wavering start. In the following years there were no more students but halfway through the thirties this changed and the number of registered students went far above fifty.

However, it was clear that there had been more potential. Although the status of the training remained vague, which is clear from the fact that at one time it could be found under ‘medical training’ in the university curricula brochure and at another occasion under ‘economics’, it was originally the intention to give this very medical education the title of ‘master’s’. At the end of the first academic year there was a discussion in which several professors took part and of which there are several visible traces in the rector’s correspondence. In a letter of 20 June 1924 to Ladeuze, Professor Michotte questioned whether it was necessary to give a master’s degree for a one-year course with an incomplete curriculum at that.[40] Doctor Dubois, who taught almost all the subjects in the first year,

declared that he did not want to examine the students on pathology but could just give them a certificate that they had taken the course. He thought the level of the course much too high for them and that they did not have enough prior knowledge, therefore making it impossible to examine them.[41] De Jonghe also took this up in a letter to Ladeuze and said that he had sorted out the matter after a conversation with Dubois and Broden, who supervised the exams as the government representative.[42]

The original concept of a complete area of study for missionaries, rewarded by a 'real' degree, was now fulfilled in a different way. A degree of 'Bachelor in Colonial Sciences' was created in which the nurse-missionary would follow a number of options in addition to the normal courses. During the first period there was the choice between a limited number of subjects that were part of other disciplines. A subject of De Jonghe's, *Ethnologie et ethnographie du Congo – politique indigène*, a history subject *Histoire et législation du Congo* by P. Coppens, and *Organisation industrielle du Congo* given by P. Fontainas. Apart from these two subjects, the following were provided on education: *Méthodologie générale*, taught by François Collard, and *Organisation de l'enseignement primaire*, taught by Raymond Buyse.[43] Apart from this obligatory package one of the following three topics had to be chosen: *Langues coloniales*, *Géographie physique du Congo* or *Botanique des plantes tropicales*. De Jonghe suggested a further step: the possibility to achieve the title of *Docteur en Sciences colonials* after a stay of three years in the colony and the defence of a thesis on an adapted topic. This was never put into practice however.[44]

The real impact of the training for the MSC seems to have been limited. The bachelor education, for which a number of non-medical subjects had to be taken, was never really successful. During the peak year of 1938-1939 ten missionaries were awarded this degree. This result was never equalled: the number of graduates constantly fluctuated between zero and ten. Only a handful of MSC achieved the degree over the years. Things were slightly better with the medical training. This could be expected because of the accompanying exemption from military service. However, the number of people that completed the training fluctuated considerably, there can be no definite number given. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that both training programmes gained in popularity during the second half of the thirties. This was the busiest period of participation at the MSC as well. It is no coincidence that this was also the period

in which the Catholic missions in the Belgian Congo flourished.

2.1.2. Home education

The missionary's preparation for their work in Africa remained essentially a matter for the congregations. In relation to this it can be asked how this took place in the congregations that were active in the MSC mission area. The information available on this is very scarce. Generally, it can be said that there were no strict rules for education and that education was in no sense required. For the majority of these congregations there are only indications that future missionaries were housed together during a certain period, in the nineteenth century tradition of being isolated from the outside world. This was, for instance, the case for the Daughters of the Precious Blood, who had a central house in Holland from 1891 where a noviciate was organised. The Brothers of the Christian Schools were probably an exception as they were specifically a teaching order, with systematic training in a teacher training college.

To illustrate this: even an outspoken and large missionary congregation like Scheut kept to the classical division. An information brochure from 1925 states: "*The trainee missionary first has a noviciate year in Scheut. During the noviciate the scheutists receive their first training, wholly based on obedience and following Jesus Christ. … Great emphasis is placed on the supernatural in everything: devout piety, independent strength of character, unwavering love for the call and congregation, all encompassing "brotherly love"*. After the noviciate the vows are made and the mission country is made known. In principle, they then stayed in Belgium for another six years in order to complete the usual two years of philosophy and four years of theology in Leuven. The brochure stated that, once arrived in the mission area, the missionary spent a year at the central post where he would "*acquaint himself further with the language*" and was taught the rest of the practical matters.[45] As an extension of what was the case in the African Seminary, the Scheut missionaries already received training in Chinese and Congolese languages in Belgium.[46] The entrance requirements for the candidates were not very high: they had to have completed their studies successfully. However, "(…) *If there was anything lacking in this regard but he was accepted to study philosophy in his diocese – if he had applied for this – then he may still have the chance of also being accepted by us*."

2.2. The education of the MSC

According to Honoré Vinck, these conclusions largely correspond with the

accepted practice of the MSC.[47] The large majority of the MSC working in the Belgian Congo had not received any more education than the aforementioned philosophical and theological training (the normal priestly training). Of those who worked in the Belgian Congo and were still living at the time of my research, to my knowledge only one possessed a university degree: Frans Maes, who had a Bachelor in Education.[48]

2.2.1. Philosophical and theological training

An aspect that is hard to grasp is the influence of the philosophical and theological training of the MSC on their positions concerning missionary work, being a missionary, Africa, the Congolese and everything to do with their future. The MSC organised their own education. This happened in two steps. In the first phase, the aspiring missionaries spent some years in Gerdingen in the province of Limburg, where the congregation had a training house. They received two years of philosophical training and the first year of their theological education. Subsequently, the students moved to Heverlee near Leuven, where they received three more years of theology. The curriculum (the *Ratio studiorum*) consisted of a number of subjects, although none of these paid any specific attention to foreign cultures. According to Vinck, educational theory and psychology were only studied in a very limited fashion. The vast majority of the curriculum consisted of theological and philosophical material. A course on ethnology was written by Edmond Boelaert but was certainly not used before the end of the 1950s.[49] Boelaert had already taught classes on ethnology when he was in Belgium, such as in the autumn of 1948. They cannot have been systematically organised courses, however, considering that he never stayed in Belgium for long.[50] Information about the Congo and about missionary life was chiefly an extracurricular activity, given during the activities organised by the community.

Classroom front view

The community life in the training house is perhaps best shown through the chronicles kept by the students. These chronicles were summary reports of the most important events in the monastery or training house. They were published under various titles (*Kronijk, Kronieken, Uit ons Leuven*) in magazines that the students made and distributed themselves. In Bree the magazine was called *De Vloed ('the flood')*, in Leuven *De Toekomst ('the future')*. The 'chronicle', usually to be found at the back of the magazine, was almost always signed with a pseudonym, its' tone always flowed well and it briefly sketched the events organised, those that had taken place, who had died and was buried, who had visited, who had been appointed, etc. In the first issue of *De Toekomst* (1927), for example, it was stated: "*10 August: Opening of the missiological week, scholars were present from all countries. The papal nuncio opened the first meeting.*"[51] Whether or not many MSC aspirants were present was not mentioned. Later, active participation in this event was reported: "*Missionary work finds eager students at our school, to such an extent that a number of them went to the AUCAM to brave the conferences of Dr. Rodhain from Brussels about 'La situation médicale au Congo' and of Mr. Olivier Lacombe from Paris about 'La spiritualité Hindoue'.*"[52] In another article about missionary action, another aspirant, Joris Vlamynck, mentioned the AUCAM (*Academica Unio Catholicas Adjuvans Missiones*), which was more or less connected to student life and the university.[53] He found that in student associations there was too little attention for the M.V.S. (*Missiebond Vlaamse Studenten – Mission Union of Flemish Students*), the academic mission union of which professors were also part: "*The number of members, 400 in 1935 went back to 200 in 1937. Too small a percentage of the 1 600 Flemish students at the College of Higher Education in Leuven*". He was apparently more enthusiastic about the AUCAM about which he said: "*Against the pernicious influence of many modern theories in the scientific milieu, the AUCAM is looking for a way to enter that world and to break the inaccessibility of 'scholarly' heathenism and its prejudices.*"

Although Vlamynck considered the working and action of AUCAM fairly extensively, he gave no further indications concerning the possible participation of MSC in this organisation. There are, however, some indications that this was the case in the second half of the 1930s. In June 1935 it was stated that "*Brother Van Kerckhove, using the lessons he had taken with P. Charles, S.J., spoke to us about 'The goal of the Church and the essence of missionary work'*" and two years later the mission club was divided into an ethnological and a missiological

department, in which the recently published missiological articles were discussed. During the school year 1935-1936, there were suddenly huge numbers of enrolments for the courses at the university missionary centre. At the start of the school year it was noted in the report that good organisation would be needed because "(…) *half the students would become soldiers and would have their hands full*". However, during November it was announced there would be no festivities on the occasion of the Mgr. Verius day, "*because of the pressures involved in attending university.*"[54] That year there were indeed a record number (17) MSC Members enroled for the courses.[55]

From the magazine chronicles it further appears that initially a missionary only came by ocassionally to talk about the Congo, sometimes with a film or slides. In 1930 the chronicle writer remarked: "*19 May: Understandably enough we welcomed the conference with light images that Father Lefèvre came to give us about our Congo mission – everything about the mission awakens our interest and this also brought immeasurable satisfaction*."[56] There was a great need and demand for information about the future place of work in the Congo. Later, this need also appeared sporadically in the records. In February 1932 the training house in Leuven was visited by a number of missionaries who were on a holiday to the motherland. The chronicle reported: "To our great joy, *Father Yernaux arrived here very early. We lived with the 'charcoal artist' in Mondombe, we heard about the hard 'labour' of the development and establishing of the mission post, of the great expenses and hardships, etc.; We got to know the great heart of 'Fafa Joseph' and many a wise lesson for later, among others about our contact with the whites, good confirmation of one of our previous lessons from the mission club*."[57] It was phrased even more strongly in 1945: "*On 10* (October, JB)*, Fr. Moeyens, recently returned to the Congo, gave us a captivating talk about the Watuzi tribe in Rwanda (where he had spend some leisure time); he also spoke to us, as a person with true knowledge, of 'our' blacks (those of our Mission) and the depopulation of the Congo. It is useful to state how much such conferences are favourable to the missionary spirit of the Scholastic, which is too long frustrated of the good influence emanating from the direct relations with out dear Missions and those returning.*"[58] Here, of course, there was an allusion to the war circumstances, which had reduced the contact between Belgium and Congo to a minimum. The need for more information about the future workplace was also expressed at other times. From the second half of the 1930s, the number of meetings increased considerably and in 1950 Father Standaert, when looking

back on the period, noted that: "*Ample use is also made of the retired missionaries. Too much sometimes, because our own activity is sometimes forgotten.*"[59] After the Second World War, the colleagues were still called on to contribute to the meetings regularly. A report of the mission club from 1948 reported: "*This year we were often given the opportunity to hear holidaying missionaries, among others Fr. Van Linden, Fr. De Rijck, Fr. Meeuwese, Fr. Wauters, etc. Others gave us studies about missionary work, Fr. Hulstaert, Fr. Geurtjens, Fr. Boelaert, etc. The striking highlight was reached this year on the grand mission day with the staging of the mission play 'Under the Cross of Tugude' by Fr. Boelaert and with the striking lecture of Fr. Jan Cortebeeck about the scholasticate and Mission*'."[60]

That same Jan Cortebeeck also wrote the foreword to the text of Boelaert's play, which was published in 1930 by Davidsfonds as the first part of a new series of children's books. The tone and style of Cortebeeck's writing, though a barely concealed attempt at mission propaganda, also illustrate well what the missionaries thought about the mission activity: "*For you, youths, this missionary life is easier to understand than for the old. You have a young, fresh, spring soul that can sympathise and empathise with ambitious, cheerful, daring, creative spirits, who can carve from a rough stone artwork which experts will regard with admiration. A missionary is such a daring force. Going to unknown, foreign lands, not knowing what one will find there except many miseries not yet taken into account, to live there away from all the comfort of modern European civilisation, this European civilisation where nothing is left to coincidence, where there are no unforeseen circumstances and requirements, where all the needs of the spirit can be met with the greatest ease, where there is no more distance, transport no longer necessary, where it suffices to lie, in a comfy chair and to turn a button to see and hear the enchantment of all arts, all over the civilised world.*"

The valiant and heroic element was still at the fore here, together with an aversion towards the 'modernisation' that society was undergoing at home. With the presupposition that the missions should thus be different, the question of how the missionaries saw this was of course raised: "*He dreams of a reversal of the heathenism and sees his primitives, his country and people recreated into a cultured society of people singing peace without even one single police helmet; of laughing prosperity and restful sufficiency, where every family can live well on the fruits of their own labour, in their own house, on their own estate without*

import or export; an ideal society where one is more sustained from lively, fresh virtues than from bread and where one doesn't see or know money: a society with no banks and no poverty, where one lives happily and dies happy and goes straight to Heaven."[61] This message directly criticises the situation as it was being experienced in Europe. For many people in the period in which this text first appeared, this type of discourse would probably have been experienced as a way out of the bad economic crisis they were confronted with. It is not coincidental that 'banks' and 'money' were named as things to be avoided in a new, ideal society.

Boelaert's own play, which he had already written in 1926, is vaguely situated in the MSC mission in Papua New Guinea and is characterised by heroism and drama. 'Tugude' is about a missionary who is confronted with a number of local customs which he opposes, quite correctly according to the story. The local tribes wish to hold a dance party behind his back. The missionary knows that these dance parties always end in tribal quarrels and fist fights. He tries to stop the various tribal chiefs from taking part in the party but does not succeed. When the party does end in murder and manslaughter the missionary is threatened with being held guilty of the death of one of the women who must be avenged. Thanks to the level-headedness of the missionary, and the sacrifice of the good, converted primitive, he manages to retain his life. In this the local people are described as primitives who can be dealt with because the white missionary is more intelligent and can confuse them by his faster reasoning. The indecisiveness and inconstancy of the local chieftains is heavily emphasised. The self-sacrificing love, taught by the missionaries, is victorious and eventually converts all the natives.

The chronicles and similar columns only make up a small section of the scholasticate periodicals. The principle part was made up of articles that were almost exclusively written by the students themselves and which dealt with a variety of theological, philosophical, moral or social subjects. The tone of these articles was generally very serious. The subjects were mainly the extension of the training itself and so they were often theological or philosophical in impact. The choice of certain topics makes it clear that the students themselves chose the topics and that the content of these periodicals was not being dictated from above, although they regularly contain devout professions of thanks to superiors. However, it is likely that this would be an established practice in such an environment. The articles are an interesting way of finding out more about the

points of view and ideas that the future missionaries generally had, especially concerning missionary activity and colonisation. Before going further into the content it is best to further situate the articles and the periodicals in the context in which they appeared. They are, after all, closely attached to the particulars of the 'mission club'.

2.2.2. The Mission Club

The specific missionary aspect of the education of the young religious students was covered in a number of meetings which were organised around specific topics. This was the so-called 'mission club'. According to the information available there must certainly have been two clubs in the MSC: one in the scholasticate in Leuven and one in that of Bree, where the philosophical training of the missionaries took place (but on which much less information is preserved). The name 'mission club' is perhaps representative of the atmosphere in which this training aspect took place. From the descriptions that may be found in the MSC Archives they appear sometimes to be meetings of adventurously inclined youths, who came to listen to exciting stories about exotic situations. It will become apparent later that the voluntary and free character of this initiative still has to be somewhat interpreted. In any event, other 'clubs' also existed within the community in the training house, such as the 'Thomas club', a philosophical study club.

Meetings of the mission club began to be organised (again) after the First World War. On this occasion one of those taking part wrote: *"At the start of the school year 1918-1919 we began with setting up the previously flourishing 'mission club' again. This has always had as a goal (and it shall, if it pleases God, continue to strive to meet its goals with diligence) the holy fire of the mission, to awaken the extremely mighty help of the apostolate and to enrich our future missionaries with everything that may be of use to us later in the mission"*[62] From a 'report of the meetings' that was made about this time: "*Every Tuesday after the walk we should come together to talk about the interests of the club, or to attend a lecture, or to practice the English language, since this is so widespread and always comes in useful to the missionary.*"[63] Apparently, not everything went without difficulties. At the start of the new academic year in October 1919 the composition of the new club was recorded in the minutes. There were at that moment twelve members, including Hulstaert (who was the secretary) and Boelaert. In December 1919 the reporter finished his report with the

announcement: *"After the lecture it was also suggested by our chairman that an association for prayer and fasting should be made of the mission club*." This proposal would also be accepted promptly. The mission club remained for the following years a combination of religious exercise and passing on of know-how. In the following years the subjects covered included the following: *"The attitude of the Catholic missionaries towards the Protestants"*; *"An interesting study of ethnology, a subject that is relatively neglected by us"; 'The Pygmies*'; '*Conference by Fr. Hulstaert on the Dutch East Indies*; '*The mission thought*'; '*Malaria fever*'; '*The actions of the Protestants in their missions*'; '*The use of catechists*'.

At the start of the academic year 1923-1924 the club was again suspended, only to start up again after the first term of the following academic year. The activities and the rhythm of the meetings were perhaps very dependent on other preoccupations of the Fathers. Besides this it indicates that, certainly in this period (early 1920), the club was not really a priority. Again in the early thirties the club went into hibernation from time to time. As has been reported earlier, there were years when only the (scarce) missionaries who were resting were called upon, those who had time enough to recount memories of their time on the missions. During the academic year 1934-1935 the secretary noted after the December meeting: "*Until May A. Cortebeeck addressed the monthly meeting of the club. In rather interesting stories about the Philippines he presented us time and again with real missionary life*." After several years of very low activity from 1930 to 1935, the situation improved again. At the start of the academic year 1936-1937 two sections were set up, one ethnological and one missionary. It is no coincidence that the secretary that year was Albert De Rop, a man who was very interested in ethnology.[64] There were probably also more theologically inspired members of the mission club, though it is not possible to find out right away who these were. It is noteworthy that there was indeed a greater interest for specifically Congolese themes to be seen in the lectures that were organised from now on. The division into two sections clearly only lasted one year but the interest in the 'ethnic' Congolese culture remained prominent afterwards in the meetings. In later years there would be another division, at a time when the MSC were also active in Brazil. During the war years the activities remained reasonably constant, even though it was sometimes impossible to meet together because of the war activities[65] and there were also complaints that the interest of the Fathers themselves was not always what it should be.

Framework

The contents of the subjects that were reported in the periodical of the scholasticate and the subjects reported in the reports of the mission club overlap. The lectures that were held and the subjects that were discussed in the mission club were very often supported by the writings of aspirant missionaries. On the basis of the contributions that were mentioned in the mission writings, some additional nuances can probably be displayed regarding the contents of the articles. The manner in which the subjects treated were assimilated and even simply what had been remembered, is expressed better in these writings. These are notes which form a sort of minutes of the meetings of the mission club, and as such had an archiving function within the group, but which certainly did not have an officially representative function with respect to the outside world or to any higher authority. Only during two years (during the Second World War) did the superior set his signature under the reports, from which it can be deduced that some form of control existed. Apart from this one instance there is nothing in the way of compulsion or checking from above to be detected concerning the meetings, nor in the periodical put together by the students. The situation in which these writings came to exist was naturally rather specific: this was a relatively small group of people who had a great deal of contact with each other within a closed community outside the context of these specific meetings. There certainly existed a degree of social control and there must also have been the selection of information and data, including those concerning the future activities of the missionaries, though this mostly happened in an implicit way.

In any case, within the mission club and outside it there was close contact with the Fathers, including those who came from the missions. From the manner in which the visits of 'real' missionaries, those who had already been abroad, were spoken of, it can be deduced that the students looked up to these people and although they did not perhaps glamorise them or hero-worship them, they did admire them and took them as examples. The mission club or the events that were organised by the club (Mission Sunday, 'Vérius memorial') were excellent opportunities to "learn something new". A large part of the activities were probably not at all experienced as a duty by those involved, but as something much more logical or automatic. Again, keeping reports would probably have been interpreted in this way. Honoré Vinck, who was secretary of the mission club immediately after independence, put it as follows: they did it because it was part of being a serious association and they wanted to be taken seriously. If they had

not kept reports, the superior would perhaps have made some remark about it, not because of the contents of the reports but certainly because it would have been a form of laziness.[66] The qualification 'moral duty' seems to apply here. It indicates that the disciplining of the future missionaries was done comprehensively in a very subtle and implicit manner.

The mission club was part of the new world which one entered as an aspirant, a world with its own rules and fixed patterns, which one did not question. This is supported by the fact that, once the missionaries could leave for the Congo, they were given a task to do and sent to a place to do it by their superiors. They were to take on this task without complaint. Father Frans Maes, whom I interviewed, was an exception in the sense that he knew that he would get an educational task in the Congo and therefore had been obliged to take a degree in education. However, that was also determined by his superiors, "(...) *because the Government required a qualification to be able to teach*". That also was just accepted and done.[67] Maes finally ended up in a school in the mission post of Flandria (Boteke), where a degree was not at all necessary, because it was a private school. This caused Maes to remark: "*So I really could have gone to the Congo two years earlier!*" In any case, he seemed rather unimpressed by what he had learnt during his educational course. To the question of whether he had found much use for his theoretical education, he answered that otherwise he would not have been able to set examinations. He had learnt *that* in Leuven.[68] Again, from talking with other missionaries it is apparent that the future destination of the aspirants, both functional and geographic, was mostly decided by their superiors.

Activities

The idea of the mission club was based, according to the MSC themselves, on two pillars: a spiritual, religious perception on the one hand and a more intellectually moulding activity on the other hand. The two were somewhat intertwined. It was important not only to collect information about the region, the people and mission activities but also to lay a sound spiritual and moral foundation. In fact, it would be more correct to say that the activities of the mission club were on three different levels: moulding, devotion and propaganda. Before going more deeply into the contents of the moulding, the first two elements will be discussed because they were regarded by the missionaries themselves as at least as important in the preparation of the aspirants.

It is clear that the spiritual element always remained an integral part of the

meetings. The duties of prayer and religiosity were repeated at almost every meeting. *"Some exercises of virtue and prayer were imposed at the attention of the missionaries, the missions and the primitives. In this way we work on our own perfection. All members should pray a rosary each month for the fellow members*."[69] Every month there was a prayer task; more specifically prayers were dedicated for a certain goal or a certain person (or persons). Expressions such as these (but with changing subjects) are to be seen regularly in the reports: *"The speaker ended with a call to pray well for the intention of the month that our Congo mission should not fall prey to Protestant disunity*." The required devotion, religiosity and piety naturally showed through in the reports themselves, depending on the dedication and diligence that the reporter of the day showed. The war years represent a high point (probably not coincidentally).

It is not an unfounded or ahistorical interpretation when we speak here about the religious and spiritual element in the training of missionaries. This is shown by the remarks that were made during the first meeting at the start of the academic year, such as this remark from 1943: *"Following our tradition the President wants to talk about the aim and the spirit of our club and also what place these must take in our life at the scholasticate. The aim is to advance mission knowledge, but above all mission love. For the men of Leuven the romantic vision of the missionary life has faded to make way for the conviction that the missionary life is a true life of sacrifice … What is demanded of a missionary besides prayer and sacrifice? Father Yernaux shared the following with our chairman: A great love of one's neighbour is more necessary than mission study, so that the ingratitude of the negroes does not put you out of action. Also a reasonable knowledge of French, so as to be always able to get on with the white colonists*."[70] Prayer and devotion were elements that were systematically present and that are repeatedly mentioned in the reports. It is of course in the nature of missionary life that there is a place for religious aspects. During the reading of the different reports, however, an image appears in which religious inspiration seems to be rather essential, at least in the interpretation of the various authors. This inspiration also seems to be independent of the longing for romance or heroism, though it cannot be denied that the two were very often intertwined. The fact that 'sacrifice' seems to be a central concept in the life of a missionary may have something to do with this. This is discussed further in the section about the role of the missionary.

Picture of a Batswa village

Besides this, the mission club was also called upon for the more earthly component of mission work; in propaganda and raising funds for the missions. This certainly fits in with what was said earlier about the presence of the missions in particular and the Catholic Church in general in the broader social context. The mission writings and periodicals of the scholasticate do not say much about concrete initiatives. Above all the 'missie-foor', the mission fair, usually with an accompanying 'raffle', was an annually repeated event for the purpose of collecting funds on which the aspirants naturally worked. The mission day of 1933 in Bree was extensively described in the mission periodical and was clearly a very popular event. "*For setting up the exhibition the gymnasium of the Noviciate was cleared out. E.P. Van Moorsel, helped by E.P. Vullings, deputy chairman of the Committee for Mission Exhibitions in Belgium, put everything together in a tidy way. The donated objects, along with the mission objects, were an expression of the love that our people have for the missions. The Brothers drew, painted, printed and decorated the halls and rooms with flags and bunting. Helpful young women from the neighbourhood plaited flower wreaths. Helpful friends planted pines and welcoming arches which, decorated with roses, gave our monastery a friendly aspect. In the Novices' garden the fairground stalls and tents were set up. Darts, bar, ice creams, kite flying, knocking bottles over, shooting, fishing and raffles formed a great attraction. The prizes were assembled out of all sorts of objects, including puppies that Fr. Van Moorsel had got for free*. (…) *The streets leading to the monastery were full of people. The church was visited, balloons donated by the Gazet van Antwerpen newspaper lifted up into the blue sky, the music brought joy, the exhibition was so crowded that stalls and raffles could hardly work. Everyone opened their purses. ''really, it's for the Missions*' "[71] In the course of the years there were a number of other practical initiatives sporadically reported, such as the collection of old spectacles, making indexes of the mission periodicals, begging hikes and collections of silver paper.[72]

3. The world view of the future MSC

What positions did the MSC youths take as regards the different aspects of their future lives as missionaries in Africa? The themes that were touched on in periodicals and reports illustrate these opinions. They are grouped together here in a number of themes.

3.1. The market position of the Catholic faith

3.1.1. Catholics and Protestants

The position towards the Protestants, as this appears in the reports, was one of superiority and (very) passive tolerance. As early as 1919 a lecture was held about the attitude of the Catholic missionaries towards the Protestants. That there was *de facto* a great deal of animosity between the two groups can be deduced from the advice that was given on this occasion: the Catholic missionaries must not only tolerate the Protestants, they should also help them. That naturally applied only as far as the church allowed it, "*that is to say, everywhere except in the work of conversion*".[73] This mutual tolerance and aid were not prompted by mutual respect but because of the impression that must be given to the Congolese. Appearances must be maintained. After all, external divisions would not give a civilised impression and may even cause confusion concerning the message of belief. In 1925 the subject came up again in a lecture to the mission club. The reporter retained from the lecture that Protestantism had intrinsically much less nurturing value, that the Protestants moralised less (which was taken as negative) and that they preferred to work with the higher levels of society and were predominately interested in money and riches. Protestantism was painted as the weaker brother of Catholicism which could only compete because of deeper financial resources. In an article from 1930, from Father China, it was stated: "*We do not have to insist on the obstacle that they oppose to the spreading of Truth. Nevertheless, despite their force, the results do not correspond completely to their efforts*."[74] And in 1933, in a discussion on "*The different factors wanting to resolve the social question in the Congo,*" it was stated that: "*Protestantism may possibly also be dangerous and even more so than communism.*"[75]

Still, this was not about enemies that had to be fought. One must try to stay out of their mission areas and, if that could not be done, "(...) *one must avoid all public discussions and direct attacks.*" This last piece of advice was to avoid disturbing the mood of the local population.[76] Later, too, whenever Protestantism came to be discussed, it was spoken of in a more denigrating manner. Giving a lecture about the Protestant missions was a difficult task, it was said, because: "'*it is difficult to understand what Protestantism gives to a human life.*" And somewhat less laconic: "'*It is difficult to get a clear picture of the conditions of living that lead to a belief in the same Christ, specifically the relationship on theological ground between Catholic missionaries and Protestant missionaries, from which a*

psychological and social difference grows."[77] Even in 1957 it was stated: "(…) *the Protestants have always been a good goad for our missionaries and they do a lot of good in the fight against Fetishism but they also do a lot of harm: the divisions in their ranks and the superficiality of their conversions causes indifference*."[78] There was never any question, thus, of a really ecumenical approach between the groups.

3.1.2. Catholics and Islam

The relationship with Islam only came into question once. Islam was described as a religion that had always shown enmity towards European Catholicism and for this reason must be pushed back. The approach that was worked out here was that one must go to battle against the influence of Islam. Strangely enough the slave handlers were never explicitly mentioned, though during early colonisation they were used appropriately and inappropriately as a reason to colonise the Congo. In place of this, the first period of colonisation under the Portuguese was recalled. According to the author they were going to oppose Islam in Africa but did not succeed in their colonisation because they wanted to '*portugalise*' too much. In contrast, the current struggle, in which the Catholic Church triumphed, was a pacifistic one. Because Islam could not occupy any geographically enclosed area as it had earlier, its power was now broken and the danger of it taking over was warded off. Considering that armed struggle was no longer possible, the Church was naturally in the advantageous position because it was superior to Islam. "*There is already a chain of sturdily–formed, fresh-growing Christianities that connects the West coast of Africa with the East coast: Cameroon, Belgian Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Urundi … In its turn the Church has now laid a barrier around Islam and placed it in a permanent position of isolation*."[79]

3.2. The role of the missionary

In 1933 one of the students, Brother Heyde gave a lecture on the basis of a book he had read: "*Le missionnaire des temps modernes*" by *Lesourd*. From his lecture of the book it appeared that the missionary should help the local population in all their problems. Included in these problems was certainly the material and social problems that were partly created by economic exploitation. The reaction of the speaker was: "(…) *it is unfortunate enough but the missionary is currently obliged to know something about everything.*" This fitted into the picture of the all-knowing father figure that the missionary had to be. Father Vertenten, one of the pioneers and still one of the most influential figures in the congregation, also

spoke along these lines. He came to speak in October 1940 "*about the negroes*". According to him it was the greatest praise that one could get as missionary "*That people say about him: he is a just man, he solves disputes well*." Again, according to him one should "(...) *love the Blacks very much but one should never let him see that one needs him*."[80] When problems in connection with the validity of marriages between natives were discussed in 1941 it was added that the aspiring missionary should therefore be familiar with canon law, since "(...) *in such cases it is the missionary who is the right person to clarify the situation*."[81] This explanation was so well received that the mission club gave much more attention the next academic year to all sorts of practical questions about marriage law.[82]

On the mission day in 1946, during a period in which the tone of the reports was often somewhat exaggerated, gestures were broader and religiosity increased markedly, the role of the missionary came into focus once again. The Brothers apparently read from other sources, in view of their own lack of experience and lack of anyone who had experience. A romantic picture of self-sacrifice and heroism was revealed: "*How hard a missionary life can be, but how beautiful and noble too, because it is inspired and carried by the love of eternal God*."[83] The contributions on this mission day are very instructive about the spiritual aspects of the missionary existence. The importance of self-sacrifice and of the exemplary function of the missionary were indicated again here as the kernel of the role of missionary. In this, use must be made of a number of aids, particularly prayer, self-denial and the Holy Mass. Ideally a missionary should possess a highly principled personality and be mild of character, which together should put him in a state to become "*a mother for the primitives*". A second contribution, from Father Moeyens, complemented this and adjusted the romantic image by emphasising that the missionary life was *not* as it was shown in missionary exhibitions or by propaganda in general. It was also a purely practical job, "*Such as the mission sewing circles imagine it, that is to say baptising, reading mass, serving sacraments and clothing Negroes.*" Finally, the missionary was also no adventurer, "*free of all rules and monastic discipline*", nor a "*heroic conqueror*". The image that Moeyens put in its place was one of 'transitive' activity in which the involved person must give of himself (sacrifice and self-denial again) without becoming poorer but certainly with the intention of lessening the original sin of others.

3.3. The image of the Congolese

In the mission club of March 1919 an article from the Scheutist De Clercq was read about missionary work in the Congo because at that time it was already expected that the MSC would establish themselves there. The reporter for the meeting was obviously very impressed by the description of the moral character of the Congolese: The list of characteristics, which he cited, certainly looked impressive: "*The low sunkenness (sic) and blindness of the people … Then he described the struggle of the converts against their inclinations and customs, long before and after their baptism: all because of their character, customs and poor inclinations. Then he briefly described the character of the natives: their fickleness, superficiality, outward appearance, laziness, childishness, suspicious nature, but on the other hand kindness and trust in their leaders*." The task to go to evangelise such people did look especially difficult and the conclusion was consistent with this: "*The moral lesson for us was: try to develop the good, do not look for ourselves, learn our work subjects, give much and expect nothing*."[84]

An especially surprising piece of commentary is to be found in the report about the club meeting of July 1922, in which there was a discussion about the Pygmies. Smolders, the secretary, noted in an ironic style: "*The ethical situation cannot be better, these must be true saints: the speaker has enumerated the catalogue of their virtues, it was truly believed that they did not have Adam as a common father. The relationship of parents to children, social, political and economic relations. Truth, generosity, chastity, if they would just do a few miracles we would canonise them all. Nevertheless, the speaker believes some of this glory should be removed by stating that they are children and that they have vices! How surprising.*" In the preceding part the pygmies were described as "*des paresseux*" (lazybones), something that seemed to determine their whole attitude to life. The remarks cited here give the strong impression that the reporter did not like what he heard from the speaker and could not agree with an overly positive characterisation.

De Rop wrote a contribution for *De Vloed* in 1933 about ethnology. It sets the vocabulary that was used to refer to the Congolese (or other colonised peoples) somewhat in perspective: "*For all missionaries, all natives seem to be in the beginning strange, mysterious beings: after all, the reasoning, imagination, language, customs, religious life – everything seems at first sight so totally different from what one is accustomed to see. It is very tempting then to tell some remarkable fact or another and by way of conclusion to decide that the native is a*

great child, without seeing in this fact the beliefs and customs of the primitive people."[85] On the subject of knowledge of the Africans and of local culture and customs there are only references to be found to introductions in anthropological or ethnological concepts. During the academic year 1947-1948 Boelaert came to give an introduction to ethnology. Sadly enough there is only a brief and laconic report to be found in the minutes of the mission club: "(…) *It is the history of the people who as yet have no history. In America, England and Germany it is also called anthropology. All branches of science are involved … Ethnography describes the cultural history of a people. Ethnology tries from this to form or pose laws of cultural history. E.P. Hulstaert for example is one of the best ethnographs of our colony. – We also get to hear about the important schools of ethnology. The evolutionists – the school of cultural circles – the school of functionalists – fundamentally one only has hypotheses; there is more than enough work for the future. We must not be discouraged.* (end of report)"

Although there was much interest in the life of the Congolese, and the mission club paid regular attention to it, the fact remains that some prejudices about the Africans and their character were difficult to expunge: "(…) *It is certainly a fact that the negroes are very lazy and uncaring about tomorrow. But one should not exaggerate here. So Prof. Leplay* (Leplae is meant, JB) *gave an example to prove the carelessness and laziness: 'When the negroes of Equator earned quite a lot of money by looking for copal, they generally did not work their gardens any more, but began to feed themselves with preserved food from Europe. A missionary told us this same fact, but according to him it was evidence of exploitation by whites: 'The whites demanded so much work from the blacks that they had no time left to work and had to feed themselves with preserved food if they did not want to die of hunger.' Which of these two was right?*"[86] There was certainly room for a critical approach and they stood open for new knowledge and new data.

However, a number of ideas were not brought into question. In the same article about 'the farmer problem', which also proposed agriculture as the future for the Congolese, some remarkable reasoning was developed about the pros and cons of private land ownership by Congolese. At the time, this hardly existed or not at all. Against the ruling opinion, which stated that the private ownership of land was against the mentality of the Congolese, Wijnants stated that it was not a question of pro or contra, but that the Congolese simply had no knowledge of the concept of individual possession of land. In other words, it really lay outside their

mentality. The article said "(…) *that they had not thought of it yet*". The corollary of this was, of course, that this knowledge could certainly be acquired. And even if the laziness of "the negroes" was qualified, the author still came partly back to it at the end of his article. To prevent the Congolese from selling their land at the first and best opportunity, he suggested the introduction by law of a fifty year sale prohibition.

That people were open to new knowledge and that the world of the Congolese certainly did interest the missionaries was already clear. The question naturally remains in what way this world was approached and interpreted. Gustaaf Hulstaert evidently gave talks himself for the mission club at regular intervals. In November 1919, it was reported, he gave "*some practical hints for finding out about the religion of the primitives*". The notes from this talk that are preserved not only give an insight into the manner in which scientific interest and (self-taught?) moulding can be combined with the religious conversion element, at the same time they give a nice insight into the ruling mentality of this period.

In that year further topics were: *"Kimbanguism"*,[87] *"initiation ceremonies in the tribe"*, *"the matriarchy"*, "*native music in our Congo mission*", *"marriage in the Nkundo"*,[88] "*the souls of the dead"*, *"the pure spirits"* and also a discussion of an article by Hulstaert about language problems in the Congo. On the mission day in March there was a talk about the advantages that the missionaries could gain by adapting to the use of language and native art forms of the Congolese and by getting acquainted with the religious concepts of the Congolese. All in all, this represented a rather great variety. The attitude that needed to be adopted was described as follows: concerning religion, it was not appropriate to look contemptuously or to scoff at the Africans' customs, only sympathy and love were appropriate and would bring them to the Light. The Truth must be brought, and the missionaries had the Truth. This was not open to discussion. Attention to and a sort of respect for the differences of the Congolese were thus explicitly brought forward as a subject. There grew in all respects a consciousness that two different cultures confronted each other and that the relationship between the two was not purely subordinate, not 'black-white' in any case. The same session included the topic "(…) *how the missionary with his European understanding of art should comport himself towards the understanding of art by the Negroes*."[89] Again, the following year was well provided with ethnologically inspired subjects. It looked very much as if they wanted to effectively reach the double aim set for them:

"enrich mission knowledge by study and be a practical missionary by prayer and sacrifice."

This knowledge is necessary for the missionary, for he must root out evil – and thus know it; besides that, with it he can also help to defend Belief. One must learn to know religion from the primitives themselves, thus one must know

1. how one gets to know the primitives

2. how one can find out the Truth

For the first point, in general, the rules of Hermeneutics must be applied and history must be critically studied – Above all, when questioning people one must be cautious. It is best to get advice from the shamans who serve the religion – but one cannot win these over so one must turn to the simple people, it is dangerous to consult the natives who have been in contact with civilisation – Also make sure that you tell your men nothing but the facts, no explanation or considerations – this also goes for the converted.

II. Remarks about finding out the Truth.
a. language knowledge is most highly necessary and should be solid
b. win the trust of the speaker – do not sow dissent by questioning a whole group, do not pose general questions.
c. great danger exists of eliciting such or such answer by your manner of questioning, do not ask for too much explanation..
d. write everything down even though you do not see much importance in it.
e. avoid offence – especially for new Christians. Curiosity is accepted.

To make that study work the apostolate speaker referred to a practical point e.g. after a story he could e.g. say that is nice, very nice, we have that in our religion, but much nicer – you can have no better opportunity to set out the truth of our religion. With examples this well worked out and founded lecture was documented.

Extract 1 – "Some practical hints for finding out about the religion of the primitives". From the minutes of the meeting of the MSC mission club of 16 November 1919 (MSC Archives Borgerhout).

Still, this did not lead to much interest in what the Congolese themselves thought

and felt. The interest in knowledge of the Congolese was much more due to utilitarian reasons. Besides that, it had to do with the exciting unknown, which one wanted to know more about and wanted to make more controllable, probably a logical reflex for the young and curious aspirants. In the last meeting of the academic year 1936-1937 a number of texts were passed around to awaken interest in the concrete reality of the mission area. These were a number of copies of *Le Coq chante*, a fortnightly periodical published by the MSC that had just started on the initiative of Boelaert and in which articles mainly appeared in the regional language Lomongo[90] and sometimes in French. The reporter reported this as follows: *"A few issues of 'Le Coq qui chante'* (sic) *were passed around and also the annual report of Mgr. Above all, the latter was very interesting.*"[91] In the annual report of the superior there was of course a general report of what was going on in the mission area, hence his remark. Besides this, it was a text that could be understood by the aspirants, who evidently didn't understand Lomongo. The new and strange language obviously gave rise to no special considerations. Only in the late 1950s was it announced: *"It must be remarked that eight of the ten members follow the Congolese lessons with much diligence, these are given by E.P. De Rop.*"[92]

However, curiosity very often got the upper hand as is shown repeatedly in the reports. It is often shown by casual remarks: *"Father De Meyst talked to us about all of the things that happen to a missionary. It was a pleasant and enjoyable meeting*."[93] It goes without saying that very often ordinary stories were told and that the exotic and anecdotal won out over other considerations: *"Brother Kemp was captain of the Theresita* (the MSC's river boat, JB) *for about 20 years. All sorts of adventures happened to him. He does not conceal how he once, in a fit of anger, kicked a recalcitrant Black from the deck into the water. Evidently he still grieves about it*."[94]

3.4. Colonial relationships: white and black

The lecture about the relationships between the colonists and the missionaries, which Father Boelaert gave at the start of 1939, did not go unnoticed. The report stated euphemistically: *"directly stated, Father Boelaert did not try to package things nicely, he stated his thoughts straight out and was not soft*." Boelaert clearly said things that the aspiring missionaries certainly felt somewhere but which they could not precisely appreciate or evaluate, since they were *not done,* but it certainly tickled their curiosity. At first glance, Boelaert's opinions seem to

be directly opposed to the common opinion: "*The real attitude: we are the guests and the blacks the hosts. The negro can see quite well that many whites stand, in the moral arena, lower than him and he asks himself why the missionaries do not go first to the whites to convert them. This is naturally a great difficulty that holds back the work of conversion*." This is a story that also recurs with others and that seems to fit in well with the position that, among others, Boelaert and Hulstaert had based their attitude to the local culture in part on criticism of their own society. For the youths present in the mission club it must have been a surprising experience to hear that one could see black and white in a reversed hierarchy. An image, by the way, that was not always agreed with in the discourse of other speakers. In the words of Father Vertenten, who came to tell them a year later that "the negroes" were "simple people, still the children of nature really". However, this simplicity was explained by what they were not: "*They do not have this artificial behaviour and therefore do not have the ambiguous, unmeaning, often hypocritical way of life of the Europeans. No, they are as they live. They do not look for any affectation. That explains why they gladly listen to the Gospels, especially to the parables.*"[95]

The contribution of Brother Wijnants in 1938 about the establishment of families in the colony, a problem that caused a lot of discussion at that time, gives a few clarifying insights: the wife moving to the colony was recommended because she would make the husband more stable. Written in very bald language it sounded as if the man would otherwise probably look for the company of black women: "*The whites who give free reign to their instincts can no longer be regarded as suitable for the elevated work of civilising. After all, how would you want such a boss, for that is what the white man has to be, to exercise authority over those which he must lead because of his task; how can such a teacher, for this is the white man also, bring the natives to a higher level when he himself has sunk so deep.*"[96] This message was clearly based on the traditional hierarchical model. From the conclusion of the lecture it is clear that this attitude must clearly be situated in the *Zeitgeist.* In this conclusion, the author quoted still more reasons why it was beneficial to let the wives of the colonists come to Congo: she could better round off the sharp edges of her husband, she was also better suited to help the native women and "*Above all it cannot be denied that a Christian home can exercise a beneficent influence on the natives*". However, the Brother's opinion of the wife was not really very high, as shown by another passage in which he stated that the exemplary function of the wife could only succeed if the wife "(…) *has not merely*

come to the Congo to sunbathe and go back to Europe with a brown skin." The wife should perhaps not come to the Congo immediately because she was weaker and more sensitive to a new environment and would therefore perhaps only make it more difficult for her husband.

In 1955 Boelaert came again to give a lecture in the mission club, this time about the *"present-day mission problems in the Congo*". The context of international politics had evolved quickly in the meantime. The ruling political mood and Boelaert's formulations were, on the surface, certainly converging. Coexistence was no longer a dirty word and people began to talk about Belgian-Congolese communities. Boelaert stated that the Congolese themselves were greatly altered and that there was therefore no longer a real 'mission' in the classical sense of the word. The missionary now had, according to him, three tasks: he must be a representative of the rights of the natives, be a server of the sacraments (and adapt himself in this respect to "our Negroes") and also be a teacher. The last task was a temporary one because it was meant to "*bring the native up to be a person who can choose for himself*". One must also respect their culture. "*No cultural imperialism*" was firmly stated.[97] It is clear that the words and the descriptions used here are coloured by the internationally developing discourse about equal rights, anti-colonialism and the struggle for independence of that time. But besides that, these words precisely reflect the view that the missionaries had of the Congolese at that time.

Without realising it themselves, the missionaries took a very contradictory attitude: in the *slipstream* of this international debate they turned away from imperialism. That also fits in with the principles of adaptionism which the MSC held earlier. However, at the same time there remained an almost unconscious form of superiority and as a corollary refined paternalism that was reserved just for themselves. The other whites were treated with much less respect but the missionary himself still took a superior position. He remained, until further orders, an educator. At the same mission day on which Boelaert spoke, Father Theeuwissen also gave a presentation in which he spoke among other things of the "colour bar" (a word that was therefore sufficiently well-known to the missionaries) the future of the colony and the policies to be followed.[98] "*The policy will therefore consist of one trying to bring coexistence into being on the basis of granting equal rights. Difficulties: the white man often has a mentality of self-satisfaction, luxury and superiority. He stands, often, lower on the moral and*

intellectual plane than the native. These are gradually climbing up the social ladder. Where the lowest level of whites meets the highest level of blacks, there is friction. The white man then implements a colour bar – perhaps not so brutally, not in law, but still as a fact – as a normal process of growth coming out of the first period (of colonisation, JB)*. The only good solution would be: to learn to respect them because they are people with their own place and their own values (cf. his article in 'De Linie' of 24 December 1954).*"[99] That some Congolese were morally and intellectually superior to whites was not a problem but these still were exceptions or extreme cases ('upper' and 'lower' levels) and the majority of the whites therefore logically stood on a higher moral and intellectual plane than the majority of blacks.

The same subtle distinction can be seen in the following citation from the historic overview of the MSC mission work in the Congo. It also was published in 1954 in the jubilee issue of *De Toekomst*. Sablon, who wrote the article, referred among other things to the scientific work of Hulstaert and Boelaert but revealed himself at the same time to be a critical follower. Above all, he did not agree with them in the interpretation they gave to the religion of the Mongo, particularly where they stated that the Mongo knew no cult to the honour of God in the real sense of the word. Instead, Sablon agreed with Mgr. Van Goethem, who said that the implicit form of worship, which was made manifest in a number of practical rituals (funeral rituals, prayers, sacrifices) was more important.[100] The writer made the following remarks: "*They naturally do not have a systematically worked out religion, their way of knowledge is concrete and intuitive. No reasoning, with premises and deductions*." The question is of course whether any religious experience happens by reasoning. In this context we must place the following remark by the same author: "*Not thought out, but not unfelt, they carry with them a relatively correct knowledge of God and in the sense of men who do not know the true God they are not even heathens, writes Fr. Boelaert.*" This sentence, which is really taken over from Boelaert, shows once again that the missionaries were stuck in an evolutionary, hierarchical context. The others were approached with a great deal of *goodwill* but there remained a fundamental distance, a value judgement and difference in values between 'us' and 'them'. For that matter, this could also be found in Van Goethem, who was cited in the same article in connection with the religious movement of the Mongo: "*Nevertheless, I retain the impression that often poor expression hides the right intentions, which God will be more content with than we are.*"

3.5. Colonial relationships: the mission and the administration

The attitude that the MSC had to take towards the government is difficult to describe. From previous investigation, it was clear that people such as Hulstaert and Boelaert, once they were in the Congo, dared to go repeatedly into heated debate with the authorities.[101] No conclusions can or should be drawn from this that apply to missionaries in general. Firstly, this is because the attitude of these 'reference figures' is not unambiguous in itself. This refers to the fact that, as leading figures in their congregation and in the MSC mission area in the Congo, they also collaborated with these same authorities and other Belgians on certain matters and in certain circumstances. Secondly, because the other MSC members in practice certainly did not think or do as they did. In the context of this chapter the focus is on the opinions that circulated during the training of the MSC. This theme was not often specifically covered in the reports of the mission club or the articles that the students wrote for their periodicals. In an article from 1934, written by Ulrik Staeljanssens, about the role of education in the colony, it was remarked that moral development must be the most important aim of colonial education. That this moral development must be based on religious education was obvious for the missions, as the author stated, "(…) *but for the state it is much more based on opportunistic reasons.*" Probably the writer of the article was referring to the financial and organisational motives behind the collaboration between the missions and the administration. And, quite in general, he ended his contribution with the remark that there "(…) *must be close collaboration between the state and the institutions of independent education.*"

Other political standpoints were represented in the contribution about "*L'action sociale au Congo Belge*". The author, Brother Declercqs, criticised colonial power relationships in this article, which was mainly inspired by the Jesuit Dubois. Of the three great powers that were at work in the colony (the image of the colonial trinity, which was often used in later years, appears here already), according to Declercqs, Capital was the strongest and most influential: "*Its (= the colony's) law is not written but is dictated (to him) by the 'Banque Générale'. There is no force that can effectively compensate for its action already becoming too much an interference in the other powers. On the contrary it only has already too much interfered and already has too great an influence on political authority. Moreover, the role of the state is in fact only an auxiliary role, even if it is presented in the form of dominance; consequently, action must at least be aimed at the preparation and organisation of a complete social structure*."[102] Even the

missions could not put enough counterweight in the scale against Capital. The limited social action that they could undertake, however, must be aimed at restructuring the whole of colonial society by organising all walks of life, following the principles of the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*.

The judgement made of the administration was milder in the contribution about "*Native policy*" that appeared in 1938 in *De Toekomst*. The attitude of the administration before 1908 was described as 'a realistic one', which in practice meant assimilation policy. The official policy after the takeover of the Congo by the Belgian State was described as 'evolutionary', which meant a certain respect for the native structures and customs. The earliest period was spoken of very critically: "*The political workers of the early days would have to make the confession that they had lived next to the Blacks without taking their mentality into account. Luckily the workers at this eleventh hour were somewhat wiser and intervened in time in the destructive work of their predecessors*."[103] A positive judgement was made of the situation at that time, although the work of the missionaries was seen as indispensable for the administration. After all, the state civil servant had other interests and therefore did not always take account of humanitarian concerns. The missions therefore had to soften state policy or keep it on the right path.

The state action and colonisation itself was criticised from the fifties. Sablon, who described the Nkundo (or Mongo)-society in his article on the occasion of 30 years of MSC in the Congo, stated that it was a living, organic community until the moment that the colonists came: *"Although the society was open to all healthy influences and could adapt itself to all reasonable demands of civilisation, at the end of the previous century the young growth of their community was disturbed suddenly by European occupation because it did not correspond to those things that, in our European outlook about civilisation and progress, are so completely wrong: exclusion of all ethnic organs of management, forcing all individuals into line, slave-like subordination to the impersonal and unfatherlike State with its fearful semblance of freedom to be able to do anything that is not forbidden by the State.*"[104] Again, in this citation the ambiguity of ideas about colonisation can be seen: on the one hand a critical attitude towards the administration and its manner of working, on the other hand the lack of fundamental criticism of the idea of colonialisation. Here again, a link is made between the criticism of the

colonial administration and the attitude towards social developments in the motherland. The examples given seem to contain a direct criticism of the quickly developing welfare state of that time (the 1950s).

3.6. Education and training

Classroom rear view, Nsona Mbata (Matadi), 1920

Principles of upbringing were seldom spoken of explicitly. In the context of the science club of Bree the subject of 'education' had sometimes been included but traces are not to be found in the periodical of the scholasticate.[105] There is one clear reference to Decoene and De Hovre, the leaders of 'Catholic educational theory' in Flanders.[106] That can hardly be surprising in the light of the social situation of the missionaries and aspiring missionaries which has already been referred to. Catholic educational theory was a normative pedagogy and fits best in the picture of the restoration of old values and the return to a clear and hierarchically organised society as a reaction to moral corruption and the social crisis.[107] That was also the tenor of the contribution that appeared in *De Vloed* about religious education, written by Gerard Van Kerckhove. Indifference to religion and thus also to religious education was ascribed to advancing technical progress, which led to hedonism and materialism. However, taking a hostile attitude to progress was probably not the most sensible move. What had been wrong in the old system of religious education was excessive intellectualism, the quasi-exclusive interest that is associated with the moulding of reason. In place of this, it must be pleaded for a system of religious concepts bound with human 'basic motivations' to which: "*the notions of race and nation– the brotherhood of all – personal freedom, etc.*"[108] could be easily attached.

A year later *De Toekomst* printed an article by Ulrik Staeljanssens about

"*Education in the Congo*". According to him, education should Educate the Congolese and should not serve to benefit the exploitation of the colony. The text was certainly inspired by the texts of the National Colonial Congress and also by the decisions of the *Commission Franck*. The official line comes through very strongly in this text. Concerning the state of the Congolese it was stated that "the negro" must be educated, not only as an individual, as a child, but also as a group, as a 'race'. Without further subtle differentiation it sounds like: "*Moral training is the most difficult and delicate, since one must rid a fallen race of all its faults and bad habits and has to provide completely new* (habits, JB) *from and for him.*"[109]

The management or exploitation of the Congolese should not be the intention: on the contrary, education should be directed to steering him towards his place of origin with the intention of letting other members of his race enjoy his attained value and to give them a good example. The schooled Congolese was therefore seen as an extension of missionary activity, considering that a great part of the attained value lay precisely in the fact that he was also evangelised. Here also, 'adaptation' was very much the way to go. Simply book learning would be a wrong choice, for that distorted "the negro" instead of improving him. With a reference to the *negro education* in the United States Staeljanssens cited a certain Blackheard: "*Two gifts can only be given to the Blacks little by little. The first is higher literary education and the second is political influence. He is not prepared to use and appreciate either the one or the other properly; what he must be taught is to work, maintained and efficient work and a habit of working*."[110]

Catholic pedagogy was not explicitly referred to in this article but the approach that Staeljanssens used was nevertheless situated completely in that context. Moral formation was the most important component of education. If this was to be appropriate then it had to have a religious basis. This religious basis could naturally best be supplied by Christianity. The popular slogan "*If we trace the frontiers of Christianity on a map of the world we would see that we have traced those of civilisation,*" was also quoted on this occasion.

Education should be in the native language, again "*according to the rules of modern education*". The author did, however, admit that there were some advantages to the use of French: "*First and mainly because the French language is the key to science and secondly because a single language of use between Blacks and Whites would be easier, promote unity and simplify the administration*." Still, all the advantages of French as a language of education

could not compete with the following observation: "*An education that does not rest on the mother tongue has an artificial character and is doomed to failure*." This summed up Staeljanssens' opinion of the subject.

After the Second World War the subject of 'education' was only handled sporadically in the mission club and in the periodicals of the seminary. In 1950 Father De Rop gave a presentation about teaching in the colony: "*We then called in the help of Fr. De Rop who talked to us for a whole evening about certain problems about which the members had had a few questions. First the school question was handled. Attention was mainly directed to the educational establishments in the Congo, the manner of teaching and the training of teachers. In a couple of short sections some principles about school policy in the Congo also came up; requests for subsidies and suchlike business.*"[111] The report gave no more details. A very striking contribution was given in 1952 by Brother Hegt, one of the French-speaking aspirants. He wrote an article with the title of "*La formation du moi.*"[112] He wanted to describe the role that the moulding of the ego played in education. The title and the announcement of the subject sounded heavy and scientific but the approach used was saturated with moral and religious notions. The conclusions drawn by the author concerning education fitted entirely into that context. They were no less relevant because of this, but neither could they be called very original.

Self-respect and a feeling of self-confidence were very important in the training of the youths, as was willpower. He also emphasised the importance of apperception in the training process, interpreted as the assimilation of everything that was newly learnt to the concepts already known. The conclusions of the article ran into a sand of rather general and vague formulations but from the citations and the bibliography with the article it seemed that the Thomist influence predominated. That is naturally not very surprising in the context of a philosophic study circle that called itself the 'Thomas circle'. However, it certainly seems that even in the 1950s the pedagogic influences, if they were such, only went in the single direction of Catholic Pedagogy. Hegt first cited texts by Thomas Aquinas himself. Besides that he referred to the French philosopher (and Thomist) Jacques Maritain and his most influential work *Les degrés du savoir*. Maritain was well-known as an anti-modernist who criticised the enlightenment and epistemology and who clung to the preeminence of metaphysics over epistemology.[113] The three other scientists whom he referred to were all Jesuits: the Dutch pedagogue

Nic Perquin, the American philosopher and pedagogue Jaime Castiello and the German psychologist Johannes Lindworsky.[114]

It is clear that many of the cited articles had undergone the direct influence of what the aspiring missionaries had read and studied. This is revealed in the construction of the articles and in the manner that the subjects are treated. Quite often there are also a number of authors, book titles and articles cited. Very many of these articles were clearly seen as a sort of task or homework in the context of the training in the seminary.[115] The impact of this should really not be underestimated. The contents give a view of what was experienced as normal and provide data, facts and pieces of information that belonged to the way the students, and therefore the later missionaries, saw the world.

Finally, in 1954 another article written by Brother Crevaels appeared in *De Vloed*. It was titled "*Education in the Belgian Congo and Rwanda-Urundi*". The article was about the way in which the Congolese were trained as priests. That is not immediately obvious when reading the article, seeing that in the first instance there is only mention of "*the training of the negro up to a full member of the Church*". After a short discussion of the two most important factors in that process, namely the 'environment' and the reasoning and moral development, an overview is given of the different levels of education. Again, in this article the rhetoric of longing for tradition and opposition to modernity is revealed. The author writes about the common law environments: "*An established grouping of people with their own base, ennobled by an equal, general culture, is a foundation from which people with higher ideals can come forth*".[116] The urbanised environment was described as "*the artificial, native townships around the European centres*". This could not be ignored. Or as Crevaels said: "*Still, the existence of the extra-common law environment cannot be switched off*." Also on the subject: "*In connection with that, there is a widespread action taking place that moderates the displacement of people and which keeps the negroes together in well-organised and managed centres*."

Surprisingly enough, he observed in conclusion that Whites were not behaving logically as long as they did not recognise the equality of Blacks and Whites in practical life. After all, the Africans were, according to him, Catholic because of the belief itself and not because the Europeans were. It was clearly a difficult subject to grasp because in the priestly training the differences in ability between Black and White were very big but still not as big as some people stated. The

author was clearly in doubt about what the correct position had to be with respect to the Congolese and their difficulties in education. "*That the negro is by nature simply inclined to satisfy his sensual inclinations cannot be taken as an absolute rule*." The general lack of civilisation in the past also played a part. Again, it could not be absolutely stated that the Black was more stupid than the White. Again, (a lack of) previous history played a part.

In the second part the author first gave a historic overview of the development of the colonial education system. This primarily served as an introduction to the discussion of seminary education for the Congolese. He was very satisfied with primary education. He found support for this in a statement by Father Brys: "*The distance that divides the elite from the masses in the Belgian Congo is no longer as large as in other African areas. We have, to a certain extent, been able to avoid the reef of a privileged caste, which lives apart from the masses and wishes to rule much more than to serve.*"[117] This was, of course, incorrect. The pronouncement, that dated from 1952 according to the Brother, could hardly be considered realistic hardly four years after the introduction of the new system of selected second grade.

Again, when discussing seminary education the author regularly referred to the environmental factors, which apparently still formed a problem and made it particularly difficult for the Congolese to finish priestly studies. He certainly did not differentiate there between Black and White, but from the turn of phrase it appears that this was, in fact, the underlying idea. From time to time this was revealed very clearly: "*It is understandable that there are currently no independent thinkers and masters among the young priests*." This represented a discourse that was generally present, and had already been developed in the thirties. It emphasised, for example, the importance and the moral value of agricultural activity and handwork. The "*References*" of Crevaels' article certainly did not refer to all of the sources he had used, but the majority of the listed articles were articles from *Kerk en Leven* (a very widespread belgian common parish periodical). It seems unlikely that anything in it diverged strongly from the classical colonial concepts.

Conclusion

From the themes and the commentaries that have been touched on here it can be seen that the missionaries in the scholasticate or the mission seminary had been taught an altogether very traditional vision of the colony and its inhabitants. They

cherished a rather traditional worldview. Their attitude towards the Congolese can certainly not be described as aggressive, arrogant or haughty. That has much to do with the religious context in general and the values of humility and neighbourly love that were therefore communicated to the young aspirants. However, there was dissatisfaction with modern Western civilisation and with a number of its characteristics: consumption, materialism, individualism and emancipation. A specific pedagogical training was almost completely absent. Where there are still some elements of educational ideas or principles, these are based on traditional and conservative thinkers.

In this respect, the next conclusion is certainly also relevant. Gustaaf Hulstaert played a great role in providing the seminarians with knowledge about everything that had to do with the Belgian Congo. Vinck states that Hulstaert was still dominant in the priestly training of the MSC in the 1960s. He was already revered during the colonial period because of his scientific work and was considered, certainly in the seminary, to be 'the one who knew about everything'. The students knew, for example, that Hulstaert had been received by the King alone at a visit to Coquilhatville (before independence). He made an impression on the students and he was respected by the other Fathers, who looked up to him much more than to Boelaert, who was much more modest and had a milder character. The views of Hulstaert, which will be discussed more deeply, therefore must certainly be accounted for as a great influence on the seminarians.[118]

NOTES

[1] Honoré Vinck, director of the Aequatoria research centre and MSC, interviewed in the "Histories" broadcast "Het rijk van de stilte" (Flemish national television, 11 April 2002). [original quotation in Dutch]

[2] For a graphical representation of these relationships, and supplementary statistics, see appendix 7.

[3] Pirotte, J. & Soetens, C. (2003). Les missions à l'époque coloniale. In Pirotte, J. & Zelis, G. (eds.) *Pour une histoire du monde catholique au 20e siècle Wallonie-Bruxelles. Guide du chercheur*. Arca: Louvain-La-Neuve. p. 681. This is for the French-speaking part of Belgium but most of the questions naturally apply by extension to all Belgian missionaries. In fact the French-speakers formed a minority in the total missionary population.

[4] Gustaaf Hulstaert (1900-1990). Born in Melsele, he studied humanities at school with the MSC in Asse before entering the order. He was ordained as a

priest in Leuven in 1924. After this, he taught for half a year at the college in Asse, then he took lessons in tropical medicine in Brussels. During his priestly studies in Heverlee he also received missionary training at the University of Leuven. In September 1925 he left for the Congo. Apart from a few holidays in Belgium, he would remain there continuously until his death in 1990. The time he spent in the Congo can be divided into two periods: From 1925 to 1950 he was active in mission work, predominately in education. He was successively a travelling Father (Boende, 1926-1927), mission superior and headmaster of the HCB school in Flandria (1927-1933), mission superior and headmaster of the junior seminary in Bokuma (1933-1935), religious superior and missionary inspector stationed in Bamanya (1936-1946) and again mission superior and headmaster of the HCB school in Flandria (1946-1950). In 1950 he was released from mission activity so that he could concentrate fully on scientific work. In the meantime, it had become clear that he had several interests in the scientific area in which he would invest much time and that his work would find recognition in broader academic circles. In this respect, the foundation of the periodical 'Aequatoria', together with Edmond Boelaert, was very important. Hulstaert's scientific interests were very broad, and his biography is very comprehensive, with publications in many areas, including linguistics, biology and history.

[5] Depaepe & Van Rompaey, p. 92. [original in Dutch]

[6] Under the title "sciences de la mission et formation missionnaire au XXe siècle".

[7] Fricoteaux, L. (1992). La formation au sein d'un institut missionnaire féminin, les Soeurs Blanches au XXe siècle. Y a-t-il eu une influence des semaines de missiologie de Louvain? In Spindler, M. & Gadille, J. (eds.). *Sciences de la mission et formation missionnaire au XXe siècle*. Actes de la XIIe session du CREDIC. Lyon/ Bologna: LUGD/EMI. p.319-332.

[8] See: Dujardin, C. (1989). Van pionier tot dienaar. Profiel van de Belgische missionaris in historisch perspectief (1800-1989). In Boudens, R. (ed.), *Rond Damiaan. Handelingen van het colloquium n.a.v. de honderdste verjaardag van het overlijden van pater Damiaan 9-10 maart 1959,* Kadoc-studies 7, Leuven: Universitaire Pers. p. 114-187.

[9] By this Dujardin certainly refers to training that specifically prepared for the "material" life as a missionary. As religious workers, the missionaries had already received priestly training after their secondary school studies. This means they were highly educated people of their age.

[10] The next paragraphs are primarily based on research and texts I used for a

lecture at the *Annual Conference of the British History of Education Society* in Swansea, November 2002, "*Centre and periphery as a framework for the history of colonial education*". An English version of this text was published in Dhoker, M. & Depaepe, M. (ed.) (2004). *Op eigen vleugels. Liber amicorum An Hermans*. Leuven: Garant. p. 96-106.

[11] Derroitte, H. (1999). L'évolution des modèles missionnaires. Dialogue d'Henri Derroitte avec le Père Joseph Masson, s.j. In Derroitte, H. & Soetens, C. (eds.) *La mémoire missionaire. Les chemins sinueux de l'inculturation*. Lumen Vitae: Bruxelles.p. 114-116. Masson was himself one of the main figures in the missiological activity in Leuven and Rome and took on responsibility for the *Semaines Missiologiques* from Pierre Charles in 1954.

[12] Cayen, A. (1920). De la formation d'une mentalité coloniale en Belgique. In *Congrès Colonial National*, s.l. [original in French]

[13] Van Overbergh, C. (1906). *La réforme de l'enseignement d'après le premier congrès international d'expansion mondiale (Mons, 1905)*. Bruxelles: Schepens. 2 v.

[14] World expansion education was one of the faces of 'specific education' organised under the motto "school for life". See Depaepe, M. et alii (1999). *Orde in vooruitgang*. p. 89-90.

[15] Moriau, J. (1976). *Werelduitbreiding. Pedagogisch-didactische vernieuwing in de lagere school 1905-1910*. unpublished master's thesis K.U.Leuven. p. 92. See also Depaepe, M. (1994). *'Kongo, een tweede vaderland'. De kolonie in het onderwijs en het onderwijs in de kolonie (1908-1960).* Ieper: Onderwijsmuseum.

[16] It still exists today as one of the three great pillars of missionary activity under the name Papal Mission Work for Children.

[17] The initiative for setting up the Crusades as a movement was taken by three Norbertines from the abbey of Averbode, Blomme, Robberechts and Vanmaele. The contents of the movement was inspired by the well-known priest (Edward) Poppe. See Van Garsse, L. (1982). *De Eucharistische Kruistocht in Vlaanderen (1920-1945). Beschrijving en analyse van een kwarteeuw zedelijk-godsdienstige vorming*. Unpublished master's thesis K.U.Leuven. p. 15-36. See also Depaepe, M. (2000). *De pedagogisering achterna*. Leuven: Acco. 3e editie. p. 218en Quaghebeur, P. (2002). "De Eucharistische Kruistocht." In Ghequiere, R. & Quaghebeur, P. (ed.) *Averbode, een uitgever apart (1877-2002)*. Leuven: Universitaire Pers. p. 92-173. [original quotations in Dutch]

[18] In fact, until a short time ago this was limited to one master's thesis:

Boonants, B. (1982). *Het beeld van Belgisch Kongo in de geschiedenishandboeken van het middelbaar onderwijs in België, 1904 tot 1980*. Unpublished master's thesis K.U.Leuven.

[19] De Baets, A. (1988). *Beeldvorming over niet-westerse culturen. De invloed van het geschiedenisschoolboek op de publieke opinie in Vlaanderen 1945-1984*. Doctoral thesis in History, University of Ghent. Concerning other research: p. 45-58. Concerning the general problem of the influence and qualification of the study: especially p. 473-520.

[20] The thesis concerned is an extension of the article by De Keyser, R. (1982). "Belgisch Kongo in den belgischen Geschichtslehrbüchern". In Furnrohr, W. (ed.), *Afrika im Geschichtsunterricht europäischer Länder*. München: Minerva.

[21] Boonants, B. (1982). *Het beeld van Belgisch Kongo.*

[22] Vincke, E. (1985). *Géographes et hommes d'ailleurs. Analyse critique de manuels scolaires.* Centre Bruxellois de Recherche et Documentation Pédagogiques: Bruxelles. [original quotation in French]

[23] Depaepe, M. (1994). *Kongo, een tweede vaderland.*

[24] Bogaerts, L., Noels, F. & Suetens, J. (1960) Taalwerkboek 5. zesde leerjaar. Lier: Jozef Van In & co. p. 234-255. [original quotation in Dutch]

[25] De Baets, A., *Beeldvorming over niet-westerse culturen*, p. 199.

[26] See Vints, L. (1987). *Kongo made in Belgium. Beeld van een kolonie in film en propaganda.* Kadoc: Leuven.

[27] Besides the studies mentioned here we also mention the Catholic Documentation Centre connected to the Catholic University of Nijmegen, which is probably the most extensive and complete collection of missionary testimonies owned within the Catholic framework of influence. See also Hogema, J.M. (1996). Stories by missionaries from and about Africa. In *Trajecta*, V, 4, p. 403-411.

[28] Soetens, C. (2000). La vocation d'une centaine de missionnaires belges (1904-1965). Premiers résultats d'une enquête orale. In Derroitte, H. & Soetens, C. (1999). *La mémoire missionaire.* p. 65-66.

[29] Ibidem, p. 69.

[30] Storme, M. (1952). L'abbé Forget (1852-1933) et le séminaire Africain de Louvain. In *Zaïre: Congolees tijdschrift.* VI, p. 787-808. Idem (1952). Léopold II, les missions du Congo et la fondation du séminaire Africain de Louvain. In *Zaïre, Afrikaans tijdschrift*. VI, p. 3-24. Storme was a Scheut missionary and a teacher in a small seminary in Bokoro.

[31] Etambala, Z.A. (1987). Un centenaire: le séminaire Africain de Louvain (1886-1888). In *Les Nouvelles Rationalités Africaines*, vol. 2, n°6, p. 322. See also

Annuaire de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, 1887, p. 391-395 & 1888, p. 420-424. [original quotation in French]
[32] Art. 47 of the law of 10 March 1923. [original quotation in Dutch]
[33] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Papers, no. 70. Memo from Mgr. Ladeuze to De Jonghe, 23 September 1922. [original quotation in French]
[34] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Papers, no. 70. Memo from Mgr. Ladeuze to De Jonghe, 30 September 1922; letter from F. Willaert, provincial superior Scheut, to Edouard De Jonghe, with a rough draft of De Jonghe's answer to Willaert, 17 October 1922.
[35] Alphonse Broden (1875 – 1929) was active as a doctor in the fight against sleeping sickness in the Free State of Congo and is seen as one of the founders of tropical medicine in Belgium. After his colonial career he became director of the Institute for Tropical Medicine. *Belgische Koloniale Biografie*, II, 102-107; Vandersmissen, J. (2001). De wetenschappelijke exploratie. In *Geschiedenis van de wetenschappen in België 1815-2000. Deel 1*. La Renaissance du Livre/ Dexia Bank: Tournai/ Brussel, p. 240.
[36] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Papers, no. 70. Letter from F.Willaert, provincial superior Scheut, to Edouard De Jonghe, with a rough draft of De Jonghe's answer to Willaert, 17 October 1922.
[37] KADOC, De Cleene – De Jonghe Papers, no. 70. Letter from Broden to De Jonghe,19 October 1922.
[38] Martinus Rutten (1841-1927). Flemish priest. He was first a teacher and school principal in Liege and Sint-Truiden and manager of the seminary in Liege. In 1902 he became Bishop of Liege. He played a leading role in the first schools funding controversy, in the foundation of a Christian workers movement and in the Flemish movement. Michiels, G. (1977). Rutten, Martinus-Hubertus. In *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek*, VII, Brussel: Koninklijke Academiën van België. 831-836.
[39] A brother of Gustaaf Hulstaert.
[40] Albert Michotte (1881-1965). Studied in Leuven and Leipzig with Wilhelm Wundt, Doctor of Philosophy, among others. In 1908 he became a professor in Leuven, where he was also the co-founder of the Laboratory for Experimental Psychology. After the First World War he started the Research Centre for Psychology, applied to problems of upbringing and education. Together with Raymond Buyse and Arthur Fauville he was at the foundation of the école de pédagogie that opened its doors in Leuven in 1923. Luyten, H. & Vandenbussche, E. (1981). *De onderzoeksapparaten uit het laboratoire de psychologie*

expérimentale van Prof. A. Michotte. Leuven: Acco. p. 9-14; Verheyen, J.E. & Casimir, R. (1939). *Paedagogische Encyclopedie*. Antwerpen: De Sikkel. p. 255-256.

[41] Leuven University Archives, Paulin Ladeuze Papers, file "école de sciences commerciales et coloniales". Letter from A. Dubois to Mgr. Ladeuze, June 1924.

[42] Leuven University Archives, Paulin Ladeuze Papers, file "école de sciences commerciales et coloniales". Letter from E. De Jonghe to Mgr. Ladeuze, 22 June 1924.

[43] François Collard (1852-1927). Doctor in Philosophy and Arts at the K.U.Leuven. Named professor in 1875, he taught in the Department of Classical Languages. From 1890 he was also a teacher of *Histoire de la pédagogie et de méthodologie de l'enseignement moyen* and more than likely a pioneer in this subject at the university. Rogiers, A. (1928). *L'oeuvre pédagogique de m. François Collard*. Liège: Vaillant-Carmanne.

Raymond Buyse (1889-1974). Studied at the University of Brussels, at the *faculté internationale pédologique*. In 1921 he became a primary school inspector and from 1923 went to work at the newly founded teaching institute of Leuven University. From the early twenties Buyse regularly worked closely with Ovide Decroly. Van Gorp, A. (2004).

Gedragswetenschap in de steigers. Het psycho-pedagogisch vertoog van Ovide Decroly ontmythologiseerd? Unpublished doctoral thesis K.U.Leuven. p. 147; Verheyen, J.E. & Casimir, R. (1939). *Paedagogische Encyclopedie*. Antwerpen: De Sikkel. p. 283.

[44] Leuven University Archives, Paulin Ladeuze Papers, file "centre infirmiers-missionnaires". Typed document with curriculum proposal, "Epreuves pour missionnaires qui ont suivi avec fruit les cours du centre pour infirmiers-missionnaires", s.n., s.d.

[45] *Eenige woorden over de Missie-congregatie van het Onbevlekt Hart van Maria Scheut-bij-Brussel. Stichting en werking. Innerlijke organisatie*. Dirix-Van Riet: Antwerpen. 1925.

[46] *De kapel van O.L.Vrouw van Gratie en het seminarie der missiën te Scheut-bij-Brussel*, Polleunis en Ceuterick: Brussel. 1901.

[47] Verbal communication from Honoré Vinck.

[48] De Rop, A. & Vinck, H. (1971). Bibliografie van de Missionarissen van het Heilig Hart. See also interview with Frans Maes in Borgerhout on 9 July 2002.

[49] MSC Archives Borgerhout, box Boelaert. "Cours d'ethnologie", taught in Gerdingen, Bree, as part of the first and second year philosophy, 1957-58.

[50] According to the biographical information on Boelaert he only definitively returned to Belgium in 1954. He replaced his colleague Albert De Rop in giving the courses in ethnology to the philosophy students in Bree from 1957. De Rop himself had only taught there from 1956 and returned to the Congo in the following year to teach at Lovanium University. http://www.aequatoria.be.
[51] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Kronijk". In *De Toekomst*, vol. I, 1927, no. 1, p. 28. [original quotation in French]
[52] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Kronijk". In *De Toekomst*, vol. I, 1933, no. 13, p. 442.
[53] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Jeugd en Missie in Vlaanderen". In *De Toekomst*, vol. II, 1938, no. 27, p. 1011-1019.
[54] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Mission club documents, Meetings October and 13 November 1935. Mgr. Verius is Henri Verius, a French MSC (1860-1892) who was active in Papua New Guinea from 1885. He was appointed as apostolic vicar of the section of New Guinea under German control. Since the 1930s people have been campaigning for his beatification by the Pope. He was certainly greatly venerated in his congregation and was remembered on the annual "Verius day".
[55] Leuven University Archives, Paulin Ladeuze Papers, file "centre infirmiers-missionnaires". List of C.U.M. registrations written for the 1935-1936 academic year.
[56] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Kronijk". In *De Toekomst*, I, 1930, no. 7, p. 254. [original quotation in Dutch]
[57] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Kronijk". In *De Toekomst*, I, 1932, no. 11, p.375. [original quotation in Dutch]
[58] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Chronique". In *De Toekomst*, III, 1945, no. 33, p. 1224. [original quotation in French]
[59] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Standaert, L., "De missieklub in die 50 jaren". In *De Toekomst*, III, 1950, no. 44, p. 1780-1787.
[60] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Missieclub". In *De Toekomst*, III, 1949, no. 42, p. 1642. [Original in quotation Dutch]
[61] Boelaert, E. (1930). *Onder het kruis van Tugude*. Leuven: Davidsfonds. p. 5-8. [Original quotation in French]
[62] MSC Archives Borgerhout. No. 3033 Sch. [original quotation in Dutch]
[63] MSC Archives Borgerhout. No. 3033 Sch. [original in quotation Dutch]
[64] Albert De Rop (1912-1980), Missionary of the Sacred Heart. Went in 1937 to the Congo. After his return in 1948 he commenced university studies which led in 1956 to a Doctorate in African Linguistics. From 1957 to 1964 he taught at the

University of Leuven (MSC Borgerhout, third series of biographical sketches, p. 50).
[65] In the spring of 1944, for example; Leuven suffered heavy bombardment in the Second World War.
[66] In this sense: written communication with Honoré Vinck, 22 March 2004.
[67] Interview with Frans Maes in Borgerhout, 9 July 2002.
[68] Interview with Frans Maes in Borgerhout, 9 July 2002.
[69] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 15 December 1919.
[70] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 11 October 1943.
[71] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Missie-dag in Bree" In *De Vloed*, I, 1933, p. 334-335. [original quotation in Dutch]
[72] MSC Archives Borgerhout. "Verslag van de Missieclub '33-'34" In *De Vloed*, I, 1934, p. 508-509.
[73] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 15 December 1919. [original quotation in Dutch]
[74] MSC Archives Borgerhout. China, J. "Préfecture apostolique de Coquilhatville". In *De Toekomst*, I, 1930, no. 8, p. 265. [original quotation in French]
[75] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Leclercqs, G. "La question sociale au Congo". In *De Toekomst*, I, 1933, no. 14, p. 462. [original quotation in French]
[76] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 26 March 1925. [original quotation in Dutch]
[77] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 28 March 1943. [original quotation in Dutch]
[78] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 5 May 1957. [original quotation in French]
[79] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Van Kerckhove, G. "Katolicisme – Islam in Afrika". In *De toekomst*, 1935, no. 21, p. 745-750.
[80] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting in 24 October 1940. [original quotation in Dutch]
[81] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting in May 1942.
[82] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 10 December 1942, 25 January, 5 April, 13 May and 15 June 1943. [original quotation in Dutch]

[83] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Report of the mission day of 20 May 1946. [original quotation in Dutch]
[84] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 13 March 1919.
[85] MSC Archives Borgerhout. De Rop, A. “Ethnologie en missioneering”. In *De Vloed*, I, 1933, no. 11, p. 295. [origina quotationl in Dutch]
[86] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Wijnants, P. “Het Boerenprobleem in Kongo”. In *De Toekomst*, II, 1938, no. 27, p. 1005-1006. [original quotation in Dutch]
[87] Kimbanguism is a religious movement named after the founder. Simon Kimbangu (approx. 1889-1951) was a catechist at a Protestant mission in the neighbourhood of Thysville (a little to the south of Leopoldville). Following a vision he began to preach himself and is said to have performed miraculous cures. He quickly gained a group of followers, who abandoned the Catholic faith. Kimbangu himself behaved as a prophet and as the leader of a new cult. After a few months the colonial administration took up arms against this religious movement. In the area around Thysville a state of emergency was declared. Kimbangu was condemned to death by a court martial but was reprieved by King Albert. He spent the following thirty years of his life in a prison in Elisabethville. See Chomé, J. (1966). Kimbangu (Simon). In *Biographie Belge d’Outre-Mer*, VI, 576-578.
[88] Nkundo is another name for Mongo.
[89] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Report of mission Sunday on 17 March 1937. [original quotation in Dutch]
[90] The regional language, also often called Lonkundo.
[91] This is about the annual report that had to be composed by the superior of the mission and sent to the superior of the congregation. A number of these reports were included in the source material used for the third chapter.
[92] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 22 September 1956. [original quotation in Dutch]
[93] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 6 March 1938. [original quotation in Dutch]
[94] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Report of mission Sunday, October 1948. [original quotation in Dutch]
[95]] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Minutes of the meeting of 24 October 1940. [original quotation in Dutch]
[96] MSC Archivess Borgerhout. Wijnants, M. (1938). Gehuwde blanken in Kongo. In *De Toekomst*, II, no. 27, p. 995-1001. [original quotation in Dutch]

[97] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Report of the mission day of 28 March 1955.
[98] “Colour bar” was a word that came from the British colonies and indicates a social and geographic separation of people of different skin colour. In the Belgian-Congolese context there was a colour bar between Belgians and Congolese.
[99] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Report of the mission day on 28 March 1955. [original quotation in Dutch]
[100] Eduard Van Goethem (1873-1949). Van Goethem was anointed as a priest in December 1899. After two years training he left for New Guinea where he became superior of the mission. On the founding of the new Congo mission of the MSC in 1924 he was transferred there and nominated apostolic prefect. On the elevation of the area to a vicariate he became vicar. He held this post until 1946. Hulstaert, G. (1980). Goethem (Van) (Eduard). In *Bibliographie Belge d’outre-Mer*, VII (c), 181-192; Vereecken, J. (1985). *Wij Gedenken. Tweede reeks bibliografische schetsen van MSC van de Belgische Provincie*. Borgerhout: MSC. p. 15.
[101] Zie o.a. Depaepe & Van Rompaey; Vinck, H. (2000). Dimension et inspiration de l’oeuvre de Gustaaf Hulstaert. In *Revue Africaine des sciences de la mission*, 12, p. 206-236.
[102] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Declercqs, G. (1933). La question sociale au Congo. In *De Toekomst*, I, no. 14, p. 465. [original quotation in French]
[103] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Bottelier, O. (1938). Inboorlingenpolitiek. In *De Toekomst*, II, no. 26, p. 967. [original quotation in Dutch]
[104] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Sablon, C. (1950). “Apostolisch vicariaat Coquilhatstad”. In *De Toekomst*, IV, no. 30, p. 2122. [original quotation in Dutch]
[105] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Aerts, F. (1933). General report of the work of the science club. In *De Vloed*, I, 5, no. 12, p. 110. It was reported here about “Some pedagogical articles that are in prospect.”
[106] In the same issue of *De Vloed* there was also an article about religious education in which De Hovre and Decoene are referred to *inter alia*. Frans De Hovre (1884-1956) and Albéric Decoene (1881-1958), who lived at the same epoch and had similar points of view, both studied neo-thomist philosophy in Leuven. Afterwards De Hovre became pastor in Gentbrugge. Decoene became head of the teacher training college in Torhout and later an educational inspector. Both were mainly known as founders of the Vlaamsch Opvoedkundig Tijdschrift (Flemish Educational Periodical) and were, certainly in the interbellum, considered as very influential pedagogues. See Verheyen, J. & Casimir, R. (1939).

Paedagogische encyclopaedie, Antwerpen: De Sikkel, I, p. 328-329 & II, p. 86-88. Verheyen wrote the following in it about De Hovre: "*Decroly, a representative of natural science, and De Hovre, a spokesman for spiritual knowledge, are in our opinion the most influential founders of present-day Belgian Pedagogy, which, through their work, has gained international recognition and under their leadership, in depth and in breadth, has grown to a flourishing movement*."

[107] See Depaepe, M. (2000). *De pedagogisering achterna*. p. 202-206.

[108] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Van Kerckhove, G. (1933). Iets over godsdienst-onderwijs. In *De Vloed*, I, no. 12, p. 337-341.

[109] MSC Archives Borgerhout. *De Toekomst*, 1934, no. 19, p. 706.

[110] MSC Archives Borgerhout. *De Toekomst*, 1934, no. 19, p. 704-706. [original quotation in French]

[111] MSC Archives Borgerhout. Notebooks from the mission club. Report of the Verius meeting, 1950.

[112] MSC Archives Borgerhout. *De Vloed*, 1952, no. 48, p. 2148-2153.

[113] Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) considered one of the most prominent Catholic philosophers of his time. His influence is even noticeable today, for example in the social body of ideas of Pope John-Paul II. Sweet, W. (2004). "Jacques Maritain". In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2004 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2004/entries/maritain/>.

[114] For each of these scientists there is an entry to be found in the *Katholieke Encyclopaedie voor opvoeding en onderwijs,* published in the course of the 1950s. 's Gravenhage/Antwerpen: Pax/'t Groeit. Perquin and Castiello have also to be situated in more conservatively-minded circles. Perquin (1897-?) was a collaborator on the *Katholieke Encyclopaedie* cited here. From Castiello (1898-1937) his best known work, "A humane psychology of education" was mentioned as well as a study on Thomas Aquinas.

[115] There were a number of obligatory lecture exercises on the curriculum in the student circles of the seminary. These included an "Augustinus circle" for philosophy and a "Thomas circle" for theology. In philosophy, a strictly scholastic approach was used (strictly applying taught reasoning principles) but theology was approached much more broadly and included short talks, which could also be on mission subjects. For these exercises texts had to be prepared and these were regularly published in the seminary's periodicals. Interview with Honoré Vinck and Jos Jans, Borgerhout, 8 March 2004.

[116] The term "common law environments" refers to an administrative and

judicial concept. The administrative division of the country fell into common law areas and extra-common law areas. The extra-common law areas or *centres extra-coutumiers* (C.E.C.) corresponded to built-up areas. The common law areas were thus in the majority. Immediately before independence the Congo was divided into six provinces, each one divided into one (in Katanga two) city areas and a number of districts. Each district was further divided into a number of "*territoires*" or territories and each territory consisted of a number of "*circonscriptions indigènes*" or "native areas". The mission area of the MSC extended over two territories, that of the Equator and that of the Tshuapa. "Common law environments" must also be understood as "the places where the common law applies". A small part of the justice system in the colony remained under Congolese common law. The applicability of this was defined by exception, "on all the domains that are not regulated by the written law". Office de l'information et des relations publiques pour le Congo-Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi (1958). *Le Congo Belge*. Bruxelles: INFOR-Congo, II, p. 44-57. See also Dembour, M.-B. (1999). *Recalling the Belgian Congo*. London: Berghahn Books, p. 17-30.
[117] This is the same Albert Brys already mentioned in chapter 1.
[118] Interview with Honoré Vinck, Lovenjoel, 19 July 2004.
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Chapter Two from: *Jan Briffaerts – When Congo wants to go to school – Educational realities in a colonial context – An investigation into educational practices in primary education in the Belgian Congo (1925-1960)*

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When Congo Wants To Go To School – Catholic Missions in the Tshuapa Region

Group photo of Sisters of Beveren-Waas, in Bolima, date unknown. From MSC Archives

To give a more coherent picture of the development of education in the region studied, it is necessary to start with a brief explanation of the development of the church hierarchy in the region and the way in which this was concretized by the religious orders that would become responsible for education. This subject will be covered in this chapter in two parts. The first part handles the evolution of the church hierarchy in a strict sense and the delineation of what would eventually become the mission area of the MSC. The presence and missionary work of the Trappists in the area will be discussed first. Chronologically, this history only begins once this congregation had decided to leave the Congo, but it is useful to consider a number of events from the preceding period in order to understand the activities of the MSC properly. The identity and presence of the other religious orders in the mission region and their involvement in education will then be outlined. Finally, the second part will describe a quantitative development of the schools in the vicariate on the basis of a number of statistical data. This will enable us to give the direct context of the reality in the classroom that will be considered in more detail in the second part.

1. The missionary presence

1.1. How the missionaries of the Sacred Heart obtained a vicariate in the Congo

In the church hierarchy, the area around Mbandaka and the Tshuapa was originally a part of the apostolic vicariate of the Belgian Congo, founded in 1888. It was put under the leadership of the congregation of Scheut, which was the first Belgian congregation to send missionaries to the Congo.[i] Naturally, in subsequent years the evangelisation of the Congo Free State as a whole expanded further, the number of congregations active in the Congo greatly increased and

the administrative church structure was repeatedly adapted.

1.1.1. The Trappists of Westmalle on the Equator[ii]

Chronologically, the protestant *Livingstone Inland Mission* was the first to establish itself at the mouth of the Ruki in the Congo River. That was in Wangata in 1883. In the same year and in the same place, Stanley, together with the officers Coquilhat and Vangele,[iii] founded the state post Equateurville, which was clearly separated from the mission that had been set up earlier.[iv] In 1895 the monopoly of the Protestants in the region ended with the arrival of the first Trappists.[v] The original intention of this contemplative order was the establishment of a closed monastic community in Bamanya, about eight kilometres from Equateurville, "*following the example of the monks in the middle ages.*"[vi]

Thanks to its strategic situation at the confluence of two important rivers, Equateurville, renamed Coquilhatville from 1892, developed rather quickly to become a so-called *circonscription urbaine*.[vii]Nevertheless, it would take until 1902 before the Trappists, at the request of the colonial administration, set up the parish of Boloko wa Nsimba, still "*forty minutes away from the state post of Coquilhatville*".[viii] Meanwhile, the developing state post was abandoned by the Protestants. The post of Wangata was moved to Bolenge (about ten kilometres outside Coquilhatville) and the *Livingstone Inland Mission* was replaced by the *Disciples of Christ Congo Mission*.[ix] Even before the First World War, the Trappists built a church in Coquilhatville and provided evangelical teaching there. Even so, their activities in this urban environment remained very limited. Marchal says in this regard: "*The trappists, simple people from the rural Kempen region, had an aversion to great centres*."[x] In the twenties the General Chapter in Rome decided that the Trappists of Westmalle had to leave the Congo and return to their monastic way of life, which was considered irreconcilable with the missionary work in the Congo.[xi] In 1926 the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun (hereafter referred to by their official abbreviation "MSC") took over their area. At the take-over of the Congo by the Belgian state, the missionary presence in the area consisted of three main posts (Bamanya, Mpaku and Boloko wa Nsimba) and around a dozen smaller posts.[xii] At the time the Trappists left the region, in 1926, they left five large mission posts behind.[xiii] The following posts were founded, in chronological order:[xiv] *Bamanya "St. Joseph*", about ten kilometres to the east of Coquilhatville, founded in 1895; *Coquilhatville "St. Eugène*" (this was originally the mission post of Boloko wa Nsimba, half an hour

upstream of Coquilhatville), founded in 1902; *Bokote "Marie-Immaculée"*, about 350 km from Coquilhatville, on the Busira, founded in 1905 in Bombimba but transferred there in 1910); *Bokuma "Saint-Bernard"*, situated a little to the south on the Ruki (originally founded in Mpaku in 1900 and moved there in 1910);[xv] *Wafanya "Sacré Coeur"*, the most recent and most southerly mission post, founded in 1917, situated the furthest into the bush, on the Luilaka (or Momboye), one of the tributaries of the Ruki, about 300 km to the south-west of Coquilhatville.[xvi]
In the middle of the 1920s, just before the take-over by the MSC, the area had five central boys' schools and one central girls' school. The five central mission posts and 120 auxiliary posts were serviced by twenty or so Trappists and 13 Sisters of the Precious Blood, helped by 300 catechists.[xvii] Jules Marchal had a chapter on the Trappists in his two-part *Missie en Staat in Oud-Kongo*.[xviii] In this he discussed among other things their shrewd manner of working, which could explain the relative success of the congregation in the matter of conversions: convert men by allowing them to have relationships with women of polygamous men, on condition that they enter a Christian marriage with those women.[xix] He added the following evaluation: "*While catechists from other mission congregations were closely watched by the fathers, those of the Trappists could work for evangelisation following their own ideas. In this way, they obtained results that were not approached anywhere else in the Congo, in spite of heavy opposition from Protestants, from European civil servants and from a private company.*[xx] *This meant that the Trappists, who were not allowed to do missionary work and were closed down in 1924 in the Congo, achieved the best results in evangelisation*." In this respect, these 'best evangelisation results' must clearly be considered as conversion actions, as education was not a priority for the Trappists.

Honoré Vinck has listed a number of the characteristics of the education by the Trappists in a recent contribution.[xxi] As was explained in the first chapter, the first official school regulation was only proclaimed in 1929. The only guidelines that already existed at that time were the *Instructions aux missionaires*, published by the Catholic Church itself and these were very succinct on the subject of education. The emphasis was almost exclusively placed on religious instruction and that would, in any case, hardly change when the official curriculum was introduced. It was still explicitly stated in 1930 that "*It (the religious instruction) will constitute the main part of the curriculum, and the missionaries will always*

give it the first place in their teachings."[xxii] Indeed, as the Trappists themselves reported in their mission periodical, the catechism was learnt first, reading and writing came later.

The emphasis was placed almost completely on proselytism, not only in the articles published in the mission periodical, but also by external commentators. The picture that Marchal gives makes one suspect that the Trappists focused primarily on the development of spiritual life with their civilising work. Again, in a letter of 27 December 1921 the governor of the province, Charles Duchesne, wrote about the Trappists' mission schools: "*In general, (there are) few pupils, who rarely complete their studies*."[xxiii] About the Sisters who taught the girls he wrote: "*Admirable for their dedication, that nevertheless achieves little success because the environment in which the girls live and the environment in which they will be called to live are not taken into account*." He was more explicit about the bush schools: "*Established in villages, where a catechist teacher is supposed to teach*" (…) "*in general he is almost illiterate, limits himself to teaching a few religious ideas to a few children and this no more than intermittently.*"[xxiv] In similar reports it was hinted that the Brothers in Coquilhatville were busy with anything but education. It was not in any respect their strongest point, Paul Jans, MSC, also reported in 1929.[xxv]
Vinck again referred to sources from which it appeared that the Trappists claimed to have been sabotaged by this same Duchesne when setting up their school in Coquilhatville.[xxvi]In a *Notice relative à l'école primaire pour enfants noirs existants à la mission des RR. PP. Trappistes à Coquilhatville* from 1924[xxvii] there was indeed a strong condemnation of the Governor, whose behaviour would have been in sharp contrast to that of his predecessor:[xxviii] "*Governor DUCHENE* (sic) *having assumed leadership of the Equateur, began a destructive action against our education.*" He was in fact accused of pulling a great number of boys out of school to set them to work in place of (white) planters. After which still more Congolese had left the school to go to work in the service of the administration or private interests.

It is rather difficult to evaluate the standpoint from which Duchesne wrote this in any case. The contribution that appeared about him in the Colonial Biography does give the following indication: "(…) *during his 6th term of office* (…) *a friendly climate arose between the directors of the private sector and himself, not excluding some passing storms, but eminently favouring appeasal. The same*

climate moreover arose between the governor and the missions established in his province."[xxix] The sixth 'term' that is spoken of only began in 1924, at the time that the MSC were already present in the region. In the sequel of the note only the MSC were referred to, never the Trappists. Consequently, it may as easily be suggested that there were personal problems between the Trappists and the colonial administration, or that this was a somewhat exaggerated but not unusual manner of reacting. From a letter of October 1924 it certainly seems that the state of education in Coquilhatville was not particularly positively evaluated by Mgr. Van Goethem, MSC. Van Goethem was at that moment still prefect of the Prefecture of the Tshuapa (and in this sense not yet responsible for the area around Coquilhatville). He said in a letter to Edouard De Jonghe: "*Native labour and the native military force are considerable over there. Nevertheless, as yet the education of the children has not been given sufficient attention. This education should be in the hands of the Catholics*". This naturally implied that the impact of the Trappists was not very strong, in spite of the presence of large numbers of converted Congolese, which was also noted by Van Goethem. He gave further details of his claims about the state of education and saw two concrete problems: on the one hand the administration hardly intervened at all to support education. On the other hand the Trappists provided only primary schooling, which was quite inadequate in an environment in which there was a great need for trained skilled workers.[xxx]

It therefore seems that Van Goethem considered that the Trappists were right to a certain extent as regards state intervention, though he did not mention sabotage explicitly, even though these opinions are drawn from private correspondence with a 'friendly' official. Concerning his remark about the level of education, it must be said that this was at that time applicable to the entire colony and as such cannot be construed as a criticism of the Trappists. In this sense it probably fits in with the missionary pressure on the administrative policies, which increased appreciably, partly under the influence of the three-yearly meetings of the heads of missions in the Congo and which, already in 1919, had led to an action plan for systematic subsidisation of the Catholic missions' education.[xxxi]

mage 1 – Canon law organisation in the Belgian Congo. From Corman, Annuaire des missions catholiques, 1924.

1.1.2. Take-over of the area by the MSC

As from 1926 the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart received the supervision of the former Trappist mission area and, as has been mentioned, they would build this up to a real vicariate. This coincided with the Trappists moving out of the region. The final mission region of the MSC came into existence *grosso modo* in two important steps. In a first phase a part of the existing vicariate (New Antwerp) was split off and brought under the supervision of the MSC as the *Prefecture of the Tshuapa* (the tributary of the Congo that runs through the southern part of Equatorial province).[xxxii] This occurred in 1924.[xxxiii]

The original intention of the Trappists of Westmalle was to found an enclosed community (an abbey), which would, through its spiritual aura, exercise a civilising influence on the local population. Already before the First World War, it seemed that the superiors in Westmalle and the General Chapter in Rome were inclined against shifting towards 'normal' mission work. This actually happened out of sheer necessity because an enclosed, self-supporting abbey community was apparently unattainable *in terra nova* and they depended too much on the local population to fulfil their own needs. The discussions between supporters and opponents of mission work would be long drawn out and the colonial abbots managed to somehow or other maintain a large degree of autonomy against the hierarchy. Finally, the hierarchy did succeed in closing down the Trappist mission. Vermeir extensively discusses the long search for a mission congregation

that could and would take over from the Trappists.
The Belgian province of the MSC, which was only set up in 1919, started discussions with the Trappists as early as 1921 but it would take until 1924 before they effectively left for the Congo. Though taking over the whole mission had originally been discussed, in the first instance the previously uncultivated area of the Upper Tshuapa (more to the east of the area occupied by the Trappists) was intended as the destination. The first MSC members arrived in Bokote, at that point the only and somewhat westerly situated mission post in the new mission area. The reason why this half-hearted solution was chosen should probably be sought in the fact that a great many of the Trappists who were present in the Congo did not want to go back, and at that time were thinking of becoming 'ex-cloistered' as monks, so as to be able to remain active in mission work. However, there were strong doubts about the new status that they would take. In the meantime, Scheut had already made an offer to take on the 'uncloistered' in their order and there was also the possibility of setting up a new, separate (monastic) order. After weighing up the different interests, most of those concerned did in fact choose to transfer to the congregation of the MSC.[xxxiv]
As a consequence of these changes, the Tshuapa prefecture was expanded in January 1926 with the more westerly situated part including Coquilhatville, which had, until then, remained in the hands of the Trappists. The area now acquired the name *Prefecture of Coquilhatville*. Still in the same year, the prefecture was enlarged towards the south and in the following year there were a number of smaller border corrections. In 1931 the independent mission Bikoro was founded and entrusted to the Lazarist Fathers. As a result, the prefecture of Coquilhatville had to give up territory in the South-west.[xxxv] Finally, in 1932, the prefecture was 'promoted' to a full mission region and gained the title of vicariate, with the 'Apostolic vicar' Van Goethem now at its head.[xxxvi]

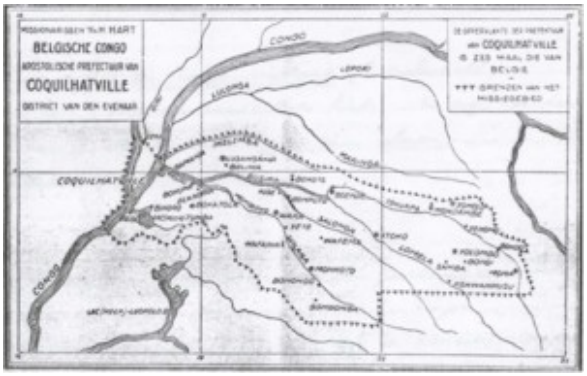


Image 2 – Map of the Prefecture of

Coquilhatville. From Annalen van
O.L.V. van het H. Hart, 1930.

To serve the conversion work the school network was also developed. As time went on the work became more systematic. This happened, certainly in this region, along two separate tracks: on the one hand in central schools, on the other in rural schools. Every central mission post where missionaries were actually placed received a school. This seemed logical, since the logistic provisions had to be concentrated and the number of people who could be brought into action was limited. Because of the extent of the area the local population was also called upon for education. The travelling missionaries went to recruit people in the interior and tried to get them to build schools and allow them to function. Consequently, the teaching was entrusted to Congolese who had received some instruction. This system already existed with the Trappists in an embryonic form but it was now carried through. In principle, in every central mission post at least one travelling father was provided. His task was to comb through the area, to visit the different villages one by one, to settle the *palavers*, to win over the population and to check on the local schoolmasters.
That a two track policy was indeed used is apparent from the fact that the rural or "bush" schools were not only figuratively but also literally much less visible. In official statistics, references are often only found to schools that were situated in more central places. In fact, there was some disagreement between missionaries and administrators concerning rural schools, as is apparent from a report written by Mgr. Van Goethem in 1935. In this he reacted against certain imputations from the educational administration that the missionaries did not do well at all in the rural schools and were not suited for education.[xxxvii]
Under the leadership of the MSC, and with the collaboration of the different congregations which were present in this area, the number of mission posts was expanded in the course of the years to fifteen or so for the whole vicariate. Boende, Mondombe (both 1925) and Flandria (1926) date from the very early years of the Sacred Heart mission. Later, Imbonga (1940) was added. In the post-war period a third parish was founded in Coquilhatville (Coq II, 1956) and a second in Boende (1956) as well as new posts in Iyonda (1945) and Nkembe (1953). The positions of the different mission posts can clearly be seen on the overview map of the Equatorial district reproduced here.[xxxviii]

Image 4 – Map of the mission region of the MSC, 1975. From MSC-circle anniversary number 1975, 50 years MSC in Congo/Zaïre.

1.2. The congregations working in the region

The complete territory of the Belgian Congo was divided into a number of areas for the purpose of Catholic mission work. One particular mission congregation was responsible for each area. Obviously this organisation was partially adapted to historical circumstances. After all, in the first instance Leopold II had asked a number of congregations to go and work in the Belgian Congo. These congregations then called upon other congregations to help them with their mission work. In the case of the MSC in the region of the Tshuapa, one male and four female congregations were involved. The intention here is only to give an overview of these congregations and to briefly consider their foundation and aims, reporting the periods in which they were active in this area and the places where they were working. The source material available on these congregations differed very greatly from case to case, both in quantity and quality. For this reason it seemed appropriate to provide more explanation on this material for each congregation. To avoid interrupting the course of the explanation, this will be done in an extended footnote at the beginning of the paragraph concerned.

1.2.1 The Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul[xxxix]

The *Daughters of Charity* are of French origin, a relatively old congregation also active outside Europe from 1839.[xl] They were present in the Congo mission of the MSC from 1926. They initially worked in the hospital for whites and the hospital for blacks in Coquilhatville and were quickly brought into education. Most Daughters actually worked in the neighbouring prefecture of Bikoro. The *Daughters of Charity* had close ties with the congregation of the Lazarist Fathers who were working there. This was described as follows by Vermeir:

“The Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul went to start a hospital in Coquilhatville and also a few schools. But as these Sisters always needed a Lazarist Father as a Fr. Confessor they could not work in a region where no Lazarists were present. For that reason the Lazarists received a small mission close to Lake Tumba, from which the Fr. Confessor could regularly visit the Sisters in Coquilhatville.“[xli] This appears to be generally confirmed by the history of the foundation of the Bikoro mission, which appeared in 1939 in the common mission periodical of the Lazarists and Daughters of Charity: *“But they cannot go very far without having a priest from the Mission close by them, entrusted with maintaining the spirit of the Founder with them, the spirit of simplicity, goodness and poverty.*”[xlii] From the same history it also appears that the Lazarists came to an agreement with Scheut about splitting a territory for their ‘independent mission’. In *Coquilhatville* itself the Daughters supervised the primary school and the nursery school.

Sisters Mauritsia and Josepha, Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, with one of their pupils. Bokote, probably in the 1940s. From Archive MSC.

1.2.2 The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart[xliii]

The Daughters of the Sacred Heart are actually a sister congregation of the MSC. They belong to the same religious ‘family’ and were also founded in 1882 in Issoudun (France) by Jules Chevalier and Marie-Louise Hartzer. The Belgian Province was founded in 1931; their Provincial House was situated in Brussels (Schaarbeek).

The sisters had by that time been working in Belgium for several decades.

According to their own chronicle writer they were called there as early as 1892, to *"take care of the linen of fathers, brothers, novices and students of the large central training house on the Terloo street in Borgerhout*." Plans to expand their activities in Belgium to a real apostolate apparently came to nothing. The sisters went back to France after a few years only to return to Belgium a couple of years later, fleeing the antireligious policies of the French government.
Their presence in the mission area of the MSC started in 1925 in *Bokote*. Subsequently, they established themselves similarly in *Boende* (1927), Mondombe (1930 to 1960), *Bolima* (from 1934 to 1944), *Bokela* (1938), *Ikela* (1941 to 1960), *Iyonda* (1944, foundation of a leper house and removal of the sisters out of Bolima). After the Second World War they also taught in *Coquilhatville* (1949). Initially that was only in a school for European children, later they also took over the supervision of a girls' school for Congolese in the new parish of Coquilhatville (Coq II, 1957).[xliv]

1.2.3 The Brothers of the Christian Schools[xlv]

At the time of colonisation, the Brothers of the Christian Schools were one of the larger religious groups and they still are. As the name implies, they specialized in education. Founded by Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, Canon of Rheims Cathedral in the early eighteenth century, the congregation initially aimed to provide free education for those in need. They were active in the region covering present-day Belgium as from the end of the eighteenth century and established themselves all over the country after Belgian independence. From the second half of the nineteenth century they developed the St. Lucas art schools, which were initially more technical schools. In the early twentieth century their schools had over 25 000 pupils.[xlvi]
In Congo they were active in many places and in different vicariates. Their first establishment was Boma, where they established themselves from 1909. A propaganda brochure of the Brothers from 1946 also reported activities in Matadi, Leopoldville, Tumba and Gombe (a St Lucas school).[xlvii] In 1955, according to their own chronicler, there were supposed to be 65 different schools of the Brothers existing in the Congo, with over 18 000 pupils in total. About a third of these were in Leopoldville, illustrating the fact that the Brothers clearly concentrated their activities in the centres and towns.[xlviii] Their presence in the region of the MSC was restricted to Bamania (from 1926) and Coquilhatville (*cité indigène*, from 1929-1930).

Brothers of the Christian Schools, Bamania 1929. From MSC Archives.

They came to work there at the explicit request of the MSC, who wanted to take on the education of catechists and teachers professionally and assigned a great deal of competence in this to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. At least that is the tenor of what MSC Paul Jans wrote to Brother Véron Ignace at the start of 1929: *"I do not have to tell you the joy with which I received the news of the provisional contract and the coming of your Brothers. During your visit in '27 you were able to see how much Mgr. (Van Goethem, JB) and I hold to your valuable support for placing education at the top and for preparing catechist-teachers capable of providing this education in all the posts depending on the Mission*."[xlix] In practice, the Brothers would work in the *Groupe Scolaire* in Coquilhatville and in the teacher training college in Bamania.

1.2.4 The Sisters of the Precious Blood.

The presence of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in the region is specifically associated with that of the Trappists. The congregation was founded in 1885 by François Pfanner, an Austrian Trappist, in Marian Hill (Natal province, South Africa). The missionary history of these Trappists shows similarities with that of the Trappists of Westmalle. The missionary activity of Pfanner gave just as much occasion for tension with the hierarchy and eventually even led to his removal from his post. The conflicts ultimately led to a secession of Pfanner's followers from the Trappist order, from which the new mission congregation of Marian Hill was formed.

Pfanner, who was working in a new Trappist monastery in Banja Luka (in the present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina, belonging at that time to the Austrian-Hungarian empire), founded the Sister order with the aim of assisting the missionaries in their work. The Sisters finally found a home in Aarle-Rixtel (North-

Brabant in the Netherlands), where they established their mother house.

Sister Nivarda, Superior of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in the Congo, in 1949. (Archive MSC)

It was the first Catholic order of nuns which was present in the region (and during the first 25 years it was also the only one). They arrived at almost the same time as the Trappists of Westmalle. We can suspect that there was a connection to Westmalle through the founder, who was still working in South Africa at that time.[li] Their presence in the region began in Bamanya (1898), where their work was with the primary school and domestic school. Later they established themselves in Mpaku (1903) but left by 1910 "*because of health problems*" and transferred to Bokuma. Finally, they also went to work in Flandria (Boteke), where the *Huileries du Congo Belge* (H.C.B.) had an establishment with associated education (1931).[lii]

1.2.5. The Sisters of St Vincent de Paul from Beveren-Waas[liii]
This was the smallest congregation working in the region. These Sisters came from a local religious community in Beveren-Waas, founded there in 1844 by the village priest Cools. They undertook the traditional tasks of a congregation of nuns: teaching and the care of the sick. Right up to the present day they are associated with the village school in Beveren-Waas. They also fulfilled these tasks in the Congo. They came to this area due to the actions of Mgr. Van Goethem, who, just as his successor Hilaire Vermeiren, came from Beveren-Waas and knew

the Sisters from his own village. The published sources mainly report one establishment at *Wafanya* (from 1929) but they are supposed also to have worked in *Bolima*, as some of the Sisters reported to me themselves in a conversation, but that was perhaps only the case in the fifties.[liv] Wafanya was the most easterly and isolated mission post in the area of the MSC.

2. Quantitative development of education in the region

It is a very difficult task, if not an impossible one, to give a correct picture of the quantitative growth of education in this region. In the first place, it is certain that exact statistics have never existed about the participation of Congolese in education. There was never a real obligation to go to school and never any effective check on the enrolment. The missions were certainly obliged to give certain data in their annual reports but it was very difficult to check the accuracy of these numbers. Besides that, missionaries and officials of the administration had a somewhat tense relationship with each other which discouraged the objective reporting of statistics and numbers.

Secondly, there is the opaque structure of education. In the course of the years, the curriculum was constantly broadened, while the structure itself evolved from a rather organically grown situation to a rather complex patchwork quilt of guidelines, schools, curricula and nomenclature. Consequently, the comparison of statistics from difference sources must be handled very cautiously, considering that the same type of school could be called by different terms.[lv] These effects are certainly less important at the level that we wish to study, primary education, but even 'primary education' is not always an unambiguous term. Let us think for example of the problem we have previously discussed: the problems of the different grades.[lvi]

Thirdly the point of departure is the ecclesiastical organisation of the colony (vicariate), which did not correspond to the political divisions.[lvii] That almost makes trusting in the information from the missions themselves obligatory. This only appears to be an inconvenient element at first sight. After all, the data that the official bodies worked with were also assembled by the missions. Even though the question is not whether the statistics give an honest picture (or can give such a picture), there still remains the enormous problem that it is not always clear which type of school is included in which statistics and which is not. Subsidised and non-subsidised schools could quite often be mingled, for example.

No systematic sets of statistics exist that are valid for the complete period, either

in an official source or publication, internal documentation or correspondence of the MSC. The figures brought together here are primarily based on three series of data. Firstly, there are the so-called *Annuaires des missions*, annual reports from missions which we have already referred to and which were considered a sort of reference book about the Catholic missions in the Belgian Congo, often with comprehensive lists of missionaries, places where they were established, information about foundations, and so forth.[lviii] Secondly, a number of (annual) reports of the MSC directed to their superiors were available. The duty of reporting, which was imposed internally, obliged those responsible at the local level to keep the superiors on the home front informed at regular intervals about the developments in the mission. The mission periodicals are the third source used. These regularly contain statistics or trends, even only as a means of propaganda. They are certainly to be read with the necessary degree of caution. Some data come from other documents such as the *Aequatoria Archive*. Finally, here and there data from inspection reports, mostly composed by mission inspectors, have been used.
The statistics are reproduced here in the following manner: Firstly, in a general overview, statistics which apply to the global region are brought together. Subsequently, the quantitative development of education is given, mission post by mission post, always referring to relevant citations and statistics. This is done insofar as possible in chronological order. In this account, the mission posts are ordered according to their date of foundation.

2.1. General

2.1.1. In the Interbellum

A report from 1929, composed by Mgr. Van Goethem and intended for the *Propaganda Fidei* at Rome, reports that there were 10 *Scholae inferiores pro pueris* and 6 *pro puellis*, with pupil numbers of 1 074 and 521 respectively.[lix] An overview that was composed at about the same time by the mission's inspector Vertenten reports in more detail the differing types of schools (nursery schools, primary schools and the teacher training college).[lx] On the basis of a large number of inspection reports that are available for the year 1929, the data from that overview can be confirmed.[lxi] For the situation five years later we can appeal to the *Annuaire* of Abbé Corman, which has been referred to previously.[lxii] The data for both years are brought together schematically here:[lxiii]

Table 2 – Schematic overview of the congregations present in the MSC mission area

The 1930s were generally considered as the high tide for Catholic missionary activity.[lxiv] The number of central mission posts in the vicariate of Coquilhatville also increased considerably in the second half of the 'thirties: Bolima (1934), a second parish in Coquilhatville (1934), Bokela (1936) and Ikela (1937).[lxv] For these mission posts, however, there are much less statistical data in connection with education.[lxvi] Besides this, the following casual remark in a travel report by one of the MSC members gives a disappointing picture of the state of affairs of that education halfway through the 1930s: "*Still no real education outside the mission posts; teaching of the catechists in the catechism as preparation for baptism, but no more. There are only schools with a real curriculum in the mission posts*."[lxvii] In Mgr. Van Goethem's report about the operational year 1936-37 some more statistics about the rural schools are given: "*Despite the difficulty of regular inspection our rural schools have maintained their activity. I here cite the number of schools and their pupils, for each of our posts.*"[lxviii]Table 2– Schematic overview of the congregations present in the MSC mission area

Table 3 – Number of rural schools and pupils in the apostolic vicariate of Coquilhatville, by mission post, 1936 (source: Aequatoria Archives)

These figures are brought together in Table 3. Finally, there are some global figures in a few internal reports on the number of pupils in the primary education of the vicariate at the end of the interbellum: in 1938 there were 118 primary schools with 6 140 boys and 665 girls.[lxix]

2.1.2. After the Second World War

Naturally, there is very little information available for the war years. The *Annals* published hardly anything about the Congo during the war and only after 1944 can traces be found of the reports from the missions to their superiors. The *Annuaire* from 1949 does give fairly detailed information. Little is added to this by the internal reports and certainly not by the articles in the *Annals*. A general reference work of the calibre of these *Annuaires* is really no longer available for the last decades of the colonial period. The *Katoliek Jaarboek* (sic) from 1960 does contain some interesting data but is nevertheless less detailed about the schools in the regions and focuses naturally on the end of the colonial period. For the

1950s, therefore, the data from reports of the diocese have to be called upon, if possible supplemented by other information, for example from the *Annals*.
There are, in fact, good reasons to approach this type of source from the 1950s with extra caution. Colonial self-legitimation and thus propaganda was very common in this period. Criticism and interest grew in the homeland and the polarisation between Catholics and free-thinkers would play an important role in Belgium, and to a more limited extent also in the Congo. A good example of this effect is to be found in the annual report of the mission for the school year 1951-52: *"A slight decrease is apparent amongst pupils in the first grade. There were some schools with five or six pupils; the Vicariate could not permit itself the luxury of subsidising the teachers for these schools as the school population was insufficient to be subsidised by the government*."[lxx] An observation that certainly contradicted the general jingoistic mood and the picture of classrooms overwhelmed by eager–to-learn masses, as it appeared in the periodical of the missionaries more than once. Increasingly positive reports were sent out into the world, particularly about the participation of girls in education: *"A happy conclusion: the girls are starting to attend school better. This is an appreciable success, given the parents apparent unwillingness to send their daughters to the mission posts*."[lxxi]

In his annual report of 1954 Mgr. Vermeiren gave the following statistics for the whole vicariate: *"The total number of pupils in primary schools of the mission is 11 933 of which 10 567 are boys and 1 363 girls. 540 children from the nursery school should be added to this number*."[lxxii] In September 1955 he gave the following statistics, which were split up quite differently: *"The number of pupils in the primary school is continually increasing. Thanks to the dedication of our itinerant missionaries the number of bush schools has increased to 29 during the past year. ... The bush fathers currently run 195 schools: nursery and primary schools have 13 693, evening schools 174 pupils. Professional schools, middle, teacher training schools and secondary schools, domestic and nursing schools have 546 pupils. A school for educational theory has just opened with 64 pupils*."[lxxiii] In 1956 it was stated much shorter: "*The number of pupils in the central and bush schools considerably exceed 15 000*."[lxxiv] The report was also characterised by an aggressive tone, typical for that period, in which the enmity between confessional and 'neutral' education shows through strongly. In the *Annals* from March 1957 the numbers were given in somewhat more detail, in an article based on the annual report of 1 July 1956.[lxxv] On the basis of this, one

can indeed conclude that more than 15 000 pupils were involved, of which less than 7% went beyond the level of actual primary education. Broken down the figures are:

Table 4 – Number of schools and pupils in the apostolic vicariate of Coquilhatville, 1956 (source: Annals MSC)

A number of elements that have been discussed above are shown in the considerations that the Vicar devoted to education in his annual report for 1958, the last that we have available before independence: *"Let us cast an eye over the education table. The vicariate currently runs 246 central and bush schools. The nursery, primary, teacher training and professional schools house an increasing number of pupils; we are approaching twenty thousand. A happy fact to be observed: as I have already mentioned above, the girls are coming in much greater numbers to the central posts of the mission for their instruction and education. The natives have confidence in our education. In this way in Coquilhatville where the left government has made such efforts to compete with free education, the number of pupils attending the classes run by the Brothers and Sisters totals four thousand. The same is true for the school for European children. The quality of our bush teachers sometimes leaves something to be desired. Nevertheless, we are making every effort to replace them with more and more pupils leaving teacher training colleges each year."*[lxxvi]

Finally a few statistics from just after independence. The *Katoliek Jaarboek* from 1961 only gives a few general numbers. For the diocese of Coquilhatville those are:[lxxvii] one junior seminary with 85 seminarians and 243 primary schools, with 18 120 Catholic boys and 3 624 Catholic girls, besides 5 200 and 3 672 non-Catholics respectively. This publication also gave a list with all the secondary schools in the Congo. From this it seems that the scarce 'secondary education' was mainly concentrated in Coquilhatville and Bamanya and that girls were almost completely ignored (see the list appended).[lxxviii]

2.2. Situation per mission post
2.2.1. Bamanya (founded in 1895)
Interbellum

Group photo of pupils in Bamanya, 1930. From MSC Archives

From the overview of 1929 it is apparent that the MSC had boys' schools in every mission post, except in Bamanya. The Brothers of the Christian Schools had a boys' school there. It was also confirmed in the *Annals* of the MSC that the Brothers, even before they started up the school group in Coquilhatville, were already active in Bamanya: *"Even before they* (i.e. the Brothers of the Christian Schools, JB) *sent the first teachers to Coquilhatville for the government schools, the first three Brothers came to Bamanya. Straight away they organised the primary school and a teacher training college."*[lxxix]Father Rousseau wrote in 1932 in the *Annals*: "*Since I have been here in Bamanya, they have built a large school for boys and another building of 64m by 50m. Already 200 boys are boarding and the beds for the remainder will soon be ready. The Sisters are now asking for the same beds to be made for the girls, that makes another 100 to 150 of these beds that we have to put together*."[lxxx] This indicates that a girls' school did indeed already exist there at that time.

In 1933 those same *Annals* stated: "*Besides workshops where we teach our black boys a craft, we have just started the first teacher training college under the leadership of a few Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Sisters have opened a similar school for girls*."[lxxxi] The girls were taught in Bamanya by the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Precise data is to be found in an anonymous report about the Sisters for the year 1934-35: *"In Bamanya the Froebel school houses 42 pupils and the primary girls' school 76. These schools are running well*."[lxxxii]

In the general report about the working of the Vicariate, Van Goethem wrote, again in the same year, about the results of that education: "*The school at the post houses 350 pupils. The teacher training school awarded eighteen diplomas in this year. Of the new pupils with diplomas ten have been placed in central*

schools, seven in rural schools and one became a clerk."[lxxxiii] Most graduates of the teacher training college therefore clearly achieved the positions they were expected to.

After the Second World War

Data for the year 1947 were included in the Annuaire of 1949. According to this data 66 rural schools depended on the mission post of Bamanya. At the mission post itself the primary school of the Brothers now counted 274 pupils. The teacher training college (the only one in the region) had 67 pupils. The Brothers also had a novitiate with 6 novices. Girls' education included the primary school with 79 pupils, a domestic school with 18 pupils and a department of 'cutting and sewing' with 11 pupils. A report from 1946 gave different numbers: the teacher training college still had, according to this source, 300 pupils, somewhat more than given in the Annuaire. Further, there was mention here of a school for 'half-white girls' (in the colonial context one usually spoke of 'mulattos'), also supervised by Sisters of the Precious Blood. The report mentioned, without further details, a hundred or so girls in 'the girls' school', and sixty or so girls and boys in the nursery school.[lxxxiv]

In the 1950s most attention was given in publications and reports to the building of a new school building for 'the teacher training college' which had already been set up in 1951.[lxxxv] The new building opened its doors in 1954.[lxxxvi] Statistics report that at the beginning of the fifties there were more than 50 students in the teacher training college. Later this number dropped to under 30.[lxxxvii] However, this local situation illustrates the complexity of the terminology used. In a document from 1956 it was reported that in Bamanya, as well as a teacher training college, there was a 'school for *moniteurs*' (teaching assistants) and a 'pedagogical school'.[lxxxviii] At that time there were 26 pupils in the *école normale secondaire*, 45 in the 'school for *moniteurs*' and 64 in the 'pedagogical school'.[lxxxix] The only mention of the primary school was that 'new classes' were added.[xc]

2.2.2. Coquilhatville (1902)

Pre-war period

There are few statistics available for Coquilhatville in the pre-war period. From an article in the *Annals* of 1927 it can be inferred that, at that time, there was already a large school with Congolese teachers.[xci] More specific information is not available. In 1937 the activity report of the Vicariate stated: "*(native centre):*

convent for Sisters of Charity, who run the new school for native girls at this place."[xcii]

After the War

The 'city' of Coquilhatville was split into two different mission posts in the *Annuaire* of Van Wing. Six rural schools were dependent on Coquilhatville "Rive" (the original parish founded in 1902).At this time, the school group of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was apparently brought into the new parish, Coquilhatville "Bakusu" (founded in 1934). The new parish apparently corresponded to the *centre ville*. At least, that can be inferred from the fact that all educational activity was situated in that part of the town. According to the data from the *Annuaire* the school group of the Brothers comprised at that time a primary school with 851 pupils and a secondary school (*section moyenne*) with 94 pupils, all boys. The Daughters of Charity led the school for indigenous girls (founded on the 7 October 1938 according to the *Annuaire*), which consisted of a nursery school with 52 pupils, a primary school with 5 classes and 360 pupils, and a domestic school with 3 classes and 38 pupils. Besides this, 2 rural schools were also reported.

In the 1950s Coquilhatville, as administrative headquarters and the only 'city' in the region, received by far the most attention. It is certain that the town was expanding enormously and that the Catholic Church tried to keep pace with the population increase. The town, which from its foundation consisted of a black and a white neighbourhood, each with its own parish, would get an additional, third, black parish at the end of the 1950s. In the school year 1950-51 a new primary school opened there with 400 pupils.[xciii] At that time plans were already being made for yet another primary school and this was already established in the next school year. At the same time a vocational school was opened. Apparently this very quickly gained 100 pupils, distributed between departments of woodwork and metalwork.[xciv]

Around 1952, according to the *Annals*, there were supposed to be 2 000 children receiving primary education in the *Centre Extra Coutumier* (C.E.C.), as the neighbourhood for the indigenous people was officially called.

Playground of the girls' school Sainte Thérèse in Coquilhatville, in the fifties. From the personal collection of Sister Suzanne Carbonnelle (Daughters of Charity), Rochefort.

Of these there were 1 300 boys and 700 girls, a proportion which, coincidently, differed significantly from that of the rural areas, where the participation by girls was far lower.[xcv] The annual report of the apostolic vicar for 1954 gives more precise statistics that reflect the same order of magnitude: 1 125 pupils with the Brothers and 717 pupils with the Sisters.[xcvi]
From 1955 we also find the new parish in the 'official' reports. The foundation of the parish occurred at the same time as the school conflict in the Congo, which also left its mark. From that time the results of both school networks were compared. Naturally, this always came out in favour of the mission schools. These still seemed to be undergoing an exponential growth. In the report for 1955-56, for example, more than 4 000 pupils were mentioned in primary education, purely in the original C.E.C.[xcvii] The results of the newly set up 'state education' stood, of course, in sharp contrast. The report of 1956 gave figures that were much more in line with the previous ones: 1 200 boys and 1 000 girls in the first neighbourhood, 300 children in the new parish. An honest comment was added: "*5 emergency classrooms were built to combat the official state schools: already more than 300 children are enrolled in these classes, mostly girls; two more classrooms are urgently needed*."[xcviii]

For the following years there is only information from the *Annals*. Again, other numbers were systematically given. Numbers from 3 500 to 4 000 pupils are mentioned in the 'Congolese' primary schools. As the nomenclature used is seldom clear-cut, it is almost impossible to find out what is precisely meant by

this. However, seeing that separate numbers are given for other levels of education, this appears to relate solely to primary education.[xcix]

2.2.3. Bokuma (1900-1910)

In the *Annals* of 1928 an article was published called "History of the mission post in Bokuma", in which religious education and the difficult beginning of conversion work in the area were mentioned. Schools were not explicitly discussed.[c] After this, nothing special appeared about this subject in the *Annals*, but from the activity report concerning the Sisters of the Precious Blood from 1934 some information can be extracted: "*At Bokuma the Sisters have a school for boys with 108 pupils, a school for girls with 51 pupils and a nursery school with 42 pupils*."[ci] Information was still scarce after this. From a report of 1935, about the Sisters of Beveren-Waas in Wafania, the following does appear: "*Sr. Julie is the head of a school for boys which currently has 365 pupils. This year there are 17 graduates, of which five have begun their grammar school in Bokuma,…*"[cii] This is a reference to the only school with real secondary education in the entire region, the junior seminary in Bokuma, founded in 1930.[ciii]

Class photo of the highest class of the boys' school in Bokuma, 1959. MSC Borgerhout Collection

In the *Annuaire* about 10 rural schools, primary education at the central school (by the MSC, JB), a junior seminary with 35 students, and girls' education by the Sisters of the Precious Blood were reported for 1948. The girls' school consisted of a primary school with 62 pupils and a department for 'cutting and sewing' with 32 pupils. The numbers for the seminary are particularly difficult to place. In an

article in the Annals in 1948, 45 seminarians were mentioned.[civ] The pupil numbers fluctuated, in fact, rather strongly. For example, the year 1947 began with 50 students and ended with 28.[cv]

The seminary, as the most prestigious educational institute in the region, received the most attention in the publications and reports for the 1950s. The report for 1956 mentioned a start-up girls' school and a boys' school that "*shot up out of the ground*", a term that applies more to the development of the buildings than to the numbers of pupils. Pupil numbers were only given for the junior seminary, there were about 50.[cvi]

2.2.4. Bokote (founded in 1905, moved in 1910)

In the meantime, in 1926, there appeared to be a nursery school in Bokote.[cvii] Eight years later Sister Henrica wrote in the *Annals*: '*About our school colony: After the holidays there are just about a hundred extra new pupils. In the week the sisters now have 702 people in the classes. As far as the number of girls is concerned, there are now 115, and we must add to that the 135 foolish virgins over which Sister Rosa is in charge*.'[cviii] What she meant by 'the foolish virgins' is not entirely clear. In another, anonymous article a boys' school led by the Daughtersis also mentioned: "*Once past the lokole-house, we arrive at the classes…. Sr. M. Ghislena is very busy: she is already teaching the girls from half past seven, more than a hundred; she is assisted by two black teachers, whom she also has to help along the way …*", and "*At a quarter past ten the classes begin for the boys.*"[cix]

This is confirmed in the activity report about the Daughters of the Sacred Heart: "*The nursery school has 70 children, led by Sr. Aleidis. The girls' school has 126 pupils and is led by Sr. Josepha. The boys' primary school has 949 pupils and the teaching is done by Sr. Engelberta, Sr. Josepha, Sr. Alphonsine, and Sr. Aleidis. The dressmaking workshop, that houses around thirty girls, is run by Sr. Henrica*."[cx] The numbers given here for the boys' school give the impression of a rather large school. This is confirmed in the general activity report of the Vicar, the numbers correspond *grosso modo*: "*Bokote: school at the post has flourished extremely well with its 1 125 boys and 150 girls*."[cxi] Again, Vertenten confirms in his article in the Annals from 1934, which has already been cited, that:

"*In the last few years there has been a great influx of male youths at our mission posts: Bokote and Boende above all (Bokote 1000 and Boende 600). In Bokote they have been able to lodge most of the children with the families that live there*

at the mission. There are guest families which accommodate up to 20 to 30 children."[cxii]

Bokote, 1956. Class photo with pupils and teacher in the company of Sister Jozefa. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

After the war Van Wing quoted 53 rural schools for this post. Then there was also primary education at the mission post, led by the MSC, with 7 classes for 350 pupils (!), and girls' education by the Daughters of the Sacred Heart: a nursery school with 39 pupils and primary education with 5 classes for 36 pupils. This last number seems exceptionally strange. A manuscript from 1946 with data about the mission at Bokote reported 310 boys and 26 girls, which is reasonably in agreement with the previous numbers.[cxiii] According to this document, there were supposed to be 949 boys and 46 girls attending in the rural schools.
Again, attention here was primarily paid to the building plans in the fifties, particularly the boarding school for which the first stone was laid in 1950. The scarce numerical data again come from the annual report from 1956: about 450 boys and 100 girls populated the primary school at that time.[cxiv] Another 11 small schools in the interior are also mentioned, but the criteria used here to determine what 'rural schools' were differed from those used in the *Annuaire*.

2.2.5. Wafanya (1917)
In 1930 the following was written about the Sisters of Beveren-Waas in Wafanya: "*E.Z. Julia, a qualified teacher, is the superior. Besides managing the house and the community she is also the headmistress of the school and is responsible for over 100* boys*. She has also already started a sewing school for girls and primary education for girls is already under discussion.*"[cxv] The reporting in the Annals was noticeably well-disposed towards the Sisters of Beveren-Waas. In 1931 father Vertenten wrote in an article, titled "Wafanya advances": "*The boys' school*

flourishes under the diligent and expert leadership of Mother Julia, she already has 136 pupils. The girls' school will quickly follow: the sewing school is there already and in a short time the little girls have already learnt a great deal, the larger ones are already learning to work on the machine. The sewing school is a beautiful hall, roomy and light, completely built in stone."[cxvi] And in 1932 he was even more lyrical: "*If you see little Mother Julia, you would never think that she, supported by the moral authority of Father Rector, would have been able to accomplish such astonishing work here: in only a few years she has set up a complete primary school. She has 300 children at school, nearly all boys. At the inspection I found that they knew so much about the curriculum that most of them could move to a higher class. Under her leadership Sister Lutgardis has started girls' primary schools (the sewing school has already been there a long time) and Sister Andrea is now starting the nursery school*."[cxvii] Clearly the boys' school of the missionaries was really run by the Sisters of St Vincent. That was confirmed by an activity report from 1935: "*Sr. Andrea runs the nursery school and has 23 children. Sr. Lutgardis is responsible for the girls' school, which houses 45 pupils and the dressmaking workshop. Sr. Julie is the head of the boys' school which currently has 365 pupils.*"[cxviii]

A report from just after the war gives an interesting reference point. It compares pupil and school numbers from July 1944 and July 1945. I will restrict myself to the primary school: In 1944 there were 221 boys, in 1945 that became 252 (first and second grade together). There were again 23 girls reported. For the other school types there is no clear reference point. For example, there is no mention of a domestic school but a teacher training college is referred to.[cxix] Besides the 85 rural schools, which were depending from the mission post, in 1949 there was mention of primary education for boys at the central school, consisting of 6 classes for at least 350 pupils. For the girls the following numbers were given: a nursery school with 1 class and 20 pupils, primary education with 2 classes for 35 pupils, and the domestic school with only 1 class for 15 pupils.

From the Annals for 1954 there is also the following quotation: "*Schools: as is the case everywhere it is also very difficult to get girls to school at this mission post: there are only 25 pupils under the supervision of one teacher. The nursery school has 30 infants (1 teaching assistant). The boys' school has 275 pupils divided over 5 study years (7 teachers). The qualified teacher Sister manages everything. The sewing and washing is taken care of by the big girls. The vegetable garden and nursery form an ideal practice place for our schoolboys*."[cxx]

2.2.6. Boende (1925)

The mission post of Boende was the first one that was set up by the MSC itself. In 1926 Father Marcel Es, MSC reported: "(…) *I have just written the number 37 down for the boys; with the girls we cannot begin until Sisters are available.*" The Daughters of the Sacred Heart would indeed not arrive in Boende until April 1927.[cxxi] One of the Daughters, Sister Emilienne, reported that year that in Boende there was a girls' school and a boys' school and cabinet maker's training with the Fathers.[cxxii] Father Vertenten reported in 1929 in a travel report: "*Every day 48 boys and 25 larger girls came to school and there is a small nursery school for about 20 little black infants.*"[cxxiii]

In the following period the Annals did not report anything specific about Boende but the activity report for 1934-35 did report that the Daughters of the Sacred Heart took care of the education for boys and girls: "*Sr. Mauritsia is responsible for the nursery school and teaching the girls. She has 50 girls in her primary school and 36 infants in her nursery school. Sister superior, Sr. Marie, with Sr. Bernardina and Sr. Magda is responsible for the boys' school. They have 824 pupils. The dressmaking workshop is run by Sr. Celesta.*"[cxxiv] In 1934, Vertenten returned to the subject of the number of boys who went to school in Boende and spoke on that occasion of 600.[cxxv] However, the somewhat more official activity reports about the vicariate also reported strong growth in 1935 and 1937: "*Boende: the school is developing and houses almost 700 pupils.*"[cxxvi]"*Our central schools have started to flourish. The number of pupils has especially increased in the school in Boende. The Commander of the Force Publique has amicably granted us a non-commissioned officer to give the pupils lessons in physical education.*"[cxxvii]

In 1941 Father Cortebeeck reported in the Annals about "*400 boys of the colony*".[cxxviii] A memo from the end of the war period reported about "*550 schoolchildren at the mission post, 1 150 in the interior with 31 teaching assistants*".[cxxix] In the post-war period Boende developed further to become the second centre of the MSC mission area. The *Annuaire* records 58 rural schools, primary education at the central school (9 classes with 600 pupils), an agricultural school (for boys) with 39 pupils, and a girls' school of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart (primary education in 3 classes with 22 pupils).

For the fifties, we find rather detailed statistics in an annual report about the school year 1953-54.[cxxx] This reports (here presented as a table):[cxxxi]

Table 5 – Situation of education in Boende, 1954 (source: Aequatoria Archive)

The annual report of 1955 seems to be less precise in its indications, and reports the following numbers: *"The cabinet making workshop led by (Father) Verpaele has 27 pupils and his construction school has 21, with 50 nursery schoolchildren, about 700 school boys, 110 girls, about 90 men at the agricultural school, 35 girls in the domestic school, about 60 at the evening school. And the teacher training school is starting shortly.*" Concerning the rural schools: *"Father N. Jockin is in charge of an immense interior. … 22 bush schools, about 900 pupils.*"[cxxxii]
At that time the only particular concern was about the mission post of Boende. Besides this, in the fifties the town began to develop rapidly, something that would quickly disturb the local missionaries: *"But the town of Boende is steadily developing a few kilometres from the mission and it is of the utmost urgency that Boende town becomes a whole new parish. There Father De Meyst is nominated as pastor.* (…) *for the freemasons are also beginning to recognise the value of Boende town…*"[cxxxiii]

2.2.7. Mondombe (1925)
There are a few statistics to be found for this small mission post. Vertenten wrote in 1931 about the start of the mission post: *"In 1926 they began here at a two hour distance from the state post* (…) *The children, about 125, begin school at 7 o'clock. One teacher Sister is in charge, she is assisted by native teachers.*"[cxxxiv] A few years earlier he had already made mention of "(…) *a school with three classrooms, each of which has an area of 6 by 5 meters, the Brother has had 40 large school banks made for it.*"[cxxxv] In 1932 the report was: *"Straight away the children from the Montessori school of Sister Imelda are ready for a song and a dance after a nice 'melesi, madame'*('merci, madame', JB). *She has thirty-odd.*"[cxxxvi]

Although it was not explicitly stated, we can conjecture that this information is about a boys' school. In the activity report about the Daughters of the Sacred Heart from 1935 it was indeed reported that *"Sr. Ludovica ran the nursery school, and has 53 children. The girls' school has 60 pupils, who receive their lessons from Sr. Imelda. There are 228 boys and their education is given by Sr. Imelda and Sr. Ascanus. The same Sr. Ascanus also teaches the school for around twenty adults. Sr. Léonarda is responsible for learning to cut.*"[cxxxvii] The same Sister Imelda wrote an article in the Annals a few years later in which she also talks about the pupils: *"Rascals hey, and we are getting up to the 300.*"[cxxxviii]

At the end of the school year 1944-45 the school had 324 boys and 35 girls.[cxxxix] Strangely enough it was reported in the annual report for the school year 1947-48 that *"a very lovely school colony has been built that may house around 300 pupils."*[cxl] Van Wing spoke in 1949 of 49 rural schools, a primary boys' school consisting of 7 classes with 450 pupils, and a primary girls' school, set up in 1930, run by the Daughters of the Sacred Heart. Later, in the fifties, there was only scarce information available about a boys' school and about the first year of the girls' school. According to this same information the area had 28 rural schools with over 1 000 pupils in 1955.[cxli]

2.2.8. Flandria-Boteke (1926)

Flandria was a special mission post in the sense that it was set up near the *Huilever* establishment.[cxlii] That there was a form of cooperation between the two can be seen from Van Goethem's activity report, in which he writes among other things: *"Huilever continues to provide for the upkeep of one hundred pupils. The school has 350."*[cxliii] Frans Maes, former headmaster of the school in Flandria, confirmed that there was a little monetary support from the "company", which also continued after the war.[cxliv]There was also a Batswa school in Boteke: *"In Boteke the sisters run a nursery school with 35 pupils, a school for young girls with 45 pupils and a boys' school for Batswa with 130 pupils*."[cxlv] The report by Van Goethem, already cited, confirms this: "*Boteke: beside the school group at Flandria: boarding school at Batswa with one hundred and thirty pupils*."[cxlvi] These Batswa schools enjoyed a certain amount of special attention. This actually related to a sort of racial segregation, whereby the Pygmies, who were seen as a non-sedentary (nomadic) people, received a 'specially adapted' education. The photograph of the kindergarten shown here confirms again the existence of the nursery school (*école gardienne*), whereas Corman in 1935 only reported two primary schools (and Frans Maes also reported nothing on this matter in the discussion I had with him).

The *Annuaire* of 1949 gives incomplete information for this post: 70 rural schools, primary education at the central school (no numbers) and a girls' school run by the Sisters of the Precious Blood (primary school with 117 pupils). The annual reports from the first half of the fifties were mainly restricted to the building of a new school for the Batswa. Flandria therefore had three schools: a school on the H.C.B. ground, one at the mission post (situated next door), and the so-called

Batswa school. From what appeared in the *Annals* it can be deduced that this was the same boys' school.[cxlvii] A notable observation about the rural schools: the report from 1955 gives 21 rural schools with about 1 300 children in the interior. This differs greatly from the numbers from 1949. Probably the intention of the Apostolic Vicar to reduce the number of rural schools was in fact being carried out, although I have not yet found any convincing evidence of this.[cxlviii]

Prize-giving in Boteke (Flandria), in the 1950s. From: MSC Borgerhout Archives

2.2.9. The other mission posts

There is almost nothing to be found about *Bolima (1934)* before the war, which naturally has everything to do with the fact that it was a new mission post at that time. Only the following report from 1935 can be quoted: "*It is a new post that has around 350 pupils. The school was taught by Sr. Ghislaine and dressmaking is given by Sr. Osmonda*."[cxlix] "*Bolima: a new post, a Father, a Brother and four Sisters. The school operates regularly.*"[cl] The information about Bolima in the *Annuaire* was also very brief after the war. There was only mention of primary education at the central school and of 19 rural schools in the interior. Only one MSC worked there at that time. Later, too, there was very little information available. In 1955 there were said to be 250 boys at school there.[cli] In the *Annals* there was mention of a school for "Pygmies" (in other cases people talked about "Batswa").[clii]

Before the war the only report about *Bokela (1936)* was that it was a new post.[cliii] In 1949 there was primary education at the central school with 6 classes and 315 pupils. For the girls there was a primary school with 3 classes and 32 pupils, founded by the Daughters of the Sacred Heart (in 1937). There

were also 72 rural schools. For this mission post, figures from 1944 are also available. They seem to be somewhat contradictory, considering that in the same document there is a report of "*about 150 schoolboys*" and "*about 100 Christian boys at the primary school*".[cliv] Most probably a distinction is simply being made between baptised and non-baptised children. As is known, baptism was only possible after a certain period of instruction and, naturally, religious instruction. For the further evolution of this post in the fifties we only have the 1955 report available. This talks of a boys' and a girls' school at the mission post and an unspecified number of schools in the interior at which over 400 pupils followed lessons.[clv]

For *Ikela (1937)* only its existence is reported before the outbreak of the war. The *Annuaire* reported primary education for boys at the central school, with 7 classes and 300 pupils, and primary education for girls with 3 classes and 30 pupils (under the supervision of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart and started in January 1941). In the interior there were 21 rural schools dependent on this mission post. In 1944 there were 239 schoolboys and 26 schoolgirls reported for this mission.[clvi] However, in 1955 only the boys' school with 320 pupils was mentioned.[clvii]

Father De Rop gave a number of details about *Imbonga (1940)* in a report from 1945: "*Founded at the start of 1940 as an auxiliary post of Flandria with the prospect of later becoming an independent post when there was enough staff. The working area: a part of the mission of Flandria and a part of Wafanya*." On education: "*What exists: Imbonga post: complete primary education: 5 teaching assistants with 75* boys*. ... Bangonda: Bilangi school with 2 teachers: 52* boys."[clviii] In the *Annuaire* it was only reported that primary education was given at the central school and that there were 51 rural schools dependent on the mission post. There were four MSC working there. In the 1950s the information was also limited here to the construction of a new boys' school building.[clix]

In 1945, finally, *Iyonda* was founded. This post was first reported in the general report by Mgr. Vermeiren from 1947-48. This was a leper house, to the south of Coquilhatville. Nothing was reported about education, not even in the *Annuaire* from 1949. From later information it seems that there was a boys' school and a girls' school. There was also mention of a nursery school and an evening school.[clx]

Concluding remarks

On the basis of internal reports, inspection reports and what there is to be made

of the publications of the missionaries, only a very fragmented picture of the true state of the numbers of pupils through the thirties, forties and fifties can be formed. We can, however, clearly recognise certain tendencies, which are in themselves not surprising.

First and foremost there is the overemphasis on primary education, which was the case for the whole territory in the form of rural schools. In this context it is useful to cite once more from the *Katoliek Jaarboek,* which contained a summary of all the schools which went further than the simple primary level at the time of independence.[clxi] A small search on the Vicariate of Coquilhatville yielded interesting results: the top of the school pyramid was formed by the junior seminary of Bokuma, comparable with the Latin-Greek school stream in Belgium. Next to this there was a *Groupe Scolaire* in both Coquilhatville and Bamania, supervised by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. These were at that time comparable to the modern humanities of six years and were taught in French. Next came secondary schools in both Coquilhatville and Bamania with a reported 'African' curriculum, which at that time were changing over to the Belgian curriculum. Whether this refers to the same *Groupes Scolaires* is difficult to discern. The *Groupe Scolaire* of Coquilhatville apparently also included at that time an *école moyenne* for boys. The *Jaarboek* said about this school type: "(*They*, JB) *comprised a curriculum of four years and prepared their pupils for office work.*"

These schools were all boys' schools. That immediately confirms the second large tendency: the under-representation of girls in education was also a fact in this area. An observation that is both quantitative and qualitative: there was no secondary education for girls and the participation in primary education was very low in comparison with that of the boys. Paradoxically enough there was an important role reserved for women (the mission Sisters) in the development of the school network. In many mission posts the men left the rudder in the hands of the Sisters, who then took over the direction of the boys' schools and the girls' schools if that was necessary.

A third point, that more specifically concerns the local situation, is the observation that the higher levels of education were in the hands of the Brothers of the Christian Schools except for the *in se* very specific case of the junior seminary that was supervised by the MSC itself. Whether this only related to a difference in professional qualifications or to the different characteristics and/or attitudes of the two congregations will have to be investigated further.

NOTES

[i] Geerts, F. (1948). Ontwikkeling der kerkelijke indeling en der kerkelijke hiërarchie in Belgisch Kongo. In *Kerk en Missie*. 28, pp. 9-18 and 40-49.

[ii] See also Briffaerts, J. & Dhondt, P. (2003). The Dangers of Urban Development. Missionary discourse on education and urban growth in the Belgian Congo (1920-1960). In *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, vol. 59, 2, pp. 81-102.

[iii] Camille Coquilhat (1853-1891) was a professional soldier, a veteran of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. From 1882 he participated in the Stanley expedition in the area around the upper course of the Congo. After his return he became a co-worker in the cabinet of Leopold II. In 1889 he was appointed vice governor general. Lieutenant Alphonse Vangele (1848-1939) was involved in the same Stanley expedition. Being also a colonial pioneer, he was also appointed vice governor general in 1897.

[iv] Equateurville would probably have to be translated as "Evenaarsstad" in Dutch or "Equatorville" in English, although I have never seen these versions of the name, which is the reason for the use of the French name here. Vinck, H. (1992). Resistance and collaboration at the beginning of the colonization in Mbandaka (1883-1893), published at: www.aequatoria.be; De Meulder, B. (1994). *Reformisme, thuis en overzee*. Unpublished doctoral thesis K.U.Leuven, p. 350; Mayota, N. (1990). Poste protestant de Bolenge, in*MBANDAKA, Hier et aujourd'hui. Eléments d'historiographie locale*, Etudes Aequatoria 10, as published at : www.abbol.com

[v] Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *Missie en Staat 1880-1914. Redemptoristen, Trappisten, Priesters van het Heilig Hart, Paters van Mill-Hill in Oud-Kongo*. Berchem: Epo.

[vi] Dries, R. (1910). Het beschavingswerk der Cisterciënzers in de Evenaarsstreek. In *Onze Kongo*, 1, p. 51. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[vii] That was the case from 1895. The administrative organisation of the *circonscription urbaine* was introduced in 1893, under Leopold II. This denomination was given to the places which were the most suitable for colonisation, with the intention of stimulating the establishment of Europeans there and to avoid speculation and possible later sale of these areas. Cf. Beyens, A. (1992). L'histoire du statut des villes. In *Congo 1955-1960: recueil d'études – Congo 1955-1960: verzameling studies.* Brussel: Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, p. 16. For more information on the earliest development of Coquilhatville, see: Lufungula, L. (1983). Il y a cent ans naissait Equateurville:

l'ébauche de l'actuelle ville de Mbandaka (June 1883-June 1983). In *Zaïre-Afrique: économie, culture, vie sociale*. 175. p. 301-312 or de Thier, F.M. (1956). *Le centre extra-coutumier de Coquilhatville.* Institut de Sociologie Solvay. Etudes Coloniales 2. Bruxelles: Université Libre, p. 7-31.

[viii] Report about the principal chapel. In *Het missiewerk in Belgisch Congoland distrikt van den evenaar door de EE. PP. Trappisten, hervormde cisterciënzers der abdij van Westmalle*, 5 (1908-1909), p. 70.

[ix] In 1884 the *Livingstone Inland Mission* was replaced by the *American Baptist Missionary Union*, which moved the mission post in 1899 to Bolenge. Ten years later this congregation transferred all its mission posts in the Upper Congo to the *Foreign Christian Missionary Society*, later renamed the *Disciples of Christ Congo Mission*. Cf. Smith, H. (1949). *Fifty years in Congo. Disciples of Christ at the Equator*. (Indianapolis, United Christian Missionary Society), p.15.

[x] Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *Missie en staat in Oud-Kongo (1880-1914)*. Deel 2. p.89-181. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xi] Concerning the discussions about the end of the Trappists' Congo mission, see Vermeir, O. (1976). *De missie van de paters Trappisten in Belgisch Congo, 1894-1926.* Unpublished Master's thesis K.U.Leuven, pp. 55-77 of Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *Missie en staat in Oud-Kongo (1880-1914) Deel 2. Redemptoristen, trappisten, norbertijnen, priesters van het H. Hart en paters van Mill-Hill.* Berchem: Epo, pp. 171-176.

[xii] Hoe staat het op de Missie? In *Het missiewerk in Belgisch Congoland*, 1906-1907, VII, p. 126. "Het Missiewerk in Belgisch Congoland" was the mission periodical of the Trappists from 1904. Before thattime, reports about the Trappist mission were published in the mission periodical of the Norbertines of Averbode.

[xiii] These posts may be found on the overview map on p. 132-133.

[xiv] Afrika Archief, "fonds missions", n° 635, letter from Father Kaptein, abbot of the Trappists of Westmalle, from 26 July 1920.

[xv] This "removal" was often explained in the periodical articles by "health problems" but was actually due to a conscious policy of the local heads which allowed them to broaden the mission activities in spite of the hierarchy forbidding the foundation of yet more posts.

[xvi] The Trappists certainly already had a catechist from 1911.

[xvii] AAVSB. Mission des Trappistes, Report of 1924. (AAVSB stands for "Reports on schools and vicariate/bishopric Coquilhatville/Mbandaka 1924-1963", a collection of documents from the Aequatoria Archive by Honoré Vinck bound in three volumes, unpublished).

[xviii] Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *Missie en staat in Oud-Kongo (1880-1914)*. Deel 2.
[xix] See also Eggermont, B., Se marier chrétiennement au Congo Belge. Les stratégies appliquées par les Missionaires de Scheut (CICM) au Kasai, 1919-1935. In *Missionering en inculturatie, Bulletin van het Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome*, LXIV, 1994, p. 113-147.
[xx] This refers to the S.A.B., abbreviation for *Société Anonyme Belge pour le commerce du Haut-Congo*, which acquired the absolute rule over a territory with a surface area of more than a million hectares in 1904 and which maintained tense relations with the missionaries, whom S.A.B. found a threat to their own position of power with respect to the local population. Concerning this tense relationship, see among others Claessens, A. (1980). Les conflits, dans l'Equateur, entre les Trappistes et la Société Anonyme Belge (1908-1914). In *Revue Africaine de Théologie*, 4, p. 5-18 and Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *o.c.* p. 145-160 and 177-179. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[xxi] Vinck, H. (2003). Les manuels scolaires des Pères Trappistes au Congo Belge (1895-1925). In Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita Kyankenge Masandi, P. & Vinck, H., *Manuels et Chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*. Leuven: Presses Universitaires. pp. 95-131.
[xxii] Conférence des supérieurs des missions catholiques du Congo Belge (1930*). Recueil d'instructions aux missionnaires*. 6eme édition. Leuven: Kuyl-Otto.
[xxiii] Duchesne was governor of the province Coquilhatville (Equatorial province) from 1921 to 1933. Jadot, J.M. (1956) Duchesne (Charles-Marie-Nestor). In *Bibliographie Belge d'outre-mer*, vol. V, 272-285; see also Lufungula L. (1986) Les gouverneurs de l'Equateur: 1885-1960. In *Annales Aequatoria.* 7, 149-166 and at http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Congo-K_Provinces_1960-1966.html (01/2004). [Original quotation in French]
[xxiv] Afrika Archive, Fonds Missions, portefeuille n° 635 "Trappistes Coquilhatville". Letter from the Governor General a.i. Duchesne to the Governor General, 27 December 1921. [Original quotation in French]
[xxv] AAFE 5.2.6-8. Letter from Paul Jans to Frère Visiteur (Véron Ignace). Bamania, 8 January 1929. (AAFE stands for Aequatoria Archive, "Fonds Ecoles").
[xxvi] Vinck, H. (2003). Les manuels scolaires des Pères Trappistes au Congo Belge.
[xxvii] Scheut Archives, Rome, "Fonds De Jonghe". Copy in the possession of Honoré Vinck.
[xxviii] It is not in fact about his predecessor; the letter refers to Georges Van Der Kerken (1888-1953), whom Duchesne replaced during his leave in Belgium in

1921. Van Der Kerken wrote a still very well-known work, “L’ethnie Mongo”, in which he was the first to draw attention to the threatened extinction (falling birth rate) of the local population.
[xxix] Jadot, J.M. (1956). l.c. [Original in French]
[xxx] Letter from Edward Van Goethem to Eduard De Jonghe, Dated 29 October 1924, Scheut Archives, Rome, “Fonds De Jonghe”. Copy in the possession of Honoré Vinck.
[xxxi] Letter from Leon Derikx (in the name of the heads of missions of the Belgian Congo present) to the chairman of the mission orders in Belgium, Kisantu, 23 July 1919, cited in Depaepe & Van Rompuy (1995). *o.c.* p. 56. For a discussion of this letter, with extended citations, see also Briffaerts, J. (2002). l.c. p. 193-194, and the accompanying notes.
[xxxii] The precise development of the church province, with a detailed description of the border corrections, may be found in the overview, published by the MSC, *Symbolum historiae M.S.C.* (Rome, 1966) p. 234-238.
[xxxiii] Vermeir, O. (1980). La fin de la mission des Trappistes à L’Equateur (1920-1926). In *Annales Aequatoria*, I, p. 213-238. This article is taken from the master’s thesis that the author wrote on this subject (already cited previously) and which he based mainly on the archives of the Abbey of Westmalle, of the MSC in Borgerhout and the Scheutist Marcel Storme in Leuven.
[xxxiv] That means that by the end of 1926 27 MSC were already active in the prefecture, certainly a very respectable number. Naturally, the overwhelming majority were ex-Trappists. See Vermeir, O. (1980). *o.c*. p. 235.
[xxxv] Geerts, F. (1948). Ontwikkeling der kerkelijke indeling en der kerkelijke hiërarchie in Belgisch Kongo, *Kerk en Missie*, p. 9-18 en 40-49.
[xxxvi] Van Goethem was already prefect from the beginning in 1924 and would remain vicar until 1946. In 1947 he was followed by Hilaire Vermeiren, who became the first Bishop of the bishopric Coquilhatville (later Mbandaka) in 1959. See *Symbolum historiae M.S.C.*, Rome, 1966, p. 234-238.
[xxxvii] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l’activité du Vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 40 p. 1 March 1935. p. 31.
[xxxviii] Map published in MSC, *50 jaar in Zaïre* (August 1975), an information brochure published on the occasion of the jubilee of the MSC presence in the Congo.
[xxxix] Concerning the sources for the mission activities of the Daughters of Charity, information is chiefly to be found in the common mission periodicals of the Lazarists and the Daughters of Charity, which can be found in the Provincial

house of the Lazarist Fathers in Leuven (Belgium). Three periodicals are concerned, of which the latter appeared in two different editions (one in Dutch and one in French): *Annales de la congrégation de la mission (et de la compagnie des Filles de la Charité*): 1925-1960. *De kleine bode van de H. Vincentius a Paulo en van de gelukzalige Louise de Marillac*: 1930-1940. *Sint Vincentius A Paulo. Driemaandelijks tijdschrift van de Lazaristen en de dochters der liefde*: 1939-1960. *Saint Vincent de Paul. Revue trimestrielle des Lazaristes et des Filles de la Charité*. 1939-1953. In addition, I interviewed two of the Daughters of Charity who were living in Belgium. These were Sister Suzanne Carbonelle, active in the Belgian Congo (including Coquilhatville) from 1952 to 1985 and Sister Gisèle Van Minnenbrugghe, active in the Congo after independence.

[xl] The congregation was founded in 1633 by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. They were also active from as early as 1671 in the Liège region. Like the Brothers of the Christian Schools, this congregation was closed down under the French regime. From 1834 the activities were restarted, also in Belgium which had become independent in the interim. Dochters der Liefde (1926). *De dochters der Liefde van den H. Vincentius A Paulo*. Tilburg: Dochters der Liefde. p. 167.

[xli] Cited from a letter of 16 march 1925 from Father Rutten, general superior of Scheut, to Father Robert Brepoels, superior of the Trappist mission, from the MSC archive Borgerhout. Vermeir, O. (1980). l.c. p. 229. [original in French]

[xlii] Vandekerckhove, C. (1939). Les Lazaristes au Congo. In *Saint Vincent de Paul. Revue trimestrielle des Lazaristes et des Filles de la Charité*. pp. 112-118. [original in French]

[xliii] This was by far the best represented of the Sisters congregations in the vicariate of Coquilhatville. Repeated attempts to establish contact with the congregation on my behalf, including via the MSC, were not successful. The Sisters claim to have neither information nor documents nor archives. They systematically refuse any requests for verbal contact. In spite of this, a British Sister, Mary Venard, published a biographical work in 1992 about the Belgian Province of the Daughters: Venard, M. (1992).*Geschiedenis van de Belgische provincie van de Dochters van O.L.Vrouw van het Heilig Hart*, Provincialate of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Brussels. (translated by Lauwers, J., MSC). The book contains a separate part about the mission to the Belgian Congo, pp. 121-148. This work is not distinguished by a critical approach, does not contain an academically responsible note structure and is certainly somewhat brief about the activities in the Congo. It does, however, report the existence of a provincial archive in Belgium. Besides this there are only two older publications

from the colonial period (a slim recruitment brochure from the thirties or forties and a more extensive information brochure from 1955): Dochters van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van het Heilig Hart (ed.). (1955). *Congregatie van de dochters van Onze Lieve Vrouw van het Heilig Hart*. Lescuyer: Lyon. 148 p. en idem (s.d.). *Dochters van O. L. Vrouw van het Heilig Hart: missiezusters*, De Bièvre: Brasschaat. 23 p. The scarce specific information that can be found about this congregation therefore corresponds, as far as the sources are concerned, with the documents of or about other congregations.

[xliv] Most of this data comes from the MSC, *50 jaar in Zaïre*. Additional sources were: *Annuaires des Missions Catholiques* by Corman (1924 and 1935) and Van Wing (1949) and the work cited here about the sisters.

[xlv] As far as the source material is concerned this male congregation presents markedly fewer problems than the female. There is an extensive archive of the Brothers in their Generalate in Rome that had already been consulted on site by Lies Van Rompaey in the context of research for "In het teken van de bevoogding". She made her extensive notes available to us. Apart from this there was a somewhat brief contact with the archivist in Rome, via e-mail, which allowed a number of clarifications and supplementary information to be obtained. A number of documents were also copied from the archive in Fexhe, a personal collection of documents collected by Brother Jules Cornet. A written reflection was made of others. In the training house in Dilbeek there remain only two large albums with a collection of documents, photos and souvenirs of the Congo. This was also consulted and described in a report. Processing of this data was done in 2001 by Pieter Dhondt. As far as published sources are concerned, use was made of the *Bulletin des écoles chrétiennes*, the general periodical of the Brothers in Belgium, in which the missions are reported in a more or less systematic fashion. The years 1 (1907) up to 41 (1960) were consulted. There was also a periodical of the alumni of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Congo: *Signum Fidei*. Up to now we have only been able to find one copy of this potentially very interesting periodical. A question about possible copies of this was similarly directed to the archivist of the Brothers in Rome but has received no answer.

[xlvi] http://www.relins.be/scherm12_26.html 01/2004.

[xlvii] Mission work of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Congo, *Zaaiers onder de Afrkaanse hemel.*

[xlviii] Frère Alban (1970). *Histoire de l'institut des frères des écoles chrétiennes. Expansion hors de France (1700-1966).* Rome: FEC. p. 641-643.

[xlix] AAFE 5.2.6-8. Letter from Paul Jans to Frère Visiteur (Véron Ignace).

Bamanya, 8 January 1929. [Original in French]
[l] http://www.mariannhill.org/anglais/index.htm 01/2004
[li] Marian Hill was at least mentioned in the correspondence of the Flemish Trappists when their own problems with the hierarchy arose. See also Vermeir, O. (1980). l.c.
[lii] According to Honoré Vinck they were also in Imbonga from 1949 or 1950.
[liii] Practically nothing about these Sisters is available as source material, apart from the personal memories and probably a few photos that the surviving mission Sisters have preserved themselves. In view of the small size of the congregation they did not have their own periodical or publication. The sisters were, however, very approachable and prepared to cooperate in an interview. On 13 September 2002 I spoke with Sister Rafaelle, Sister Innocentia and Sister Hilde, in Beveren-Waas.
[liv] Interview with Sister Rafaelle and Sister Innocentia, at Beveren-Waas, 13 September 2002. See also: Pauselijke Missiewerken (1961). *Katholiek Jaarboek voor Kongo, Ruanda en Urundi*, *1960-1961*. Brussels: Pauselijke Missiewerken. p. 65.
[lv] Depaepe & Van Rompaey dedicated just eight pages to the problem of educational statistics.
[lvi] The Mission annual report "Katoliek jaarboek voor Kongo, Ruanda en Urundi. 1960-1961" (sic) elucidates this matter due to the overview that is given in relation to the various "types" of schools, in which what the various types actually stand for is briefly explained.
[lvii] In official publications the government subdivision was assumed.
[lviii] Finally, there is also the "Katoliek Jaarboek voor Kongo, Ruanda en Urundi" from 1960, which has been referred to previously.
[lix] AAVSB. Rapport de 1929, présenté par Mgr. Van Goethem.
[lx] AAVSB. Année scolaire 1929-1930. Nombre des élèves et du personnel enseignant, Vertenten, December 1930. According to the information from Honoré Vinck, nursery schools were not considered to be separate schools but the pupils in the nursery schools were still not considered to be pupils of the primary school.
[lxi] The data originate in both cases from the same author, Petrus Vertenten, who was, at that time, mission inspector for the whole missionary area.
[lxii] This dated from 1935 and claims to give the state of business on the 30 June 1934.
[lxiii] The schools were not systematically treated in this publication, neither is

there a separate ”education” section provided. Teaching is repeatedly reported among the other activities that a congregation practiced at a particular place. This data must be compared with similar data from other sources. For the period 1930-1934 our collection of inspection reports is not as complete as that for the year 1929. These inspection reports come, almost without exception, from two collections: the booklist “Missions” in the Afrika Archive in Brussels (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Aequatoria Archive, booklist “Ecoles” in Borgerhout.
[lxiv] See also Depaepe & Van Rompaey.
[lxv] Van Wing, J. & Goemé, V. (eds.) (1949). *Annuaire des missions catholiques*. Bruxelles: Edition Universelle.
[lxvi] The number of inspection reports in our possession for the period 1935-1939 is much lower, while annual reports from this period are not available. A updated version of the *Annuaire des missions catholiques* was only published at the end of the forties under the editorship of Van Wing. The periodicals of the missionaries and the internal reports also contain much less detailed information.
[lxvii] Delafaille (1934). Mijn eerste dienstreisje in Kongo. In *Annals van Onze Lieve Vrouw van het Heilig Hart*, 9, p. 197. My emphasis. This publication is cited below as *Annals.* [Original in Dutch]
[lxviii] AAVSB. Vicariat Apsotolique de Coquilhatville, activité missionnaire durant l’exercice 1936-1937, Mgr. Van Goethem, 7 p. [Original in French]
[lxix] AAVSB. Document with statistics and an overview of mission life, s.n., 4 p., dated 1938. Similar data for 1937 report 111 schools with 6,143 boys and 578 girls.
[lxx] AAVSB. Commentaire au rapport annuel 1951-1952, Vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, typed, s.n., 3 p. [original in French]
[lxxi] Ibidem. [original in French]
[lxxii] AAVSB. Rapport annuel du vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, signed by H. Vermeiren, 8 October 1954. [original in French]
[lxxiii] AAVSB. Rapport annuel du vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville 1955, s.n., 21 September 1955. [original in French]
[lxxiv] AAVSB. Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville (rapport 55-56), s.n., s.d. [original in French]
[lxxv] “Coq. 25 jaar Vikariaat” In *Annals*, maart 1957, p. 46.
[lxxvi] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 1957-58 vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville. [original in French]
[lxxvii] Church hierarchy was introduced in November 1959. The organisation into vicariates became obsolete and the Congo consisted from then on of six

ecclesiastical provinces, each divided into a number of dioceses. From then on Coquilhatville was the name of one of the ecclesiastical provinces that was about equal in surface area to the Equatorial Province. This ecclesiastical province was divided into five dioceses and an attached prefecture. One of these dioceses, the archdiocese of Coquilhatville, corresponded to the former vicariate of the MSC. Hilaire Vermeiren became Archbishop.

[lxxviii] The statistics that were published by the (in the meantime) Congolese *Bureau de l'Enseignement Catholique* (B.E.C.) in Leopoldville contrast sharply at first sight. They reflect the situation of October 1962, a little over two years after independence. At that time there were 9 656 boys and 4 777 girls in Catholic primary education of the bishopric. Considering that a maximum of one year can lie between the two publications, there certainly seems to have been different criteria used in their compilation. Bureau de l'Enseignement Catholique (1963). *Statistiques de l'enseignement national catholique 1962-63*. B.E.C.: Léopoldville. p. 24.

[lxxix] Vertenten, P. (1932) Nieuws uit Bamania bij Coquilhatville. In *Annals*, 4, p. 78. [original in Dutch]

[lxxx] Rousseau, L. (1932). From a letter by E. Broeder L. Rousseau. In *Annals*, 1, p. 6. [original in Dutch]

[lxxxi] Moeyens (1933). Over Bamania. In *Annals* 1, p. 11. [original in Dutch]

[lxxxii] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionaire des Soeurs du Précieux Sang, 1934-1935, s.n. [original in French]

[lxxxiii] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l'activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, typed, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935.[original in French]

[lxxxiv] AAVSB. Missie-post van Bamanya (bij Coquilhatville), G. Wauters, 20 April 1946.

[lxxxv] See *Annals*, September 1955, p. 131.

[lxxxvi] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 1950-1951, Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n.; AAVSB. Rapport annuel du vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, H. Vermeiren, 8 October 1954; *Annals*, December 1954.

[lxxxvii] AAVSB. Commentaire au rapport annuel 1951-1952, Vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n., 3 p.

[lxxxviii] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956; also the *Annals* report in 1957 a training college, a pedagogical school and a "school for moniteurs" (teaching assistants).

[lxxxix] Ibidem: this last document gives numbers for the three schools.

[xc] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 1957-58 vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n.

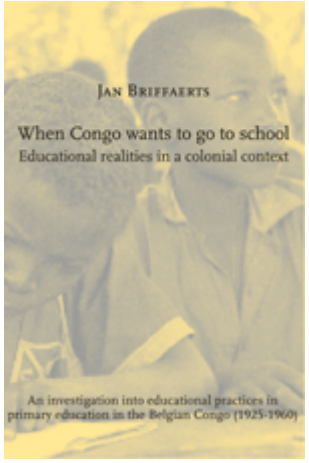
[xci] Dubrulle, M.(1928). Robert Longundo. In *Annals*, 2, p. 32.
[xcii] AAVSB. Vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, rapport sur l'activité missionaire durant l'exercice 1936-1937, E. Van Goethem, s.d. [original in French]
[xciii] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 1950-1951, Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n.
[xciv] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 3 July 1952 – 30 June 1953, Vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n.
[xcv] *Annals*, March 1952, p. 36 e.v.
[xcvi] AAVSB. Rapport annuel du vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, H. Vermeiren, 8 October 1954.
[xcvii] AAVSB. Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville (report 55-56), s.n.
[xcviii] AAVSB. 1955 Overview, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956. [original in Dutch]
[xcix] We indicate here in particular two anonymous articles: "Coquilhatstad", in *Annals* from December 1956, p. 176 and "Pastoor van een zwarte parochie: interview met Pater De Gols, pastoor van de eerste zwarte parochie van Coquilhatstad" in *Annals* from May 1957, p. 68.
[c] Brepoels, R. (1928). Geschiedenis van den missiepost in Bokuma. In *Annals*, 4, p. 81.
[ci] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionaire des Soeurs du Précieux Sang, 1934-1935, s.n. [Original quotation in French]
[cii] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionaire des Soeurs de St. Vincent de Wafanya de 1934-35, s.n. [Original quotation in French]
[ciii] Vinck, H. (s.d.). Joris Van Avermaet (1907-1956): Bio-bibliographie. To be found on Aequatoria's website: www.aequatoria.be/BiblioVanAvermaet.html (01/2004). In the MSC's archive in Borgerhout there is an extensive historical note about the seminary, composed by one of the missionaries, Remi Sanders, a few years after independence. This places the beginning of seminary education at as early as 1923, at the time of the Trappist mission. MSC archive Borgerhout, "Historiek van het klein seminarie te Bokuma", Sanders, R., s.d., typed, 36 p.
[civ] Heireman, G. (1948). Ons zwart missieseminarie van Bokuma schrijft aan ons blank missieseminarie van Assche. In *Annals*, p. 118.
[cv] MSC archives Borgerhout. "Historiek van het klein seminarie te Bokuma", p. 22.
[cvi] AAVSB. Commentaire au rapport annuel 1951-1952, Vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n., 3 p.; AAVSB. Overzicht 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956;*Annals*, December 1954.

[cvii] Emiliana, Sr. (1926). Brief uit Bokote. In *Annals*, p. 127.
[cviii] Henrica, Sr. (1934). Laatste berichten uit Bokote (parts of a letter from E. Sister Henrica). In *Annals*, 1, p. 12.
[cix] *Annals*, 1934, 5, p. 109.
[cx] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionaire des Filles de N.D. du Sacré Coeur de 1934 à 1935, s.n.
[cxi] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l'activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935. [Original in French]
[cxii] Vertenten, P. (1935). Een blijvend loofhuttenfeest. In *Annals*, 10, p. 221.
[cxiii] AAVSB. Manuscript about Bokote, signed (illegibly), 24 February 1946.
[cxiv] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
[cxv] *Annals*, 1930, 8, p. 176. [original in Dutch]
[cxvi] Vertenten, P. (1931). Wafania vooruit. In *Annals*, 7, p. 151. [original in Dutch]
[cxvii] Vertenten, P. (1934). Van uit Wafania. In *Annals*, 6, p. 127. [original in Dutch]
[cxviii] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionaire des Soeurs de St. Vincent de Wafanya de 1934-35, s.n. [original in French]
[cxix] AAVSB. Statistiques générales de la mission – 1 juillet 44 – 1 juillet 45, Vicariat Apostolique de Coquilhatville, with report "Wafanya".
[cxx] "Wafanya – Zusters van Beveren". In *Annals*, October 1954**,** p. 140. [original in Dutch]
[cxxi] Volgens de *Annuaire* van Corman. [original in Dutch]
[cxxii] Emilienne, Sr. (1927). From a letter from Sister Emilienne, Boende. In *Annals*, p. 269.
[cxxiii] Vertenten, P. (1929). Van Coquilhatville naar de boven-Tschuapa (vervolg). In *Annals*, 3, p. 55. [original in Dutch]
[cxxiv] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionaire des Filles de N.D. du Sacré Coeur de 1934 à 1935, s.n. [original in French]
[cxxv] Vertenten, P. (1935). Een blijvend loofhuttenfeest. In *Annals*, 10, p. 221.
[cxxvi] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l'activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935.[original in French]
[cxxvii] AAVSB. Vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, rapport sur l'activité missionaire durant l'exercice 1936-1937, E. Van Goethem. [original in French]
[cxxviii] Cortebeeck, Y. (1941). Boende. In *Annals*, 1, p. 7. [original in Dutch]
[cxxix] AAVSB. Note with data about the Boende mission, manuscript, H. Delafaille, 1944-45. [original in Dutch]

[cxxx] AAVSB. Katholieke missie Boende St Martinus, jaarverslag 1/7/53 – 1/7/54, s.n., 1 November 1954.
[cxxxi] The term “succursale schools” refers to the rural schools.
[cxxxii] AAVSB. Overzicht 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.[original in Dutch]
[cxxxiii] Ibidem.[original in Dutch]
[cxxxiv] Vertenten, P. (1931). Missieleven (uit den missiepost Mondombe St-Theresia). In *Annals*, 1931, 4, p. 76. [original in Dutch]
[cxxxv] Vertenten, P. (1929). In *Annals*, 4, p. 78. [original in Dutch]
[cxxxvi] *Annals*, 1932, 8, p. 176. [original in Dutch]
[cxxxvii] AAVSB. Rapport sur l’activité missionaire des Filles de N.D. du Sacré Coeur de 1934 à 1935, s.n. [original in French]
[cxxxviii] Maria Imelda, Zr. (1937). Iets over onze schooljongens van Mondombe. In *Annals*, 3, p. 54. [original in Dutch]
[cxxxix] AAVSB. Note with data about Mondombe, manuscript, Yernaux, July 1944 – July 1945.
[cxl] AAVSB. Report 1947-1948, Vicariat Apostolique de Coquilhatville, Mgr. Vermeiren. [original in French]
[cxli] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
[cxlii] *Huilever* refers to the *Huileries du Congo Belge*.
[cxliii] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l’activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 march 1935.[original in French]
[cxliv] Interview with Frans Maes in Borgerhout on 9 July 2002.
[cxlv] AAVSB. Rapport sur l’activité missionaire des Soeurs du Précieux Sang, 1934-1935, s.n. [original in French]
[cxlvi] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l’activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935.[original in French]
[cxlvii] Theresia, Sr. (1955). Triptiek uit Flandria. In *Annals*, p. 165. See also *Annals*, December 1954.
[cxlviii] See below, chapter 5.
[cxlix] AAVSB. Rapport sur l’activité missionaire des Filles de N.D. du Sacré Coeur de 1934 à 1935, s.n. [original in French]
[cl] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l’activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935.[original in French]
[cli] AAVSB. Overzicht 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
[clii] *Annals*, December 1954.
[cliii] Voor Bokela: AAVSB. Vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, rapport sur

l'activité missionaire durant l'exercice 1936-1937, E. Van Goethem. Voor Ikela: *Annals*, 1938, 4, p. 80.
[cliv] AAVSB. Note with statistical data about Bokela St Pieter, manuscript signed P.Smolders, dated 1944. [original in Dutch]
[clv] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
[clvi] AAVSB. Note with data about Ikela, manuscript, G. Michielsen, dated 1944.
[clvii] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
[clviii] AAVSB. Report: mission Imbonga, A. De Rop, 1945. [original in Dutch]
[clix] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
[clx] Wijnants, P. (1954). Leprozerie van Igonda. In *Annals*, p. 149; AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
[clxi] *Katoliek Jaarboek voor Kongo, Ruanda en Urundi*, 1960-1961. p. 206-255.
[clxii] Dibalu, A. (1969). *L'histoire de la formation des maîtres de l'enseignement élémentaire dans l'évolution de l'enseignement au Congo*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Université de Laval, Québec.
[clxiii] *Ibidem*. p. 127.
[clxiv] AAVSB, "Note additionnelle sur les écoles rurales", par P. Trigalet, in "Rapport Général 1934-1935", p. 33.
[clxv] Vertenten, P. (1929). Met de Theresita de Momboyo op naar Wafanya. In *Annalen*, 12, p. 274. This relates to a village in the vicinity of Flandria, Ifulu. [original quotation in Dutch]
[clxvi] Maria Godfrieda, Zr. (1934). Wat ze zooal te doen hebben. In *Annalen*, 5, p. 108.
[clxvii] See Dams, K., Depaepe, M. & Simon, F. (2002). 'By indirections finding directions out': Classroom history, Sources and Objectives. In Jamrożek, W. & Żołądź-Strzelczyk, D. (eds.), *W dialogu z przeszłością. Księga poświęcona Profesorowi Janowi Hellwigowi* [Dialogue with the past. In memoriam Professor Jan Hellwig.]. Poznan: Adam Mickiewicz University Press. p. 69.
[clxviii] Dembour, M.B. (2000). *Recalling the Belgian Congo: Conversations and introspection*. New York: Berghahn Books.
[clxix] For the definition of those themes I again used the marker that was previously used by researchers in the research into "Orde in vooruitgang". I would particularly like to thank Betty Eggermont and Hilde Lauwers for their willingness to share their experiences on this subject.

When Congo Wants To Go To School – Part II – Realities



In the following chapters I will try to reconstruct the educational reality in the schools of the MSC based primarily on the written sources available. More specifically, this relates to the reconstruction of classroom life and the educational relationship between missionaries and pupils. The closer one gets to the so-called 'micro level', the more apparent it becomes that it is almost impossible to make a true reconstruction in the sense of a true representation, "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*", of the educational relationship between missionaries and Congolese. Naturally, the source material available is important here and defines the boundaries within which the research can be carried out.

A second important matter is that the teaching was not given by the missionaries in the first place, but by the Congolese. This is not unique to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, it is more generally true for the entire colony. From the beginning an appeal was made to native assistance, to carry out the huge quantity of work caused by the evangelisation project. A decision was already made in 1907 by the bishops in the Congo to establish a central teacher-training course for each church province. The reason for this was of course the unbalance between the personnel available and the population to be reached. The fact that evangelisation was much more important to the missionaries than the educational activity meant that it was "sufficient" initially to train the Congolese as catechists and that it was not necessary in the strict sense to train teachers. This was also emphasised in those first plans: the candidates for training had to be young (maximum 12 years old) and it was explicitly stated that the intention was not to train educationalists but catechists as assistants to the missionaries.[i] According to Antoine Dibalu there were 11 central teacher-training colleges in 1922, of which those closest to the Equator province were situated in Nouvel Anvers (North of Coquilhatstad) and in Tumba (by Lake Tumba, South of

Coquilhatstad).[ii] However, it is likely that not everybody who became teaching assistant had actually attended a teacher training college. That was certainly true in the mission region of the MSC.[iii] One example of this can be found in the Annals from 1929: *"On Tuesday there is a school inspection. Notwithstanding all kinds of unfavourable circumstances satisfactory results have been achieved. The head teaching assistant, Georges Lobombe, although he has not had any professional training, was given an honorary mention in the inspector's report.*"[iv][v]

From a statistical summary from 1934 it is apparent that a little over 120 "white" religious workers were working in the vicariate Coquilhatstad, together with 90 teachers and 357 catechists. It was also stated that there were another eighty pupils or so at the teacher training college at that time. Consequently, an attempt was made to have trained teachers but that was clearly not always the case. Moreover, the same was true for the missionaries themselves. They had, barring a few exceptions, no educational training. The missionaries' role was often limited to supervising the *teaching assistants* and to giving religious education. One of the many testimonies in this regard was given in the Annals by Sister Godfrieda, a Sister of the Sacred Heart, who worked in the newly established mission post in Bolima from 1934: *"Here you will find Sr. M. Godfrieda, who tries to keep order with two black helpers among the three hundred and fifty rascals and to drum the first concepts of discipline, prayer and the catechism into them and to teach them some letters and arithmetic."*[vi] Relatively speaking, more people with educational training could be found among the sisters than at the MSC. The MSC were not a teaching order by nature. Consequently, it should not be surprising that when a large school had to be established in a central place, as in Coquilhatville, the Brothers of the Christian Schools were appealed to, being traditionally considered an educational congregation.

The majority of teachers in education were Congolese. Naturally, when considering the educational reality and the classroom life those teaching assistantsare important witnesses. However, in the same way as for the pupils, it is much more difficult to trace their voice than the coloniser's. A limited number of them did manage to become "évolué" and a number of testimonies about education may, for example, be found in this way in "*La Voix du Congolais*". But there we are also dealing in essence with superficial and ideologically distorted messages. Moreover, and that is also true to a great extent for the other parties

involved, these sources rather represent experiences of events or behaviours rather than the reality itself. However, as Dams, Depaepe and Simon have remarked, that does not necessarily have to be considered a fatal inadequacy for the historian.[vii] However, insofar as possible the "gap in the memory" is completed by a number of oral testimonies from people involved in education. They will primarily be considered separately in the last part. Oral sources have their own specific interpretative issues. It is not possible to consider them individually without further context. Nevertheless, I would also like to consider them on their own because the aspect of "remembering" is interesting and intriguing enough to consider them separately.[viii] Questions about memories over a longer term are an extension of those about the effects of education. That part of the research may then be properly considered as more "anthropological" in nature (cf. the introduction).

However, the second part relates to the basic material that should make it possible for us to form an idea of the main aspects of education in this region of the Belgian colony (and by extension, and in general, these findings are also true for the rest of the colony). This account is organized around a number of themes, which I used to relate to the source material.[ix] The headings used may of course be debated (what is an "educational climate"?) but the primary intention was to introduce a kind of general, first classification of the material available. *Grosso modo* these themes can be divided as follows (see diagram). The intention is to consider the field of work in four chapters, each from a different themed perspective. It is almost impossible to make an absolute boundary, hence the warning that this is a "rough" division. The intention is certainly not to divide reality into numerous smaller realities. For that reason it is also necessary for the themes to overlap somewhat.

1. Educational climate:
What was the educational aim and environment?
What was the dominant view of Congolese children?

2. Educational comfort:
Material construction and organisation of schools
Timetabling

3. Content of lessons and implementation of the curriculum:
What was taught?

How were subjects taught?

4. Intercourse and behavioural prescriptions:
How were the pupils approached?

NOTES

[i] Dibalu, A. (1969). *L'histoire de la formation des maîtres de l'enseignement élémentaire dans l'évolution de l'enseignement au Congo*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Université de Laval, Québec.
[ii] *Ibidem*. p. 127.
[iii] AAVSB, "Note additionnelle sur les écoles rurales", par P. Trigalet, in "Rapport Général 1934-1935", p. 33.
[iv] Vertenten, P. (1929). Met de Theresita de Momboyo op naar Wafanya. In *Annalen*, 12, p. 274. This relates to a village in the vicinity of Flandria, Ifulu. [original quotation in Dutch]
[v] Maria Godfrieda, Zr. (1934). Wat ze zooal te doen hebben. In *Annalen*, 5, p. 108.
[vi] See Dams, K., Depaepe, M. & Simon, F. (2002). 'By indirections finding directions out': Classroom history, Sources and Objectives. In Jamrożek, W. & Żołądź-Strzelczyk, D. (eds.), *W dialogu z przeszłością. Księga poświęcona Profesorowi Janowi Hellwigowi* [Dialogue with the past. In memoriam Professor Jan Hellwig.]. Poznan: Adam Mickiewicz University Press. p. 69.
[vii] Dembour, M.B. (2000). *Recalling the Belgian Congo: Conversations and introspection*. New York: Berghahn Books.
[viii] For the definition of those themes I again used the marker that was previously used by researchers in the research into "Orde in vooruitgang". I would particularly like to thank Betty Eggermont and Hilde Lauwers for their willingness to share their experiences on this subject.

When Congo Wants To Go To

School – The Educational Climate

Group photo of pupils in Bamanya, 1930. From MSC Archives

Moral foundation and worldview

The clear moralising impact of the curricular was indicated in the previous chapter. This moralising also seems a very good reflection of the climate in which missionary intervention and education took place. This fact was very clearly brought to the fore in the mission periodical of the MSC. It was repeatedly pointed out that, as far as the missionaries were concerned, Christianisation was the most important concern. This remained the same throughout the colonial period, although it levelled off towards the end and was concealed by other, more worldly-oriented educational objectives. In 1926, one of the MSC pioneers, Father Es, wrote about the settlement in Boende: "*We are situated on a small plateau in the middle of the tropical forest, far from the state outpost and every native village, so as to reduce the influence of the heathens and the whites to a minimum. The purer the Christian atmosphere, the better the Christians.*"[i] The same Father Es wrote about the lessons themselves: "*Those classes, as dull and monotonous as they are – we know from our own experience of taking them as children – do not bore them. They constantly ask for more. And together with these reading, writing, drawing and maths lessons, the Christian spirit penetrates their heart drop-by-drop. Everything on the mission breathes this exalted spirit which will only make them more human. Our goal is after all not only to form developed Negroes, but also developed Christians.*"[ii]

The statements made in the *Annals* sound disarming to contemporary ears, sometimes even shockingly naïve. For this reason they are a good indicator of the

state of affairs. The opinions in the metropolis were not so different or more 'elevated' that they needed to mince words. In the end of year edition of the *Annals* in 1931 the following could be read: "*Why mission expansion? Because we need money, our beautiful mission territory around the equator forest, which is six times bigger than Belgium, needs to be provided with more priests, more Brothers, more churches, more schools. Why mission expansion? Because otherwise the Protestants will take advantage! Because otherwise the Protestants, with all their gold, will stack the best part of the harvest in their own stores.* (…) *Why expansion? Because the need for souls is so great that the waves engulf the ship of the church*."[iii] That there was a need for souls was obvious to all missionaries and to the home front. That something needed to be done about it was at least as obvious to the missionaries. And the competitive element towards other religious convictions naturally became a part of this.[iv]

Petrus Vertenten, who was an abbot and known as a very cultivated man,[v] wrote in 1930, without mincing his words, that: "*Our principal work is the salvation of souls, and it is going well, very well. Here at the station we regularly have about 500 people who come to the catechetic lessons. They stay here a year and then we have to chase them away to make room for others.*"[vi] Later he also wrote that Congolese children were interested in the mission station: "*To obtain wisdom and knowledge, that is an investment which stays, knowledge to read and write and so many other things and especially to become a Christian.*"[vii] This statement reveals much more about the intentions of the author than of the children. Other missionaries also stated the same motivation: "*It remains noble work, making decent Christians of the black heathen children. That is for a large part the task of the mission Sisters.*"[viii] About the heathens in the bush, in the fifties he wrote: "*Through education and prayer exercises they have more contact with God and they hope to become good Christians*."[ix]

This was not only propaganda language, reserved for publications intended to promote the missionary cause to the general public. Although some things were worded in attractive language, these sorts of statements are representative of what the missionaries thought. The 'pure Christian culture' element played a big role, which, for example, finds great expression in the writings of Gustaaf Hulstaert. When the influence of the proposed curriculum reform of 1938 filtered through into the region, he was thoroughly annoyed. In a letter to the governor general he lamented the fact that the primary schools of the Brothers of the

Christian Schools in Coquilhatville all operated in preparation of secondary education. He was clearly and thoroughly opposed to the proposed 'two track system', under which education had to function both as preparatory and as final education:[x] "*Through the application of your new directives, all the young men from Coq and its surroundings will be isolated because of the broken lives they would lead. Of course, on the one hand you intend an education without any connection with indigenous life which fatally produces semi-intellectuals and classless people; while on the other hand you advocate sending back to the mass of indigenous population, the greater majority of these pupils for whom the education will be completely inappropriate.*" Furthermore, Coquilhatville as a centre had a great influence on the surrounding area and the detrimental consequences would have an impact on the whole region. For Hulstaert, *detribalisation* was one of the primary consequences of the all too 'Europeanising' education. He compared the situation with that of Europe, where urbanisation was ever increasing together with ethical derailment. In the Congo similar developments would now take place: "*The disastrous effects of the system to which I am protesting are not limited to a certain ridiculous pride, to a snobbism of speaking French and copying the European. The danger is more serious; it attacks the foundations of the indigenous society itself: it is a question of life or death for them.*"

Hulstaert was complaining about the general intention of the education. The stimulation of education in and of the French language was an important signal but it was certainly not the only element in the curriculum that was wrong: "*The inappropriateness, the origin of these ills emanates, in my opinion, not solely from the predominant role given to the teaching of French. This is certainly an important element, … It is mainly the orientation and spirit of the education that should be brought into question. It is futile to expect the neutralisation of the damaging effects through a course in agriculture – that the pupils hate because the curriculum and the orientation of education remove them further from it – and to a few other branches of secondary education, without value in their eyes and without any influence on the aim of the utilitarian school. It will not be these few notions of agriculture, a few intuition lessons, no more than the lessons of the catechism etc. that will result in the adjustment of the personal and social life. By its nature the education remains completely oriented towards preparation for a career which the vast majority shall not experience. Consequently, this school will not train man; it will disseminate a superficial erudition, the damaging*

consequences of which are not wholly known."[xi]

This extensive quote shows in the first place how Hulstaert himself reacted to the changes in education. He was certainly not alone in this, as was indicated in the first chapter. The inherent contradiction in the proposed structure must have already been generally known and criticised. Even so, as far as Hulstaert is concerned, this statement is not only a 'technical' or 'educational' critique. He clearly also took a position against 'westernisation' and argued for 'adaptation', adjustment. However, this did not detract from the fact that the Congolese needed to be Christianised. That basic principle remained unaltered. However much Hulstaert considered himself (or was considered) progressive, he was a very conservatively-minded man.[xii] His visions, which probably were partly the result of the training he received during his novitiate, were staunchly anti-modernist. Whenever he spoke about what was good for the Congolese, there was always a clear anti-modern tendency present. This was very clearly apparent in his aversion to city life and his homesickness for the simple country life. Several authors have pointed to the fact that Hulstaert's 'indigenistic' opinions, with those of the MSC, were more anti-western than pro-African.[xiii]

In any case it is clear that indigenism, as a variant of adaptionism, was not essentially different when it came to the religious and moral principles to be learned at school. The following statement by Mgr. Van Goethem shows that Hulstaert was not alone in holding this opinion: "*The natives of Coq, who are developed in the proper sense of the term are rare. The natives in our city are, in general, uprooted, they have turned their backs on their own people, and, with borrowed clothing, follow the whites whom they envy and towards whom they harbour only feelings of revolt. This is an unfortunate situation but not irretrievable. Our natives have not renounced their own people to such an extent that they allow the feeling to develop within them of a revulsion against their own race; they are rather embarrassed of their own because they ignore the beautiful sides of their race and their ambition causes them to follow the white, with whom they want to be an equal but for whom they feel only envy and hate.*"[xiv] The educational agenda of the missionaries immediately followed from this: tradition and attachment to their own descent, order and discipline too. "*Christian life, science, law, industry, cleanliness, medicine, all these emanate from Bamanya*" was declared proudly in the *Annals*.[xv] That the missionaries were considerably proud of the disciplining of young Congolese is also evident from the

contributions that appeared. *"I have always admired you for your regularity and seriousness at the school. How hard this discipline must have been for you, you were used to the wild, free life. And yet you managed to bend and force yourself. 'How is it possible?' outsiders often asked me, when they saw you in line for class. You were chatting and quarrelling, shouting and screaming: the last bell toll struck and immediately all noise stopped and you were motionless, in line like drilled soldiers. That was discipline!"*[xvi] Quotes like these indicate that this was the result desired by the missionaries, to be proudly presented back at home. "*We, who are used to an ordered life, can hardly imagine what the loss of freedom means to these children of nature.*"[xvii] The longing for order returned again and again: "*The Montessori school is housed in a brick building. It is a delight to the eye and the mind to see healthy, spotless, shining children, busy freely and orderly, under the maternal vigilance of their teacher and governess, Mama Imelda*."[xviii] 'Free' and 'orderly' apparently went together without problems here. From the fact that the Sister also reported a, be it 'maternal', control in the same breath, it can be deduced that this order did not come forth spontaneously out of the freedom of the children and that clearly the freedom was limited and defined from above.

The all-seeing, controlling eye of the missionary was essential to safeguard the purity of the products of missionary education. A general aversion to city life and its influence on the Congolese arose with the MSC.[xix] This was not only apparent from the propaganda that was spread but also from the actual policies of the missionaries. Striking examples of both can be found. In one of the 'founding' stories that appeared in the MSC mission periodical in the late twenties, the young protagonist arrives in town, which is described by the author, Father De Knop, as follows: "*Then you went to the city with Father and Mother (Coq), where the black and white people sweat through life side by side. You will admit that the black city is not ideal: such an impossible collection of people, who only have to build a tower of Babel to complete their downfall.* (…) *Thomas, live by prayer and the sacraments, be proud of yourself. Do not consume the rot of the big city.*"[xx] When, in 1927, Hulstaert became director of the mission in Bokote, where industrial plantations of the *Huileries du Congo Belge* (HCB) were settled (Flandria), he made sure the schools were situated at a considerable distance from the company grounds because close proximity would only be detrimental to the education and upbringing of the children.[xxi] The same idea could have been at the basis of the answer he gave the plantation management when asked if

specific lessons could be taught for training fruit pickers. Hulstaert answered that at that time (in 1929) the school was not yet equipped but: *"In fact the project is one of the best and in addition to the benefits for the company, this trade, in the sense you give it, is of such a nature as to keep the natives in their own region*."[xxii] Various developments also need to be linked to the fact that urbanisation was already a known phenomenon during the colonial period.[xxiii] In 1941 Hulstaert wrote in the inspection report on the school in Bamanya: *"The most noticeable thing at the school is the decreasing number of students. Of course the establishment of the school of Mpenjele plays a role; yet in my opinion, this is particularly due to the depopulation of the interior and the attraction of the official school of Coq*."[xxiv]

The rejection of everything urban generally seemed to fit into a sort of nostalgia for 'the good old days', a sentimental mentality in fact. That "*the purity of the Negro*" was only professed in a one-sided way can then be deduced from the fact that not all native customs needed to be respected. A nice example of this is the letter which Hulstaert, still in his role as responsible for the mission of Flandria, wrote to the management of the HBC after he had discovered that on a particular night wild native dances had been performed at the work camp. A Congolese woman, the wife of a native chief who came to be treated for an illness at the mission, had apparently participated in this: *"Now, this woman participated in a dance here in the workers' camp on Sunday in the evening, a new dance for this region which, according to the serious blacks (neither I nor any of our catechists went, in fact we never go into the camp), is obscene, not because of the words sung but because of the attitudes and gestures and movements of the principal dancer. The dance is called Mongodji or Wetsi."* That fact was sufficient to complain, even though he only had heard this from somebody else. *"There were very many people at this first representation. The manager of your district of Flandria was also present, accompanied by his wife. They joined the group of accompanying dancers; the lady carried out the esaka (clapping the hands to accompany the singing and the movements of the principal dancer) and both distributed money*."[xxv]

The reason why this incident certainly had to be reported to the general management of the camp was that the conversion of the native workforces would be endangered by it: *"It is consequently the second evil dance in the workers' camp. This does not in itself concern us as these dances are not carried out in*

public places but because we are already unable to have the required guarantees for the baptism of our catechumens working here in your company, as a result of certain events that occurred previously, in my opinion, the latter aggravates the situation even further."[xxvi] This reasoning fitted the strict rules applicable to the 'catechumenate'. It also indicates how the worldviews clashed, even in the mind of people setting themselves up as defenders of the local population. Van Goethem worded this incompatibility still differently, in his complaint to the governor general about the development of the Congolese in Coquilhatville: "*It is time now to give them their soul, to inspire them to attachment to their environment, to have them appreciate the civility, morality and religiosity of those who gave birth to them. If primary school teaches them all that, they will be enlightened and honest people, better able to understand the white and more capable of helping them.*"[xxvii] The concern for national tradition was thus apparently not the actual foundation of education but was always subordinate to the demands and the needs of the coloniser. In any case, whatever the motivation of those responsible in the field was, the Christian life according to the prescribed rules formed the strong overtone. In an inspection report about the school in Bamanya, Hulstaert wrote: "*The teaching of religious studies is well taken care of. Rev. Brother Director teaches himself in lonkundo, in addition to the lessons by the priests and teachers. Through this he can better help the students to penetrate the great truths and lay the foundation of a proper Christian life*."[xxviii]

Attendance and control of the children

2.1. Attendance

What were the material circumstances, the *real life* context with which the missionaries were confronted in the field? The first assertion which must be made is that it was not compulsory to go to school. It was not the case anywhere in the colony and it elicited the complaint from one missionary that it was difficult work: "*Because here in Congo, where there is not yet any compulsory education law, one is never sure of one's children. Today you have them, tomorrow you don't.*"[xxix] For that matter, this compulsory education would never be introduced. In 1930 the inspection report for the school in Mondombe reported: "*The irregularity in these two divisions of the preparatory education is large, the order and discipline leave much to be desired, absences are numerous, it must be remedied energetically: unjustified absences shall be punished by small but effective punishments, the pupils have the choice of accepting these or*

leaving."[xxx] Reports of similar situations are legion.

Some examples: the MSC established a small school in Mpenjele, a settlement dating from the time of the Trappists, located between Mbandaka and Bikoro. A number of inspection reports are available for the school. In 1935 there was apparently considerable doubt as to the viability of a school in that location because of a lack of children. The inspector further reported: "*Passing through the village* (…) *the Father could find almost no pupils. When questioned, the teaching assistants replied that of the 35 pupils registered in February only 22 remained*."[xxxi] The school was then closed, the report concluded: "*The closure of the school in Mpenjele, an inevitability, was consequently brought forward by 8 months*."[xxxii] Oddly enough it seems a new school was then opened because there is also a report for 1941, which, however, indicates similar problems. It reported that for every class, there were about thirty pupils enrolled on the register, of which more than ten had not attended class for a few months. For the neighbouring Beambo the inspector reported in 1934: "*The next inspection shall have to decide whether it is worth continuing a school amongst such a small population so little interested in the regular functioning of this school*."[xxxiii] In Injole, another village in the area, the Fathers found the school deserted in July because the children had all gone to work with their parents, harvesting copal.[xxxiv] It caused the missionaries great concern because in the mission periodical they also asserted that colonial industry was largely responsible for the absence of the people and the disruption of daily life in the countryside. Paul Jans complained about these situations in 1936:[xxxv] "*If everything goes well, you'll find your people at home. But often you won't. Then they are fishing; spread along the river for weeks and months. Or they are out for copal. And as long as the European war industry or others call for copal and the managers fight over it here – in a few months the prices rose from 0.18 Fr. to 1.25 Fr. a kilo and more, irrespective of the quality – so long will your villages run empty. But not only that, the blacks will lay out no more gardens, there will be no pupils in your schools and the roads and villages will become dirty; their health will continue to be ruined.*"[xxxvi]

Negligence concerning school performance was also reported in Bamanya in the early thirties. The village youth at the missions were in general much more obedient and regular in their school attendance but there was clearly far more difficulty with the children from the surrounding inland villages: "*Of the children*

of the foreign villages, of the tribes of Ngombe and Balumbe, there are still real children of nature, who cannot stand a day on the school benches, especially in the fishing and caterpillar season."[xxxvii] In Mondombe, Vertenten remarked that it was very difficult to get girls into school and subsequently to keep them there, especially in the first years of school.[xxxviii] In Flandria a school was run under the permanent direction of missionaries and there also a relatively steep decline was reported at first. The headmaster (Hulstaert) stated in his reports to the management of the local HCB settlement that no great results had been achieved with regard to the number of pupils. He also mentioned multiple "*désertations*".[xxxix] Even in Coquilhatville the large number of absentees at the girls' school was noticed: *"Everyday a large number are absent. Only about twenty could be said to be regular."*[xl]

Absences continued to be a problem in rural schools in the forties and fifties, as far as can be ascertained from the inspection reports. It remained difficult to induce girls, in particular, to attend school consistently and diligently. The missionaries themselves reported this frequently in their publications. Father Van Gorp explained it as follows in 1953: "*The most obvious, the easiest explanation is this: boys often fight free at home. In the eyes of their parents, who are often egoists, they do not lose so much to see their boys leave them temporarily and go to school. Often the opposite is true: now the boys mostly have to pay their state taxes very early, which is largely an expense for the parents themselves. Boys do not make a lot of money. Girls, in contrast, are looked on far more kindly, better cared for and…better fed. For parents, having daughters means richness, or at least a source of income, which they will exploit as early and as tight-fistedly as possible. Furthermore, providing the daily bread or rather, the daily packet of kwanga (cassava), is almost solely the responsibility of the women*."[xli] The interference from the daily affairs of Congolese families was great and the missionaries could not control this easily. In a letter about the condition of the schools in Bamanya in 1947, it was observed that the attendance of girls at primary school left much to be desired, "*And* (that, JB) *will not improve unless either the Mission or the State intervenes in one way or another.*"[xlii] One of the consequences, as was suggested, was the fact that during the 'fishing season' all the girls systematically absented. In 1954 in Wafanya it was also stated that it was very difficult to get the girls to come to school. In Coquilhatville, on the other hand, there was clearly a different development. Education boomed there in the fifties, both for girls and boys. Father De Gols, who was parish priest of the

‘black’ district of Coquilhatville, remarked in an interview in the mission paper that it was striking that girls, who had previously not or only reluctantly come to school, now also seemed ‘gripped by general eagerness to learn’.[xliii]

2.2. In the bush

It is important to realise that the general context in which education took place was very different depending on whether one was in Coquilhatville, in a mission post or in a village in the bush. From the internal reports of the MSC it is apparent that by the mid-thirties, the missionaries were showing a great deal of activity, and that they tried fairly actively to involve the Congolese population in Christian community life as the missionaries imagined it. In the report to his superiors in Rome, Van Goethem naturally did his best to emphasise as much as possible the dedication of his troops. In 1934 he reported the establishment of a new parish, the construction of a printing office, primarily to facilitate evangelisation and the publication of schoolbooks. Active work for the Congolese was done through the *Cercle Excelsior*, a kind of club centre which functioned as the starting point for all kinds of social activities like football, cinema, French lessons, bookkeeping and of course also religious *conférences* and *retraites*. As far as the situation in the interior was concerned, however, Van Goethem painted a very different picture. He based his commentary on the reports from his missionaries, who travelled around their assigned territory several times a year. The image sketched in the reports is very heterogeneous. In certain areas there was good contact between the local population and the missions, in other areas there was a strong influence from the Protestant missionaries or there was just less willingness on the part of the people to consort with the MSC. Many areas were plagued by high mortality rates, caused, according to Van Goethem, by venereal diseases. The colonial government imposed considerable burdens: copal needed to be found, the roads needed to be maintained and new roads needed to be laid.

It was apparent from the report that evangelisation and education were at that time strongly interrelated. The chapter devoted to evangelisation is by far the largest, which of course is not illogical, considering the destination of the report. And yet the chapter mentions education almost as much as in its own chapter “*enseignement*“. Most travelling Fathers inspected schools during their tours through the hinterland of the mission posts. Among other things, it was reported that Jean Cortebeeck, who was responsible for the region of Mondombe, supplied

all the catechists with blackboards, chalk, slates and slate pencils. The majority of the catechists also functioned as teachers but had to make do without school buildings and with inadequate equipment.[xliv] In other places, the teaching was considered not good enough. Also in this report, it was determined that school attendance was not regular enough.[xlv]

The report by Mgr. Van Goethem, which is quoted here, is an important source because it is one of the few documents that offer a more detailed view of the condition of rural schools. The report contains a memorandum, requested by the Bishop and written by Father Paul Trigalet, who worked in the area around Flandria. From this it is also apparent that the school is considered the most important aid for evangelisation – in a two-fold way. Firstly, the school was the proverbial carrot ("*l'appât*") through which children were enticed into the Kingdom of God. The fact that the catechists could act as wise men in the school context raised their prestige, which also had an impact on the success of evangelisation. Trigalet further described, in a somewhat cryptic way, how the establishment of rural schools was handled. They started with the training of a number of *moniteurs [teaching assistants]* at the mission post of Flandria. A number of boys, who had been taught for some years at the central mission post, were chosen to go and teach in the mission schools themselves, "*under the vigilant eye of an older catechist*".[xlvi] That last addition indicates that in many cases very young people were involved, both concerning the catechists as well as the prospective *moniteurs*. It had to be ensured that there was a minimal question of authority between catechist and *moniteur*, which was of course easier if there was an age difference. Indeed, most new teachers came straight from primary school.

At school, age was always a relative concept in itself. There were not really any rules in this regard. Young and old often sat beside one another: "*A father sits beside his son, married men next to boys of thirteen or fourteen years old.*"[xlvii] In an inspection report of 1930 about the Mondombe school, Vertenten stated that: "*Due to the considerable differences between the pupils, their large number, considering the rooms available and the shortage of the teaching assistants we have made five divisions*."[xlviii] This was also the case in the rural school of Beambo: "*In addition we have noted an excessive difference in age. Some children are truly too young*."[xlix] Elsewhere it was said that: "*The pupils are a little eclectic, there are some very young pupils and others that almost appear too*

old to me; hence the considerable difficulty for the teacher."[l] After all, it was often difficult to determine the exact age of the children. When the education administration tried to set age limits for entrance to the school at the beginning of the 1950s this met with a lack of understanding by the MSC. In Flanders Frans Maes even developed a method for determining the children's age in a 'scientifically responsible' way. This method calculated age using observation and comparison of the builds of a large number of pupils. He wrote a 'scientific' article on this in the *Annalen.* In a report on his school in 1954 he gave a table showing the average height per class. He stated that he had been trying to get the oldest pupils out of the classes since 1948 but that he could not discover their age and so he made the selection based on how tall they were[li]

When it came to actually founding rural schools Trigalet clearly had more difficulty giving correct and exact information, even though Van Goethem introduced his memorandum with this purpose. In the first instance he referred back to the vicariate's *rapports annuels.* Apparently, a few things had gone wrong after an encouraging start. The reasons he gave for the problems with rural schools could be explained for the most part by a lack of control. It can be suspected that there is another reality hidden behind these words. Trigalet lifted up a corner of the veil in his concluding remarks, in which he spoke of the advantages and disadvantages of the reform of the rural schools as provided for by Van Goethem. The bishop wanted to close a number of small bush schools and so strengthen the existing schools and also give them a complete curriculum, conforming to the guidelines of the *Brochure Jaune*. Trigalet pointed out that this solution would indeed require less manpower and increase control. On top of this less pay would have to be spent on the *moniteurs.* However, opposed to this there was the fact that larger buildings would need to be erected and that the food transports for the children would be problematic: "*Regular contributions should be expected from them* (the pupils, JB), *we have not achieved that yet. Regular attendance cannot be obtained except through making the pupils pay and – let us say – manu militari. I am talking from experience*."[lii] It points to the fact that at that moment there was quite a bit of resistance in the interior to what the missionaries desired from the local population.

Trigalet also blamed the lack of success of the Bush schools on the Congolese themselves: "*Fundamentally we have achieved that which we could have expected from the black left to himself. Except for very rare exceptions, the majority were*

not capable of working seriously, moved by zeal, love of work or noble ambition. These sub-causes were burdened by a lack of supervision."[liii] Another good example in this context is an incident discussed in the 1950 *Annalen.* A travelling priest arrived in a remote *chefferie*, found the school in total silence, and concluded: "*The teaching assistant is up to date with everything: the class register, the list of absences and attendance has already been filled in two weeks in advance*." In the same article the author further concluded that in the village schools it was usually the teacher who gave the example of "*haagschool houden*" [=playing truant].[liv] The sanction considered in such a case was to transfer the teaching assistant in question to another post, where it would be easier to keep an eye on him. This again tells us more about the way the missionaries experienced things than about the real motives of the Congolese. Nevertheless, it looks very much like a reaction against an overly imposed way of life in general. School attendance was a part of that. The missionaries interpreted a negative reaction or even hesitation to embrace this way of life on the part of the Congolese as an intrinsic weakness on their part. This caused an even greater tendency towards 'education' and/or control. What made the difference between the mission post and the rural schools was, of course, the fact that there were by definition always one or more missionaries present who exercised direct control over the teaching assistants and the students and organised the daily time schedule of both groups. This time schedule will be considered later in more detail.

2.3. Escape from the country/urbanisation

Besides this external control element there was another, broader phenomenon in which the absence at school was situated, namely urbanisation. The question arises whether this was caused by a dislike of the missionaries and schools in the mission posts or from a (Congolese) desire for the city. Another possible reason could be the difference between the congregations in the city and in the country. This should be placed in the context of the differences in opinion between the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Brothers of the Christian Schools. There was certainly a great appeal to city life, probably for the same reasons the MSC judged and disapproved of it. These reasons can be summarised under the headings 'opportunities' and 'social promotion'. The Brothers must have started from a fundamentally different attitude since they had a far more neutral stance towards the city. Apart from this they also took a much more neutral stance to the educational landscape *in globo* as a consequence of the fact that they always

worked ‘as subcontractors’, be it for the state (in official schools), or for other congregations such as the MSC.[lv]

Van Goethem already stated in a letter to the provincial governor that a lot of children dropped out of the mission school and then appeared to be attending school in Coquilhatville without the local missionaries knowledge. In itself this already shows that the MSC, and probably the missionaries in general, took on a rather controlling attitude to their students. In the letter cited, Van Goethem suggests that he wanted to put up a strong fight against the phenomenon. He felt that people had given the governor the wrong impression that it was the missionaries who sent the children to the city. “*If this had been the case, we would have been wrong to express our wish to the Government of keeping the indigenous pupils in their natural environment and our desire to allow pupils from the interior to attend courses at the central school of the mission serving their place of origin*.”[lvi] This clearly shows that it was the MSC who, from their intrinsic motivation, wanted to keep the youth in the villages. Rules were created and agreements were made in that respect between urban schools and rural schools.

This also closely fitted with the general restriction on free movement that was in force for all the Congolese. For example, Van Goethem wondered in the same letter how it was possible that the children concerned had all acquired a domicile and consequently residency right in the city. In his opinion it certainly meant that one of the admission rules of the *Groupe Scolaire* was not applied strictly, specifically the requirement that the parents had to live in the *cité indigène*. As a matter of fact, a lot of effort was put into keeping children out of the city. From a letter of October 1942, from the head of the *Groupe Scolaire*, it is apparent that all possible administrative weapons were implemented. He listed the documents a pupil had to submit in order to be accepted: “*1. the identity documents of their parents; 2. their own if they are old enough to have them; 3. their medical card; 4. the transfer permit, issued by the administrator of the region from which they are coming, 5. the residence permit from the CEC or the Coquilhatville region; 6. the personal certificates and letters of recommendation from R. Fathers of the mission and the school from which they come.”* The letter was a reply to a letter from the governor, who had apparently asked the director to indicate how the admission could be more strictly monitored: “*What should be done to strengthen the decisions taken? In my humble opinion it does not appear possible to mend*

the holes in the net that prohibits access to the Groupe Scolaire to children from the hinterland who want to pursue their studies unless each presenting pupil must provide a certificate from the missionary authority of the place of origin or of Coq/belge stating that the parents of the interested party (either father or mother) are resident in Coquilhatville for supervising and caring for them."[lvii] There were three enclosures with the letter with overviews of pupils, their place of origin and the person who send them to the city. The writer concluded with the following statement, which unmistakably represented how he felt about this avalanche of ceremonies: "*Finally, in order to reply to your wish for numeric accuracy, I have drawn up the attached table, Appendix II. I hope it is to your satisfaction.*"

A letter from Hulstaert from 1943 summarises the entire situation well. In the letter, sent to the Brother Director of the school in Coquilhatville, he said: "*With regard to the acceptance of pupils to the Brothers' school in Coq, rules have been established by the government. The principle is: no boys are accepted from the interior; only those whose parents (father or mother) live in Coq may attend lessons there. However, a few exception are allowed; e.g. for boys who were sent by the Fathers or by the regional manager, as well as a few special cases.*" That keeping pupils in their own region was truly considered a rule to be complied with is apparent from the following statement from the same letter: "*Sometimes pupils are sent by the Fathers. It is not possible to cut off the path to the official school for all pupils from the country. However, the necessary leave is rarely given. However, if it is considered useful to grant such leave, the following precautions must be taken: 1. One ensures that the boy has permission from his own parents. 2. The pupil is given a personal, individual letter addressed to the Br. Director of the Groupe Scolaire, in which a request is made for the acceptance of the pupil. 3. The pupil is given the certificate of primary school education completed (the boys must initially attend the school at the post that runs in their region); and add the necessary information concerning their behaviour, character, etc. As well as: the place of origin, the parents (and their current residence). The pupils must also have their certificate of baptism with them and everything must be in order with the Regional manager and Medical Department. 4. One will ensure that only good students will be sent. 5. Account will particularly be taken of the fact that the pupils in Coq will enter a very dangerous environment; that they must consequently be well trained to be able to face the risks with sufficient confidence, risks both to their Christian life and to the knowledge that was given*

to them at school; this knowledge presupposes a thorough intellectual training to be accepted without damage. The Fathers must be held personally liable before God and only allow those to go that they judge in conscience to be capable of entering into the danger."[lviii]

Naturally, it was easier to have this type of control on children at the mission post, in the presence of the missionaries, but it was often hard to maintain with regard to children from the bush. Hulstaert concluded that himself in the letter cited here. Yet the missionaries also tried to monitor the activities of children attending school in the village schools. Not only reports were given, the teaching assistants or *moniteurs* were also expected to keep the register (appèl list), and a class diary if possible. These were then inspected by the travelling Father on duty, who tried to make a trip to the interior every few months and to visit as many schools as possible, of which a report could then be submitted to the mission superiors. In principle the missionary inspector (one per religious description) had to draw up an inspection report and pass it on to the state inspectors. In the case of the MSC these missionary inspectors were Vertenten (1928-1936) and Hulstaert (1936-1946), Cobbaut (1947-1950)[lix] and Moentjens (1950-1959). Moentjens said in an interview that it was in fact impossible to inspect the entire region himself: "*– Father Gaston, I think that you must have a lot of work to be able to inspect all those schools! – If those 364 classrooms were together on a few square metres (…) but the Vicariate is immensely large with an area 4.5 times that of Belgium. To reach the mission post Wafanya on the Momboyo river I have to travel around 600 km on a river boat that moves at 5 km per hour.*"[lx]

However there are also a lot of other reports in the archives, drawn up by the school heads themselves or by the so-called travelling Fathers. For example Father Pattheeuws, who wrote stories about his travels in the interior in expressive terms in the mission periodical: "*I pretend I allow myself to be convinced by those promises. It would be a great pity for the village if I have to close the school (oh certainly, Fafa). I show him Rosalie with her big eye (*his motorbike, JB), *which will in future come through the villages at great speed to see where the lofundo mongo are, the Christian ones, and the children or the teaching assistant or all of them at once. I add that I will come and test the boys soon. You may be certain that they will cram hard from today and tomorrow and repeat everything the entire day to perform well at the competition. Although*

those promises don't mean much, that has at least been gained."[lxi] Usually there was a travelling Father for each central mission post. He could also report on specific posts. This created an entire chain of information. One example of this are the reports of Jos Moeyens, travelling Father at the Bamanya post, who reported to the superior, Paul Jans, who sent the reports on to the missionary inspector Vertenten, who, as already mentioned, had to report to the state inspection.

Further education

3.1. Who was allowed to go to Bamanya?

It is clear that a rather restrictive policy was also enforced with regard to the training of *teaching assistants.* From the correspondence of the Fathers in the interior with the Father rector of Bamanya it appears that there was an explicit request to send as few people as possible from the interior to the teaching assistant training there.[lxii] The local missionary in Mondombe apologised profusely in 1948 when he sent a number of his pupils to Bamanya for the teacher training college: *"I hope you will excuse me for sending a few more than the quota allocated to me because there is hardly anyone from Mondombe in Bamanya and because I did not send any last year.*"[lxiii] From Bokela a similar quotation: "*Dear Father Wouters, I received your letter of 2/11/47 concerning the limitation of children a few days ago. Bokela will probably send 3 new pupils to you. We have no certified teachers in our region. Those from the south will not come here or do not stay: especially when they see that they will be employed elsewhere anyway when they leave here. The Sister in the school would still like a certified teacher for the highest class. I am talking of 3 here but one may drop out as happened last year*."[lxiv]

Innumerable extracts may be found in the Aequatoria of what must have been an impressive correspondence, solely concerning sending pupils from the various mission posts in the interior to the mission post of Bamanya, with a view to further studies at the teacher training college. It was a fixed custom that pupils had to be recommended for this by the local supervisor. Consequently, careful attention was paid to the pupils' points, their character and whether they were suited in the missionaries' opinion to achieve anything. That the *Groupe Scolaire* in Coquilhatville increasingly became a reinforced stronghold as the years went by, has already been shown. But there was also considerable selection in progress at the teacher training college in Bamanya. In any event the missionaries

corresponded extensively in that regard. The pupils were put on the boat, which then took them to Bamanya over the Congo river and with which the supervising Father gave a short note with the pupils concerned, in the style of *"Imbonga 30-1-48. Reverend Father Rector, Nkolongo Jean, originating from Bolukowafumba (?) will be coming as a pupil (new) to the Bamanya teacher training college. He has the prescribed 100 frs. for purchasing the mosquito net."* Or: *"Bokela 6-1-1948. Dear Father Rector. I have sent 3 good pupils for the teacher training college. We need teachers here. I hope you will be satisfied with them."*[lxv] Sometimes the accompanying reference was a little more extensive and some Fathers used the opportunity to write about the young people being sent, like Hulstaert in the following example:

Beste P. Jans,

Theresita onverwachts hier en lijk altijd ongeduldig om te vertrekken. Hierbij de jongens terug: we voorzien geen andere gelegenheid later. Dus ...
Bolongo Jos nog niet terug van huis.
De nieuwe:
[4 namen]
4 kristenen
[4 namen]
4 catechisten reeds op school vanaf oktober '29, behalve Nsinga reeds vanaf '28.
Lokose en Kolongo hebben 't 3' jaar begonnen.
De anderen hebben 1' jaar af en zijn nu in 2'. Ons schooljaar begint na OLV Hemelvaart (lijk in België)
Over karakter etc. zult u zelf wel gauw ingelicht zijn.
Lokosa is nog al een schterbakse.
Basoso is wat raw, maar rechtdoor. Maakt graag plezier, maar is ne schat van ne vent.
Ik maak er een eind aan. Geen tijd meer. Hoop dat ze 't goed zullen stellen en u erover tevreden zult zijn. Er zijn hier niet veel liefhebbers voor Bamanta!
Vele groeten van Marcel.

Hartelijk gegroet,
Gustaaf Hulstaert.

[Dear P. Jans,

Theresita unexpectedly here and as always impatient to leave. Here are the boys back again: no later opportunity is expected. So...
Bolongo Jos is still not back from home.
The new ones:
[4 names]
4 Christians
[4 names]
4 catechists already at school since October '29, except Nsinga already from '28.
Lokose and Kolongo started the 3rd year.
The others have completed the first year and are now in the second. Our academic year starts after Assumption (as in Belgium)
Concerning character etc. you will yourself quickly draw a conclusion.
Lokosa is rather sly.
Basoso is rather coarse but straight. Likes to have fun but is a wonderful guy.
I will finish here as I am out of time. I hope they will do well and that you will be satisfied with them. There are not many enthusiasts for Bamanya here!
Give my regards to Marcel.

Yours sincerely,
Gustaaf Hulstaert]

Extract 1 – Example of an accompanying reference letter when 'sending' new pupils to Bamanya. Source: Aequatoria Archives.

Theresita onverwachts hier en lijk altijd ongeduldig om te vertrekken. Hierbij de jongens terug: we voorzien geen andere gelegenheid later. Dus …
Bolongo Jos nog niet terug van huis.
De nieuwe:
[4 namen]
4 kristenen
[4 namen]
4 catechisten reeds op school vanaf oktober '29, behalve Nsinga reeds vanaf '28.

Lokose en Kolongo hebben 't 3e jaar begonnen. De anderen hebben 1e jaar af en zijn nu in 2e. Ons schooljaar begint na OLV Hemelvaart (lijk in België)
Over karakter etc. zult u zelf wel gauw ingelicht zijn. Lokosa is nog al een

achterbakse. Baosso is wat ruw, maar rechtdoor. Maakt graag plezier, maar is ne schat van ne vent.
Ik maak er een eind aan. Geen tijd meer. Hoop dat ze 't goed zullen stellen en u erover tevreden zult zijn. Er zijn hier niet veel liefhebbers voor Bamania!
Vele groeten aan Marcel.

Hartelijk gegroet, Gustaaf Hulstaert.

[Dear P. Jans,
Theresita unexpectedly here and as always impatient to leave. Here are the boys back again: no later opportunity is expected. So…
Bolongo Jos is still not back from home.
The new ones:
[4 names]
4 Christians
[4 names]
4 catechists already at school since October '29, except Nsinga already from '28.

Lokose and Kolongo started the 3rd year. The others have completed the first year and are now in the second. Our academic year starts after Assumption (as in Belgium). Concerning character etc. you will yourself quickly draw a conclusion. Lokosa is rather sly. Baosso is rather coarse but straight. Likes to have fun but is a wonderful guy.
I will finish here as I am out of time. I hope they will do well and that you will be satisfied with them. There are not many enthusiasts for Bamanya here!
Give my regards to Marcel.

Yours sincerely,
Gustaaf Hulstaert]

Extract 1 – Example of an accompanying reference letter when 'sending' new pupils to Bamanya. Source: Aequatoria Archives.

It is apparent from these letters that the directors of the teacher training college in Bamanya implemented a more reticent policy with regard to accepting new pupils. They probably wanted to avoid too many students starting the studies at once and thought that the infrastructure would not be capable of coping with the number of interested parties. In any event, administrative steps were also taken to allow the transition to Bamanya (and the same was true *a fortiori* for the large

city Coquilhatville) to proceed smoothly. The pupils sent were not only given an accompanying reference from the Fathers, but also had to be able to prove to the government authority why they were moving from one place to another. They were given a special pass for this.

In the vast majority of cases the intention was that the pupils would return to their village of origin after completing their studies at the teacher training college. Hulstaert was a strong supporter of that principle and not loathe to admit it: *"I have a few boys at school here who would like to become teachers. Could I send them to you and when? I trust your promise that those boys will later return here. You probably are thinking: chapel mentality. Of course but if you do not care for your own chapel, not much can be expected from others. Insofar as this should be believed – if you do not provide support it will cave in and ultimately who has to cope with the trouble then?*"[lxvi]

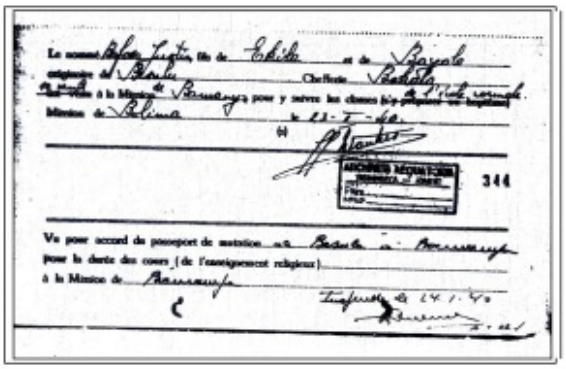


Image 1 – "Passeport de mutation", a special pass for moving from one place to another. From the Aequatoria Archives.

The students for the teacher training college could also return home sooner. They were assessed on their behaviour and attitude while at school. If they did not fulfil the expectations or went too far in the missionaries' opinion, they were sent back. A lot of testimonies can also be found in that regard. The missionaries interfered extensively in the lives of their students. A lot of letters consequently also consider the behaviour, and more particularly the social life, of the young students. That correspondence between the Fathers also shows clearly that morality did weigh heavily in practice. Everyday life was saturated with a number of moral rules and principles which everyone had internalized well. Being good

and avoiding gossip were the clearest expressions of this. Again from Hulstaert: *"On the issue of little Bakutu, I have already written to you that I believe there is no question of searching for Loisa Bokeo's sister. He has an eye on a girl here, although Antoine Esale had advised him to take that Bokeo. I believe that it is more an issue of going eating there in the family. But of course that does not mean that it might not be a good thing to prohibit him from going there; and I will also write to him in that regard, even if just to avoid gossip.*"[lxvii]

3.2. Practical examples

However it is clear from the following story that took place in 1931 that things did not always go to plan for the missionaries. One of the students, Jean Itoko, was apparently shown the door by Father Jans, but did not want to return to his village. After a few failed attempts to get him on board of one of the riverboats to send him back to his village, the man went underground, apparently in the premises of the provincial medical department, where he got in as a member of the workforce via friends or relatives. The Fathers talked to the provincial doctor (Strada) and one of the officers of the department (Verfaillie). Jans sent a letter to Verfaillie. He answered Jans: *"Very Reverend Father Paul, the man Itoko Jean came to the office this morning. As the Provincial Doctor has informed me that he has to be returned to you and that he did not leave on board of the Theresita, I will return him for all useful ends.*"[lxviii]

The person involved tried to explain his case himself in a letter, written in the school French he had learned: *"Mr Director, Mr A.V. I would like to take advantage of my time today to ask you whether I could return to my work? I am asking this because I have not left for the village. I told the Father at Bamanya that I would not return to my village without a diploma because if I return I would be disgraced. I do not want to leave, I want to continue my studies with the Doctor. And also he told me 'as you want, my child'. Now I am asking you whether it is possible to continue. I remain yours faithfully, Your servant, Jean Ikolo.*"[lxix]

On 10 October Jans sent a letter to the district director, Requile. He explicitly appealed to his competence in tracing Itoko and ensuring that he returned to his village of origin. Even if the person concerned was against it, the Fathers used every means at their disposal to make him do what they thought he should do. Jans played on the feelings of (in)security of the territorial official: *"The boy does not want to return to his home at any cost. On the other hand, we have been informed that in order to make him complete his studies, we are morally obliged*

*to return him to his home where he belongs. But having no means of coercion for this (*sic) *I would like to ask your assistance, convinced that you would not in any way wish to see the number of unemployed people increase in the Belge*."[lxx]
The reply took some time, apparently Itoko had truly succeeded in hiding well. On 2 December, Jans wrote again to the director to make his further action clear: he had somehow managed to get an acquaintance of Itoko to report him to the police. The wording in the letter made it apparent that this type of intervention was not unusual: "*Mr director, I have the honour of sending the said … Joseph, with whom, according to your statement, the said Itoko Jean is lodging. I would remind you that this same Itoko Jean, a former pupil at Bamanya, was the subject of one of my previous letters in which I requested he be forcefully repatriated, the boy having had to be expelled from the school and originally coming from the territory of Bokote. Since that date I have not seen the concerned person again. It may be that … Joseph may be able to give you more detailed information about the location where he is hiding or the person with whom he is working.*"[lxxi] On that same day the addressee wrote his reply to Jans. Itoko Jean was found in the *Belge,* the interior district of Coquilhatville. He was immediately brought before the magistrates' court and judged. After two months the missionaries had managed to find the recalcitrant student and got their own back. The student was punished with imprisonment and a large fine and was obliged to return home.[lxxii] The reasons he gave apparently did not convince anyone. The example indicates that there was a case of 'transgressive cooperation' in the sense of good contacts between the missionaries on the one hand and the government departments on the other.[lxxiii]

The strange thing is that the missionaries reacted very differently in the opposite case in which a person refused to continue his studies. They left the matter alone or at least were not so worried about it: *"I would also like to inform you that A. LIANJA and NKOI do not want to return to Bamanya: they have given the excuse that they become ill there and receive injuries and they then do not have anyone from the family to help them. As they no longer want to go, there is little more that can be done. I received the message from Bokuma that boys would be coming here who have also left Bamanya, and they have also come: the reason given: their family no longer wants them to go to Bamanya. Consequently, I have registered them here for the time being, they are ISENGE Antoine and BONGANDA Jos.*"[lxxiv] Naturally, it did fit the general tendency of Hulstaert to keep young people in the villages. In 1929 he again wrote to Jans: "*it is sincerely*

true that we need good teaching assistants everywhere, we even more than others, as the inspection proved. Moreover, this has been known for a long time. I do not doubt the matter at all. But firstly may I encourage boys to go to Bamanya? Does that not constitute acting against the work of this school here, for which we are also ex-justitia responsible?" [lxxv]

Father De Knop reacted in a similar way in a similar situation: "*While the boys are on holiday, we are obliged to give you some bad news about Bonsenge Maurits. He used to be a fantastic student; last year he had a distinction. At the beginning of this academic year he was also very good and had the best results, was at the front of the class. That has gradually declined and he is now at the tail end, although he is still satisfactory. Something must be wrong with that boy; and we suspect – we will just say it frankly then you will know what the matter is – serious moral errors. There is also the greatest risk that he will not come through it and even that he would have to be sent on. Would it not be more desirable in that case for him to stay at home? As long as he is still satisfactory for his studies and he has not been blamed for any specific lack of morality we do not want to oblige him to stay at home. We would like to leave the decision up to your good judgement.*"[lxxvi]

statistics for the school year 1932	Fathers	Brothers	Sisters	Teaching assistants
Coquilhatville	1	4	3	6
Bamanya	1	4	3	9
Bokuma	2		2	5
Flandria HCB	2	1		7
Flandria mission	1		2	2
Wafanya	1		1	3
Bokote	1		3	5
Boende	1		4	2
Moandombe	1		2	2
Total	11	9	20	41

Table 1 – Statistics of teaching staff at the vicariate of Coquilhatville 1932.

The position of teachers

Reference has already been made to the Congolese teachers. It is clear that the education system of the missionaries relied on their dedication and work. One of the witnesses interviewed in the framework of this research said: "*If a pupil had not understood something after the class, he needed information. If this was not from his friends, it would be from the teaching assistant, who lived in the district. He would be accessible for this type of demand. And in their absence, from the Sister? No!*"[lxxvii] It is difficult to assess the quantitative proportion of the

moniteurs in colonial education correctly. Nevertheless, it may be stated on the basis of the available data that they bore the greater part of the actual workload. Just to cite one telling example: according to the statistics of the MSC themselves there were 3883 pupils at school in the vicariate Coquilhatville, in 1932, at the various mission posts (account must be taken of the fact that very little information can be found on rural schools in the statistics concerned, it may nevertheless be assumed that this more or less relates to an overview of those places where the various congregations were effectively present). Apparently, the staff of these schools consisted for 50% of Congolese teachers, as is shown from the following excerpt from those statistics.[lxxviii] That was the situation at a time that the actual educational organisation had just been established, the first educational curriculum had only been announced three years previously.

4.1. Kolokote

Which position did the *moniteurs* and *monitrices* hold? How did they see their position? How were they seen by the missionaries? It will have become clear in the meantime: what was true for the pupils and students was also true for the Congolese teachers. The missionaries kept an eye on them. Reference has already been made in this chapter to descriptions of inspections and the attitude towards the teacher in the small bush schools, far from the central mission post. Reference has also already been made to the lack of direct testimonies. Consequently, the case of the teaching assistant Pierre Kolokoto, whose correspondence with the missionaries in French has been preserved, is extremely rare. Kolokoto was a teaching assistant in a small bush school in Beambo. A few letters of his have been copied in the 'Scholen' Fund of the Aequatoria archives. These are interesting material because they may contribute to giving an image of the position of a person who acted as a link between the missionaries and the children. For these reasons I thought it worth citing the five letters as faithfully as possible.[lxxix]

The letters were all written in the period between October 1935 and February 1936. In essence they relate to a dispute involving the *moniteur*, the village catechist and the missionaries. The dispute centred on the relationship and particularly the cohabitation of the teacher with a girl from the village. That was not tolerated by the catechist, which caused problems in the village community and towards the MSC. The teacher repeatedly wrote to Father Vertenten, whom he probably knew from his visit as the travelling Father and inspector. He wanted

to pay the dowry for his betrothed as quickly as possible because then he would also be allowed to cohabit with her in accordance with the principles in force then. However, the dowry was much too expensive for him. He consequently asked the missionaries if they would grant him a loan. Vertenten asked for advice from Mgr. Van Goethem. The missionary's interpretation can be seen clearly in his letter. The *moniteur* had "*caused public scandal*". The hierarchical relationships were clearly sketched in the letter. Kolokote had not obeyed either the catechist or Vertenten himself. The school for which the *moniteur* was responsible did not attract many pupils and their number was apparently decreasing too much for the Father's liking because he would not pay his wage and threatened to close the school. That the missionaries sometimes had to calculate very carefully is also clear from the fact that Vertenten remarked in his letter that he still hoped to be able to obtain subsidies for the last school year. He finally asked Van Goethem whether he should dismiss the *moniteur* or allow him to stay, which would then probably cost the missionaries the payment of the *dot*.[lxxx] "*Mgr. replied*", is stated rather laconically at the bottom of the letter: "*Continue to employ him but do not give an advance loan.*"[lxxxi]

This correspondence is an illustration of the balance of powers in the villages. There was clearly a distinction between catechists and *moniteurs*, even if an attempt was sometimes made to have the two go together, as already shown for Flandria. It is clear from the letters that the moniteur had a difficult time due to the fact that the catechist did not approve of his love life. As is apparent from Vertenten's reaction, the missionaries initially accepted the catechist's judgement. Stéphane Boale also stated that the teacher was conscious of the fact that there was a person in the vicinity who kept an eye on him. If that was not a missionary, Father or Sister, then it was the catechist, under whose authority he fell, "(…) *despite the fact that he was educated, a man who knew many things*. (…) *If that happened to a moniteur, who did not obey the rules, who hit children and punished them badly, he would be given a bad report from the catechist who operated as a supervisor. He would be subject to a warning, and he would have money docked*."[lxxxii] In any event that seems to correspond well with the case referred to in the letters cited and the approach apparent from it.

4.2. Professional status and wage

It has already been shown from the above that the moniteur was generally in a subordinate position to the missionaries, at least in his or her professional

situation. Concretely, the MSC concluded an agreement with the *moniteurs* which stipulated that these were bound to work for the missionaries for three years. These contracts also stipulated that, in addition to the cases explicitly legislated, *"the prefecture reserves the right to terminate this contract under the following conditions:*
– due to any court judgement whatsoever;
– due to inability as a result of serious illness or prolonged infirmity;
– due to notable inability, laziness, intemperance or insubordination."[lxxxiii]

The contract was not the first engagement that the *moniteur* had to undertake to the missionaries. Already at the commencement of studies the new student had to sign a contract with the school in which he or she undertook to complete the studies and to remain at the mission until completion of the studies.[lxxxiv] Moreover, it is striking how the MSC explicitly appeal to state authority in this model contract. The question is whether the sanctions stipulated in the event of a breach of contract were truly imposed by the State. This indicates that it was necessary for the missionaries to keep this type of big stick available, probably because forcing compensation to be paid for contractual damage was not efficient enough. In the example of the Jean Itoko case it is clearly apparent that the missions were themselves powerless in the face of a pupil who ran away but they could appeal to the cooperation of the colonial upholders of order without any problems.

Je, Bertin Ngoi, soussigné,
fils de Gregorie Ngoi et de …
originaire de Bongilambengi,
Chefferie des Waya,
Territoire des Ekonda,
demeurant actuellement à Flandria,
déclare vouloir suivre les cours de l'Ecole normale Libre de Bamania-Mission,
et m'engage à y rester jusque après obtention du diplôme de sortie.
Je déclare savoir que le présent contrat est protégé par l'Etat, qui peut me forcer de l'exécuter et n'admet la rupture dudit contrat que pour des raisons de santé, d'incapacité ou d'indignité, établies par les personnes, préposées à la Direction de ladite Ecole Normale Libre de Bamania.

Fait à Flandria, le 3 février 1930.
L'élève de l'école normale libre,

Bertin Ngoi.

I, Bertin Ngoi, the undersigned,
Son of Gregorie Ngoi and …
Originating from Bongilambengi,
Chefferie des Waya,
Territoire des Ekonda,
Currently resident in Flandria,

declare my intention to attend courses at the independent teacher training college at Bamanya Mission,
and I undertake to remain there until I have obtained the final diploma.
I declare that I am aware that this contract is protected by the State, which may force me to fulfil it and does not admit any breach of the said contract except on grounds of health, inability or unsuitability, established by persons appointed by the Direction of the said Independent Teacher Training College of Bamanya.

Drawn up in Flandria, on 3 February 1930.
The pupil of the independent teacher training college,

Bertin Ngoi.
Extract 2 – Example of an undertaking that the pupils had to enter into with the missionaries. From Aequatoria Archives.

The position of the native staff was in general subject to the decree of 16 March 1922 (*decree relating to employment contracts)* that regulated the employment contracts between "*travailleurs indigènes*" and "*maîtres civilisés*".[lxxxv] That decree also established that wages could be docked (*"implement fines")* in the event of infringements of the working discipline. That right was also often effectively used by the missionaries. This was also expressed in the correspondence cited concerning Pierre Kolokote. In the letter Vertenten wrote in that regard to Van Goethem, he wondered: *"Is a penalty of 70 fr. enough? Or should we close the school and not employ him for the moment?*"[lxxxvi]

There is not very much general information available relating to the remuneration of the *moniteurs*. This was only considered insofar as it constituted a part of (or contributed to) the social position of the moniteurs. A few indications can be found of this. The subsidies for teaching staff were listed in a document from 1936, implemented by the Daughters of the Precious Blood who were active in

three mission posts at that time. It gives an idea of the relationship between the missionaries and the native teachers. An annual salary of 5 000 francs was provided for a European teacher, 600 francs for a *moniteur* or *monitrice*. Naturally, this relates to subsidies and not wages. From the correspondence with Pierre Kolokoto (from 1935), cited above, it may be deduced that a teacher's wage could indeed amount to 70 francs a month. Naturally these things related to seniority. Moreover, the 1929 curriculum did not provide for any minimum wages but only regulated the subsidies for the missionaries. In 1948 Cobbaut, who was an inspector at that time, informed the Father rectors at the mission posts of new salary scales for the *moniteurs*: "*Some rectors, seeing that the previous salary scales were truly too low, have already increased them themselves; of which I approve. We must attempt to keep our moniteurs as long as possible for the correct running of the school but as a result we must also provide them with a worthy wage*."[lxxxvii] In any event a distinction was made between certified and non-certified teachers. The basis salary of a certified teacher was 40% higher than that of a non-certified teacher (350 compared to 250 francs a year in 1948). The *moniteur* could receive a higher wage through seniority and particularly through bonuses related to his family status (having a spouse and children). Towards the end of the fifties the difference in the treatment of certified and non-certified teachers, which existed throughout the colony, would cause annoyance and union action.[lxxxviii]

The statement by Cobbaut indicates that there was a problem with the wages for teachers, particularly when compared to other occupations. The topic was considered at the bishops' conference in Leopoldstad in 1945. Edouard Van Goethem, MSC, was the observer: "*Progress places increasing demands on our education and requires an increasingly qualified native staff. (…) These efforts will however remain ineffective to a great extent if the government, which is responsible together with the missions for the progress of the natives, does not decide to grant our school work an adequate financial contribution, principally to allow us to fairly pay all the native teaching staff.*" From the information cited by Van Goethem in his report a number of conclusions may be drawn for his own vicariate. Generally speaking there was excessive financial pressure on the missions, which prevented them from being able to pay their staff properly. Generally, state subsidies only covered half the expenses of the MSC in their vicariate. *Moniteurs* in the rural schools were particularly expensive because the state paid less subsidies there (60% as opposed to 90% for central schools).

The *moniteurs* in the rural schools naturally constituted the largest group, precisely because establishing mass education was the goal and consequently required a broad presence. Van Goethem explicitly supported this in his report. This situation resulted in a relatively large staff turnover. A lot of *moniteurs* found other jobs that paid better and left education. The MSC tried to pay their *moniteurs* the same wage as an average labourer. Van Goethem stated that this average was an amount of 175 francs a month, while it should really be 400 or 500 francs.[lxxxix] In an anonymous memo from 1944 located in the Aequatoria archives, which contained very many arguments that are also mentioned in the report by Van Goethem, matters were stated even more candidly. In a comparison of the minimum monthly wage of a labourer (130 francs) and the subsidy that was provided monthly for a teacher, it was apparent that the latter only received half of that minimum wage (62 francs). In practice this meant that the missions had to find sufficient funds to adjust the difference.[xc]

Jans and Hulstaert were already confronted by this type of problem in 1932. Hulstaert wrote in a letter to Jans that there were teachers who told him "(…) *that their contract for the mission states payment of 700 fr. per month. Consequently, everyone knows that they are important people; they earn at least 700 fr. a month, not small fry and they were apparently told in Bamanya that they would receive here in Flandria, as a special exception, 750 fr.*"[xci] Jans replied rather laconically: *"I believe that further comment on the initial wage is unnecessary. I have already told you not to overreact as the company makes it possible for you to go far above the minimum. That Botuli and Co. have not understood it differently but have explained it differently to their companions is not my fault. They have signed for three years, in the hope of a gradual increase and the freedom to try their fortunes elsewhere after three years if they are then able to earn and receive the monthly 700 or 750 they now already dream of.*"[xcii]

Another striking point is the way in which the women were included in the salary scales. There was clearly less money available for them. Still as late as 1952 that was confirmed by the missionary inspector Moentjens: *"I have the honour of informing you, and this in accordance with Monseigneur, that in future the monitrices will also receive the legally prescribed minimum wage of the region per month.*"[xciii] Whereas a complicated calculation was required in 1953 to calculate the correct wage for the *moniteurs* in Bamanya, for the monitrices it was sufficient to state "*legal minimum wage of Coq-Bamanya*".[xciv]

Consequently, there were no supplements for them. That fitted in with a wider logic that assumed that a woman would no longer work once she had started a family. That was true for the entire colony (and undoubtedly also to a great extent in the motherland). It was also a generally accepted idea with the *évolués*. The following quotation from an inspection report from 1948 is very representative thereof: "*That training for monitrices is very important. It is rather irritating that you must always start again because the teachers leave to get married. However, this is the natural and good state of affairs, the school will only improve to such an extent when we will have native Sisters*."[xcv]

The first articles about women starting a professional career did not appear in *La Voix du Congolais* until the second half of the fifties. From 1956 onwards, the periodical did publish a whole series of mini-portraits of women who worked, as though they were a curiosity. This usually concerned very young, newly graduated girls, who were obviously also still unmarried even though they sometimes said *"that they would certainly continue to work once they were married."* The simple fact that such statements were made and certainly in the context of a publication like *La Voix*, was very revealing. The editorial team at *La Voix*, which assumed a progressive attitude in relation to social development, almost always wanted to give the reader a message. This clearly indicates that the actual situation was *de facto* not developed to such an extent. It is also striking how many of the girls who were mentioned had first been a *monitrice*.[xcvi]

4.3. Appreciation by the missionaries

In the report already cited, Mgr. Van Goethem explained why the problem of financing the *moniteurs* was so important: *"It is a problem for which we must understand the importance. If we fail in our cooperation, others will take our place. It is not fear of competition that must inspire and support our activity, but our love of the Church and the native populations who must stimulate our enthusiasm. The évolués set the tone for the entire population and this will become and remain Catholic insofar as the leaders are*."[xcvii] He compared the situation of the teachers with those of the working class in Europe, which was oppressed for many centuries until they stood up for their own rights. It is not surprising that he particularly emphasised the role of the *moniteur* in the bush, considering the social visions the MSC adhered to. However the contribution by Van Goethem is particularly interesting because it gives a good description of what the MSC particularly expected from their native teachers: "*Consider the*

work which the educator fulfils in the village, amongst the populations in the bush. In this backward environment he replaces the Family, the Church and the Government (…) The educator not only educates children to become good Christians and good citizens, he is also the friend of the adults and provides information and advice to the village. He is the person from whom the illiterates in the village are told about news and the explanation of all the events which they do not understand." Obviously account must be taken of the fact that Van Goethem had a specific aim in mind when writing this report, namely arguing for an increase in the subsidies: *"This important, essential role fulfilled by the educator with the natives in the bush must be appreciated properly and fairly supported by the Government."*

The apostolic vicar consequently did see the importance of teachers in the mission project. The fact that he used exaggeration in this to be able to acquire more subsidies in fact only emphasises this. The attitude of the missionaries in relation to the teachers partially corresponded with that. Naturally, the work of the *moniteurs was greatly supervised.* However, this supervision was often coloured by mistrust and sometimes even contempt. Following on what Van Goethem wrote in his report, it could be stated that the missionaries in the field did see the importance of the *moniteurs,* but primarily from need. Frans Maes stated in 1955: *"The pupils did 2 to 3 small tests in Arithmetic, French and Geography each week which were corrected by myself. They only did examinations for the moniteurs at the end of the school year. In this way their results were only influenced very little by the often overly partial judgement of the moniteurs.*"[xcviii]

Casually subtle differences were noted between Congolese and white teachers: "*Yes, native teachers had occasionally fiddled with the examinations and they also sometimes accepted bribes: it is impossible for H.B. Director to correct all those papers personally, so he has to rely on his colleagues in education. And that the native teachers have the boys in their class work for them and pay small fines is probably a general occurrence in the Congo.*"[xcix] This statement is naturally hard to confirm or contradict from a contemporary perspective. However, in the context of the mission periodical in which it was published, account must be taken of the fact that it was considered completely normal at all the mission posts to have the children work the land or to work in other ways. The proceeds from that work were specifically to the benefit of the missionaries.

The missionaries' opinion of their *moniteurs* was certainly not unanimously judgemental, far from it in fact. In numerous inspection reports good impressions were given of the native teachers, although this did fit within a generally dominant and paternalistically tinged triumphalism: "*The moniteurs are good and giving courses according to the method. This does not detract from the fact that they still have a lot of progress to make. But it is clearly obvious that perfection cannot be obtained in just a few years*."[c] And at another time: "*Nevertheless, it always remains necessary to supervise the native moniteurs closely. In effect they easily forget to implement during their courses the method that was taught them and which they are continually reminded of by the Reverend Fr. Director*."[ci] There was a fundamental lack of confidence in the moniteur, the sources are unanimous in that regard: "(…) *two black teachers who try to do their best pretty well as long as the Sister continually checks on them and keeps an eye on them.*"[cii] Or again: "*It is right to say to the moniteurs that they must follow the curriculum they have been given but I do not believe that the moniteurs are themselves able to determine properly what is part of the curriculum and what is not because they find it so very difficult to resist their inclination to teach things outside the curriculum. In any event, more effective supervision is required*."[ciii] Moreover, the missionaries continued to do so, certainly until the end of the colonial period. The priest from the black parish in Coquilhatville still said in 1957: *"Every morning the Fathers go around the classes for an hour to supervise the religion lesson. The supervision of the other lessons is carried out by the Brothers and Sisters*."[civ]

The private correspondence between the missionaries was perhaps more telling than what was stated in the inspection reports or mission periodicals. The level of confidentiality was evidently much higher. In that regard, reference should be made to a number of letters from the later vicar and bishop, Hilaire Vermeiren,[cv] sent to his colleague and friend Paul Jans. Both were pioneers of the Congo mission. Therefore, account should certainly be taken of the fact that they possessed a lot of the typical mission heroism and strongly identified with the traditional image of courageous missionaries. On the other hand, that heroism must to some extent "really" have been experienced by the people involved. They were often isolated and had to rely on themselves. They shared their life with a very limited number of acquaintances originating from the same environment and culture as themselves. Nevertheless, it is surprising to note a number of statements from a person like Vermeiren that did not particularly indicate much

humanity or understanding in relation to the Congolese. Vermeiren wrote a number of letters to Jans in which he particularly talked about pupils who were difficult or with whom he was having problems.[cvi]

These letters indicate that corporal punishment was apparently commonly used to inflict punishment on the Congolese pupils or even the trainee teachers. The relationship with students and *moniteurs* was characterised according to these statements by the use of coarse vocabulary and actions. Moreover, a kind of condescending attitude existed in relation to the abilities of the Congolese in general, which was accepted when talking to other missionaries about them. The *moniteurs* were no exception. Naturally, it is difficult to establish whether this simply relates to literary exaggeration, to a kind of mission-machismo, or whether there truly was a case of rough treatment, cursing and corporal punishment of the students and *moniteurs*. A comparison of these statements with later actions by Vermeiren is also difficult and could quickly lead to *Hineininterpretierung*. In his capacity as apostolic vicar he did not write about these matters. The fact that this does to some extent relate to a character trait or habit can also be deduced from other statements about other Europeans. Vermeiren wrote the following about Van Goethem, his predecessor as vicar: *"Although I sometimes feel like fighting with him I still do not know anybody with such great thoughts and broad vision*."[cvii] And about the mission Sisters in Bokote: *"I am really in the pits here with those stupid nuns. Sister Berta cannot even be touched with a bargepole: aren't women evil creations when they get going, my goodness!"*[cviii] In the *Annalen* he wrote, in the 1920s, in an article about a Congolese catechist: *"Occasionally his eyes will flash and he will give a distracted listener a wallop on his naked back. Nobody blames him for that; the sore place is rubbed and the spirit is then more ready to understand the truths: don't the blacks call chastisement: 'boté ea wanya', medicine for the mind?"*[cix]

However, it was rather exceptional that physical violence was spoken of so openly in the sources. It is also difficult to deduce from this type of source whether physical violence was used against the Congolese or whether it was justified. It is easier to draw conclusions about the missionary estimation of the service personnel. Consciously, but also often subconsciously, a distance was created between the European missionary and the Congolese *moniteur*. An additional distinction must also be made here depending on whether it relates to the estimation of men or women. The *moniteurs* did not really have a special position

in relation to other Congolese, although the expectations of them with regard to intelligence or assimilation may have been slightly higher. It is consequently also useful to situate the image the missionaries had of the *moniteurs* and *monitrices* within the more general context of the image the missionaries had of the black man and woman. This characterisation is clearly mainly drawn from the descriptions given by the missionaries and in particular the MSC in their periodicals and elsewhere. Moreover, the image shown in the various types of documents does not differ fundamentally. Depending on the author, different nuances may be noted but in general the descriptions correspond quite well.

The missionary image of man

It is striking that some people were occasionally tempted to make condescending – or even racist – statements. As 'racism' is in itself a rather charged term, it is perhaps advisable to precisely define what is meant by it beforehand. Here, I would first like to refer back to what Bambi Ceuppens wrote in this regard in her very extensive study *Congo made in Belgium*. In fact, it is hard not to refer to this book as it considers the theme in a very extensive and detailed way and also dedicates a chapter to Hulstaert and Boelaert,[cx] the two elements of so-called 'adaptionist' or 'scientific' thinking of the MSC. Those trends did play a role in the image the modern reader tries to form of the position of the Congolese. The important thing in the construction she tries to make in her book is that it is based on a clear and defined idea of what racism is. Ceuppens refers to recent historical research into the concept of race in the Flemish press during the interbellum. In the articles by Marnix Beyen, to which she refers, it was stated that the association of 'blacks' with physicality did not *necessarily* result in negative judgements in broad social discourse.[cxi]

Ceuppens then stated with emphasis that racism is not defined by systematically representing others as negative or inferior but by representing them as 'different', by creating differences that cannot be objectified. Unconnected to the concrete context in which this statement was made, and without connecting a moral assessment to that statement, this does make her aim clear. On the other hand it should be noted that what was stated in the passage concerned with Beyen fits remarkably well with the vision of man that may be established for the missionaries and certainly the MSC: "*However, statements of the retarded nature of the blacks were mainly made in a cultural civilising discourse.*"[cxii] A distinction was made between the positive and negative characteristics of the

‘blacks’, in which the more positive traits did however correspond rather with things that were considered valuable in the observer’s own culture or hierarchy of values. A balanced approach of these two points of view appears essential to make it possible to correctly evaluate the sources considered here. Like Ceuppens I would like to give the necessary reserves: my aim is not at all to show whether this or that person was a ‘racist’ and then to point to this or judge that. My aim is primarily to show that the characterisation of the Congolese by the missionaries illustrates the relationship they had with them and consequently (hopefully) this can throw some light on the relationships that constituted ‘colonial practice’ and, more specifically, teaching practice.

5.1. The Congolese

It is probably useful to start by returning to an interview I made with three mission Sisters from Beveren-Waas.[cxiii] The main interviewee, Sister Rafaëlle, had worked in education at the mission post in Bolima since 1949 and then at Wafanya. When asked what her idea of the Congolese was before she left for the missions, the following rather odd conversation occurred:

R: People told us: are you going to the negroes, and they will eat you and so on… We sometimes laughed at that, these were made up accounts.

J: Did this turn out well, did what you thought beforehand fit with what you experienced when you got there?

R: I will tell you: a black person stays a black, inside and out. And on the other hand I can say that I learned an awful lot from the blacks.

J: Did you not have the idea that they were barbarians yourself?

R: That is completely untrue!

J: But they did tell you that …

R: But that is not true!

A little later the Sister explained her statement “*a black person stays a black*”. She meant that although the missionaries came to teach religion to the Congolese, the Congolese continued to practice their own customs (“*superstitions*”). The anecdote is illustrative for the way in which these people interacted with the Congolese. They wanted the best for them and tried to do everything they thought necessary (and that fitted with their task, as described to them). They did not even doubt the personal qualities of the other and recognised them extensively. However, they did not succeed completely in disconnecting themselves from the relationships imposed upon them, partly as a result of the

eurocentrism of the society they represented and partly as a result of the way colonial society was constructed. Sister Rafaëlle again: *"You know, a black person has no initiative, he has to have someone standing behind him egging him on but they will do it in their own way."*

With the benefit of hindsight it naturally becomes safer to interpret events and situations. However, it is not unimportant here that this relates to people making statements about people they were often in contact with for thirty or even forty years or more. The Sister quoted here had, despite her great age, only been back in Belgium for seven years. Reactions in the same vein were gathered from the other interviewees. During the colonial period itself pronounced opinions were also given about the Congolese. Father Vertenten wrote a remarkable article in 1934 in the *Annalen* in which he wanted to uncover the soul of the Congolese for the readers at home. At first sight the article was a succession of clichés about the nature of the "negro". The author placed great emphasis on eating habits.[cxiv] In doing so the gluttony of the African was emphasised but also a kind of beastliness. Whether the food was fresh or not, the black person didn't care, as long as he could eat. *"Flowers aren't edible, consequently they are less valued than mushrooms, they have no interest in them at all"* it was claimed. The main motivation for the African, Vertenten claimed, was the immediately practical, the utilitarian. Eloquence was important because you could achieve what you wanted with it. People called "intelligent" were very influential people. The black person had no skill or interest in 'higher' matters (i.e. the beauty of nature). *"The negro is not poetically talented, they are all suitable to be salesmen*."[cxv] The emphasis in this article, and in a lot of others, was very much on the 'difference' of the Congolese. To some extent this was probably done consciously by the authors. After all they wanted to introduce the people at home to that strange, foreign world and consequently mainly showed the exotic, strange sides – everything that was different from home.

The image drawn by Vertenten was consequently certainly not unequivocally negative. The characteristics listed in the article were probably not interpreted as such. Vertenten wrote that the African certainly also prized skills other than the purely utilitarian: *"Other characteristics should not be disdained: patience, compassion, goodness, generosity, self-sacrifice, but 'intelligence' is the best.*"[cxvi] Nevertheless, it may be stated that Vertenten was *in se* already an adaptionist: *"If a negro can read and write, if he can do arithmetic and has*

notions of French, then he rises at least a head above the others in their consideration and a head and shoulders in self-confidence. If we do not fulfil that urge they will go elsewhere and we should use that zeal for development, also to encourage the people morally."[cxvii] This statement is a strange mixture of eurocentrism, paternalism and religious competition. Vertenten apparently already sensed at the time that a number of social developments would arise that did not fulfil the vision of the MSC but which they would have to cope with anyway.

Less disguised (or subtle) words were used in other contributions. Vertenten himself wrote about their attitude to money: "*The more a Negro earns, the greater his debts.*"[cxviii] The comment by Gustaaf Wauters fits with that: "*Negroes are exceptionally motivated to exploit their neighbours, although they are not capitalists.*"[cxix] In the fifties this type of comment continued to appear. About city dwellers: "*They speak Pidgin French. They sing our Latin songs the entire day, from the requiem to 'Adesto Fideles', they serve Mass well and prefer nothing so much as posing.*"[cxx] Or country dwellers: "*Black Christians easily think that they are already far above simple heathens purely by being Christian.*"[cxxi] So-called 'black' character traits were easily attributed to the Congolese. They had an unstable character: "*We do not hold any illusions: the constancy of the Negro is very relative, especially when they are back in their old environment, so much tempts them onto side roads.*" [cxxii] They had no perseverance (and were consequently lazy): "*A lot of Negroes will take a first step but they tire quickly. They all feel called to sit at a typewriter once but only few of them have the patience to attend school for a few years. They all stand in awe of a black mechanic who can disassemble an engine and reassemble it but there are few who will want to start the craft by cleaning a machine.*"[cxxiii] Father Pattheeuws stated in the *Annalen*: "*There is no greater sluggard than an unsupervised black man.*"[cxxiv] The MSC certainly was not an exception from other religious orders in their approach to the Congolese. In one of the publications by the Daughters of Charity the same terms were used to say: "*The Sisters in Europe quickly think that the Blacks do all the dirty work here, but that is not true. You always have to stay with them. If our Sisters move away, they laze around. They love eating and resting between meals. According to them that is the best use they can make of their time.*"[cxxv]

'Adaptionism' is linked closely to the Sacred Heart missionaries in scientific

literature. That position then primarily refers to two members of the MSC, Edmond Boelaert and Gustaaf Hulstaert, who were self-declared 'indigenists'.[cxxvi] Adaptionism then refers to a pair of concepts in which assimilation and adaptation are opposed. Assimilationists would, roughly speaking, assume that the colonised population should assimilate with the coloniser's culture. Adaptionists however assumed that the coloniser had to adapt the colonisation methods to the nature and characteristics of the colonised population. The contradiction is illustrated by another, namely that between a vertical (authoritarian) and a horizontal evangelisation relationship in which equality was central.

Here we would like to consider the opinion of the people who were already to a great extent 'indigenistic' at that time. In addition to Boelaert and Hulstaert there are a few more MSC names to be cited. They were (and are) considered, at least within their own ranks, as people who were greatly interested in the local culture and local morality and customs. Often the conclusion is naturally drawn that they were also convinced of the equality of peoples, 'races' and more specifically the equality of Belgians and Congolese. Paul Jans and Alfons Walschap were such people who were thought to have studied native culture and society intensively (even if they were not necessarily scientists in the true sense of the word). According to their obituaries, they specifically carried out "ground-breaking" work in the area of songcraft.[cxxvii] This indicates the dangerous terrain that is embarked upon when interpreting such attitudes. Father Moyens recounted in the *Annalen* about putting on theatrical performances, in which the roles were played by local pupils. They were directed in this by a Sister Auxilia, assisted by Father Jans and Father Walschap. The fact that these people were pioneers with regard to respect for local culture was emphasised greatly by their colleagues: "*Long before a few people who had serious intentions for civilisation drew attention to the 'natural beauty' within the Negro civilisation, Sister Auxilia was already very busy with her girls in practising the native art of singing and dancing.*" The author of the article, which was only written in the fifties, was consequently considering events which had taken place twenty years previously, then completed his pro-indigenistic position as follows: "*Sister Auxilia understood all too well that no European play could simply be imposed and taught. The black people understood little of our talking theatre, in which emotions are expressed more in words and reasoning that through action. For our blacks, theatre is primarily a play. This play develops very naturally, so also very naturally leans to*

dancing as a representation of every emotion."[cxxviii] Here the use of natural and playful characteristics threaten to take on a 'belittling' function, no matter how much they are represented as 'authentic' and 'defensible'. A sharp duality can be detected hidden within statements such as this one. What seems at first sight to be a respectful attitude could equally be considered a paternalistic, patronising approach.

5.2. Woman

What the missionaries thought about women must certainly have been largely coloured by the attitudes taught to them in Belgium. A good example of the connection between the two is given by Vertenten, who concluded in 1929 that more and more European families were coming to live in the colony: *"It is a gratifying phenomenon for the colony that increasingly more brave, physically and morally healthy young women are coming to the Congo. Here more than anywhere in the world young energetic men, facing a heavy duty, need the love, help and support of a woman. In all the colonies the uplifting and strengthening influence of good women has been experienced, the rest are as welcome as cold porridge; they do more damage here than in Europe.*"[cxxix] The MSC did not consider the presence of white women as universally positive in a colonial context. They had to prove that they were good and were judged strictly in relation to the man's well-being. It seems to be an attitude that was based strongly on what was taught in the mission seminary in Belgium.[cxxx] It also appeared to be a general conviction. The mission superiors in the Congo also occasionally stated, "*For each young Christian man, a female Christian companion should be prepared.*"[cxxxi] An argument that is moreover only one step removed from that of the *évolués*, who would demand in *La Voix du Congolais* more and better education for women after the war because they desired an equal marriage partner.

One member of the MSC, Jan Caudron, had written an article in the *Annalen* about the boys at school in Bokote. Later on he also wrote one about the girls. He was very negative about their behaviour. Girls stole excessively, were always too late for church and stank because they did not bathe as well and as cleanly as the boys. According to Caudron they also performed inadequately in the classroom: "*I saw you, girls, in the classroom almost every day. What a difference to the boys! They have a desire to learn, they want to advance, they love reading and arithmetic and writing; but our girls …ah! They could sometimes sit there lazily.*

And when I questioned them: they could not answer or you had to drag the answer out of them. Still I must confess that there were a couple that were a pleasure to have in the class. However the majority were so lacklustre, without any motivation, without attention, without a desire to learn."[cxxxii] Indeed, the Fathers preferred not to teach the girls but had Sisters come over for that. Father Es stated in 1926 that he just left the girls aside while awaiting the coming of the female mission staff: "(…) *I have just written my number 37 for the boys; we can't do anything with the girls as yet as long as there are no Sisters.*"[cxxxiii] The Sisters were also less enthusiastic about the girls: *"Johanna, a 15 year old Negress, was good in class, an exception to our spoiled, giddy girls*."[cxxxiv] Their intelligence, interest and ability to concentrate were sometimes judged as exceptionally low by male and female religious workers: "*You can already hear the girls singing; they are allowed to do so relatively frequently because a serious lesson is rather difficult for them as their attention cannot be maintained for too long in one stretch*."[cxxxv]

Alfons Van Gorp, one of the missionaries of the post-war generation also shared that opinion in the *Annalen* of 1953: "*Perhaps more dedication and certainly more psychology is asked of the Sister teaching in the girls' school.*"[cxxxvi] In the same article he also gave his vision of the problem of the low number of girls attending school, already cited in this chapter. In the jubilee issue of the MSC for the 50-year anniversary of the foundation of the missions in 1954 the problem of the school attendance of girls was also on the agenda.[cxxxvii] Neither the Fathers nor the Sisters gave serious criticism of the policy on the education of girls. It is hard to expect any different from the Sisters because their own role was also strongly characterised by traditional practices, imported from Europe. In 1935 Mgr. Van Goethem stated in his report on the Sisters from Beveren-Waas: "*As in all our posts, the reverend Sisters are entrusted with the housekeeping in each post. They deal with caring for the schoolchildren and the Fathers and missionary Brothers. They prepare the provisions for the missionaries for use during their travels. They do the cooking for the missionary Fathers and also for the children in the school. They wash and mend the clothes for the missionaries and schoolchildren. They care for the church linen and decorate the church on feast days. They take care of the kitchen garden*."[cxxxviii] This state of affairs continued until after independence and was, as indicated in the quotation, also applicable in general.[cxxxix] Consequently, it should not be surprising that the attitude of the Sisters and Fathers with regard to girls' education could not be

described as particularly progressive or revolutionary.

It is interesting to place this besides the official discourse, as used in the minutes of the bishops' conferences in The Belgian Congo. After their first main conference, held in Leopoldville in October 1932, it was stated that due to christianisation, and specifically in order to be able to form Christian families, girls' schools also had to be founded in the countryside. However, great difficulties were expected in the realisation of this aim. Firstly, it was difficult to find girls who could have a career in education as the majority married very young. From then on they would be unavailable for the employment market because they would have too many commitments as mothers and housewives. Secondly, it was claimed: "*The female gender, hardly liberated and still very imperfectly in a type of servitude which has chained or dulled the will of the black woman over centuries to make them appear little able to practice the position of teacher in an environment in which she will not be under close supervision and in which she will miss guidance and frequent advice*."[cxl] The Congolese woman had consequently been oppressed by the Congolese man and that was the reason she was "not yet" suited to teach herself. The argument was that the Congolese woman was used to a lot of control and strict guidance from her spouse and family. If this should disappear she would no longer be able to function.

Whether that then meant that the future for Congolese women was seen differently, e.g. without control and guidance? Of course not – and that was true at all levels. The missionaries' vision of the role of women within a Christian family (and consequently in a Christian marriage) naturally did not deviate from the Western tradition in that regard. That at first sight implied a kind of independence and freedom in comparison to African tradition and in that sense also an improvement in the social situation of women.[cxli] However, it also included the moral duty to bring children into the world and to fulfil household duties: "*Also for that reason – if we want to ensure numerous Catholic descendants in the future – we must now dedicate ourselves to the formation of good Catholic mothers.*"[cxlii] According to the conclusions of Mgr. Six, at the bishops' conference in the Congo, that also fitted within the logical political responsibilities that the State had in relation to the happiness of its citizens. Amongst others this included a policy for the benefit of "numerous families," the payment of child allowances and the prohibition of married women working.[cxliii]

The following advice given at the *Plenary Bishops' Conference* in 1936 is more significant, for example. When considering the subject *"The press in our missions"* the possibility was also mentioned of publications aimed at a specifically female target audience. *"It is necessary to provide varied reading matter in the girls' classrooms, for edification, that interests them, that inculcates notions of respect, true modesty, sincere docility, etc. etc.: that also reveals the women's faults to them: fickleness, chattering, gossiping, etc. etc.: so that they are taught about true Christian women through well-chosen models*."[cxliv] It is clear that the Congolese woman was considered in a category of her own. She had to bear the shortcomings unique to woman in addition to the shortcomings of her 'race'. Hulstaert's view also fitted with this. It was rather harsh for women and the indigenous people in general. In an article published in 1951 in *Aequatoria*, he primarily tried to refute the criticism towards the missions. From the *milieux évolués* an increasing demand for more and better education for girls was heard. Hulstaert primarily indicated the responsibility in this regard of the other parties involved: the government, the parents, but also the girls themselves. Finally he blamed the relative failure of education for girls on the total indifference assigned to it by the local people. A gradual improvement could occur but then only for the following reasons: *"Either they'll hope for a direct benefit (teaching assistants, midwives, nurses), or they'll expect that girls will find more profitable parties to marry, who are of more interest financially.*"[cxlv]

Concretely it remained difficult to get girls into school. Hulstaert explained in an inspection report from 1942 that as a result of the inability to obtain a good, enduring atmosphere in the school: *"The number of children always remained low in this school. It is a very difficult obstacle because the teaching staff easily lose heart as a result and the children themselves learn less enthusiastically if there is no life or competition in the classroom. Moreover, the girls' school also has a few smaller boys attending lessons there before going to the Brother's school*."[cxlvi] The last remark clearly shows the hierarchical relationship between boys' and girls' education: a boy that was too young to go to the boys' school, could already 'be prepared' at the girls' school because it was considered less difficult. In any event the issue of the girls' school was handled very carefully. Hulstaert even makes an exception to his strict attitude in relation to selective access to the school because he felt the morality of the girls was at too great a risk if they did not attend school. In an inspection report from 1930 about the girls' school in Coquilhatville, he wrote: *"One tries to influence the parents so that they send*

their children to school more regularly. The considerable distance from the native village remains a major obstacle. The issue of morality – at such risk – of young girls, leads to an indulgence that could otherwise not be tolerated. In future we can and must be stricter."[cxlvii]

Nevertheless the attention requested for girls' education was often sincere. In Flandria, where the *Huileries du Congo Belge* were situated, the establishment of girls' education was mentioned during the negotiations between the MSC and the company in 1930. Hulstaert drew up a report of the negotiations ("Memorandum") and tackled the issue in it. He seemed to feel a little awkward about the issue himself but did give the impression of being in favour of the establishment of a girls' school. The general director of the company had apparently already made it clear two years previously that he would be in favour of having a female congregation in the vicinity that could concentrate on help in the dispensarium, in the hospital and also in the education of the girls. Hulstaert had then remained uncommitted and had passed the question on to Van Goethem, who promptly went in search of a congregation prepared to reside in Flandria. Once it had been found, however, the management of the company became recalcitrant because there would not be enough work for the Sisters due to the lack of girls in the school. Hulstaert did state that he had not insisted but then devoted another half page to listing the reasons for there being a sufficient number of girls in the vicinity of the H.C.B. who would be prepared to attend school.[cxlviii]

A more explicit plea for girls' education can be found in an inspection report about the school in Bokote, in which reference was made to the bad characteristics of the girls but also in which a workable solution was sought. The report of the missionary inspector Vertenten nevertheless started from the traditional conclusions relating to the nature of the girls: "*They are less interested in education, are more capricious, less assiduous, less zealous, less capable of intellectual activity, flightier and often recalcitrant. It is work that requires great patience. I believe that the cause for this difference should predominately be sought in the education of a young girl, she is surrounded by every care, she represents an asset for her parents, she is conscious of her worth, she is spoiled while the boys are not paid much attention. This will only change very slowly. Good results could perhaps be achieved in stimulating the competitiveness between the boys and girls. The more difficult the task, the more*

meritorious. This inferiority precisely proves the necessity of education and instruction for young indigenous girls."[cxlix] It is one of the few references in which the inequality between women and men is not used as an explanation for a difference in treatment but in which an insistence is made from the conclusion of the inequality to the removal thereof. Exactly what Vertenten then considered to be concrete equality is not known, however.

Summary

The general atmosphere, the climate within which mission education took place was strongly defined by the assumptions of the missionaries with regard to social questions in general and to the nature of the Africans and the Congolese in particular. The missionaries were and remained tributary to their evangelisation task and the way in which it was informed and taught to them. "Gaining souls for the kingdom of God" always remained somewhere at the foundation of their actions, even if it was articulated differently over the years and connected more with a genuine social concern.

Socially the MSC, and Hulstaert in particular, were rather defensive and conservatively minded. They stood for maintaining the status quo in which they had been educated and trained themselves and in which they believed strongly. They wanted to bring this across to the Congo and also maintain it there. That was expressed in their concern for the language in which the lessons were given and the hostility towards the modern urban environment. The reactions of the missionaries towards the Congolese showed it: Congolese searching for levers to gain further access to the new colonial society were considered negatively unless they were explicitly on the side of the missionaries.

The missionaries consequently considered they had an essential role in colonial society. The controlling of the Congolese was more then necessary to prevent derailment. Beneath this lay the deep gap that existed according to the missionaries between their own culture and that of their pupils. The Congolese were intrinsically inferior. Reading between the lines this is apparent in their official discourse and it is certainly and more explicitly apparent from their more personal communication.

Supervision was consequently an important factor in the education the MSC wanted to organise in their mission area. A great problem in this was the difficulty to get children to school and to keep them there, specifically at schools

in the interior. There was no compulsory education and children were often not sent to school willingly in the villages. There were numerous reasons for this but often the children had to help their parents to provide for sustenance for the family. The missionaries were never completely in control of the situation, despite a certain level of authority they had towards some part of the population.

In the same context urbanisation was considered a phenomenon to be combated by the MSC. They tried to keep the children in the villages insofar as possible or at least to bring them back there after their studies. Access to the city schools was dissuaded or made difficult insofar as possible. Strict entry conditions and a complicated registration duty for the village teachers contributed to this but were unsuccessful.

The restrictive attitude of the MSC was noticeable in relation to ordinary transfers of pupils in primary school but also to those who wanted to continue their education. In this region this usually related to people who wanted to attend the teacher training college in Bamanya. Those that did get so far were followed closely in their daily activities. The missionaries did not hesitate to intervene and no distinction was made between life at school or outside school in these matters. Some missionaries did not hesitate to involve the state authorities to make their pupils toe the line.

The Congolese teachers or teaching assistants formed an essential link in the educational organisation of the MSC. They were also supervised carefully and assessed by the missionaries. They were obliged contractually to work for the school for a minimum period. The relationship between the teaching assistants and missionaries did evolve over the years from a strict hierarchical authoritarian relationship to a situation in which economic necessities and developments gradually gave the Congolese a position for negotiation and consequently obliged the missionaries to be more flexible.

Still, it must be said that the MSC generally considered the native teachers as a necessary link in the evangelisation project rather than as a partner with whom good cooperation was possible. That also fitted into the image the missionaries had of the Congolese. The combination of racial prejudices and traditionalist views meant that the Congolese women, in particular, bore the consequences of this.

NOTES

[i] Es, M. (1926). Letter from Pater Marcel Es, Boende. In *Annalen*, 6, p. 153. The bold passages for emphasis in the quotations are by the author. [original quotation in Dutch]

[ii] Es, M. (1927). Mijn kleine schoolkolonie. In *Annalen*, 11, p. 246.

[iii] "Onze missie-begrooting voor 1932" In *Annalen*, 1931, 12, p. 268. [original quotation in Dutch]

[iv] The pro-catholic and anti-protestant sentiment was consequently very present in the Belgian colonial milieus, for example also in the attitude of Edouard De Jonghe, as previously discussed.

[v] Petrus Vertenten (1884-1946) was ordained as a priest in 1909 and initially went to the missions in New Guinea, where he was active from 1910 to 1925. From 1927 to 1939 he lived and worked in the Belgian Congo. Over almost that entire period he was also the missionary inspector of the Vicariate Coquilhatville. Vertenten was also known for his skills as a writer and had a number of friends in the artistic world, including Henriette Roland-Holst-Van der Schalk and August Van Cauwelaert. He was also an accomplished painter; a number of his paintings have been preserved and are exhibited at the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen [Royal Institute for the Tropics] in Amsterdam (KIT). See www.aequatoria.be (under "bio-bibliographies") and Vlamynck, J. (1985). *Wij gedenken. Tweede reeks biografische schetsen van M.S.C. van de Belgische provincie.* Borgerhout, p. 8.

[vi] Smolders, J. (1931). Veel werk te Boende. In *Annalen*, 2, p. 29. [original quotation in Dutch]

[vii] Vertenten, P. (1935). Een blijvend loofhuttenfeest. In *Annalen*, 10, p. 222. [original quotation in Dutch]

[viii] Imelda, Zr. (1935). Uit een brief van E. Zr. M. Imelda. In *Annalen*, 3, p. 60. [original quotation in Dutch]

[ix] Heyde, S. (1954). Regen en zon over Nkembe. In *Annalen*, July – August, p. 100. [original quotation in Dutch]

[x] There were overlaps in that criticism with the attitude of the scheutist Maus, whose analysis of the 1938 curriculum has been discussed at length in the first chapter. See p.46 et seq.

[xi] AAFE 30.3.1-4. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the governor general. Bokuma, 19 March 1942. My emphasis. [original quotation in French]

[xii] Honoré Vinck, who knew him personally, described him as a rather obedient but humanist Catholic who became a cultural pessimist, particularly in the thirties (a trend which was not alien to the zeitgeist) and developed into an ultra-right

wing conservative Catholic in later life. See “Dimension et inspiration de l’Oeuvre de Gustaaf Hulstaert” at www.aequatoria.be/BiblioHulstaertFrameSet.html

[xiii] See also Ceuppens, B. (2003), *Congo Made in Belgium?* p. 449 et seq. She does indicate that there was a difference between the scientific “tenors” of the MSC, Boelaert and Hulstaert. Boelaert, who is less known but was equally respected in scientific circles, was a stalwart opponent to any form of biological racism and in that sense much more consistent in his anti-colonialism and indigenism.

[xiv]AAFE 30.3.5-7. Letter from Mgr. Van Goethem to the governor general. Coquilhatville, 25 March 1942. [original quotation in French]

[xv] Vertenten, P. (1932). Nieuws uit Bamania bij Coquilhatstad. In *Annalen*, 4, p. 78. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xvi] Caudron, J. (1935). Ik denk aan mijn jongens te Bokote. In *Annalen*, 12, p. 269. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xvii] Wauters, G. (1934). Ngonji’s doopsel en eerste H.Kommunie. In *Annalen*, 4, p. 78. [original quotation in Dutch]

[xviii] Cortebeeck, J. (1932). De houtskool-teekenaar (continued). In *Annalen*, 8, p. 176. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xix] Briffaerts, J. & Dhondt, P. (2003). The dangers of urban development. In *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, LIX, p. 81-102.

[xx] De Knop, J. (1939). Een liefdeshistorie. In *Annalen*, 9, p. 205. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xxi] AAFE 32.3.11-4.2. Memorandum sur les pourparlers entre la S.A. des Huileries du Congo Belge et la préfecture apostolique de Coquilhatville à Flandria en date du 5 avril 1930.

[xxii] AAFE 34.4.13. Letter from Gustaaf Hulstaert to the Managing Director of the S.A. des Huileries du Congo Belge [H.C.B.]. Flandria, 17 March 1929. [original quotation in French]

[xxiii] Cf. in an article for the missiological weeks in Leuven: Planquaert, P. (1946). L’exode des populations vers les centres et l’ébranlement de la famille rurale. In *La Famille Noire en Afrique. Compte Rendu de la 17e semaine de missiologie de Louvain.* Museum Lessianum – section missiologique 27 bis. p. 66-74. The same theme was also dealt with at the Congo bishops’ conference in 1945. Zie Briffaerts, J. & Dhondt, P. (2003). The dangers of urban development. In *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, LIX, p. 81-102.

[xxiv] AAFE 1.5.6. Report on the inspection of the boys’ primary school in

Bamanya, October 1941. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, October 1941. The official school in Coquilhatville here also means a congregational school, also run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[xxv] AAFE 36.1.7-8. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the Managing Director of the H.C.B. Flandria, 12 June 1928. [Original quotation in French]
[xxvi] Ibidem.
[xxvii] AAFE 30.3.5-7. Letter from Mgr. Van Goethem to the governor general. Coquilhatville, 25 March 1942. [Original quotation in French]
[xxviii] AAFE 1.5.6. Report on the inspection of the boys' primary school in Bamanya, October 1941. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, October 1941. [Original in Dutch]
[xxix] "Het vorstelijk bezoek aan onze missie in Congo". In *Annalen*, 1928, 11, p. 244. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[xxx] AAFE15.3.4-8. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'école primaire à Mondombe, 1930. P. Vertenten, Mondombe, 24 December 1930. The school was under the direction of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart (See chapter 3). [Original quotation in French]
[xxxi] AAFE 25.3.3. Inspection d'avril 1935, Mpenjele. P. Jans. [Original quotation in French]
[xxxii] AAFE 25.3.3. Inspection d'avril 1935, Mpenjele. P. Jans. [Original quotation in French]
[xxxiii] AAFE 25.3.4. Inspection de l'Ecole Rurale de Beambo. Inspection de Juin. P. Jans. [Original quotation in French]
[xxxiv] AAFE 25.3.4. Inspection de l'Ecole Rurale des Injole, 8 avril 1935. P. Jans. The academic year in the Belgian Congo coincided with the civil year until the fifties, i.e. it began in January and ended with the prize-giving at the end of December.
[xxxv] Paul Jans (1886-1962), was ordained as a priest in 1909. He first became a teacher at the mission seminary of the MSC in Asse but left for Italy in 1920. He was one of the first MSC to go to the Congo in 1926. He was predominately active there as the head of the mission post in Bamanya and from 1930 as parish priest in Coquilhatville. He was also the driving force there behind the organisation of religious and cultural activities. He also dedicated himself to composing liturgical music based on native elements. Vereecken, J. (1985). *Wij gedenken. Tweede reeks biografische schetsen van MSC van de Belgische provincie.* Borgerhout: MSC. p. 47.
[xxxvi] Jans, P. (1936). Hoe ver staan we in Congo? (vervolg). In *Annalen*, 5, p.

104. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[xxxvii] AAFE 15.1.3-7. Bamanya. Report on the girls' school. Academic year 1934. Sister Auxilia, Bamanya, s.d. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[xxxviii] Afrika Archief Brussel, electronic inventory, no. 12490. Letter from P. Vertenten to the provincial inspector. 1931.
[xxxix] AAFE 33.2.6. Ecole professionnelle H.C.B. Flandria. Rapport sur l'école. Flandria, 31 December 1929. s.n.
[xl] Paters Lazaristen Archives, Leuven. Rapport sur le fonctionnement des Ecoles des Révérendes Soeurs de Saint Vincent de Paul à Coquilhatville. P. Vertenten, February 1930. [Original quotation in French]
[xli] Van Gorp, A. (1953). Bokela. In *Annalen*, October, p. 137. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[xlii] AAFE 11.5.10-11. Schoolrapport 1947. Handwritten, probably by Sister Auxilia, 31 December 1947. Includes a report of the situation of the girls' school in Bamanya. [original quotation in Dutch]
[xliii] "Pastoor van een zwarte parochie: interview met Pater De Gols, pastoor van de eerste zwarte parochie van Coquilhatstad". In *Annalen*, May 1957, p. 68. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[xliv] AAVSB, Rapport général sur l'activité du Vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935, p. 11.
[xlv] Ibidem, p. 8.
[xlvi] AAVSB, Note additionnelle sur les écoles rurales, par P. Trigalet, in the previously mentioned Rapport Général 1934-1935, p. 33.
[xlvii] "Uit brieven van Z.E.P. Vertenten aan de studenten der apostolische school in Assche". In *Annalen*, 1928, 10, p. 219. [original quotation in Dutch]
[xlviii] AAFE 15.3.4-8. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'école primaire à Mondombe, 1930. P. Vertenten, Mondombe, 24 December 1930. [Original quotation in French]
[xlix] AAFE 25.3.7. Ecoles Rurales. Beambo. Inspection du 16 octobre 1934, par le P. Jans. [Original quotation in French]
[l] AAFE 25.4.8. Ecole rurale de Beambo. Inspection du 12 mars 1934. P. Jans. [Original quotation in French]
[li] AAFE 96.1.9-10. Rapport Annuel 1954-1955 Ecole H.C.B. Dist. Flandria. F. Maes, Flandria, 10 April 1955.
[lii] AAVSB, Note additionnelle sur les écoles rurales, par P. Trigalet, in Rapport Général 1934-1935, p. 37-38. [Original quotation in French]
[liii] AAVSB, Note additionnelle sur les écoles rurales, par P. Trigalet, in Rapport

Général 1934-1935, p. 38. [Original quotation in French]
[liv] Pattheeuws, K. (1950). Rosalie on an inspection trip. In *Annalen*, September, p. 121. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[lv] On this see Briffaerts, J. & Dhondt, P. (2003). The dangers of urban development.
[lvi] AAFE 30.2.6-7. Letter from Mgr. Van Goethem to the provincial governor. Coquilhatville, 3 March 1942.
[lvii] AAFE 30.3.11. Letter from P. Warnotte, Directeur Groupe Scolaire Coquilhatville to the provincial governor. Coquilhatville, 22 October 1942.
[lviii] AAFE 30.5.2. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Brother Director of the *Groupe Scolaire* in Coquilhatville. Coquilhatville, 10 March 1943. [original quotation in Dutch]
[lix] AAFE 84.5.13. Letter from the substitute apostolic vicar (J. De Schepper) to the provincial governor. Coquilhatville, 22 October 1947.
[lx] "Als Kongo op de schoolbank wil: interview met Pater Gaston Moentjes" In *Annalen*, February 1957, p. 20. [original quotation in Dutch]
[lxi] Pattheeuws, K. (1950). Rosalie op inspectiereis. In *Annalen*, September, p. 121. [original quotation in dutch]
[lxii] AAFE 12.2.11. Letter J. Yernaux. Boende, 22 January 1947; AAFE 12.2.14. Letter F. Van Linden. Bokote, 27 January 1947; AAFE 12.2.13. Letter P. Smolders. Bokela, 26 December 1946.
[lxiii] AAFE 11.2.8. Letter T. De Ryck, Mondombe, 5 February 1948.
[lxiv] AAFE 11.5.12. Letter from P. Smolders to G. Wauters. Bokela, 24 November 1947.
[lxv] AAFE 11.2.11. Note of P. Smolders. Bokela, 6 January 1948.
[lxvi] AAFE 21.4.2. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Pater Rector in Bamanya (Paul Jans). Flandria, 11 April 1930.
[lxvii] AAFE 21.2.10-11. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Father Rector in Bamanya (Paul Jans). Flandria, 23 August 1932
[lxviii] AAFE 22.4.4. Letter from P. Jans to Mr Verfaillie. Bamanya, 6 October 1931.
[lxix] AAFE 22.4.5. Letter from J. Ikolo to the *territorial director*. Coquilhatville, s.d.
[lxx] AAFE 22.4.6. Letter from P. Jans to F. Requile. Bamanya, 10 October 1931.
[lxxi] AAFE 22.4.8. Letter from P. Jans to F. Requile. Bamanya, 2 December 1931.
[lxxii] AAFE 22.4.7. Letter from F. Requile, *administrateur territorial*, to P. Jans. Coquilhatville, 2 December 1931.

[lxxiii] This type of occurrence undoubtedly also contributed to the image among the Congolese that the missionaries were ‘accomplices’ of the government. See chapter 9 in that regard.
[lxxiv] AAFE 213.4. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Father Rector of Bamanya. Flandria, 19 January 1932.
[lxxv] AAFE 21.4.4. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Pater Rector of Bamanya. Flandria, 5 August 1929.
[lxxvi] AAFE 3.3.11. Letter from J. De Knop, rector ad interim Bamanya, to Father Rector in Bolima, 13 July 1937.
[lxxvii] Stéphane Boale, a pupil at the primary school in Bokote in the forties. Interviews taken in September-November 2003, St Joost ten Node.
[lxxviii] AAFE 84.1.1-2. Table “Statistiques enseignement année scolaire 1932”.
[lxxix] This series of letters can be found in AAFE 25. They have been included as appendix 9.
[lxxx] The dowry.
[lxxxi] AAFE 25.2.7-8. Letter from P. Vertenten to Mgr. Van Goethem. Bamanya, 26 December 1935.
[lxxxii] Interview with Stéphane Boale in Saint-Josse-ten-Noode, November 2003.
[lxxxiii] AAFE 9.2. includes a number of copies of employment contracts concluded with moniteurs, dated 1931.
[lxxxiv] Example from AAFE 21.2.1.
[lxxxv] Similar agreements between non-natives were regulated by other legal texts. Léonard, H. (1936). Le contrat de travail au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi. In *Les Novelles. Droit colonial, tôme II*. Bruxelles: Larcier. p. 357-384.
[lxxxvi] AAFE 25.2.7-8. Letter from P. Vertenten to Mgr. Van Goethem. Bamanya, 26 December 1935.
[lxxxvii] AAFE 11.2.7. Letter from F. Cobbaut to the rectors of the mission posts. Boende, 1 June 1948.
[lxxxviii] The *Centrale des Enseignants Chrétiens* (C.E.C.) considered the issue in November 1958 in a specially themed issue of its union paper “Notre Droit”: “Le statut pécuniaire des moniteurs non-diplômés”. AAFE 39.3.4-4.9.
[lxxxix] Van Goethem, E. [Mgr.] (1945). Charges budgétaires de l’enseignement et traitement des moniteurs. In *Compte-Rendu de la troisième conférence plénière des Ordinaires du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*. Leopoldstad. p. 163-183.
[xc] AAFE 48.3.10-4.1. Rapport 1944. La condition sociale et le salariat des instituteurs. En général, et spécialement au Congo Belge. s.n.
[xci] AAFE 21.3.7. Letter from G. Hulstaert to P. Jans. Flandria, 30 December

1931. The emphasis is Hulstaert's own.
[xcii] AAFE 21.3.6. Letter from P. Jans to G. Hulstaert. Bamanya, 1 January 1932.
[xciii] AAFE 9.3.1. Circular from Gaston Moentjens to the rectors and school directors of girls' schools. Coquilhatville, 7 January 1952.
[xciv] AAFE 9.1.3-4. Memo "lonen voor 1953". s.n.
[xcv] AAFE 12.5.7. Report on the inspection in the sisters' school in Bamanya 1944. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, 17 November 1944.
[xcvi] As an example: Colin, M. (1956). Trois femmes Congolaises. In *La Voix du Congolais*, XII, p. 125-132.
[xcvii] Van Goethem, E. [Mgr.] (1945). Charges budgétaires de l'enseignement et traitement des moniteurs. In *Compte-Rendu de la troisième conférence plénière des Ordinaires du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*. Leopoldstad. p. 163-183. [original quotation in French]
[xcviii] AAFE 96.1.9-10. Rapport Annuel 1954-1955 Ecole H.C.B. Dist. Flandria. F. Maes, Flandria, 10 April 1955. My emphasis. [original quotation in French]
[xcix] *Annalen*, May 1951. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[c] AAFE 4.3.12-4.1. Rapport sur l'inspection de l'école primaire de Bamanya, 1937. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, 18 June 1937. [original quotation in French]
[ci] AAFE 4.4.5-9. Report on the inspeciton of the boys' primary school in Bamanya, 1936. G. Hulstaert, Coquilhatville, 23 October 1936. [Original quotation in French]
[cii] Maria Godfrieda, Zr. (1934). Wat ze zooal te doen hebben. In *Annalen*, 5, p. 108. My emphasis. [original quotation in Dutch].
[ciii] AAFE 9.3.4-4.1. Rapport d'inspection de l'école primaire et de l'école de moniteurs à Bamanya, 1952. G. Moentjens, Coquilhatville, 11 September 1952. My emphasis. [original quotation in French]
[civ] "Pastoor van een zwarte parochie". In *Annalen*, May 1957, p. 68. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cv] Hilaire Vermeiren (1889-1967) was ordained as a priest in 1912 and taught at the mission seminary of the MSC in Asse from 1913 to 1925. In 1925 he was employed in Bokote, where he became the rector of the mission post after a few years. From 1925 he was part of the bishop's council and in 1947 he was appointed as the successor to his fellow villager Edouard Van Goethem, the apostolic vicar. At the end of the fifties he also became the first archbishop of the new archbishopric Mbandaka. Hulstaert, G. (1983). Vermeiren (Hilaire). In *Belgische koloniale biografie*, VII, A. 365-369.
[cvi] These letters, from which a number of longer quotations have been brought

together here, can be found in AAFE 22. See appendix 10.
[cvii] AAFE 22.3.5. Letter from H. Vermeiren to P. Jans. Bokote, 29 May 1932. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cviii] AAFE 22.4.2-3. Letter from H. Vermeiren to P. Jans. Bokote, 3 August 1929. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cix] Vermeiren, H. (1926). Tata Paulus en tata Bernard. In *Annalen*, p. 175. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cx] Edmond Boelaert (1899-1966) was ordained as a priest in 1924. He did not have a higher diploma except a certificate from the University Centre for Missionaries. In the biographical notes on him he is being described as a very good student and an autodidact. After his ordination he was appointed as the person responsible for mission propaganda in Belgium. He left for the Belgian Congo in 1930 and would work there until 1954 in various places and positions. As a teacher and head of the seminary in Bokuma he also began publishing scientific texts on the language and culture of the Mongo population. He was the co-founder in 1938 of the periodical Aequatoria. In addition to a very extensive bibliography (articles and publications), he particularly left an extensive collection of documentation, which is integrated in the Aequatoria Archives (in a separate fund "Boelaert"). Vereecken, J. (1992). *Wij gedenken. Derde reeks biografische schetsen van MSC van de Belgische provincie.* Borgerhout: MSC. p. 11; Hulstaert, G. (1970). Boelaert (Edmond, Eloï). In *Belgische Overzeese Biografie*, VII A, 53-58.
[cxi] Ceuppens, B. (2003). o.c. XLVI; Beyen, M. (1998). "Vlaamsch zijn in het bloed en niet alleen in de hersenen" Het Vlaamse volk tussen ras en cultuur (1919-1939). In Beyen, M. & Vanpaemel G. (Eds.). *Rasechte wetenschap? Het rasbegrip tussen wetenschap en politiek vóór de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Leuven: Acco.
[cxii] Beyen, M. (1998). l.c. p. 184. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxiii] Interview with Sister Rafaëlle, Sister Innocentia and Sister Hilde, in Beveren-Waas, 13 September 2002.
[cxiv] With regard to eating habits as an instrument of the representation of other cultures and as a "creator" of difference: Ceuppens, B. (2003). *Onze Congo? Congolezen over de kolonisatie*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, p. 19-28.
[cxv] Vertenten, P. (1934). Welsprekend of brutaal? In *Annalen*, 11, p. 247. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxvi] Ibidem. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxvii] "Uit brieven van Z.E.P. Vertenten aan de studenten der apostolische school

te Assche". In *Annalen*, 1928, 10, p. 219.
[cxviii] Vertenten, P. (1938). Mengelingen uit Flandria. In *Annalen*, 10, p. 224. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxix] Wauters, G. (1951). Makasa. In *Annalen*, May , p. 72. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxx] Carle, J. (1954). Uit Coq. In *Annalen*, January , p. 5. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxi] Van Gorp, A. (1954). Bokela (vervolg). In *Annalen*, February, p. 20. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxii] Vertenten, P. (1932). Nieuws uit Bamania bij Coquilhatstad. In *Annalen*, 4, p. 78. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxiii] Pattheeuws, K. (1950). Rosalie op inspectiereis (vervolg). In *Annalen*, October, p. 139. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxiv] Ibidem.
[cxxv] "Brief van Zuster Baptizet, visitatrice." In *De kleine bode van den H. Vincentius à Paulo en van de gelukzalige Louise de Marillac*, 1931, 2, p. 44. [original in Dutch]
[cxxvi] Depaepe, M. & Van Rompaey, L. (1995). *In het teken van de bevoogding*. p. 85 et seq.
[cxxvii] Alfons Walschap (1903-1938). The younger brother of the author Gerard. He was ordained as a priest in 1930 and left for the Congo mission in 1932. He is said to have composed numerous songs and also a complete Mass in the African style ("Bantu mass"). Vereecken, J. (1982). *Wij gedenken. Eerste reeks biografische schetsen van MSC van de Belgische provincie*. Borgerhout: MSC. p. 38. For Paul Jans, see footnote 35, p. 170.
[cxxviii] Moyens, J. (1955). Mama Auxilia Maria en Martha. In *Annalen*, April, p. 73. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxix] Vertenten, P. (1929). Van Coquilhatstad naar de boven-Tschuapa (vervolg). In *Annalen*, 3, p. 55. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxx] See the references in chapter two to the worldview of the MSC.
[cxxxi] Six, G. [Mgr.] (1936). L'Action sociale au Congo. In *Compte-Rendu de la troisième conférence plénière des Ordinaires du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*. p. 155. The quotation is attributed in this article to the Governor general Ryckmans. [Original quotation in French]
[cxxxii] Caudron. J. (1936). Zijn er ook meisjes op de school in Bokote? In *Annalen*, 9, p. 197. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxxiii] Es, M. (1927). Uit een schrijven van eerwaarde Pater Marcel Es. In

Annalen, 1, p. 11. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxxiv] Maria Jozefa, Zr. (1935). Brokkelbrieven. In *Annalen*, 1, p. 11. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxxv] Maria Godfrieda, Zr. (1934). Wat ze zooal te doen hebben. In *Annalen*, 5, p. 108. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxxvi] Van Gorp, A. (1953). Bokela. In *Annalen*, October, p. 140. [Original quotation in Dutch]
[cxxxvii] "Onze Scholen". In *Annalen*, December 1954 (jubilee issue), p. 184.
[cxxxviii] AAVSB, Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire des Soeurs de St Vincent de Wafanya de 1934-1935. Mgr. Van Goethem. [original quotation in French]
[cxxxix] Interview with Sister Rafaëlle, Sister Innocentia and Sister Hilde, in Beveren-Waas, 13 September 2002.
[cxl] De Clercq, A. [Mgr.]. (1932). Question Scolaire. In *Compte-rendu de la première conférence plenière des ordinaires de missions du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*. p. 77. [original quotation in French]
[cxli] Eggermont, B. (1994). Se marier chrétiennement au Congo Belge. Les stratégies appliquées par les Missionaires de Scheut (CICM) au Kasai, 1919-1935. In *Missionering en inculturatie*, *Bulletin van het Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome*, LXIV, p. 113-147.
[cxlii] "De Lazaristen in Congo". In *Sint Vincentius a Paulo. Driemaandelijks tijdschrift van de Lazaristen en de Dochters der Liefde*, 1946, 1, p. 10. [original quotation in Dutch]
[cxliii] Moreover, this fitted completely within the general assumptions of Six and presumably also the majority of bishops and religious workers. Sociale Actie (social action) was defined by Six as: "*organised action intended to restore and re-establish the social order, and in a more strict area the economic order, on the basis of natural law and evangelical doctrine*." Six, G. [Mgr.] (1936). L'Action sociale au Congo. In *Compte-Rendu de la troisième conférence plénière des Ordinaires du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*. p. 155. [original quotation in French]
[cxliv] De Clercq, A. [Mgr.]. (1936). La presse dans nos missions. In *Compte-rendu de la troisième conférence plénière des Ordinaires des missions du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*. p. 15. [original quotation in French]
[cxlv] Hulstaert, G. (1951). L'instruction des filles. In *Aequatoria*, XIV, p. 129-130. [original quotation in French]
[cxlvi] AAFE 1.1.4. Verslag over de inspectie in de meisjesschool te Bamanya, 1942. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, 12 November 1942. [original quotation in Dutch]

[cxlvii] AAFE 15.4.2-5. Rapport sur le fonctionnement des écoles des Révérendes Soeurs de Saint Vincent de Paul à Coquilhatville, 1930. P. Vertenten, Coquilhatville, 8 November 1930. [original quotation in French]
[cxlviii] AAFE 32.3.11-4.2. Memorandum sur les pourparlers entre la S.A. des Huileries du Congo Belge et la préfecture apostolique de Coquilhatville à Flandria en date du 5 avril 1930.
[cxlix] AAFE 15.5.4-6. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'école primaire à Bokote. P. Vertenten, Bokote, juillet-août 1930. [original quotation in French]

When Congo Wants To Go To School – Educational Comfort

Class in a rural school in the MSC mission area, in the 1950s. MSC Borgerhout Collection

This chapter is primarily concerned with the development of the 'educational comfort' in the region of the MSC. This term must be further explained. 'Educational comfort' was used by Marc Depaepe to describe a larger body of elements that, taken together, contribute to the 'comfort' of education and of being taught. In the first instance I will be concerned here with the material organisation of the educational activity. As was set out in chapter 3, the

missionaries built up a network of schools. This building must also be taken in the literal sense of the word. The material aspect of education is often the best documented, in the form of archives and other sources. The schools at the larger mission posts are mainly those referred to in the different articles and reports. This implies that the general picture is unavoidably a little distorted, even here, because the mission posts were much better equipped than the little schools in the bush.[i] 'Educational comfort' is naturally not only the material equipment, it is also everything that goes with or is connected with the existence of a building in which education is undertaken. By this I do not mean that I am primarily concerned with everything that is used in teaching in the colonial classroom, although that does contribute to the full picture. 'Comfort' includes the integration of the schools in the society as much as in the mission posts and also the upkeep, the material aspect of living. Or, to put it another way, the 'material management' of education. Other aspects of the reality of classes, such as discipline and timetabling, will only be considered later.

Appearance of the classroom

Before moving to information that comes from the written sources, I wish to present on a few photographs of 'classroom life'. Such pictures are rather scarce, certainly within the boundaries of the MSC mission region. They are naturally interesting because they visually present a particular aspect of reality. It is true that this relates more to the material environment than the behaviour, considering that the 'life' shown is posed in many cases. Everything naturally depends on what one allows the photographs to tell. The descriptions that follow here give a vague idea of what it was like then, although they raise as many questions as they answer.

The photographs in image 15 show a school in Nsona Mbata (in the neighbourhood of Matadi) in 1922. The pupils are in a building, in any case they are more or less closed off from the environment and they have some protection against the vicissitudes of the climate. It is difficult to say whether this is a room that is specifically meant for education. What is noticeable in the photograph is that there is certainly more than one teacher operating in the same room. The children are evidently divided into groups. At first sight there are four groups of children, on closer inspection five can be distinguished (on the right-hand photograph they can all be seen, three at the back, two at the front). The first teacher stands at the blackboard and teaches something about a text written on

the board. It is not clear what the topic is. In an enlargement of the photograph it seems to be about syllables, which could indicate that this was a reading lesson. The second teacher is sitting at a table as are the pupils who are clearly forming his class. There is a pile of papers on his table (exercise books or textbooks?) and there is also a clock (an alarm) and there is something lying there that looks like coins. The second teacher also has a blackboard that (perhaps because of the photographer) is pushed completely to the side. In total there must be between fifty and seventy children sitting together in this room. The group at the back, who are sitting on school desks, clearly have slates and slate pens, which they are using. With the groups at the front these instruments cannot be seen and a few pupils seem to be holding something (an exercise book?).

Image 16 – Classroom in front and rear view, Nsona Mbata (Matadi), 1920. Source unknown

The photograph in *image 16* is a picture of a class in the MSC missionary region from around 1950. The material environment in which the lesson is given is very sober but shows more specific characteristics that are commonly associated with the concept of 'school' in comparison to the previous photographs. The teacher – who poses stiffly – stands on a platform before the class. On the large blackboard that is fixed to the wall there are a number of letters on the left, which indicate a writing lesson. A number of arithmetic sums can be seen on the right. The school desks are narrow and more than two pupils sit at them at a time. As far as can be seen, the room being used as a classroom is built in stone and the walls are more or less plastered. On the floor there is also some sort of stone or paving. The school is clearly built from some sort of durable material. Still, this is supposed to be a rural school, going by the clothing of the pupils and above all the assistant. He is wearing a *pagne*, which would not have been permitted at the mission posts.[ii] Finally, the photographs in figure 17 are taken at a central mission school. The classrooms have glass windows. On the photograph on the left a sort of overhang can be seen behind the frame, probably a *barza*, which makes one

suppose that the classroom is part of a larger school building.[iii] The school desks have a better finish, the pupils sit in pairs. They are not wearing uniforms but it is clear that there is a sort of *dress code*. On the left there is a map of the Belgian Congo on the wall together with a few other undoubtedly didactical pictures. On the right, pictures are also on display and a cupboard with didactical material (probably measuring vessels). These classes undoubtedly look the most 'European'.

Image 18 – Classes in central mission schools, MSC mission area, in the 1950s. MSC Borgerhout Collection

The last 'class photograph' (*image 18)* is even more richly filled but the quality of this classroom is not necessarily better than the classrooms on the previous photographs. The building, which is visible in the next photograph, also looks to be built in durable materials, although that cannot be said for certain on the basis of these pictures. However, the roof is not tiled, it seems to be covered with thatch or planks, probably *ndele*.[iv] The wooden lathes of the roof trusses are visible on the inner side and there seems to be a space between the wall and the roof (light is shining through the opening). In contrast, the interior seems to be richly decorated. This impression is naturally partly aroused by the angle of the photograph. In any event there is a large school board, which has been filled for the occasion with writing, arithmetic exercises and in the middle a large drawing which shows the 'sacred heart'. Above the board a whole series of pictures have been hung. These are more than likely religious in origin. The picture is reminiscent of a religion lesson, partly because of the presence of the nun on the photograph. The school desks look solid and the pupils well groomed, although the dress code does not seem to have been very strict. The pupil in the centre front only has a vest on, the pupil on the right of the photograph has a large hole in his shirt. The description of the photographs makes it clear that in spite of their visual character, they can only reproduce a part of the reality.

Building schools

Inside the boys' primary school in Bokote, with Sister Jozefa (Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart) and a teacher, 1956; The boys' school from the outside. MSC Borgerhout Collection

With regard to the school building in the strict sense we should be able to distinguish three phases, although the chronology can not always easyly be distinguished. There was a start-up phase, which was really more unique to each location in itself than representing a clear period or a clear block within the colonial period. This start-up phase was very often characterised by starting up an activity without a suitable material infrastructure. This logically developed into a sort of consolidation, characterised by building or setting up a room or a classroom specifically intended for and adapted to the provision of education. It is my hypothesis that this was generally accompanied by the consolidation of a mission post, at least in the case where a central mission post was concerned. In the case of the bush schools somewhat more cautious argument is required because the situation there was not as clear. In a third phase, the situation had finally evolved to such an extent that it could be described as the professional management of the school activity and the school buildings. As has been said, the three phases are to be considered more as phases of the life cycle of a mission, the village, or of an individual school. The colonial period cannot be divided into three clearly defined phases. In the next paragraphs I will mainly try to illustrate clearly what these phases looked like at different locations. At the same time, I will attempt to visualise the appearance of the school at the mission post using drawings, illustrations and photographs.

2.1. Start-up phase

When the MSC came to the region in 1924 they were confronted with an existing but limited infrastructure. The Trappists had always given priority to evangelisation in the strict sense. Furthermore, they were never present in very great numbers, which also must have reduced their power considerably. One of them, Father Sebastianus, reported on their Tsuapa mission. He spoke of the "*small number of missionaries, which has never been more than thirteen*." He spoke of the achievements up to that time: "*situated as the first place up the river, is a town with approximately 250 or so Christians*." Here it must be remarked that anyone who was not a Christian was systematically ignored in this sort of report. Consequently, it is very difficult to estimate how many people really lived there. The Father continued his report about the different villages in the area he had visited: "*nearly all worked for the state or for merchants. A chapel, built in 1913 or 1914, had collapsed. The house in which the Father lodged was at the point of collapse. I believe there is now a chapel and house there*." Occasionally, he spoke of the construction of one building or another. He wrote about Mondombe: "*In the month of July of the year 1924 I built a large chapel here thirty metres long by six metres wide*." And about Yalola: "*Yalola is really more beautifully situated. In this place I built a house in 1923, thirty metres long by nine metres wide, with the intention that a mission might come here*." He added a list of places where there were catechists and added the comment: "*At all of the above named places there is a chapel and a house for the Father*." He reported nothing at all about schools.[v]

Teaching by a Father in the Equatorial province. Probably Father Yernaux in Mondombe. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

In a letter from 1920, from the Trappist superior Kaptein to the governor-general, it seems that in each of the five mission posts there was a boys' school.[vi] In the whole area, in contrast, there was only one girls' school.[vii] In the first report by the MSC about the Congo in the *Annalen* (March 1925) there was immediate mention of school buildings. Father Van der Kinderen wrote about Bokote: "*First of all a house will have to be built for the Sisters, whom we expect with excitement; then our own house of clay replaced by one of brick, and in between these a new church has to come because the current chapel is ready to fall down. The new school for the boys is almost ready but for the moment it will have to house the newly arrived Brothers and Fathers*."[viii] In the years following the first arrival, more and more missionaries departed for the Congo. The reports, which they sent home, were often printed in the *Annalen*. Already in 1925 and 1926 they reported on new establishments, where there were always new school buildings to be prepared. At the end of 1925 Edouard Van Goethem reported a new foundation in Boende under the leadership of Father Van der Kinderen, who for the time being was staying "*in the house of the State agent*" and collected a group of children every day to teach them. At about the same time another MSC member, Van Houtte, wrote about a new post in Mondombe: "*After a few hours we stand in the middle of the forest where mighty trees and vines and undergrowth strive with each other. Out of this savage wilderness a Christian village is supposed to arise with its Churches as the middle point, with its houses for Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, with its sections for young girls and women, for boys and youths, with its houses for Christian married couples*."[ix] The choice of words indicates not only the somewhat euphoric mood which was always built up for the public at home but also the central theme of the project: the mission post was there to serve the purpose of the development of Christianity. The church was certainly the beginning, the middle, and the end of the mission project. Van Houtte also reported that he had brought a number of people to start the village up: "*A catechist and his wife, three Christians and a couple of catechumen*." The first construction of the new post was a place to pray and to teach: *"After work they come together under a roof made from leaves and supported by 6 poles, to pray and to receive teaching*." Naturally, this referred to religious education.

2.2. Consolidation

I have already referred to the fact that the state post Coquilhatville situated on the river Congo rather quickly became considered the capital of the region. The MSC had their own way of looking at this. In the first instance they thought of

developing Boteke as the centre of their activities. Finally, they would, however, lean more towards Bamanya, which was only about ten kilometres from Coquilhatville but had a much quieter and more enclosed character than the city.

"Primitive school", MSC mission area, exact place and date unknown. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

One of the Fathers was provoked to pronounce: "*Coq may certainly be the administrative and commercial capital of the region, Bamanya is now the intellectual capital*." The provincial capital, however, could not be ignored. The most important building project there was that of the official school, the *Groupe Scolaire*, and was only begun in 1929. As has already been said, a request was made to the Brothers of the Christian Schools for the leadership of the school. The *Groupe Scolaire* was a rather ambitious project. The teaching began long before the large school building, often seen in photographs, was completed. According to the Brothers' archives the first school year in that school building was that of 1935-1936. However, the lessons had already begun in 1930. An internal document of the Brothers tells the story of the start of the school. On the 20th January 1930 two Brothers, Maillard-Lucien and Frans Van Paula, left for Coquilhatville, where they arrived on the 6th February. They were to start the school. The head in Bamanya, Brother Médard Victorin, had made all the necessary arrangements with the local authorities so that the two could have the classrooms of the old trade school at their disposal. These had been adapted so that they could be used as temporary classrooms. Brother Maillard-Lucien was given the task of managing the school and organising the classes. Van Paula had to give lessons for the first school year. Brother Visitator came by aeroplane to Coquilhatville to inspect the new location and was said to be "*satisfied with the*

provisional organisation of the classes". On Friday 21st February the lessons started. According to the Brothers 197 children appeared and these were divided into four separate classes. On the next day only 187 pupils showed up, on Monday 225. This was a bit too much of a good thing, so that a fifth classroom was very quickly sought, "*auprès du comité de la Chambre de Commerce*".[x] The *Groupe Scolaire* was an official school that the MSC, strictly speaking, had not much to do with. There are, however, indications that much earlier – in 1924 – the MSC had received a free concession of land in Coquilhatville.[xi] This land was intended for building a girls' school and a building for the female teachers. The land was to be found in the *zone neutre ou sanitaire*, between the European and native neighbourhoods of Coquilhatville, something that happened often in the towns that developed in the Belgian Congo.[xii]

More specific information on the foundation of the schools in Coquilhatville may be found in the report by Edouard De Jonghe about his journey through the Belgian Congo in 1924-1925. His journey can be precisely situated: he was there at the end of October 1924, when the takeover of the area by the MSC had just begun. He noted in his report that it was also necessary to attract a female congregation because nothing had yet been done about girls' education. The first real traces of that education are to be found in 1927, hardly two years after the arrival of the MSC. This was a school under the leadership of the *Daughters of Charity*. The provincial inspector Jardon wrote in his inspection report: "*The regular teaching started at the beginning of September 1927, the date on which the temporary room was acquired. The classes are light and well ventilated; they comply with the regulations*."[xiii] There is also an inspection report available on the school year 1928-1929, with comments from the mission inspector as well as from the government inspector. They sound alike where the infrastructure is concerned: "*The school has not yet been organised regularly. The Sister responsible for the classes was sent to prepare the ground. The teaching staff will arrive from Europe and the school will be established according to the official regulations once the classrooms that are under construction have been completed and furnished*."[xiv] Jardon, the state inspector confirmed: "*It cannot be organised seriously until it has a full staff and a suitable location. We will soon be satisfied concerning these two points*."[xv]

At that time there were two ordinary years in the girls' school and a 'preparatory year'. In total 150 girls were enrolled. That number must always be taken with a

pinch of salt because absenteeism was a generally widespread phenomenon. Not every pupil came every day and many dropped out. This was what was stated by the Sisters themselves in their report. There were *de facto* about 90 regular pupils, "(…) *despite the monthly remuneration given to the regular pupils*". All in all this is still a relatively large kernel for a school in its starting period and in the context described. The most important theme in this report, which was in other respects very summary, was the lack of space: "*during the two years in which the school has been functioning we have occupied a temporary classroom.*" And: "*Again, the temporary classroom occupied by the pupils is getting much too small, which makes our task very difficult.*"[xvi]

The building of the Groupe Scolaire (Brothers of the Christian Schools) in Coquilhatville. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

All pupils apparently had to sit together in the same classroom. It involuntarily makes one think back to the photographs in image 16. Again, in the report about the school that was composed by the government inspector at the end of 1929, there is still no progress to be reported about the definitive handing over of the buildings. Still, it appears as if at that time they were already being put into use. The inspector wrote: "*The school building, the property of the Colony, has not yet been completed.*" He went on to describe the building in detail, which indicates that it was in fact already largely completed. Three classrooms, of eight by five and a half metres, were already complete, three others still had to be built. He then reports under the heading "*Didactic organization*": "*Each classroom has a large blackboard and is furnished with good school desks with two seats.*" The three classrooms were populated by the 150 pupils of the primary school, who

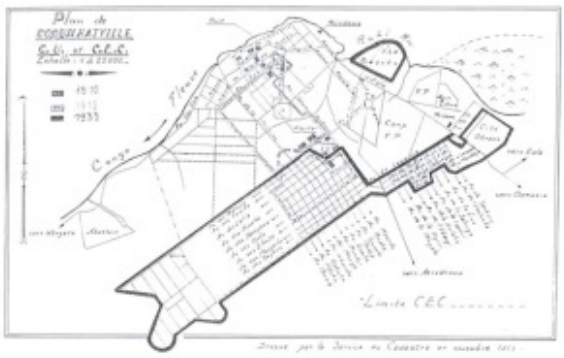
came regularly according to the class registers, and by the 87 children in the kindergarten, who, however, came less regularly because of the great distance involved.

In this phase the development of the girls' school was certainly followed up well by the responsible inspectors. The ink on the Jardon report was not yet dry when Vertenten made a new report in February 1930. From this – more detailed – report it can be seen that there were certainly some difficulties during the start-up and that the material infrastructure played a role in some of them. In the first year there were 80 girls. It is true that they did not all come every day but they all sat in one classroom. The teaching assistant found it hard to keep them in hand: "*80 pupils is certainly a lot for one classroom and one teaching assistant, who is not even professionally trained. The Reverend Sister Headmistress is doing everything possible but I can understand that she sometimes loses heart. It is absolutely necessary to divide this first year in two but there is no classroom available.*"[xvii] In the second grade, which also developed in the meantime, they were confronted with the same types of problems. The two years of the second grade both got lessons from one Sister, *Soeur* Josephine. She gave lessons in turn to the first year and the second year, always in the same classroom.

Finally, there is an interesting observation in connection with the position of the school, which was built on a strip of ground between the 'European town' Coquilhatville and the place where the Congolese lived. As can be seen on the map shown here (p.191), large, grid pattern neighbourhoods developed outside the city centre, where Congolese workers found a place to live. Racial segregation was a fact of life here, too. The only exception must have been the school of the Brothers, which according to Muzuri was housed in the buildings of the *Chambre de Commerce*, which would normally have been in the (European) centre.[xviii] Naturally, this was an official school, which may have played a part in the assignment of temporary accommodation, until the *Groupe Scolaire* was handed over. At the girls' school the distance that the pupils had to travel to and from home seemed to pose a problem, though one of a really ambiguous nature: "*With the intention of resolving the distance from the 'Belge' and in order to stop too frequent comings and goings we are considering establishing a refectory where a hot meal can be served at midday. In this way they would be (sic) removed for a longer period from their milieu and have more contact with their teachers*."[xix] The suggested solution was typical of the beginning period of mission work in

general. The purpose was to separate the children from their environment as much as possible and bring them under the influence of the missionaries. That could only be a good thing, at least according to the Sisters.

The *Belge*, in this case also called "Coq Bakusu", was the first city expansion, a neighbourhood populated purely by the Congolese. The girls' school was certainly established there. The girls therefore seemed to come mainly from the villages around Coquilhatville, maybe also from the military camp in the north of the city. As De Meulder shows, Coquilhatville was much more a loose collection of entities laid down next to each other than a well-considered urban project. A good illustration of this is the description that Paul Jans gave in the *Annalen*: "*On the contrary, the blacks attend well, though the real native village lies a half hour from the church*. (...) *The misfortune of such villages is that they simply knock them down and replace them as the white city spreads. The houses are made of clay and are erected very quickly. In this way the village has moved so far away from the church that it is absolutely necessary to found a new church, near the village and by the military camp.*"[xx] In 1934 a new mission post, specifically for the Congolese neighbourhood, would finally be founded, "Coq Bakusu", around which the *cité indigène* would then develop further.



Plan of Coquilhatville, centre urbain et centre extra coutumier, made by the land registry department. From De Meulder, B. (1994), vol. 2.1. illustration 7.33.

Besides the girls' school there had in fact been a boys' school in Coquilhatville for quite a long time. From the information given by Corman in the *Annuaire* of 1924 it could be deduced that there must have been a school there. This must have

been a school founded by the Trappists. In one of their publications from that period there was a report on religious education: *"When in 1901 the mission began near Coquilhatville, where Bosekya Norbert was a catechist under the first pastor there, E.P. Gregorius Van Dun, many adult people and some who had already being married in the heathen fashion began to come to the lessons*."[xxi] No information is to be found on the material organisation. The vice-governor general Duchesne reported in 1920 in his political report to the governor general that there were certainly some schools in the mission posts but that they did not amount to much. *"The said mission has a so-called primary school. One missionary and one or two teaching assistants enthusiastically teach religion, writing, reading, the 4 major parts of arithmetic, a little on the metric system, perhaps a few notions of hygiene and agriculture*." He is as brief as he is laconic about the results of the education: *"In general, very few pupils, who rarely complete their studies.*"[xxii]

From the travel reports of De Jonghe it can certainly be deduced that the Trappists had started to build a boys' school: *"The school buildings of the Trappists, constructed 2 years ago, include 4 classrooms. The teaching is done by a missionary in the 4th class and by 3 teaching assistants in the lower classes. I have counted around 40 pupils in the 1st year, around 30 in the second, the same in the 3rd and around a dozen in the 4th year. Over the last two years, the Trappists seem to have made a serious effort to provide an adequate school. Their efforts should be encouraged.*"[xxiii] In the first inspection report from 1927 there is some information that fits with what Duchesne reported. According to his information the primary boys' school in Coquilhatville had two years, with 60 and 20 pupils respectively. The personnel indeed consisted of one religious worker, the ex-Trappist Bernard Wiedenbrugge, who was assisted by two Congolese *teaching assistants*. The mission inspector was very brief in his commentary: "*Devoted staff do what they can; the lack of assiduity hinders the general progress; the material could be better*."[xxiv] There was no specific information in this report. The next year the commentary was more detailed and the mission inspector (Vertenten) did not even have enough space to write all his thoughts down. He found that the teachers left much to be desired but also reported that an agreement had been reached between the MSC and the Brothers of the Christian Schools to start up a teacher training college in Bamanya. The government inspector clearly got on well with Vertenten, who had had extensive

contact with him when he was appointed mission inspector. He also wrote positively about the future projects of the MSC.[xxv]

It looks as if Bamanya took a very important position in the mission strategy of the MSC at the end of the 1920s. The centre of gravity of education came to be there and in Bokuma, where a junior seminary was already operating at that time. Coquilhatville got no privileged treatment in any way. The decision was made to set up the *Groupe Scolaire*, inspector Jardon reported in October 1929, and in the meantime the MSC did not find it necessary to do anything about the state in which the classrooms were at that time. They chose to use their money to build schools at other mission posts. However, the situation of the existing infrastructure was not ideal. Jardon wrote: "*The school has three classrooms situated in a brick building with a sheet metal roof, whitewashed walls, a concrete floor and bilateral lighting. These classrooms measure 5 m in length by 6 m 50 wide. In addition, a hangar classroom has been used for the preparatory courses, where excessively young children are admitted to follow the primary courses. Very well maintained, the primary school classes are inadequate for the number of pupils occupying them. Moreover, their arrangement is wrong in the sense that they are wider than they are long.*"[xxvi]

That only seems to strengthen the hypothesis that the MSC did not want to make the big city a priority. In subsequent years schools were extended at other mission posts. As has already been stated in the first chapter, new schools were also built in the new mission posts. Hardly any information can be found on the erection or the interior equipment of these. The reports to the superiors in Rome are missing for this period (the second half of the 1920s). In Boende (founded in 1926) a school building had been erected very soon but just before completion it had been destroyed by a storm. Marcel Es gave an impression: "*The rebuilding was begun with courage. Everything seemed to work against us …. but still we will have one. We then will still need Sisters for the girls' department – which is now being necessarily neglected – and Boende will be fully recovered. And in the meantime? … Two warehouses; a wood warehouse and a shed to dry stones, which serve as a school: a few posts in the ground and a palm roof on them. If there is rain or a thunderstorm, it is impossible to give lessons; open on all sides, there is continual disturbance from the calling and shouting of the workers that keeps them informed about everything that is happening at the mission.* (…) *Yes, it sometimes gets still worse and they all sit outside at the drop of a hat* (…) *One*

of our school warehouses gave up the ghost recently. In the middle of class, suddenly there was a big crack and I and my boys just had time to jump outside."[xxvii] Some years later Father Smolders wrote in the same periodical that they had had to sacrifice the school because of lack of space, to give the Sisters a roof over their heads, and that they had held the school (four classes) in the church.[xxviii]

2.3. Functional phase

In one of the last issues of the Annals of 1930 a call to raise funds was made: "*Considering the new school law introduced by the colonial governor, our missionaries will no longer be permitted to give lessons in barracks erected in wood or stamped earth but innumerable schools must rise from the one end to the other of this continent, which, as much through their strong materials as through their hygienic improvements and also through the demands that are made on their teaching staff, have to conform with the newly posed legal regulations. All this requires a great deal of expenditure and a fundamental professional training for masters and mistresses, so that the Catholic schools will be able to compete with those of the Protestants and Moslems*."[xxix] This referred almost certainly to the first programme brochure, which was issued in 1929. Obviously, this was a half-truth. It would have been rather more correct to state that there were now conditions attached to the subsidies. But it was of course true that people now needed decent schools, which could withstand inspection. And the importance of the infrastructure in this was not to be underestimated.

A minimal infrastructure was also needed outside the schools because a number of mission posts were rather isolated and some posts 'recruited' in a rather extended area. There were many children who had to come a long distance to school and who could not just come and go home. A boarding scheme fitted naturally into striving for immersion, insofar as possible, in the Catholic atmosphere. However, the organisation of this was not always straightforward. In Bokote and in Boende the missions were confronted with a great influx of children, while there was no possibility of lodging all the applicants. Vertenten wrote: "*In Bokote they have been able to accommodate most of the children with the families who live there at the mission. There are families who lodge 20 or 30 children. In Boende there are not enough married people to arrange this lodging, above all the tribes are too diverse there. The boarding building is much too small for 600 boys. The boys themselves have erected emergency huts and gradually*

improved these: huts, larger and smaller, but mostly smaller, with sleeping benches made from branches and one or more fireplaces."[xxx]

A number of the mission posts were probably more developed, in the sense that more missionaries were active there, that the post had a greater catchment area and that education received more care. This has of course to be associated with the development of further education. Although it should be clear by now that the MSC were not particularly great supporters of further education, there were still areas in which they took part. Strictly speaking this was restricted to only two fields, from which one can conclude that these were inspired by a certain necessity: these evidently were teacher training and priestly education. A teacher training college was founded in Bamanya, where a primary school was already established. In Bokuma a junior seminary was set up, in which a great deal was invested too. There was also a primary school there but the seminary certainly recruited in the whole region. Besides this, education also seemed to be developed further in older mission posts, such as Bokote and Wafanya, and newly established posts, such as Flandria and Boende.

Generally speaking, it seems that a relatively long time passed before the infrastructure was in order. Reports of a lack of space were legion. At the school of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Coquilhatville moving could take place in 1932: "*The construction of the primary school is finally completed. After three years of existence the success of this establishment is assured. Because of the lack of space in the temporary classrooms, the school directors had to limit the admission of new pupils*."[xxxi] According to the inspection report for 1934, there were five classes in the girls' school in Bamanya but only four classrooms. Because of this the two highest classes sat together. They sat with a maximum of 25 girls in a classroom of 7 by 5 metres. Obviously, giving separate courses cannot have been easy.[xxxii] In the teacher training college itself the situation was similar in the lower years. In the first inspection report he made about this school, Vertenten wrote: "*I have established that a single group has been made of two groups of children, the one comprises 19 pupils, the most advanced, and the other the remainder, i.e. 27. The teaching assistant in front of this class is especially concerned with the more advanced group, the others (according to the Rev. Fr. Headmaster) have to get what they can from it*."[xxxiii] There seemed to be too few classrooms to split the group in two, but evidently no effort was made to give the people in the first year a suitable course.

There were certainly a number of building projects in the pipeline but they could not always be carried out as quickly as hoped for. Sometimes Fate intervened, as in Boende, in other cases different priorities were simply chosen. That was, for example, the case in Wafanya, the newest of the Trappist missions. In the inspection report for 1931 it was reported that there was a real rush into the school, particularly in the third year: *"It is still necessary to be satisfied with the poor school in adobe. The Reverend Father Superior of the Post, the Rev. Fr. Dubrulle, hopes to start the construction of the new brick school this year. As the old Church is threatened to collapse it was necessary first to build a temporary church. A dispensary and a dressmaking school were essential. The plans for the new school have already been approved by Monseigneur."*[xxxiv] The sewing workshop was apparently more necessary than a proper school. At that time there was still no primary education for girls.

Bokuma, also one of the older mission posts, had a primary school that was led by the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Here, too, they were confronted with similar choices: *"It has not yet been possible to construct the new building we consider necessary. The house, which has as yet housed the boarders, is threatening to collapse and other very urgent works cannot be postponed, so we have not been able to think of it yet. As the small classroom is still adequate for the number of pupils we have renovated it and whitewashed it. All the desks and chairs are new, still temporary but solid and easy."*[xxxv] In Bokote work was begun on better and larger classrooms: *"In the classroom for the first year of the first grade there is overcrowding of pupils. The construction of a fourth, temporary but solid and spacious classroom is in progress. When it has been completed a fourth teaching assistant will be appointed."*[xxxvi] In other places a boarding school was built, as in Bamanya: *"Since I have been here in Bamanya they have built a large school for boys, and another building of 64 by 50 metres. Already 200 boys sleep in it and the beds for the rest will soon be finished."*[xxxvii] And in the new posts the school was immediately included in the planning: *"Flandria: one kilometre from Flandria, we have founded the mission of Boteke. A priest is in charge and 3 sisters of the Precious Blood have been placed there to take charge of the school. They already have a good group of girls. We intend to concern ourselves particularly with the Batswa."*[xxxviii]

For the third phase of my hypothesis, therefore, many marginal comments and shades of detail need to be added. The school curricula obliged the missionaries

to manage the school in an organised manner. It was never straightforward to get everything financed and subsidies became more and more necessary from the 1930s onwards. The degree to which good results were reached was often dependent on very local circumstances and this can best be illustrated by a few concrete examples. In the following section I will consider the development of the mission posts of Flandria and Bamanya in more detail. Flandria was a new mission post, founded by the MSC, Bamanya was the oldest of the already existing mission posts.

A few concrete examples of central and rural schools

3.1. Flandria (Boteka)

3.1.1. Education for the Congolese

Flandria took a special place among the other mission posts of the MSC for three specific reasons. It was a post that was closely connected to a private company, the *Huileries de Congo Belge,* and it was also partly developed by Gustaaf Hulstaert, who was head of the school from 1927 to 1933 and from 1947 to 1950. Vertenten founded the mission post of Boteke or Boteka, as it was really called, in 1926. That occurred at the request of the company, which had been present in the Congo since 1911.[xxxix] The company owned the rights to a wide area in the region, where they wanted to produce palm nuts. The Lever company did not acquire the rights coincidentally. Negotiations with the Belgian State had preceded it. This finally resulted in a *convention*, in which, besides the profit margins for the parties to the contract, the rights and duties of the enterprise were also defined. In this way it was, among other things, determined that education must be provided on every plantation.[xl] The enterprise was therefore contractually obliged to contact the missionaries with the idea of the development of education and the social improvement of the working people. The company was not working on its apprentice piece in Flandria, this is apparent from the way it tackled matters. Vertenten, who as director of the school would also control the infrastructure, received a letter in July 1926 in which he was asked, in the future, to make systematic reports (every four months) about the situation of the school. The letter also specified in detail what kind of information was required: it went from the condition of the building to the names of the teachers, the moral education and the observed influence of the school in the region.[xli]

Later on, the precision and the economy with which the company interacted with the missions were apparent. They did not function as a generous Maecenas but

did work as a business partner. An internal memo from the *managing director* to the *district manager* in Flandria specified in 1928: *"As you are aware, the professional schools of the Société that are managed by the Missions in our different Areas received as a certain Capital Grant for the construction of the school buildings and workshops, dormitories, etc. and now receive an annual sum to cover the cost of the teaching staff, scholars clothing and food, school books, stationery, etc. etc. Over and above this one Capital Grant and the Annual grants nothing must be given to the schools or the Missions connected with them except against payment of its cost price*."[xlii] Another good example was the letter in which the school director was himself asked to make copies of the four-monthly reports that he had to send to the HCB. That would be a significant timesaving for the *Huileries* in Flandria, "*and* (we, JB) *will be certain of avoiding any copying errors*."[xliii] Hulstaert replied to this, with a similar letter, in which he asked them to always send two copies of their letters, for his superiors. He informed them of one difficulty which meant that he could only send four copies of his letters: *"The machine and the paper which I have available cannot make 6 copies at a time*."[xliv]

The construction of the school buildings began in 1928. A lot of people had been involved. Vertenten negotiated for a long time with the management of the H.C.B. about the right location, and the necessary space for the school buildings. In the summer of 1927 he wrote the following: *"You require the construction plans for the buildings we intend to build as quickly as possible. That is easier said than done, especially as I do not know precisely what it is you require and I would like to reply adequately to your request. According to the letter from the Rev. Fr. Dereime from 4 March 1927: 'The government curriculum stipulates that the pupils at the school for clerks eat with place settings, knives, etc. The Adm. Baissel, whom I consulted on this fact, intends to extend the measure to all pupils in school.' – it is thought that the constructions must be erected in the genre of a college or boarding house. According to your sketch attached to your letter of 14 June, it seems that inadequately spacious refectories have been provided to have two hundred pupils eat with place settings, knives, etc*."[xlv] Vertenten was obviously of the opinion that the easiest solution would simply be that H.C.B. should just define what buildings they wanted and that they should simply appoint a construction supervisor.[xlvi]

In September 1928 Hulstaert, who in the meantime had become the director of

the school, reported the following state of affairs: There were four dormitories, which were almost all completely finished. One of the dormitories was used as a classroom because the clay building that had been used as a school was already worn out and thus had been demolished. The building of two houses for teaching assistants was still in progress but they had not yet started on the school building itself. They were still busy with the preparatory groundwork.[xlvii] There was a great deal of discussion about the correct placement for the buildings. Hulstaert would not give way and defended a sufficient distance between the work camps and the location of the school to the management of the H.C.B. He wanted a minimum of 250 metres distance between the two. There was a great deal of disagreement about the correct location of the school buildings. In a report to the State, in early 1929, Hulstaert again expressed his dissatisfaction about the progress: *"The correct operation of the school is hindered by the fact that the constructions have not been completed.* (…) *Difficulties a) material: establishment of the constructions (difficulties in obtaining the ndeles required for the roofing, during almost the entire year; insufficient workforce); b) materials to provide the pupils with the necessary nourishment."*[xlviii] He repeatedly asked for support from the *Huileries* in the form of transport or materials but the repetitions in the correspondence indicated that people at the HCB were not very receptive.

In the summer of 1929 still not much progress had been made. Hulstaert noted in his report to the company that they had even had to replace the temporary classrooms ("*hangars*"), which were used for teaching and as a workshop, because they were falling apart.[xlix] In the second half of that year the work did proceed better but they had clearly not yet begun the building of the school itself. There were constant removals because they had to manage with a minimum of classrooms, while the school population and that of the mission continued to grow. The *dortoirs* functioned in turn as a storage area, a classroom and a dormitory.[l] Again, in the *Annals* Vertenten reported that two of the dormitories were being used temporarily as classrooms.[li] And in October 1930 Hulstaert wrote yet another note to the management of the HCB in Leopoldville concerning the school building, in which he said: *"We constantly have to halt the construction of the school itself."*[lii] In the inspection report written by Vertenten in March 1931 no direct allusion was made to the building problems. That probably indicates that it was not really considered a problem. The only remark in the report that could possibly be connected with the condition of the infrastructure is the conclusion: *"An attempt is being made to do the five years of primary school*

in three years and we have every confidence in its success."[liii]

In an official inspection report (of the government inspector) that was made half-way through 1929,[liv] the state of affairs concerning the infrastructure of the H.C.B. school was described almost completely: "*Four dormitories for boarders, each comprising two rooms of 12 metres by six, have been constructed. These are brick buildings with a concrete floor, whitewashed walls, sheet roofing, with bilateral lighting. While awaiting the final construction of the school, one of the two rooms in these buildings will be used as a classroom. These rooms are perfectly adequate. The final plan for the school has been given to me. The installations – primary school and vocational subjects – comprise 7 classrooms: one of 10 m, 50 by 6 m, 40; four by 8 metres by 6 m, 40; two by 6 m, 40 by 5 m, 25. The school will be built in brick and covered by sheet metal. The ground of the buildings will be concreted."* Subsequently, the building programme yet to be completed was unveiled. From this it was apparent that at that moment there was still reckoned to be 18 to 24 months before work on the school would be commenced. The priority was given to the further completion of the dwellings of the European staff (the missionaries) and the remaining provisions for the pupils. It was reported that there was already a kitchen, as well as two dwellings for teaching assistants and a "*fosse à fumigation suffisante pour 120 hommes*".[lv] Besides this the report also mentioned a *jardin d'essai*, which, in principle, was obligatory for all primary schools according to the 1929 school curriculum. Incidentally, "*Cultures faites par les élèves*" were also reported so that it may be deduced that two different things were truly meant by these references. In any event it was a fact that the pupils were engaged to provide their own living provisions and those of the mission post. They also had to help with the building work. The missionaries considered this a good practical training. Hulstaert declared in a letter to the manager of the HCB: "*With regard to using the pupils for light works to be carried out over a part of their time I have the honour of informing you that we have done the same since the very beginning. It is moreover an educational element to accustom them to manual work from a young age*."[lvi] In 1935 the new manager, Trigalet, reported, not without a certain pride: "*From a point of view of agricultural work, the upkeep for 40 Ha plantation of Elaïs* (palm plantation, JB) *is left to the care of our pupils*."[lvii]

One of the biggest problems with which the missionaries were confronted at the post was the provision of food. It was apparently enormously difficult to

continuously deliver food for a large number of boarders. The mission post itself had limited ground: *"Surrounded from all sides by huge plantations of the H.C.B., the school only has very restricted land available. The buildings and the various subjects take almost all of it*."[lviii] Hulstaert also had discussions with the HCB-management about the provision of food. What the food for the pupils should be allowed to cost was worked out to the centime. According to the H.C.B. it was agreed that for each pupil, each day, one franc was paid for buying food. The government inspector, Jardon, had made remarks in his report about the insufficient rations for the pupils. According to the general management in Leopoldville the allowances were enough. The missionaries must have made agreements with the territorial administration about the delivery of food by the population from the surrounding villages. And they must have developed and expanded the cultivation by the pupils, so as to have sufficient food supplements.[lix] Hulstaert reacted to this a few months later in his typical, detailed style. At the same time it gives a good picture of the sort of provisions available for the pupils:

... Quant aux chickwangues, nous les achetons également ici aux magasins de la Société.[787] Elles nous sont facturés 0,2795 fr. pièce. Elles ne pèsent pas 1 kg. mais leur poids moyen est de 440 gr. seulement. Et nous constatons encore une tendance à la baisse du poids. En outre il nous est souvent impossible d'avoir la quantité nécessaire. Ainsi pendant le mois courant, nous n'en avons pu obtenir que 200 par semaine, alors que le nombre des élèves dépasse 100. Nous nous voyons donc obligés d'en acheter ailleurs. Or le prix de faveur est de 1 f. les 3 chickwangues.

Je me permets de vous présenter ici deux schèmes faite sur cette base, avec les prix minima et maxima. Les quantités indiquées ne me semblent pas exagérées, vous en conviendrez également en comparant la somme allouée et le prix des vivres tels que vous les indiquez.

3 chickwangues	0,8385	à 1,00
30 gr. d'huile	0,12	à 0,12
250 gr. poisson	0,141	à 0,2142
préparation	0,0193	à 0,0194
	1,1188	à 1,3536
200 gr. de riz	0,44	à 0,50
1 chickwangue	0,2795	à 0,3333
50 gr. d'huile	0,20	à 0,20
250 gr. poisson	0,141	à 0,2142
préparation	0,0193	à 0,0194
	1,0798	à 1,2667

Permettez-moi de vous faire remarquer encore que les prix des chickwangues tend à une hausse; les indigènes commencent à exiger 50 centimes pour une seule chickwangue. Ensuite le riz ne saurait pour les gens d'ici remplacer le manioc qu'en partie. D'ailleurs il requiert une quantité d'huile plus grande à cause de la préparation.

Les schèmes n'indiquent pas de légumes etc. vu que les élèves peuvent les cultiver eux-mêmes. Mais la préparation exige de l'huile et une rétribution pour les femmes qui s'en occupent. Cette rétribution est de 0,0193 à 0,0194 f. par élève et par jour. Plus tard il faudra un cuisinier, ce qui augmentera les frais de préparation d'à peu près 2 centimes par élève et par jour, le tout calculé sur la base actuelle de 100 élèves.

... Nous étendons les cultures faites par les élèves, mais le temps et le terrain mis à leur disposition ne permettent que la culture de quelques vivres supplémentaires, comme des légumes, des condiments, fruits, etc.

Gustaaf Hulstaert about the cost of living (1929). Aequatoria Archives

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See Illustration

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Excerpt 1 – Gustaaf Hulstaert about the cost of living (1929). Aequatoria Archives.

At the end of his letter he gave another explanation for his extensive and detailed account. He said it was a very important element in the correct functioning of the school. If the provision of food was not in order, the teaching hours also suffered because the pupils had to take care of it themselves. Providing their own means of survival necessarily had a detrimental effect on the time that could be spent on the lessons and consequently on their intellectual training.[lxi] The conclusions by Hulstaert correspond exceptionally well with the memory of one of the interviewees, Jean Indenge, of his time at school in Wafanya during the forties:

La mission, ou l'école organisait des repas. Mais, de quel repas s'aggissait-il? Je vous dessine un chikwangue … Alors, là, c'était cette forme. (he draws a sketch, JB). C'étaient les femmes qui venaient de loin, qui vendaient ça aux missionnaires pour les élèves.

Alors, quand on revenait de la messe, à 7 h. du matin, on recevait chacun un quart (montre sur le dessin). Un petit morceau comme ça. C'est du pain. Mais c'était insuffisant pour un garçon qui devait étudier, et qui devait (fortement) travailler comme un militaire, pour ne pas dire comme un prisonnier.

Alors, ce chikwangue, quand ça datait de plus d'une semaine, ça produisait déjà des champignons. Je suis très content que vous m'avez posé des questions là-dessus, et j'aimerais bien voir un ou une missionnaire qui va me contredire sur ça. Parce que moi, j'étais là, je ne raconte pas ce qu'on m'a raconté.

Donc ce n'était pas suffisant. Alors, on devait manger quoi? Parfois il n'y avait pas autre chose. Parce que si nous attendions le dimanche, ou le soir, nous avions la même chose, plus des petits morceaux, j'ai oublié comment on appelle ça, de peau de cochon. Ils étaient grillés, et on les coupait en petites rondelles, comme ça. Et, parfois le dimanche, on recevait un demi chikwangue au lieu d'un quart. Ajoutez à ça comme légume des petits pois prépares, il y en avaient même qui ne voulaient pas manger ça, quand ils voyaient ça, ou avec un peu de riz. Donc, on sentait simplement l'odeur de viande, mais ce n'était que ce petit morceau, je ne sais plus comment on appelle ça. ("*makala*") [lxii]

The letter Father Dereume, head of the HCB school in Alberta, wrote to Hulstaert in 1948 is very intriguing in that context. Boys from the school in Flandria were sent to Alberta with the intention of continuing their education there. But apparently it was difficult to get used to the regime in Alberta because the boys already caused problems after one week. One of the reasons the pupils gave for this was the food: "*This morning a group of four boys came to me to tell me they were hungry. They are given the same food as the other boys including those who have come a long way and have no family here. Our boys are all well built and are regularly examined by the doctor, so there is no lack of food. It is not surprising they probably are rather homesick, the eldest who was in Kisantu is trying to convince them of that and we hope that he will succeed. But they are rather demanding: they had 100 grams of fish FOUR times a week in Flandria and meat on all feast days, that is probably not exactly true (sic), our boys do not and could*

not get that."[lxiii] Hulstaert himself did not worry too much about that, as he made clear in a letter to the directors of the company. He wrote that he was aware that the Nkundo were rather picky and had also made the same complaints in other schools.[lxiv]

3.1.2. Batswa school

Flandria and the mission post at Boteke were in a region where a large number of Batswa lived, a population group that drew a lot of attention. The Batswa distinguished themselves from the rest of the population by their stature and their lifestyle. They were 'pygmies' who formed relatively closed communities. According to the missionaries their lifestyle was even more primitive than that of the Nkundo, who were considered the 'ordinary' inhabitants of the Tshuapa. The pygmies were an irresistible attraction for the missionaries. Already in 1922, in other words at a time when no MSC were in Africa, Father Es gave a lecture at the mission seminary about the pygmies. He described the essential characteristics of the pygmy: "*The ornamentation of the body and mutilations of all kinds are little known. They dress minimally, do not work more than necessary, in other words not at all, live from the hunt, live in caves or behind a windbreaker or in a house built in 20 minutes used for one night and then abandoned. It is also necessary to work for pottery. Consequently, it is not surprising that these outstandingly lazy people have none: all they have, and they are proud of it, are the woods with their game: they have terrible eyes, their legs are as strong as iron and as flexible as rubber, a bow and arrows and to top it all a (…) trust in Providence. (…) They have a philosophy of common sense for everything they do and for this they are able to become independent from circumstance*."[lxv]

This description was characterised by a form of oversimplification that can also be seen in articles on the Pygmies that were published in the *Annalen.* In 1942 the following statement could be read there: "*The Nkundos dominated the Batswas. The missionaries and sisters themselves also despised the Batswa's: they are dirty, stink, do not wash their children.*" The account by father Wauters in 1935 was slightly more detailed but still clearly aimed at readers in Belgium. Wauters emphasised the fact that the Batswas and certainly the Batswa children hated a settled and ordered life. They much preferred hunting and running around in the woods. Sitting still in a classroom was asking a great deal of the children. He greatly emphasised the 'wild' aspect (in the sense of 'not calm') of all their activities.[lxvi] Around the time that Wauters' article was published, Van Goethem

also wrote his annual report of the MSC mission that has already been cited, in which he paid a lot of attention to the Batswas. In it he quoted two reports drawn up by the same father Wauters on request of the vicar. Wauters considered the method for converting the Batswas and the general condition of the Batswa population: the location of the villages, the outlook of the villages ("*lamentable*"), their mentality, which was defined as 'driven by fear' and characterised by an inferiority complex in relation to the Nkundos. In addition he also described them as dirty, without any sense of hygiene and victim to all kinds of disorders, from venereal diseases to skin problems. He also described the relationship between Nkundos and Batswas, which was apparently a master-slave relationship. According to a certain tradition the Nkundos exercised mastery over the Batswas and obliged them to carry out a number of duties.

Naturally, it is interesting to compare the explanation he gave here to the text published in the mission periodical. Obviously, these reports were, due to the nature of the text, much more elaborated and much richer in detail and nuances. For example, the psychological element and the relations with the Nkundos were considered much more deeply, something that could not be found in the popularising literature. From that angle it is very educational to study more carefully the text dedicated to the pygmies in the textbook *Buku Ea Mbaanda*, which Hulstaert prepared at around the same time for use in the Congolese schools: "*All the pygmies are very intelligent at working in the forests. They do not make mistakes during the hunt, they know the ways of all the animals, they do not get lost in the forests. Like riverside residents are in water so they are in the forests. They only live in the forests. The pygmies do not have any fields, they do not care for their houses and yards, they do not wash their clothes. They only live in the forests with what they find there. They live in their own way. They do not seek intelligence and pleasure very much. The pygmies are not polygamous like the tribes in the Congo. In this way they have been applying God's laws since the beginning of time, that one man has one wife. Many do not have the ability to be polygamous because of a lack of funds. When the church arrived in the Congo to teach people the way to Heaven, the pygmies did not want to believe it. Perhaps they will believe afterwards. But at the moment they move and wander through the forests. The State has evicted a large number of pygmies, for them to live in the streets. But they are not yet accustomed to living in villages and often return to the forest. They have not yet abandoned their custom of flight. They are very negligent in matters relating to God and the world.*"[lxvii]

Photograph of a Batswa village. From Schebesta, Les Pygmées du Congo Belge.

This is based on the conclusions that Wauters made in his reports and the points of action he formulated in relation to the Batswas. He assumed that the missionaries could intervene in the pygmies' lifestyle and make them completely 'sedentary': *"It is necessary to make the Batswa people, who are essentially hunters, into an agricultural people. The Batswa are healthy, vigorous and strong people; they are suited to agriculture and it will safeguard the future of this tribe."* That was the role of the missions. For its part the State had first and foremost to reduce the taxation on the Batswas, as they had also already done so in the Kasaï province. The State also had to encourage them to build houses in loam instead of the straw huts they lived in. According to the priest the blame for this was partly the Nkundos who prohibited the pygmies from building solid residences. But most importantly schools had to be established and more particularly an agricultural school and a craft school. Both were to be used as aids to make the Batswas sedentary.[lxviii] Father Wauters' ideas concerning agricultural education at least continued to burn for a long time with the MSC. Apparently, attempts were continually made to have the boys learn agriculture at school, which was not an obvious matter for a people that lived from the hunt. In 1945 Hulstaert congratulated the people of Flandria with the results they had achieved in this area.

There was definitely a Batswa school in Flandria. It is not always as clear what school is being mentioned when checking the courses. Van Goethem was also rather unclear in his annual report for 1934-1935: *"The Huilever continues to provide the upkeep for one hundred pupils. There are 350 in the school. Evening*

courses are also taught there to which 48 assistants attend. At the mission post in Boteke, which is in addition to the School Group from Flandria, we have a boarding school for Batswa with one hundred and thirty pupils. We have succeeded in inculcating serious discipline in this timid and wild people."[lxix] Whether there were also actually two schools is unclear from this. In an article published in 1954 in *De Toekomst*, one of the periodicals of the seminary students, it was claimed that the mission at Flandria was actually made up of two sections. The first section situated at the HCB concession, with a church, a presbytery and other facilities, including schools. The other part was 'the mission post itself', where more functions were clearly housed: "*church, presbytery, convent and girls' school, sewing room, kitchen, laundry, stables, further on a smithy, carpentry, brick ovens, palm and coffee plantations.*" That seems clearer, if it were not that furthermore the text mentions that father Wauters had founded a Batswa mission, in addition to the Nkundo mission, that the Batswas had their own school and *moniteurs* and that another new Batswa school was founded in 1950, subsidised by the State.[lxx]

Photograph of a Batswa village. From Schebesta, Les Pygmées du Congo Belge.

A remark in a letter by Hulstaert, from July 1946, gives some clarification. The letter is precisely related to the management of the Batswa school and the effect of it on the subsidies to be allocated. The missionary-inspector (who succeeded Hulstaert in that position) had proposed making the headmistress of the girls'

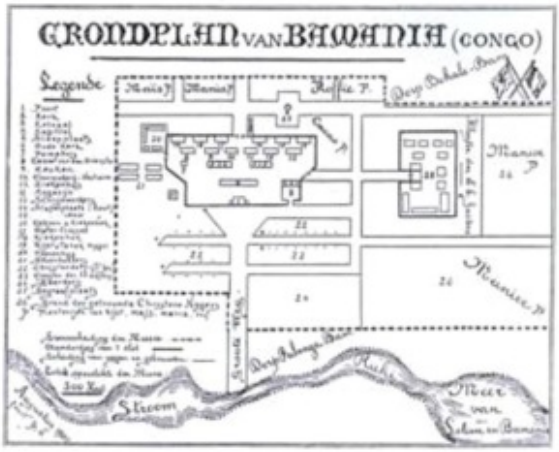
school also the headmistress of the Batswa school. Hulstaert, who had himself just become the head of the HCB school and rector of the mission, wrote: *"For the official inspection, however, it is unacceptable for one person to be the head of two schools. This is also impossible in practice. The same case would however also arise if I should take on the school; in fact it would then be even worse because it is even more work than it would be for Sr. Imberta. The only difference would be that in her case the reports would have to mention her both with the girls and the boys, while the HCB school is not stated in the reports and consequently is not noticeable there*."[lxxi] The HCB school consequently fell under the category of a private school and was not in the system for subsidies.

Frans Maes, who worked in Flandria from 1948, indicated that, when he arrived, there was only a boys' school 'at the compagnie'. When asked for a summary of the school situation, however, he said: "*(There was) a primary school on the site of the compagnie, just for boys. At the mission there was a school just for Batswas, not for others. With three yearly levels; and a few from the fourth or fifth year came to me. That was the case until '55 and '56. Then two years were merged into one because the school year was then made the same as in Europe. A girls' school was also built at the mission, in '51 and '52, which the sisters cared for. Everaert built it, he had also built the mission, in white brick. Consequently at the end there were three schools; the one for the Batswas only existed until '54, I think. They then came to me at the compagnie*."[lxxii] That seems to confirm that the mission school was intended for the pygmies from the beginning and that the building problems discussed extensively here relate to the same school.

In his inspection report from 1939 on the Batswa school Hulstaert did not mention the material problems in more detail but did mention the subsidy problems. He particularly feared that the school's subsidies could be threatened due to the irregular attendance of the Batswas. Nevertheless, there was a boarding school connected to the school. That did not appear to be very effective because the pupils would sometimes disappear for many weeks.[lxxiii] It seems that the educational project with regard to the Batswas was taken close at heart by the MSC. At the same time, however, they believed that they should be approached differently. In the same way the Congolese related to the whites, the Batswa related to the Congolese. Hulstaert: "*Of course a school for the Batswa will not reach a high 'academic' standard in a few years as is the case for the schools for Baoto, nor is that expected. The main thing is that the boys are given a*

proper education, adapted to their ethno-social nature. (…) One must not be as demanding as elsewhere. The aim must not be set so high."[lxxiv]

It seems that the school was in fact closed for a while because in the correspondence between Hulstaert and the head of the school (presumably father Cobbaut)[lxxv] the question of reopening is mentioned. Apparently, transferring the school to Bokatola, a few hundred kilometres south of Flandria, where the MSC wanted to found a new post, had been considered: "*Thank you very much for your last letter. In relation to it and to my letter nr I.568, I would like to inform you that Monseigneur does not agree with my idea of keeping the central Batswa school in Bokatola. In his opinion it must remain in Flandria and under your management. So please consider my proposal as non existing. I hope that the re-establishment of your school proceeds well. I would especially recommend an experimental garden, as undoubtedly something could be achieved with that people in agriculture.*"[lxxvi] Moreover, the plan for the mission post was never realised. At the end of 1943 the head wrote a letter to Hulstaert in which he proposed reopening the Batswa school, which indicates that it had been closed at least during 1943.



Grondplan van Bamania.

Drawing of the floor plan of the Bamanya mission, anno 1901. From Het Missiewerk in Belgisch Congoland, 1905.

3.2. Bamanya

3.2.1. Introduction

I have already stated that Bamanya was considered by the MSC as the "jewel in

the crown" of their Congo mission. The village was the oldest Catholic establishment in the region, founded by the Trappists in 1895. Education was also given there, although this was certainly very rudimentary until the beginning of the First World War. The ground plan that was published in the Trappists' periodical in 1901 did not show any educational infrastructure. It is also apparent from photographs, as shown in chapter 3, that not much more than religion lessons were given in the church. However, both sources only allow conjecture on the real situation. In the *Annales Aequatoria* from 1990 a (posthumous) article was published which had been written by Hulstaert on Bamanya in the 'olden days', in which he wrote down memoirs of the way Bamanya looked at the arrival of the MSC.[lxxvii] He referred on numerous occasions to a plan published in 1910 but that proves to be the same as that from 1901. However, in relation to that plan he already mentioned a great number of changes. Amongst others he described the school buildings: "*The building that is currently still located to the right of the former abbot's residence or common room, but a little to the front and in a perpendicular direction, was the first school for teaching assistants-catechists, run at the time of my arrival by Fr. Georges Lefevere (transferred to Mondombe in November 1927). The classrooms were situated at the bottom; the attic served as dormitories for the students who ascended there using an outdoor ladder.*

... Later it was used as the primary school classroom and then as a room for M.S.C. youth foyer"[lxxviii] He continued with some explanations about the construction of the primary school itself: "*Parallel to the latter construction there is also a building with temporary classrooms for the primary school. It was demolished when the new one, which is still standing, was built by the lay builders employed by the Vicariate. More to the left, in the direction of the Bonkele marsh, the plan mentioned above shows four rectangles, the no. 21 indicating the brickworks, which still served for the construction of the final school buildings in the 1930s.*" Consequently, the school was also started here before there were decent buildings. The Brothers of the Christian Schools already came to Bamanya at the end of the twenties.

Agreement between the MSC and the Brothers of the Christian Schools concerning the formation of a teacher training college for the Congolese in Bamanya, 5 November 1928. Aequatoria archives.

In a letter of 8 January 1929 Vertenten, who was the mission superior at that time, wrote to the *Frère Visiteur* that he had not expected that the arrival of the Brothers would be arranged so quickly and that he would try to have all the necessary measures taken as quickly as possible to allow work to start. Apparently, buildings had already been provided at that time for the primary school classrooms because they were not mentioned, unlike the school equipment, for which there was still a great need. The teacher training school, however, still had to be built and he did consider that in detail. The Brothers had ensured that the government had allocated a considerable amount in subsidies for this school. The Brothers' house and the classrooms were to be built in bricks made on site by the MSC (the brickworks were also mentioned on the old plan of the mission post). The actual building works would then only begin once the Brothers had arrived and approved the design.[lxxix] Nevertheless, the rector hoped to have completed the work around the beginning of March. That it did not progress so well in reality is apparent from another letter from September of that year in which Jans mentioned the material and workforces for the construction of the Brothers' rooms. This presumably related only to the private accommodation

of the Brothers, for which they were themselves contractually responsible, although the MSC helped them with the organisation. The school buildings were presumably were finished faster.

In his inspection report of 1930 Vertenten noted that a large boarding school had been built, intended to offer accommodation to 200 pupils. In addition the furniture was still being worked on: "*We have produced a number of new benches and desks, which are very good although temporary. It has as yet been impossible for us to produce model and final desks.*"[lxxx] Van Goethem added a little more in his annual report on the mission in 1931: "*A colony for boys has been built, with three hundred beds, a sanitary installation, and a health centre*."[lxxxi] In 1932 he wrote a contribution for the mission periodical of the MSC, in which he was clearly proud of the results achieved after three years. He reported that the first teaching assistants had graduated, eleven in total. He was full of praise for the Brothers: the difference to the past was considerable. He claimed that at that time around 300 pupils, all boys, were at school, of which two thirds were boarders.[lxxxii]

Vertenten's comment on the contrast with the past was certainly accurate. The division of the school into a school for girls and one for boys was only introduced after the Brothers started their work. The girls' school and the kindergarten were initially next to each other on the same site. According to the 1933 report there was certainly sufficient space and equipment for the kindergarten: "*Two rooms have been allocated for the kindergarten, the larger room 5 x 13 ½ m, with 3 large windows and a small adjacent room*." The primary school accommodated 96 pupils, divided over five years. However, there were only four rooms for this. The two higher years were consequently taught together by a Belgian sister, while the other years were taught by a teaching assistant. In the 1934 report further details were given of the outlook of the school. The classrooms were all in stone, a few with a concrete floor, others only with a clay floor. They measured between 35 and 48 square metres and had windows on both sides with white curtains as sunblinds. The pupils sat at the school desks in threes or fours. In addition sister Auxilia also mentioned boards, cupboards and chests as school furniture and "*the elements of the metric system, charts, catechism and bible pictures*" as "documentary equipment".[lxxxiii] The inspector reported that the classes were orderly and clean, each pupil had his own pencil case. In his 1936 report Hulstaert did note in passing that the school desks were not really a blessing for

the children: *"Despite the unfortunate design of the desks, more care should be taken of the children's posture* (when writing, JB)."[lxxxiv]

Teacher training college Bamanya, 1933. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

How the girls' primary school had developed was indicated in a report from 1938. At that time it already included five years, divided over two grades. The fact that the girls' school had also developed that well indicates that Bamanya truly had become an important centre for education. As a good example of how decisive the 1930s were for the development of education: in April 1929 the girls' school was founded, comprising three years. From February 1931 there was a complete five-year structure (divided over two grades). That was also confirmed in the report by Van Goethem for that year.[lxxxv] In the following year a domestic science school was also started but apparently it did not take off initially. Van Goethem explained this as follows: *"For the year 1935 the school of Bamanya proposed organising a 6th year, followed by 8 girls, who would follow courses in religion, reading, writing, arithmetic, French, drawing, women's work: cutting, dress-making, embroidery, knitting, crochet, pottery, etc. in addition to domestic science. This is the second attempt of this type, which apparently is more promising than the first because the pupils are younger.*"[lxxxvi] In 1935 the domestic science department was reopened and from 1937 comprised three years of study.

3.2.2. The 1940s

More information on the development of the schools was given in a few inspection reports from the 1940s. The following was reported on the boys' school in 1944: *"The situation of the buildings leaves much to be desired, particularly the old school, the roof of which is in a dreadful condition. The pisé-de-terre construction*

classroom that serves for the first year has become dilapidated. Fr. Rector has his hands so full with all kinds of imposed and extremely urgent works on buildings that he cannot find any means to do up the school classrooms, although they really need it. This condition of the buildings stands out sharply from the carefully tended flowerbeds beside the school."[lxxxvii] Which points again to the work that the pupils did at the mission post. The report also considered the experimental gardens, which were still the pride and joy of the missionaries. In 1946 Hulstaert also repeated his complaint on the condition of the buildings: "*The building for the teacher training college is very satisfactory but the buildings for the primary school, especially the first year's classroom that is truly dilapidated, should certainly be improved*."[lxxxviii] In the same year the missionary inspector wrote about the girls' school: "*The school building has undergone a remarkable change: it has been given a zinc roof, unneeded door openings have been closed, everything has been beautifully whitewashed and painted. However, an attic is still needed urgently because it gets unbearably hot immediately under the roof around noon and especially in the afternoon*."

One year later the state inspection drew up a more detailed report on the Sisters' school. The report included the drawing of the school buildings shown here. In addition it also considered the condition of the furniture. The classroom furniture was in order but the dormitories were not as acceptable. There was only one dormitory where mosquito nets were provided and then there were still too few: "*There are only 6 mosquito nets for the eleven pupils who sleep there, which clearly results in deplorable promiscuity.*" With regard to didactic material, there was also a shortage, especially for the youngest. The sisters had ordered school boards and some tables and chairs for the domestic science school. In addition, there were only two toilets for 131 pupils, which seemed rather limited to the inspector. In any event, it meant that the terrible smell around the toilets was unbearable, as no septic pit had been installed.[lxxxix] The inspector had apparently also made remarks about the boys' school, on deficiencies in the classrooms and dormitories: "*The rain leaks through the ndele roofs of the two said buildings, causing damage to the rooms themselves and to the school furniture. It is almost impossible to teach in these rooms on days of heavy rains*."[xc] The dormitories stank. Although these rooms were very close to the marsh, there were also hardly any mosquito nets there. The inspector also made a vague allusion here to the damaging consequences for the boys: "*The few pupils who have a mosquito net invite a few friends to spend the night with them, which*

is, especially for the boarders, something which is not advisable."[xci] Why that was the case was not mentioned.

The school head, Father Wauters, responded in a particularly irritated way and wrote a letter to Van Goethem in which he parried the criticism from the state inspection. According to him the inspector had smelled the manure from the cowshed instead of the toilets. However, he did implicitly admit later on in the letter that he was right but attributed that to the unwillingness of the Sisters to move the toilets to a more remote site. He naturally also had to react to the remark relating to "*promiscuity*": "*Mr. Van Meerbeeck obviously comes from a family with only a few children otherwise he would know that brothers and sisters from large families in Belgium always sleep together. I have never heard those families complaining of 'deplorable promiscuity'.*" He even added a few gibes at the inspector: "*If the Department of Education would like to compensate the expenses, I am naturally immediately prepared to buy iron beds for all the children. In addition I have also ordered 500 mosquito nets for the boys and girls at Bamanya. Once they have arrived they will be handed out for use, in the hope that the Department of Education will pay for them.*" Furthermore, the Father did not give the impression that he had fundamental problems with the material condition of the school. He thought that the schoolchildren in Bamanya were accommodated much better than in their parents' houses, which constituted an improvement to their life. He finally also took a swing at the government: improvements and expansion of the building had been discussed for some time but if the state, with all its means, did not succeed in providing some infrastructure within a short period, that was even more the case for private parties, especially as it was difficult to find good workers. It is clear that the priest had to confirm nearly all the inspector's arguments, no matter how much he tried his best to find counter arguments and excuses.

Drawing of the school of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Bamanya. The captions with the drawing: no. 1: brick building, covered with corrugated sheets, with six classrooms in one school building, no. 2: one classroom for the kindergarten and boarding school, sewing room, dining room, storeroom, playroom, infirmary, kitchen and the mission storage place; this building was rectangular and had an inner courtyard divided into two separated parts; the building was constructed in brick and was partially covered by corrugated sheets, the other part in ndele (shaded). no. 3: laundry and ironing room, also built in brick and covered with ndele. no. 4: toilets. From the report by the state inspection for 1947. Aequatoria Archives.

3.2.3. The 1950s

In the early 1950s the girls' school was made up of a U-shaped building complex, including six classrooms, probably of 8 by 6 metres. The flooring was concrete and the roofing zinc sheets. Four rooms served as classrooms for the lower grades, two as classrooms for the domestic science department. The kindergarten, which was also integrated in that complex, comprised a single room of 14 by 3.5 metres. There were windows on two sides throughout ("*sufficient lighting and ventilation*"). The children in the kindergarten sat at small tables and chairs, in the primary school long benches were used and in the domestic science school the girls were given a table and chair. The teachers had a desk and a chair available and taught using a school board, made from wood or cardboard.

The boarding school comprised 3 dormitories, a dining room, a 'native' kitchen, a workroom, a sitting room and a storage area. The building was entirely constructed in stone. The flooring was made partially from concrete, partly from terracotta (e.g. in the kitchen) and the roofing was partly zinc sheets and partly *ndele*. Electric lighting was a major innovation for the evenings. The condition in the boarding school was apparently considerably improved now. The pupils slept in wooden beds or beds made according to the model used in the boys' school. Each pupil had a mosquito net, a native mat, a blanket and a pillow. There was a chamber pot for every two pupils. In addition, the inspection report of 1950 also stated: "*The pupils sit at tables in the dining room covered with a clean table cloth and on benches. Each pupil has a plate and a spoon. In addition there are bottles with clean drinking water on the table, with an enamelled drinking mug per two pupils. The dining room is completely clean and looks especially pleasant in its simplicity.*"[xcii]

The report stated the following about the boys' school: "*The first year is established in a room in the boarding school. It is made from durable materials, is covered in sheet metal and the floor is in terracotta. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th years are established in a separate building opposite the Brothers' house; two of the rooms are 9m x 5m and one is 7.5m x 5m. The whole is constructed in durable materials, with a concrete floor and a roof in ndele, but its outer appearance has changed a lot since last year* (…) *The 5th and 6th years occupy two classrooms of 7m x 8m each in the normal school complex, which is also made from durable materials, with a concrete floor and sheet metal roof*." There was sufficient lighting and ventilation. According to the missionary inspector a few rooms could

do with a coat of paint but except for that everything was in very good condition. In addition, he also mentioned the presence of a small workshop for handicrafts and a few hangars that were used as a brickworks: *"In one the earth has been worked and bricks are made from wooden moulds, the other is used for drying the bricks and the third houses the oven where the bricks are baked."* This was consequently also considered a part of the school, although everything points to the missions also trying to earn some money from this by supplying buyers from around the mission posts with bricks.

The boarding school was made up of a separate complex, with an inner courtyard and four dormitories of 24 by 4 metres, a large dining room of the same dimensions, a room of 12 by 4 metres that served temporarily as a classroom (for the first year), two rooms for the *Père Surveillant*, two storage places and half-open hangars where the children could 'relax' and cook "*à leur gré*". From the remarks of former pupils it may be deduced that the voluntary aspect of this sometimes had to be taken with a pinch of salt and that the hangars pretty much served as the permanent living area for the children. The beds were made from wooden planks that sloped slightly and that were supported by some bricks. There was a mosquito net for every bed, a mat and a blanket.

View of the boarding school of the girls' school in Boende. MSC Borgerhout collection.

Every pupil had a place at the table, a chair, a plate and a spoon in the dining room. The sanitary facility had finally been replaced: *"12 installations in durable materials and with a concrete floor have replaced the old portable sheds this year. They are very well maintained but more ventilation at the top would better ensure the elimination of all disagreeable odours."*[xciii] The school furniture included

long benches which were old-fashioned (in the inspector's opinion) and that should be replaced by modern models. More modern pairs of seats were used in the highest classes of the primary school.

In 1951 the report of the missionary inspector did not go into details with regard to the infrastructure. It was simply stated that the changes that had been started at the end of the 1940s had unfortunately not been continued.[xciv] The 1952 report again considered the material aspects of the boys' school in detail. Strangely enough Moentjens, who had been rather positive about the school in 1950, gave a very detailed but relatively critical report: "*All the classrooms are in good condition but the periodic upkeep of the classrooms leaves much to be desired. The layout of the benches themselves sometimes gives an impression of disorder. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th primary classes are too small for the current number of pupils. (…) Unfortunately, the impression of the interior appearance of the classrooms and the furniture is nothing to be proud of in either of the two schools. Almost all the primary school rooms are too small. It would be a major and greatly beneficial improvement if a headmaster's office and a reception be added in the new secondary school building so that the head would no longer be obliged to receive people in his own residence.*"

Aerial photograph of Bamanya, in the 1990s. The buildings of the Sisters of the Precious Blood are to the bottom left, the church and parish hall are in the centre, with the village above. To the right, under the river (a tributary of the Ruki), is the former boys'

boarding school with the residences of the Fathers a little further down on the left, where the building of the Aequatoria research centre is also situated, hidden from sight by the trees. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

He was equally critical of the furniture: *"That (the furniture) of the 4 first primary years is not worthy of a central application school as Bamanya."* The boarding school was also too small: there were only 196 beds for 208 boarders. Apparently, not much had happened during the two preceding years. Although it was clear that certainly not everything was in order, from the remarks given here it may be deduced that the standards used for evaluation had also shifted somewhat and that the condition of the school had certainly not deteriorated in general. An illustration of this is the plea by the inspector for a school museum: *"It would be interesting and useful to organise a school museum of indigenous objects and a collection of colonial products."*

The school for *moniteurs* was finally the basis for a 'higher' teacher training college in the early 1950s. Its construction took a number of years. In the annual report for 1953 Vermeiren already noted that there were seven new classes, an office and a school museum. New sanitary installations, dormitories, a kitchen and dining rooms were in progress. At that time, work was also finally complete on the girls' dormitories, although no further explanation was given for this in the report. The statements of the vicar make it apparent that the situation in these dormitories was initially not too good: "*One had to renovate* the *girls' dormitories and the stables and one had to build numerous houses in durable materials for the teaching assistants and workers.*"[xcv] The attention in this type of reports was usually primarily paid to the projects pending and the progress that was hoped to be gained. The fact that this point was situated right at the end of the text is consequently also indicative of the importance attached to it. The construction of the teacher training college and its completion was really the only point worth mentioning in the reports for the early 1950s. The opening of the school and the completion of the building were already mentioned in 1954. However, it was considered in detail again in 1955. Presumably the vicar also had his own sales tactics. The construction of a new domestic science school was also mentioned in the years 1954-1955 and in 1958 the completion of new school

buildings for the primary school in Bamanya was also reported. Whether this also means that there was a complex of school buildings is another matter. When the number of pupils is considered next to this, it seems that these all related to relatively small groups which probably did not take up too much space.

3.2.4. *Les champs scolaires (the school fields)*

In the inspection reports a lot of attention was paid to what took place outside the classroom: the garden, animals, workshop. Work on the land is discussed in every report. In Bamanya the children had experimental gardens available and they also maintained the Brothers' orchard. In one of his reports Moentjens even wrote: "*In a purely material field nothing has changed since the last inspection except for moving and expanding the school fields*", to which he added: "*A curious matter and one with which I am unable to agree completely is that the products of the school gardens are sold whereas they could be used to feed the pupils themselves.*" The mission post also had a real farm: "*The school itself does not have the facilities for livestock farming, but the small and large livestock of the mission indirectly served for teaching and the Brothers' henhouse is looked after by the pupils*." In 1938 a separate report was even drawn up about the 'experimental garden', in which the content of the lessons was described and the way in which theory was converted into practice. The pupils also had all the time necessary for that because the report concerned also mentioned the duration of both types of lesson: "*Theoretical 30 mnt. a week. Practical 7.30 (h.) a week*."

Bamanya, in the 1950s. From left to right the Sisters' residence, the domestic science school and the girls' boarding school. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

The 1950 report also included considerably more on the *champs scolaires*, the *petit élévage* and *autres travaux matériels* than on the other material aspects of the school itself. It included a list of the works carried out by the various classes: "*With regard to handicrafts and other things imposed by the curriculum, here is a brief summary of what was carried out:*

1st A: weaving raffia cords; 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th raffia lace-making; the five first years of primary school: wickerwork, each class according to its abilities; 5th year: chair canework and improvement of the brick oven; 6th year: binding and construction (garage); 1st and 2nd years of teacher training: brick manufacture; 3rd year teacher training: elementary carpentry (mallets, instrument handles, brick moulds, ladders)." In addition, the pupils from both the primary school and the teacher training college spent time on the upkeep of the henhouse and the rabbit run. They mainly worked on the *champ scolaire*, a field of approximately one hectare and 35 ares (10 350 m^2). All kinds of crops were grown on it, both European and African.

In my opinion there are numerous reasons for that attention to school gardens and handicrafts. Firstly, there was the educational argument. Apparently, this was used even then as a kind of excuse to justify the intensive maintenance work the children did. Secondly, the cultivation of a number of crops certainly provided an essential addition to the missionaries' limited means. However, it is not surprising that the priests would be criticised sooner or later for the fact that the pupils had to do a lot of work for the benefit of the missionaries. It was invariably stated in the inspection reports that the work fitted within the framework of the education of the children but undoubtedly it was not always understood that way. The comment by Moentjens on the sale of the crops is an indication of the limit of the possible criticism, which the missionaries did not in fact ever exceed themselves. Naturally, their argument was that the financial means were limited, often too limited and consequently they saw no difficulty in increasing the funds, even if this was thanks to the pupils' work. Ultimately it was to their benefit anyway.

3.3. The rural schools

Beyond the mission posts matters were different. Father Delafaille wrote in 1934 that there was still no education provided outside the mission posts. The religion lessons given by the catechists were the only teaching available.[xcvi] In an inspection report from 1932 an attempt was made to present this situation in another, much more positive way: "*It is important not to lose sight of the fact that*

in numerous villages there are "catechumenats" where thousands of children receive some notions of reading, writing and arithmetic with their religious education."[xcvii] Delafaille's comment was indeed to the point. The implicit message in this text was also that the education was limited to some elementary notions.

Bamanya. "Les filles au travail". Date unknown. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

Nevertheless, the MSC needed infrastructure to be able to make their intentions known. A testimony to this is the message that Mgr. Van Goethem gave in his activity report from 1932: "*When I talk of pupils, I only mean the children educated and accommodated at the mission posts. Unlike the schools of the majority of the other missions, all our pupils, except for those from Coquilhatville, are boarders who board with us, are dressed and fed by us and for whom the instruction and education constitutes the most important work of the post*."[xcviii] He did not include the rural schools in his statistics, "*for honesty's sake*". From the reports, which are of course written by the MSC themselves, it is apparent that they did want to invest in shaping the material environment of the school and in the children at school. As Van Goethem had already said, the intention there was not to be restricted to the school buildings. However, the financial side of things often weighed heavily and Van Goethem understood that priorities had to be set. He consequently also decided to do good work at the central schools and to provide the complete framework there. Naturally, that was at the expense of the rural schools. Material could be distributed to the catechists but they were then left on their own to decide what to do with it.

The report Trigalet drew up at the request of Van Goethem with regard to the

policy for rural schools around Flandria testifies to the delicate balance that had to be found. On the one hand, an attempt was made to eliminate the inefficiency factor of the rural schools insofar as possible, on the other hand the classes were very quickly overcrowded at the central mission post. For that reason he argued for the development of education on as simple lines as possible and to be spread broadly in the bush schools. The costs generated by this would be compensated by the fact that it would be possible to work more efficiently at the mission school and to achieve progress more quickly. His report continued in detail with regard to the educational project set by the MSC in Flandria, where an attempt was made in the years 1932-1934 to make a large number of teaching assistants ready to start up primary schools around the mission post. A lot of time and money was invested in the project. Logistic support was also provided from the HCB. In total over 30 000 francs were invested over two years, which constituted an enormous amount.

The report did not mention the construction of rural schools at all. However, the acquisition of materials: school boards, slates, slate-pencils, chalk, exercise books, reading books and pens (only for the teachers) was mentioned. The evaluation of the project was not as positive, though; the relapse was great after one year. Trigalet primarily blamed this on the lack of inspection: the area was too large and the *teaching assistants* for a variety of reasons did not function optimally without proper supervision. He also referred to budgetary reasons that were perhaps at least as important. After all, the budget had been reduced. As has been shown previously, this was also the moment at which the subsidies to the missions were reduced for the first time.[xcix] However, conflicting areas of authority also seemed to have been at stake. For some reason Van Goethem himself had obliged the missionaries to have as many children as possible come to the mission post, according to Trigalet. Naturally, that was precisely what they were trying to combat. The consequence was that a tug of war developed between the *teaching assistants* and the priests about sending pupils on. A second consequence was that the boarding school costs rose greatly.

Van Goethem’s measures are explicable because he assumed that the best approach would be to close as many rural schools as possible. He actually saw more benefits in centralisation, thus following the idea of Walschap, who had travelled in the region and had concluded that the rural schools were too numerous and had no future. The level of education was too low there and the

attendance to irregular. Trigalet also saw the benefits of centralisation but still had a few objections to it. It would require a much more developed infrastructure and a system of a continuous supply of food and more importantly it would cost a lot of money in a difficult period. Trigalet did not think it would be possible to appeal to the means of the natives via local taxation because they were too limited: "*They are not inexhaustible and often are not flourishing at all as they already have to bear many crushing charges for them, which they cannot escape from*".[c]

At the beginning of the 1950s a dispute arose concerning the inspection of rural schools. Apparently, the provincial inspector, Eloye, had made remarks on the reports relating to the condition of rural schools in the region. The vicar, Vermeiren, had written an angry letter to the provincial governor. The case had reached the governor general. As a result of this a second inspection was carried out by the head of the inspection, Jean Ney.[ci] His report on the work of the provincial inspector uncovered disputes with the MSC. Ney was very critical of the MSC in general and described a number of points for discussion in detail. In addition, he also considered the condition of a number of rural schools, which he had visited. In his opinion the majority of those schools were inadequately furnished, the hygiene was abominable and in some cases the school building was no longer there.[cii]

Summary

The missionaries had to develop a material framework to support their activities. Education almost naturally took a central place in this. That followed automatically from the connection between education and the *core business* of the missions, i.e. evangelisation. Evangelisation implied education. If that was only externalised in the first phase by defining a separate place for holding sermons or for religious services, it naturally developed into the construction of buildings in which pupils could be separated from their environment.

The fact that this relates to a very natural evolution does not mean that it was realised without any problems. More specifically during the initial stage the teaching was given in a very sober and often inadequate framework. During the first years in the Congo the MSC did the best they could. Their presence in the field and the fact that education was provided seemed more important in that period than the circumstances in which the education was given. In general, it seems normal that the material framework was not always able to cope with the

growth of the school population. Indeed the concrete problems for the MSC seemed mainly to relate to overpopulation in the classrooms. Moreover, there was no general framework at that time, or regulations for education and consequently no inspection of those circumstances. That inspection would only develop from the end of the 1920s onwards and we may assume that it did not immediately start operating at top efficiency. Nevertheless, from that moment the missionaries were faced with feedback and criticism of the educational activity and consequently also of the material framework.

The fact that the criticism was not always experienced as just by the people in the field is overwhelmingly obvious from the examples quoted. Both in Flandria and Bamanya, two MSC mission posts that developed in rather different settings, that development was characterised by negotiations and conflicts with the (private and public) partners in the field. The realisation of the material infrastructure required a lot of effort and that was also often strongly emphasised in publications and official reports. That an appeal was very often made to the pupils themselves is emphasised less strongly, although it was not something that was experienced negatively. The missionaries considered using the pupils in work on the infrastructure and in cultivating crops as a normal and positive element of training and education.

NOTES

[i] Vertenten, P. (1932). Nieuws uit Bamania bij Coquilhatstad. In *Annalen*, 4, p. 78.

[ii] Information from Honoré Vinck, August 2004.

[iii] The barza is a sort of covered terrace, veranda.

[iv] *Ndele* is the plural of *lolele* which, according to Hulstaert's dictionary, means: "*feuille de palmier Raphia laurentii D. W. employée soit en entier dans la construction des parois soit pliée et tressée pour former des tuiles végétales*." See Hulstaert, G. (1957). *Dictionnaire Lomongo-Français*, Tervuren: Annales du Musée Royal du Congo Belge. p. 1284.

[v] AAVSB, Report by Father Sebastianus about the Tshuapa mission. Sebastiaan Van Sitteren, 1924. [original report in Dutch]

[vi] Bamanya, Coquilhatville, Bokuma, Bokote en Wafanya.

[vii] African Archives Brussels, Fonds Missies, n°635 "Trappisten Coquilhatville 1914-1940". Letter from Kaptein, abbot of the Trappist mission to Duchesne, vice-governor general a.i., 26/7/1920.

[viii] “Brief van den Eerwaarden Pater Van der Kinderen”. In *Annalen*, 1925, 3, p. 58. [original quotation in Dutch]
[ix] Van Houtte, (1926). De nieuwe missiestatie in Congo. In *Annalen*, 2, p. 33. [original quotation in Dutch]
[x] Papiers Cornet, Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, Fexhe. “Supplément à l’histoire pour l’année 1930. Maison de Coquilhatville, Congo Belge”, written document, s.n.
[xi] African Archives Brussels, Mission Collection, n°635 “Trappisten Coquilhatville 1914-1940”, “diverses”.
[xii] The concept of the Congolese town was often very simple. However, many civil engineering utopias were created around it. Bruno De Meulder states that Coquilhatville is a very good example of this. At around the turn of the century Charles Lemaire, the then district commissioner, had very precise and structured plans for the town development of Coq. Hardly anything was done about it by his successors. On this subject, De Meulder says that it seemed that “*Lemaire’s plans were not followed in spite of all the good intentions that the introduction of the embryonic town planning laws brought. There was in fact not much coordinated town planning. With Coquilhatville as it is described, is meant the district commissariat here, the black quarter further up, yet further Coquilhatville-transit, and still further a couple of satellites*.” De Meulder, B. (1994). Reformisme thuis en overzee, p. 367-368.
[xiii] African Archives Brussels, Mission Collection, n°647. “Ecole de filles de grands centres. Localité de Coquilhatville. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l’école dirigée par les Filles de la Charité. Année 1927”. Congo Belge, Inspection Générale de l’Enseignement. [original quotation in French]
[xiv] African Archives Brussels, Mission Collection, n°647. “Ecole de filles de grands centres. Localité de Coquilhatville. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l’école dirigée par les Filles de la Charité. Année 1928-1929”. Vertenten, *missionnaire-inspecteur*. [original quotation in French]
[xv] Ibidem. G. Jardon, *chef du service provincial de l’enseignement*. [original quotation in French]
[xvi] Ibidem, Soeur Cécile Borsu. I assume that the report was written by her. She was the only Sister responsible for looking after the school at that time. She was a certified teacher and nurse herself. She was assisted by two Congolese women, Elisabeth Lombala and Léonie Bongenge, “*coloured supervisors*“, as they were called in the report. Their task was effectively limited to child-minding.
[xvii] Archives Lazarist Fathers, Leuven. “Rapport sur le fonctionnement des

Ecoles des Révérendes Soeurs de Saint Vincent de Paul à Coquilhatville". Vertenten, February 1930. Typed version. [original quotation in French]
[xviii] Muzuri, F. (1990). Le Groupe Scolaire. In *Mbandaka hier et aujourd'hui. Eléments d'historiographie locale*. Mbandaka: Centre Aequatoria. p. 205-207.
[xix]< Archives Lazarist Fathers, Leuven. "Rapport sur les oeuvres des Filles de la Charité de St-Vincent de Paul à Coquilhatville. Exercice 1930", s.n. [original quotation in French]
[xx] Jans, P. (1927). Aankomst in Congo. In *Annalen*, 5, p. 104. [original quotation in Dutch]
[xxi] Dries, R. (1912). Het beschavingswerk der Cisterciënzers in de Evenaarsstreek. In *Onze Kongo*, II, p. 358-359. [original quotation in Dutch]
[xxii] African Archives Brussels, Missions Collection, no. 635. Letter from the vice-governor general ex officio Duchesne to the governor general, 27 December 1921. [original quotation in French]
[xxiii] Report by Edouard De Jonghe of his travels through the Congo, 1924-1925. KADOC, De Cleene-De Jonghe Papers. [original quotation in French]
[xxiv] African Archives Brussels, Fonds Missions, no. 635. "Rapport sur le fonctionnement des écoles primaires du 1er degré. Mission de Coquilhatville. Année 1928", G. Jardon, 29 March 1928. [original quotation in French]
[xxv] African Archives Brussels, Fonds Missions, no. 635. "Rapport sur le fonctionnement des écoles primaires du 1er degré. Mission de Coquilhatville. Année 1928", P. Vertenten, 24 March 1929; G. Jardon, 24 April 1924.
[xxvi] African Archives Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 16.484, document no. 55. [original quotation in French]
[xxvii] Es, M. (1927). Mijn kleine schoolkolonie. In *Annalen*, 11, p.248. [original quotation in Dutch]
[xxviii] Smolders, J. (1930). Veel werk te Boende. In *Annalen*, 2, p. 29.
[xxix] "Oproep ten voordele der Missiën." In *Annalen*, 1931, 11, p. 247. [original quotation in Dutch]
[xxx] Vertenten, P. (1935). Een blijvend loofhuttenfeest. In *Annalen*, 10, p. 221. [original quotation in Dutch]
[xxxi] African Archives Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 12.490, school inspection reports 1932. "Rapport annuel 1932 pour le service de l'enseignement". [original quotation in French]
[xxxii] AAFE 15.1.3-7. Bamanya. Report on the girls' school. School year 1934. Sister Auxilia.
[xxxiii] AAFE 15.2.12-3.3. Rapport sur le fonctionnement des Ecoles primaires et

normales à Bamania. P. Vertenten, Bamanya, 15 October 1930. [original quotation in French]
[xxxiv] AAFE 15.3.12. Rapport du missionnaire inspecteur sur le fonctionnement des écoles. Ecole primaire de Wafania. P. Vertenten, Wafanya, 1 April 1931. [original quotation in French]
[xxxv] AAFE 15.4.1. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'école primaire des R.R. Soeurs du précieux sang à Bokuma. P. Vertenten, Bokuma, 11 April 1930. [original quotation in French]
[xxxvi] AAFE 15.5.3-6. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'école primaire à Bokote. P. Vertenten, Bokote, July-August 1930. [original quotation in French]
[xxxvii] Rousseau, L. (1932). Bamania. In *Annalen*, 1, p. 6.
[xxxviii] African Archives Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 12.490. "Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire de la préfecture de Coq. pour 1931", Van Goethem. [original quotation in French]
[xxxix] Fieldhouse, D.K. (1978). *Unilever overseas. the anatomy of a multinational 1895-1965*. Stanford: University Press. p. 494-555. A complete chapter is dedicated to the Huileries du Congo Belge, a part of the soap empire of the Lever Brothers that merged in 1930 with the Dutch Margarine Unie into the multinational Unilever.
[xl] Fieldhouse, D.K. (1978), o.c. The author says about the 'convention': "*Heavy emphasis was laid on the duties of H.C.B. as a paternalistic employer: indeed, Lever's son later alleged that the support given by the Belgian socialist leader, Vandervelde, in parliament resulted from his knowledge of workers' conditions at Port Sunlight, which he assumed would be the model for Lever factories in the Congo.*" (p. 505).
[xli] AAFE 35.3.3. Letter from the administrator delegate HCB to P. Vertenten. Leopoldville, 10 July 1926.
[xlii] AAFE 35.4.1. Note from the managing director, Edkins, to the district manager of the H.C.B. Leopoldville, 4 October 1928.
[xliii] AAFE 35.4.13. Letter from the director general H.C.B. to G. Hulstaert. Leopoldville, 25 August 1928. [original quotation in French]
[xliv] AAFE 35.1.12. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the administrator delegate of the H.C.B. Flandria, 10 February 1929. [original quotation in French]
[xlv] AAFE 36.4.13-5.2. Letter from P. Vertenten to the district manager of the H.C.B., handwritten, s.d. [original quotation in French]
[xlvi] Ibidem
[xlvii] AAFE 35.4.8. Rapport sur les travaux d'établissement. Septembre 1928. G.

Hulstaert, Flandria, 28 September 1928.
[xlviii] AAFE 35.1.14. Renseignements annuels sur l'enseignement. G. Hulstaert, Flandria, 28 January 1929. [original quotation in French]
[xlix] AAFE 34.3.7. Rapport trimestriel sur les travaux d'établissement. Juin 1929. G. Hulstaert, Flandria, 30 June 1929; AAFE 34.1.9. Rapport trimestriel sur les travaux d'établissement. Septembre 1929. G. Hulstaert, Flandria, 30 September 1929.
[l] AAFE 32.1.10. Rapport trimestriel sur les travaux d'établissement. G. Hulstaert, Flandria, 30 June 1930.
[li] Vertenten, P. (1929). Met de Theresita de Momboyo op naar Wafanya. In *Annalen*, 1929, 12, p. 270.
[lii] AAFE 32.1.1. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the managing director of the H.C.B. in Leopoldville. Flandria, 28 October 1930. [original quotation in French]
[liii] AAFE 15.3.8-10. Ecole primaire Flandria H.C.B. Rapport sur le fonctionnement des Ecoles. par le Misssionaire Inspecteur. P. Vertenten, Flandria, 16 March 1931. [original quotation in French]
[liv] I deduced this from the fact that reference is made to the following fact in this inspection report: "*The frequency and the insistence are not satisfactory at all. During the second trimester of 1929, 17 pupils left the school*." Given the fact that the beginning of the school year at that time still corresponded to the beginning of the calendar year, the second term is consequently the period April-June. In the quarter report from Hulstaert for September 1929 reference is again made to a report from the state inspector of 19 June. Hulstaert stated in his report that account had been taken in the meantime with his remarks. He refers more specifically to two points of criticism that were mentioned in the inspection report, being the total lack of didactic material and the inadequate development of the experimental garden. AAFE 34.1.8. Rapport trimestriel sur l'école. Septembre 1929. G. Hulstaert, Flandria, 30 September 1929.
[lv] AAFE 93.4.9-12. Congo Belge. Province de l'Equateur. Inspection de l'enseignement. Rapport sur l'inspection de l'école des Huileries du Congo Belge établie à Flandria (district de l'Equateur). s.n., s.d.
[lvi] AAFE 35.1.13. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the responsible manager H.C.B. Flandria, 9 February 1929. [original quotation in French]
[lvii] AAFE 93.4.1. Rapport scolaire. P. Trigalet, Flandria, 22 April 1935.
[lviii] AAFE 93.3.10. Rapport fin d'année 1934. G. Hulstaert, Flandria, s.d. [original quotation in French] letter from the responsible manager of the H.C.B. to G. Hulstaert. Leopoldville, 23 July 1929.

[lx] The *chikwangue* is a sort of thick pasta with an elastic texture, which is made by wetting manioc roots. *Chikwangue* is part of the staple diet in the Congo. Massamba, J., Adoua-Oyila, G.M. & Trèche, S. (2001). Perception et acceptation d'une innovation technologique dans la préparation de la *chikwangue* à Brazzaville, Congo. In *Food, Nutrition and Agriculture*. ***A Publication of the FAO Food and Nutrition Division,*** XXIX. p. 22-31.
[lxi] AAFE 33.3.12. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the managing director of the H.C.B. in Leopoldville. Flandria, 17 November 1929.
[lxii] Interview with Jean Indenge, in Brussels, 14 July 2003. Jean Indenge was born in 1935. His schooling, as for many children from the interior, only started at a later age at the end of the forties and early fifties.
[lxiii] AAFE 29.1.2. Letter from Father Dereume to G. Hulstaert. Alberta, 11 February 1948.
[lxiv] AAFE 29.1.5. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the head of the H.C.B., Flandria, 23 April 1948.
[lxv] MSC-archives Borgerhout. Mission books. Minutes of the meetings of 21 May and 6 July 1922. [Original quotation in French]
[lxvi] Wauters, G. (1935). De Batjwa-jeugd. In *Annalen*, 3, p. 53.
[lxvii] Lesson no. 125 "Les Pygmées", Included in Missionnaires du Sacré Coeur (1935). *Buku ea mbaanda I* (Livre de lecture). Turnhout: Brepols. Original French translation is available at http://www.abbol.com/commonfiles/docs_projecten/colschoolbks/bukuea.php [translated from the French]
[lxviii] AAVSB, "Rapport sur les Batswa", by G. Wauters, in "Rapport général. Coquilhatville. 1934-1935", Van Goethem, pp. 15-30.
[lxix] AAVSB, Van Goethem, "Rapport général, Coquilhatville, 1934-1935", p.2 [original quotation in French]
[lxx] Sablon, C. (1954). Apostolisch Vicariaat Coquilhatstad. In *De Toekomst*, nr. 30, p. 45-46.
[lxxi] AAFE 100.4.12. Letter from G. Hulstaert to F. Cobbaut. Flandria, 18 July 1946. [original quotation in Dutch]
[lxxii]Interview with Frans Maes in Borgerhout on 9 July 2002. [original quotation in Dutch]
[lxxiii] AAFE 101.4.9-11. Report on the inspection of the boys' school for Batswa in Flandria, 1939. G. Hulstaert, Flandria, 2 October 1939. [original quotation in Dutch]
[lxxiv] AAFE 101.4.1. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the Father Director of the School

of the Catholic Mission, Flandria. Hulstaert, Bamania, 6 January 1941.
[lxxv] Florent Cobbaut (1910-1997) worked in the Belgian Congo from 1936 to 1950. According to my information he was stationed in Flandria from 1939 to 1946. He succeeded Gustaaf Hulstaert in 1946 as the superior in the Congo. He was also interim inspector. In general, detailed information on who was working where is missing from the war years. Boelaert was also stationed in Flandria during the war. According to information from Vinck he was there between 1942 and 1946. However, in a letter from 16 December 1943 to the head of the school, Hulstaert mentions both Boelaert ("Mon") and father De Rop, which means it is almost certainly Cobbaut who is being addressed here. See Lauwers, J. msc (1992). *Standplaats van de Missionarissen van het H. Hart in Kongo tot 1992*. Unpublished document. The biographical information on Cobbaut is from Honoré Vinck.
[lxxvi] AAFE 101.3.9. Letter from G. Hulstaert to the head of the school in Flandria. Coquilhatville, 21 September 1941. My emphasis. [original quotation in Dutch]
[lxxvii] Hulstaert, G. (1990). Souvenirs du vieux Bamanya. In *Annales Aequatoria*, XI, p. 429-432. He then wrote of the memories of his first visits: "*De ces visites j'ai retenu quelques souvenirs, qui ont été confirmés, peut-être plus ou moins déformés, par des séjours ultérieurs (retraites p.ex.) lorsque j'étais en poste à Flandria (1928-1933)*."
[lxxviii] Ibidem. [original quotation in French]
[lxxix] AAFE 5.2.8. Letter from P. Vertenten to Frère Visiteur. Bamania, 8 January 1929.
[lxxx] African Archives Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 12.490. P. Vertenten, missionary inspector to the provincial inspector in Coquilhatville, 23 February 1931. [original quotation in French]
[lxxxi] African Archives Brussels, electronic inventary, no. 12.490. "Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire de la préfecture de Coquilhatville pour 1931", Van Goethem. [original quotation in French]
[lxxxii] Vertenten, P. (1932). Nieuws uit Bamanya bij Coquilhatstad (Vertenten). In *Annalen*, 4, p. 80.
[lxxxiii] AAFE 15.1.3-8. Bamanya. Report on the girls' school. School year 1934. Sister Auxilia.
[lxxxiv] AAFE 4.5.1. Bamanya. Inspection of education. October 1936. Girls' school. G. Hulstaert, Coquilhatville, 20 October 1936. [original quotation in Dutch]

[lxxxv] African Archives Brussels, electronic inventary, no. 12.490. “Rapport sur l’activité missionnaire de la préfecture de Coquilhatville pour 1931”, Mgr. Van Goethem.
[lxxxvi] AAVSB, “Rapport sur l’activité missionnaire des Soeurs du Précieux Sang 1934”, Mgr. Van Goethem. [original quotation in French]
[lxxxvii] AAFE 12.5.3. Report on the inspections in the primary and teacher training college in Bamanya. 1944. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, 4 November 1944.[original quotation in Dutch]
[lxxxviii] AAFE 12.5.2. Inspection of the primary and teacher training college in Bamanya. 1944. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, 28 September 1946. [original quotation in Dutch]
[lxxxix] AAFE 11.3.3. Rapport d’inspection de l’établissement des Soeurs Missionnaires du Précieux Sang à Bamanya. Ecole primaire mixte pour indigènes et école ménagère. Vanmeerbeeck, *inspecteur-adjoint au service provincial de l’enseignement*, Coquilhatville, 8 May 1947.
[xc] AAFE 12.1.1. Letter from G. Wauters to Mgr. Van Goethem. Bamania, 23 September 1942. [original quotation in French]
[xci] Ibidem, the underlining is in the original. [original quotation in French]
[xcii] AAFE 10.2.14-3.3. Inspection report of the girls’ school at Bamanya. G. Moentjens, Coquilhatville, 5 December 1950. [original quotation in Dutch]
[xciii] AAFE 10.3.8-13. Rapport d’inspection de l’école primaire pour garçons indigènes à Bamanya. G. Moentjens, Coquilhatville, 3 December 1950. [original quotation in French]
[xciv] AAFE 9.5.7. Rapport d’inspection de lécole primaire et de l’école de moniteurs de Bamanya. G. Moentjens, Coquilhatville, 10 September 1951.
[xcv] AAVSB, “Rapport annuel 1952-1953. Vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville”, Mgr. Vermeiren. [original quotation in French]
[xcvi] Delafaille, H. (1934). Mijn eerste dienstreisje in Kongo. In *Annalen*, 9, p. 197.
[xcvii] African Archives Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 12.490, school inspection reports 1932. “Rapport annuel 1932 pour le service de l’enseignement”. [original quotation in French]
[xcviii] African Archives Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 12.490. “Rapport sur l’activité missionnaire de la préfecture de Coq. pour 1931”, Mgr. Van Goethem. [original quotation in French]
[xcix] See the Liesenborghs’ table in appendix 5.
[c] AAVSB, “Rapport général sur l’activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de

1934-1935", Van Goethem, 1 March 1935, with the corresponding report "Notes additionnelles sur les écoles rurales" by P. Trigalet. [original quotation in French]

[ci]Ney was not popular in missionary and Catholic circles, he was known as a fanatic anticlericalist. See Briffaerts, J. (1995). *Over Belgische politiek en Congolese scholen*.

[cii]African Archives Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 12.452, Inspection Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville 1949-1953. "Contrôle des inspections faites pendant l'année 1951, province de l'Equateur", Jean Ney, Leopoldville, 11 December 1951.