Developmental Colonialism and Kitawala Policy in 1950s Belgian Congo

by

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Abstract

Though much has been written about Kitawala, a Central African offshoot of Jehovah's Witnesses, in the Belgian Congo, little has been produced on the colonial government's post-war policy towards the religious movement. Kitawala was a popular religious movement that frequently stood in tension with established power figures, African and European alike, because its pastors prophesied a millennial event at which foreign rule and exploitation would end. Drawing on the Belgian colonial record, this thesis elucidates the ways in which colonial Kitawala policy changed significantly in the 1950s in line with post-war developmental colonialism that sought to expand imperial resources while also re-legitimising colonial rule. In light of anti-colonial, nationalist movements emerging across the Africa, colonial officials hoped to co-opt the majority of Kitawalists with a wide range of development programs, while repressing Kitawalists who remained implacable critics of Belgian rule.

Keywords: Belgian Congo; Kitawala; Colonialism; Development; Decolonisation; Democratic Republic of the Congo

To the members of my family, you each contributed to this thesis in your own time, in your own way.

Acknowledgements

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List of Acronyms

AA	Archives Africaines – Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Brussels
AI	Affaires Indigènes
Abako	Alliance des Bakongo
AIMO	Affaires Indigènes et Main d'Oeuvre
Balubakat	Association des Baluba du Katanga
CACI	Caisses Administrative des Circonscriptions Indigènes
CARD	Camps pour Anciens Relégués Dangereux
CEC	Centre Extra-Coutumier
CID	Criminal Investivation Division
Colagrel	Colonies agricoles pour rélégués
Conakat	Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga
ECZ	Eglise du Christ au Zaïre
FBI	Fonds du Bien-Être Indigène
FIDES	Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Économique et Social des territoires d'outre-mer
FOREAMI	Fonds Reine Elisabeth pour l'Assistance Médicale aux Indigènes
GG	Gouvernement Général
INEAC	Institut national pour l'étude agronomique au Congo belge
Kat	Katanga
MNC	Mouvement National Congolais
MPR	Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution
PJ	Papiers Joset
RA/AIMO	Rapport Annuel/Affaires Indigènes et Main d'Oeuvre

RA/CB	Rapport Annuel/Congo Belge
RAT	Représentant de l'Autorité Tutélaire
SA	Saint-André

Chapter 1.

Introduction

This thesis is about changes in Belgian colonial policy in the mid-1950s towards the religious movement known as Kitawala, an African offshoot of Jehovah's Witnesses/Watchtower.[1] Kitawala was a widespread, popular religious movement whose pastors prophesied a millennial event at which foreign rule and exploitation would end, heralding a time of equality amongst humans before God. They offered baptism, controlled witchcraft, and held clandestine meetings. As a result of their repudiation of all other authority figures, Kitawalists frequently stood in tension with established power figures, African and European alike.

From the 1920s to the mid-1950s Belgian colonial agents perceived Kitawala as a unified and subversive politico-religious movement. They responded by repressing the movement through surveillance, incarceration, banning, forced labour camps and, occasionally, summary executions. After 1955, officials began interpreting the movement

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[1] There is some debate as to the origin and definition of the word "Kitawala." Several contemporary sources attribute Kitawala's origin to a corruption of the word "tower" and that it potentially has affinities with a similar Swahili word meaning "cleansed." See Sholto Cross, "The Watch Tower Movement in South Central Africa, 1908-1945" (Ph.D. diss., Oxford, 1973), 6; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques et Protestation Sociale: Le Cas du Kitawala chez les Kumu du Zaïre* (Kinshasa: Faculté de Théologie Catholique, 1982), 134. Gérard maintains however that Kitawala means "domination" in Swahili, not "cleansed," from the verb kutawala (to dominate, to direct), corresponding with the movements' promise of reversing power relations. See Jacques E. Gérard, *Les Fondements syncrétiques du Kitawala* (Bruxelles: Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques (CRISP): Le livre africain, 1969), 9-10. Africans who practiced the movement did not call it Watchtower or Kitawala, but referred to it using a variety of words or the name of a particular leader. See Cross, 5-6. The Bakumu in Orientale called it "the religion," while the Luba in Katanga called themselves witnesses or members of "the society" or "the movement." See Gérard, 9. All citations in French have been translated by the author.

as composed of diverse religious groupings, representing varying degrees of danger to the colonial state. Consequently, a new Kitawala policy crystallised in 1956. It combined the established methods of repression with attempts at accommodation and co-optation. I consider accommodation to be a mutual process of negotiation between officials and Kitawalists, in which both parties seek to co-exist with each other through compromise.[2] Meanwhile, co-optation refers to colonial officials' use of propaganda and socio-economic reforms with the intention of undermining Kitawala's anti-establishment ideology and bringing Kitawalists into their camp. In practice, this included the creation of primary schools, medical clinics, film screenings and agricultural development projects.

These policies were strongly shaped by the Second World War, a shift in the needs of metropolitan capital, and the wide currency of "developmental colonialism" in the post-war era.[3] According to historian Frederick Cooper, World War II was a turning point in the trajectory of colonial rule, shaking European self-confidence and clearly revealing to Africans and Asians the contingency of foreign rule.[4] Historian Bill Freund has argued that the social groundwork of capitalism in Europe was very weak after 1945, and that "reforms to secure political and social democracy were considered essential in this climate and such considerations were particularly acute in the colonies."[5] In Asia, the prestige of British, French and Dutch colonial rule was shaken by the Japanese invasion of many of their Asian colonies, including Singapore, Indochina and the Dutch East Indies. European colonial power did not recover from subsequent Asian nationalists'

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[2]   David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 1-2.

[3]   Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 234; Bill Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa: The Development of African Society since 1800*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Rienner, 1998), 168-173, 176.

[4]   Cooper, *Colonialism*, 187.

[5]   Important foundations of capitalism were weakened by Fascist regimes' destruction of liberal political institutions and by the new prestige of the Soviet Union given its critical role in defeating Fascism. Freund, 177.

demands for independence.[6] Meanwhile, in Africa, Italy was defeated by allied forces and lost its African possessions.[7] Africans and Asians contributed to the war effort by fighting in armies to defend some empires from others and by engaging in wartime production which caused them great hardship. The campaign against Hitler's racism and the selective application of the Atlantic Charter, calling for universal self-determination, showed the hypocrisy of colonial ideology.[8] By the mid-1950s, former colonies like India and Indonesia also contributed to a growing anti-colonial discourse in international forums like the United Nations.[9] Thus, World War II created circumstances that seriously undermined the legitimacy of colonialism.

Even before the end of World War II, European colonial powers in Africa sought to reform their colonial systems, given Africans' war time hardships, as well as Africans' rising demands for equal rights and standards of living. The war revealed the poverty of Africans to Europe and it became clear to European colonial powers that "Africa needed a 'new deal', to begin as quickly as possible, both for its own good and, more importantly, for the good of Europe."[10] France and Britain reacted "to the effects of [World War II] by trying to resecure and revitalise the parts of their empires that they retained, particularly in Africa: to turn the development idea into a mechanism for proclaiming the legitimacy of rule, for building up beleaguered imperial economy, and for raising the standard of living of colonial populations."[11] A new emphasis was placed on

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[6] Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: Britain's Asian Empire and the war with Japan* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 463-646. Indonesia declared independence in 1945 while India and Burma gained independence in 1947 and 1948 respectively. Indochina began its armed struggle against France in 1946.

[7] Paul Nugent, *Africa since Independence: A Comparative History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 19.

[8] Cooper, *Colonialism*, 187; Nugent, 20.

[9] Cooper, *Colonialism*, 188.

[10] Freund, 170.

[11] Cooper, *Colonialism*, 187. These reforms took political, economic and social forms. For more information on the effects of the war and on the creation, implementation and limits of post-war colonial reforms, see Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; and John D. Hargreaves, Decolonization in Africa. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1996.

social welfare, including medicine and education, as "the new stage of economic development towards which colonial regimes were preparing required a more qualified, stable working class."[12] This reorientation towards modernised empires characterised French and British colonialism in the post-war era, when colonial powers' investment in their colonies was at its greatest and when colonial states were at their largest.[13] Indeed, for France and Britain "political reform was closely linked to what were seen as the necessary social bases for the new planned level of capitalist development. Both powers appreciated the importance of some kind of new basis for collaboration with Africans."[14]

However, France and Britain were not the only world powers seeking to use 'development' as both a goal and a method of rule. On January 20th, 1949 US President Harry S. Truman declared that:

> We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of fair dealing.[15]

This new paradigm of 'development' recast the post-war era by dividing humanity into developed and undeveloped regions. During the Cold War (ca. 1945-1991), both the United States and the USSR promoted 'development' as a way of legitimising their

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[12] Freund, 172-173.

[13] Cooper, *Colonialism*, 37, 145, 187. It should be noted that colonial development ideology in Africa emerged in the 1920s and 1930s and that practical experiences from this period influenced post-war development policies. See Monica M. Van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office du Niger, 1920-1960* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2002), xxi-xxvi; Guy Vanthemsche, *Genèse et portée du "Plan décennal" du Congo belge (1949-1959)*, Classe des Sciences Morales et Politiques, vol. 51 (Bruxelles: Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer), 8. The great depression of the 1930s was a time of stagnation and retrenchment which showed the limits of capitalist development in Africa. Some colonial administrators realised that social and economic investment was needed to push capitalist development further, but in the 1930s funds for new endeavours were rarely available. Freund 168.

[14] Freund, 176.

[15] Philip McMichael, *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 2004), 22.

respective ideologies – capitalism and communism – each hoping that they would win people's hearts and minds by providing the best living standards.[16] The United States also saw development as an opportunity to expand capitalist markets, the flow of raw materials, and as a way of securing access to strategic natural resources. Indeed, in 1956 the influential American development economist Walt Rostow proclaimed that "our military security and our way of life as well as the fate of Western Europe and Japan are at stake in the evolution of the underdeveloped areas" of the world.[17] Yet, unlike European colonial powers, the United States:

> Had almost no stake in maintaining colonial rule. American policy was committed to containing the advance of socialism through establishing ties with nationalists in the colonies who could be won over to the American view of the world. This was a strategy closely related to the desire of American business to establish a stronger position in the trade and material resources of African and other colonies dominated by European industry. American war-time [World War II] propaganda was often sharply anti-colonial. Later the imperative need for good relations with European allies blunted the thrust, but the general lines of pressure remained constant.[18]

In the Belgian Congo, Governor General (1935-1946) Pierre Ryckmans started the Belgian administration on a developmental colonialist tack in 1946, similar to those of France and Britain, when he acknowledged Africans' wartime hardships and the need for economic and social reforms. A strong supporter of "the heavy and magnificent 'white man's burden'," Ryckmans believed that Belgium should invest in a colonial development program, meant to raise African living standards and increase production to the 'mutual benefit' of Congolese and Belgian until the 'civilising mission' had been completed.[19] Indeed, he viewed development as a means to expand the markets of

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[16]   McMichael, 31.

[17]   Ibid., 19, 23, 48.

[18]   Freund, 177.

[19]   William B. Norton, "Pierre Ryckmans (1891-1959)," in *African Proconsuls*, ed. L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 397, 406; Vanthemsche, 9; Jacques Vanderlinden, *Pierre Ryckmans: 1891-1959: Coloniser dans l'honneur* (Brussels: De Boek université, 1994), 602.

industrial powers like Belgium.[20] Ryckmans is generally attributed with persuading the colonial ministry to create a development fund for the Congo, ultimately leading to the creation of the Belgian parastatal development agency *Le Fonds du Bien-Être Indigène* (*FBI*) (1947-1963) and the socio-economic *Plan Décennal* (1949-1959) under Minister of Colonies Pierre Wigny.[21]

I will examine these new developmental colonialist policies in reference to Stanleyville District, Orientale province, because the District's mid-1950s administrative reaction to Kitawala is relatively well documented.[22] *Figure 1* shows the location of the city of Stanleyville, both the district and provincial capital, in north-eastern Belgian Congo.

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[20]   Vanderlinden, 602.

[21]   *Plan Décennal*: 'Ten-Year Plan' and *FBI*: 'The Native Welfare Fund'. Vanthemsche, 9-11; Vanderlinden, 59; Norton, 407. For more details on the creation of the *Plan*, see Vanthemsche.

[22]   Stanleyville District was one of four Districts constituting Orientale Province in north-east Belgian Congo. Orientale was founded in 1913, but bore the name "Stanleyville Province" between 1933 and 1947. For the purposes of this thesis the province will be referred to as Orientale. Located in the south-west of Orientale, Stanleyville District was composed of seven administrative territories: Stanleyville, Bafwasende, Banalia, Basoko, Isangi, Opala and Ponthierville. The city of Stanleyville, modern-day Kisangani, was district and provincial capital. An eight territory, Lubutu, was temporarily part of the District sometime between 1933 and 1953 before being annexed to Kivu Province, but the timing and reason for this administrative change is unclear. Lubutu territory is significant because it was a site of significant Kitawala influence and the 1944 Kitawala uprising, and was also targeted by *FBI* programs.

Figure 1   The Belgian Congo, 1955

(Gaston Derkinderen, *Atlas du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* [Bruxelles: Elsevier, 1955], face viii. Reproduced by permission from the Archives Africaines, Brussels)

Colonial agents viewed Kitawala in Stanleyville District as particularly threatening to Belgian rule and developed a wide range of new strategies to reduce Kitawala's perceived threat, thus making the District particularly suitable for the study of the administration's new Kitawala policy.[23] This new Kitawala policy crystallised in the mid-1950s, at a time when colonial rule was increasingly challenged by nationalist movements across Africa and around the world. Indeed, Egypt's achievement of full independence from Britain in 1953-56, the decisive defeat of French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria and especially the supposedly 'anti-modern' Mau Mau movement in Kenya all showed the contingency of colonial rule and contributed to Belgian administrators' search for new ways of engaging Kitawala. These new, scarcely studied, approaches to combating Kitawala, included a special *Sûreté* Kitawala taskforce, as well as *FBI* and *Plan Décennal* development projects.[24]

In particular, I seek to answer the following questions: what kind of anxieties did Kitawala evoke in colonial agents? How and why did colonial administrators re-imagine Kitawala for the new Kitawala policy to be put into action? To what extent did the Kitawala taskforce continue the previous policy of repression, while also seeking to accommodate or co-opt moderate elements of Kitawala? In what ways did Belgian administrators look to neighbouring colonies for guidance in dealing with Kitawala's 'subversion'? How directly were the *Plan Décennal* and the *FBI,* as manifestations of developmental colonialism, involved in the attempt to accommodate and co-opt political and religious dissidents in the post-war era?

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[23] "Dossier AI (4737)," R. Philippart, Administrateur Assistant à Stanleyville. "Contribution à l'étude de la secte Kitawala." February 26 1954; "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Paul Ernest Joset, Chargé de Mission. "Synthèse des résultats de la Mission." May 24, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[24] The *Sûreté* was the Belgian colonial state security and information service.

Most post-independence scholarship examining Kitawala has only made passing references to the perceptions and policies of the 1950s.[25] Many Kitawala studies, such as the ones by de Mahieu, Cross, Greschat, Anyenyola Welo and Mwene-Batende, have focused on the spread and social effects of Kitawala.[26] Kitawala's anti-establishment stance frequently appealed to and helped organise Africans who were discontent with the colonial *status quo*, causing the colonial state to view the movement with suspicion and to seek to repress it. Some scholars' references to the 1950s contain claims that are not substantiated by the colonial record. For instance, Greschat has claimed that Kitawala recanted all political agitation in the 1950s and de Mahieu joined him in stating that on December 6, 1957 the Belgian government asked all of its colonial agents to cease repressing politico-religious movements.[27] While it is hard to generalise about a highly decentralised movement such as Kitawala, and while the possibility of fully legalising Kitawala and Watchtower was discussed by leading colonial administrators in the 1950s, this thesis will show that the colonial administration viewed sections of Kitawala as a political threat until the end of Belgian colonial rule and did not legalise Kitawala. The tension between the 1957 order to cease repression but the continued non-recognition and repression of Kitawala until 1960 suggests divisions between centrally decreed policy and stances taken on the ground.

Other scholarship has approached Kitawala by placing it within a comparative framework with the Belgian Congo's other messianic movement: Kimbanguism. These studies focus more on a thorough description of religious ideologies and practices than

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[25]   W. De Mahieu, "Les Komo et le Kitawala," *Cahiers des Religions Africaines* 10, no. 19 (1976): 51-66; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 1982; Hans-Jürgen Greschat, *Kitawala: Ursprung, Ausbreitung und Religion der Watch-Tower-Bewegung in Zentralafrika* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1967), 64; Jacques Anyenyola Welo, "Le mouvement Kitawala en République du Zaïre." *Problèmes Sociaux Zaïrois*, no. 96-97 (1972): 3-26; Edouard Bustin, "Government Policy toward African Cult Movements: The Case of Katanga," in *African Dimensions: Essays in Honor of William O. Brown*, edited by Mark Karp. Brookline, Mass.: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1975; Cross, 400.

[26]   These authors have highlighted in various forms the political, social, religious and economic instability and marginalisation, caused by both internal and external factors, which contributed to Africans' adoption of Kitawala.

[27]   Greschat, 64; De Mahieu, 54.

on the colonial state's perceptions and policies.[28] It is likely that scholars have not yet addressed Kitawala policy in the 1950s because most scholars working on Africa in the post-independence period have focused their research on recovering Africans' agency and perceptions of colonialism, especially as Africans were usually rendered silent observers in colonial historiographies. This focus on Africans' perspectives, together with the Belgian colonial archive still being in the process of being declassified, may explain this historiographical silence.[29]

This thesis discusses colonial policy by drawing on publications and the Belgian colonial record. The African Archives at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels reflect officials' perspectives in the Congo, and as such relate the perceptions that formed policy in the late colonial period.[30] The archive, by itself, poses challenges to understanding Kitawala on its own terms, but is essential for the purposes of this thesis, in order to comprehend changes in officials' perceptions of Kitawala and Kitawala policies in the 1950s. My intent is not to deny Africans' experiences under colonialism, but to elucidate Belgian late colonial policy making on this particular issue, something which is largely missing from the historical record. As mentioned above, most post-independence scholarship has only made fleeting references to 1950s Kitawala policy,

[28] M.T.M. Kanyinda Lusanga, "Le Facteur religieux comme agent de prise de conscience politico-nationaliste pendant la période colonial au Zaire: le cas des mouvements Messianiques (Kimbanguisme, Kitawala)," *Etudes Zairoises*, no 2 (1975): 41-69; Canda-Ciri Njangu, "Le Kibanguisme et le Kitawala: étude comparative," *Antennes*, no. 1 (1975): 4-26.

[29] This lacuna was likely due to a lack of access to official sources. Historian Cross explicitly stopped short of 1950s Belgian Congo in his Ph.D. dissertation on African Watchtower, for lack of information. See Cross, 400. Greschat's aforementioned false conclusion was based on the few official documents available to him in 1967 and probably resulted from access to documents showing centrally decreed policies, but not to documents showing practices on the ground in the Congo. Indeed, when Greschat conducted his research, post-1914 material was inaccessible in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Zambia and Malawi. See Greschat, 4, 64. Kitawala was never legalised, although the possibility of fully legalising Kitawala and Watchtower was discussed by leading officials in the 1950s. See "Dossier Affaires Indigènes (hereafter AI) (4737)," Auguste Buisseret, Ministre des Colonies. "Objet: Association 'Les témoins de Jéhovah' à Léopoldville." March 16, 1957; J. Paulus, Directeur au Ministère des Colonies. "Objet: Requête Watch Tower Bible Tract and Society de Léopoldville." March 11, 1957. Archives Africaines du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (hereafter AA), Brussels.

[30] I also make limited use of Benedictine mission material from the Archives de l'Abbaye de Saint-André, Zevenkerken.

and the same can be said for most contemporary published sources. Indeed, Daniel Biebuyck, an ethnographer working for the colonial *Institut pour la Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale* (*IRSAC*), studied Kitawala in Bakumu society, but like Jacques E. Gérard, one of the first anthropologists to study Kitawala practices in 1955, only commented in passing on the projected effectiveness of the colony's intended Kitawala policy.[31] Meanwhile, Jean-Pierre Paulus, president of the *Institut Supérieur des Etudes Sociales au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi*, provided a concise overview of colonial officials' anxieties regarding Kitawala and 1950s Kitawala policy.[32] Paulus' overview, however, does not show to what extent development-minded colonial practice was applied towards Kitawala, nor does it present the details and the limits of the new Kitawala policy. Thus, the colonial archive is instrumental in filling the historiographic gap that exists for Belgian Kitawala policy in the 1950s.

Access to Belgian colonial records remains relatively restricted. The former Colonial Ministry archives are today known as the African Archives and are housed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels. When I consulted the archive in the summer of 2010 archivists reserved the right to deny access to declassified documents over 50 years old in the name of protecting Belgium's international relations and the private lives of individuals. As a result, I experienced restricted access to archive indexes and was denied access to a great number of declassified documents. It is for this reason that this study contains little or no information on the colonial officials who created and implemented 1950s Kitawala policies.

Given the thesis' reliance on the colonial record, many of its insights are limited to the perceptions, including the paranoia, of colonial administrators. The resulting account is at times both distorted and intermittent, as officials had limited information on Kitawala. Officials diverged on whether Kitawala was essentially a religious or a political movement, but generally viewed the movement as a threat to their authority, or at the

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[31] Daniel Biebuyck, "La société Kumu face au Kitawala," *Zaïre*, 11 (1957): 39; Gérard, 116.

[32] Jean-Pierre Paulus, *Le Kitawala au Congo Belge* (Brussels: Editions de la Librairie encyclopédique, 1956), 3-12.

very least as xenophobic and potentially subversive.[33] Indeed, "the colonial trilogy –
administration, Church and capital – sought to repress an ideology which contested the
authority of the state, rejected the limits of economic inequality and proposed a new God
and new morals."[34] Consequently, Kitawalists had reason to be suspicious of strangers,
whom they suspected were colonial government collaborators.[35] According to Gérard,
Europeans in some parts of the Congo were frequently confused, attributing all
manifestations of insubordination of state and mission authority in areas of Kitawala
activity to the movement. Gérard claimed that none of these Europeans had any
coherent knowledge of the movement they were readily identifying in their jurisdictions.[36]
As a result, while Kitawalists did engage in activities that were insubordinate towards
state and mission authority, it is likely that officials sometimes misinterpreted Congolese
"weapons of the weak" – foot-dragging, dissimulation, gossip – as Kitawalist
subversion.[37] However, reports of Kitawalist activity usually mention more explicit forms
of resistance like the open unwillingness to follow orders, pay taxes, and sabotage.

Because this thesis deals with the perceptions and policies of a colonial
government, it frequently evokes Kitawala's alleged 'anti-colonialism.' There is the real
danger, however, that in emphasising Kitawala's 'anti-colonialism,' historians have
merely reproduced the observations of contemporary white observers, which did not
necessarily represent the lived experiences of Kitawalists. It is important to keep in mind

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[33] "Dossier Affaires Indigènes et Main-d'Oeuvre (hereafter AIMO) (127)," S. Lauwers, Chef et
Commissaire de District de Stanleyville. "Note d'Observation au Rapport Annuel AIMO 1943
du Territoire de Lubutu." January 31, 1944; "Dossier AIMO (1638)," Bribosia, Administrateur
Territorial. Costermansville. "Avis de l'Administrateur Territorial Bribosia sur le Recours en
Grade Introduit par les Condamnés à Mort de la Révolte de Masisi." January 15, 1945, AA,
Brussels; Gérard, 114, 116.

[34] Benoit Verhaegen, preface to *Les Fondements syncrétiques du Kitawala*, by Jacques E.
Gérard (Bruxelles: Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques (CRISP): Le livre
africain, 1969), 8.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Gérard, 12.

[37] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven:
Yale University Press, 1985.

an emic[38] approach to the movement because, as Karen E. Fields admits in her study on African Watchtower, one cannot ultimately know if the Kitawalists were revolutionary or seeking the religious goal of purging the land of evil.[39] Some members may have had either or both objectives in mind when they became converts. Ultimately, Europeans' misattribution of "weapons of the weak" to Kitawala, reports of explicit resistance, and the movement's alleged anti-colonialism also reflect the distance between European observers and Kitawalists – African chiefs being the regime's front line in interacting with Kitawala.

This dearth of information only began to be remedied in the mid-1950s when Belgian security services started compiling officials' reports about Kitawala into studies available to administrators.[40] Even so, such reports and studies mostly provide insights into the conflicts between European officials and Kitawala, and only limited views of everyday interactions between African agents and Kitawalists. As was the case with Watchtower in British Africa, thinly spread European agents authored reports on Kitawalist subversion and the state's reactions, but these agents frequently only had indirect contact with Kitawala, drawing on reports from their African subordinates.[41] The appointed African chiefs, government informants, Kitawalists, or non-members, who interacted regularly, did not author any reports in the colonial record. It is also important, as historian David Robinson reminds us, to remain cognisant that "African informants, the mediators and disseminators of information, were crucial at every juncture" of

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[38]   Used in anthropology, an emic approach strives to describe actions or beliefs from the perspective of the actor.

[39]   Karen Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 122.

[40]   "Dossier AI (4737)," Philippart. "Contribution." 1954; "Dossier AI (1621)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Kitawala: Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels.

[41]   Fields, 57.

officials' acquisition of knowledge about African society.[42] Robinson points out that in colonial French West Africa "it was not easy for the French to verify what [informants] were saying, and the informants learned to manipulate the system. They knew what kind of information was sought, and believed, and how to integrate their own interests with that information."[43] This also holds true with the creation of reports about Kitawala in the Congo. Belgian officials could only report the Kitawala activity of which they were aware and it is likely that some African chiefs, who either tolerated or were active members of Kitawala, did not regularly report the movement's activities.

It is important to bear in mind African informants' agency in creating the colonial body of knowledge because the new Kitawala policy of the mid-1950s rested on officials' ability to categorise Kitawalists as either dangerous or harmless to the colonial state. These categories were essential in determining whether a Kitawalist should be repressed or accommodated. It is possible that these categories were shaped by both Europeans' encounters with Kitawala and African informants, as well as officials' conscious attempts to render the Kitawala movement more 'legible' to the colonial state.[44] Indeed, dividing Kitawalists into 'political subversives' and 'harmless religious zealots' may have been a way for agents to simplify a complex religious movement, enabling the creation of a policy designed to tame Kitawala by isolating its most radical elements.

This thesis does not seek to establish the 'true' character of Kitawala as 'political' or 'religious.' Nevertheless, Kitawala's character is important because it has proven very hard to conceptualise, resulting in a significant scholarly debate on the extent to which Kitawala was a proto-nationalist and pan-Africanist movement, or whether the movement

[42] Robinson, 4-5. De Mahieu argues that officials' search for information on Kitawala also influenced Africans' choices vis-à-vis Kitawala and the movement's trajectory. In 1955 the administration relaxed its repression of Kitawala to aid Gérard in conducting his research while posing as a white Kitawala leader. This resulted in a Kitawala resurgence, as many Africans began openly converting to the movement; De Mahieu, 54.

[43] Robinson, 4.

[44] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 2-4.

sought the restoration of cultural coherence as a result of cultural tensions.[45] Fields has called these two scholarly interpretations the 'political' approach and the 'cultural' approach and attributes this division to the historians' tendency to export "into scholarly accounts the questions urgently asked by contemporary observers."[46] Ultimately, any attempt at a neat distinction between political and cultural Kitawala has been futile, but is significant because colonial officials' attempts to identify Kitawala's character also informed Kitawala policy. Indeed, both Belgian and British administrators dealing with Kitawala and Watchtower, respectively, tried to differentiate between the political and religious aspects of the movement in the hopes of accommodating, rather than repressing, the majority of its members.

The 'political' conceptualisation views Kitawalist millenarianism as an underdeveloped form of protest, which serves as an intermediate step between spasmodic resistance and organised nationalism and can only be successful if it helps further the aims of more 'rational' secular nationalists. This interpretation of African religious movements was particularly popular in the mid-1950s and 1960s when many African colonies were gaining independence and has been applied to Kitawala by historians and sociologists like Paulus, René Lemarchand, Crawford Young, and

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[45] John Higginson, "Liberating the Captives: Independent Watchtower as an Avatar of Colonial Revolt in Southern Africa and Katanga, 1908-1941," *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 1 (1992): 55-80; Jean Marc Ngoy Kyungu Wa Nsungu, "Etude comparative de deux mouvements politico-religieux: Le Kimbanguisme et le Kitawala 1921-1960" (Ph.D. diss., Institut Supérieur Pédagogique Lumumbashi, 2001), 26; Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 62; Fields, *Revival and Rebellion*; Terence O. Ranger, "Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Studies Review* 29, no. 2 (June 1986): 1-69.
[46] Fields, 14.

Anyenyola Welo.[47] Sholto Cross and John Higginson advanced a 'proto-class' variation of the 'proto-nationalist' interpretation, positing that Kitawala helped form the consciousness of Africa's 'common people.'[48]

Historians Jonathon Glassman and Terence Ranger have shown that the 'proto-nationalist' view and its 'proto-class' variant, are marred by the teleology that the movement would invariably contribute to secular nationalism or class consciousness.[49] Subsequent writers have refuted the 'proto-nationalist' approach by showing that the anti-establishment bias of most core Watchtower members prevented them from

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[47] Nationalist histories, often written on the heels of independence, suited national political elites as they showed a linear sequence of events to independence, and also reflected the interpretations of the colonizers, who feared that Kitawala would become the basis of a nationalist movement. René Lemarchand, *Political Awakening in the Belgian Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 167-168, 173; Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 253. Cross conceded that Kitawala did mean different things to different people. See Cross, 9, 445-446. According to Anyenyola Welo, the post-war struggle for political emancipation passed from Kitawala to urban, non-religious associations, but Kitawala remained a catalyst for the masses' desire for greater autonomy. See Anyenyola Welo, 15. Biebuyck claimed that Kitawala contributed to a greater sense of unity and collectiveness amongst the Bakumu ethnic group, and together with Gérard and Mwene-Batende, convincingly posited that it was particularly successful in areas that lacked strong centralised political authorities capable of organizing potential proto-nationalist movements. See Biebuyck, 36-37; "Dossier AI (4737)," Étude M. Gérard. "Le caractère politique du Kitawala au Kivu." August 28, 1956, AA, Brussels; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 149, 185-187.

[48] The 'proto-class' analysis emerged as the 'proto-nationalist' view was increasingly challenged. Cross tentatively argues for a connection between Watchtower and the process of proletarianization, while Higginson boldly states that Kitawala was a catalyst for working-class ideology in Katanga. Cross, 6, 434-435; Higginson, "Liberating the Captives"; Higginson, John. "Bringing the Workers Back In: Worker Protest and Popular Intervention in Katanga, 1931-1941," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 22, no. 2 (1988): 199-223.

[49] Glassman has aptly argued that some scholars' search for 'class consciousness' in their subjects is an attempt to impose theoretical social phenomenon onto historical actors, which do little to help us understand their agency. The 'common people' were not led like sheep by nationalist leaders and "had their own visions of the shape that the postcolonial nation-state should take." Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), 12-13, 17. Ranger critiques the 'proto-class' view on the basis that the violent Watchtower/Kitawala prophet Mwana Lesa did not attack chiefs, nor whites, and that "it seems possible that the proto-proletarian interpretation may depend as heavily on the paranoic fears of colonial administrators as did the nationalist." Ranger, 17.

supporting nationalist causes.[50] Analyses that stress messianic movements' ability to unite Africans politically across ethnic lines have a point, but the fascination with messianism should not be allowed to sideline other aspects of religious and social movements. As a result, historians Ranger and Frederick Cooper have argued that African religious movements deserve to be analysed in their own terms, as spiritual communities, instead of as forerunners to nationalism or class-consciousness.[51] I believe it to be nevertheless likely that, as noted by Ranger, "some [Watchtower] ideas could [have been] made use of in a more diffuse anti-colonialism" and "were certainly picked up and used in popular protest movements."[52]

The 'cultural' approach is the other major interpretation of Kitawala, and views the movement as a predominantly religious phenomenon seeking to restore cultural cohesion in response to cultural tensions produced by the colonial situation. Proponents of this view include historians and anthropologists Gérard, Greschat, Biebuyck, and Mwene-Batende, all of whom have unsurprisingly come into conflict with the more political interpretations mentioned above.[53] Greschat explicitly states that Kitawala should not be confused with a political, nationalist, or revolutionary movement, while Mwene-Batende has concluded that Kitawala is a religious movement, not a social one.[54] However, like 'proto-nationalist' and 'proto-class' analyses of Kitawala, purely cultural or religious interpretations are also problematic because they undervalue both the political ramifications and intent of ritual acts like baptism.[55]

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[50] Ranger, 3-4.

[51] Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 62; Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa*; Ranger, 18.

[52] Ranger, 14-15, 16.

[53] Gérard, 109-110, 112; Greschat, 94; Biebuyck, 40; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 13, 65, 253, 280.

[54] Greschat, 94. Mwene-Batende discusses Kitawala as a symbolic response, a myth created to manage perceived social contradictions, cultural anomie and colonial exploitation. See Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 13, 65, 253, 280.

[55] Fields, 18.

Karen Fields' groundbreaking book, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa*, dissolved the barrier between the 'political' and 'cultural' understandings of Watchtower in colonial Malawi and Rhodesia. Fields contends that both of these approaches are flawed because they are predicated on the question of 'rationality' – 'political' Watchtower is an irrational or immature version of 'real' nationalist politics and 'cultural' Watchtower is an irrational flight from 'real' social tensions.[56] Fields takes Hobsbawn's statement, that "'the kinds of community which produced millenarian heresies are not the ones in which clear distinctions between religious and secular things can easily be drawn'" as a point of departure to argue the politico-religious nature of Watchtower. Fields goes on to explain that Watchtower was politically threatening to colonial regimes because it repudiated both mission Christianity and 'traditional' religions, both of which were important political foundations of the colonial state.[57] If Kitawala constituted such a challenge, this would in part explain officials' paranoia towards it.[58]

John and Jean Comaroff's highly influential work on South African religious movements, has portrayed Christianity as "a symbolic field of struggle over capitalism."[59] I would argue, however, that Kitawala was rather ambivalent towards capitalism. Indeed, Kitawalists' desire for a theocratic world order could be seen as the quest to end capitalist forms of exploitation. Yet, Kitawala pastors' frequent prophesying of a time of idyllic plenty in which Africans would control products for conspicuous consumption

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[56] Fields, 18. Given that Kitawala is a form of African Watchtower and similar ways in which these movements have been discussed by academics, Fields' conclusions also stand for Kitawala.

[57] Established Christian missions were essential to the colonial state as they furthered the 'civilizing' mission, created a skilled and literate workforce necessary for the colonial state and economy, and legitimised the regime. Yet, despite missionaries' work to the contrary, 'traditional' African customs and chiefs' supernatural symbolic powers had to be supported by the state, because it was dependent both on African chiefs' continued service and authority amongst their people. Ibid., 14, 47, 51, 274-277.

[58] Ranger, 18.

[59] Elizabeth Elbourne, "Word Made Flesh: Christianity, Modernity, and Cultural Colonialism in the Work of Jean and John Comaroff," *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 2 (2003): 445.

could be interpreted as a desire to control capitalist production. Meanwhile, Jean Comaroff's view in *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance* that African independent churches were subversive because they appropriated and subverted Christian forms is relevant to Kitawala, and substantiates Fields' conclusions.[60]

Fields' contribution to our understanding of Watchtower best illustrates the politico-religious nature of Kitawala. This thesis discusses the politics of 1950s Kitawala policy and does not aim to contribute to the debate regarding the character of Kitawala. Nevertheless, I use Fields' interpretation because it offers an academic understanding closest to an emic understanding of Kitawala. Such a view of Kitawala serves to highlight the artificial and subjective nature of officials' attempts to differentiate between 'political' Kitawalists and moderate 'religious' Kitawalists, so as to allow for their new policy of accommodation and repression.

I now return to the concerns of the beginning of the introduction, namely the creation and implementation of the new Kitawala policy in the mid-1950s. To understand the significance of these policy changes, it is important to understand both the subjectivity of British and Belgian colonial agents' perceptions of Watchtower/Kitawala, as well as their repressive relationship with the movement (Chapter 2). The colonial archive shows that Belgian colonial officials were extremely anxious about Kitawala, seeing it as a xenophobic movement and a potential agent of Communism. In 1955, administrators were convinced by an ill-fated Kitawala uprising not only of the great danger of 'nationalist Kitawala,' but also of the failure of existing Kitawala policy. These anxieties, heightened by the numerous challenges to colonialism in the post-war era, led to the creation of the new Kitawala policy (Chapter 3). The new policy saw the continued repression of 'radical' Kitawala, in part with the deployment of a *Sûreté* Kitawala Team. I will show that administrators were acutely aware of anti-colonial struggles in other colonies, like Mau Mau in Kenya, and actively pursued more direct contact between

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[60]   Elbourne, 442.

officials and Africans, as well as penal reforms, to prevent such an outcome in the Congo (Chapter 4).

Simultaneously, the new policy was developed in accordance with post-war developmental colonialism, which sought to expand imperial resources and increase opportunities for metropolitan capital, while also re-legitimising colonial rule.[61] The substantial resources invested in the colony during this period were a show of Belgium's strength as a colonial power, but one necessitated by the fact that continued rule could no longer be taken for granted and needed to be both legitimate and appealing to the colonised. Thus, officials sought to address the social and economic causes of Kitawala. The *Plan Décennal* and the *FBI* spearheaded developmental colonialism in the Congo, both of which were used as tools in the attempt to co-opt Kitawala in Orientale in the 1950s.[62] As such, my examination of 1950s Kitawala policy reveals developmental colonialism's role in attempting intensified colonial government penetration and control of African society. The development of the Congo was undertaken to provide greater material benefits to the colony's population, but also to consolidate colonial rule in what has been called the "second colonial occupation" of Africa (Chapter 5).[63]

The implementation of this second occupation, however, was not straightforward and had serious limitations. I will show that Kitawala continued to be viewed as a political threat to Belgian colonialism until Congolese formal independence in 1960 by examining colonial administrators' perceptions and policies towards Kitawala. Kitawala did not become depoliticised in the 1950s with the rise of secular nationalist political parties, as

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[61] Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, 39; Freund, 168-173, 176.

[62] Most sources on Belgian developmental colonialism are contemporary documents and treatises. Vanthemsche's 1994 study of Belgium's *Plan Décennal* is a valuable resource which examines the origins, elaboration and intentions of the *Plan*, but does not claim to provide a detailed examination of the *Plan*'s application. Vanthemsche, 5.

[63] D.A. Low and John Lonsdale, introduction to *History of East Africa*, eds. D.A. Low and A. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), iii.

some historians have suggested.[64] How effective was the new Kitawala policy in accommodating, co-opting and repressing the movement? Belgian officials were divided on what they wanted and how to achieve it. As a result, there was an ambiguous relationship between the developmental and the anti-Kitawala agenda, one characterised by parallelism, convergence, conflict and ultimately failure (Chapter 6). I seek to examine why and how developmental colonialism was perceived and implemented, as well as how it articulated with the anti-Kitawala agenda in the Stanleyville District of Orientale Province.

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[64] Anyenyola Welo, 15-16. It is possible that many Kitawala congregations became relatively depoliticized in the last decade of colonial rule, but I argue that given the number and diversity of Kitawala groups it is hard to generalise Kitawala's evolution as a movement.

Chapter 2.

The Making of the Congolese Kitawala

Kitawala was a religious movement in the Belgian Congo and a distant ideological product of the American Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, better known as Jehovah's Witnesses or Watchtower.[65] The basic tenets of Watchtower doctrine formed the foundation of African Watchtower and Kitawala belief in Southern and Central Africa, but these were repeatedly adapted to the lived realities of the movement's African followers whose communities were undergoing significant transitions. Africans adopted the movement for a variety of reasons, but followers generally shared real or imagined powerlessness.[66]

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[65] For the purposes of this thesis I shall refer to the 'official' movement, headquartered in Brooklyn, as 'Jehovah's Witnesses' or 'Watchtower.' I will use 'African Watchtower' whenever I wish to emphasize either African interpretations of Watchtower or describe the ethnic makeup of a given Watchtower group. Unless noted otherwise, I will refer to the movement in the Congo as 'Kitawala.' Watchtower began as a bible study group founded in the 1870s by Pastor Charles Taze Russell from Allegheny, Pennsylvania, "amid the widespread religious revival that crisscrossed the radical politics of the time." In 1884, the study groups were incorporated in the United States, becoming the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, and since 1931 the movement has called itself Jehovah's Witnesses. Fields, 91-92.

[66] A basic adherence to Jehovah's Witnesses' ideas and doctrines allows many diverse African groups to be considered as part of a larger African Watchtower movement. Some African prophetic movements incorporated elements of Watchtower doctrine but did not see themselves as belonging to either a global or African Watchtower movement. See Cross, 432. Kitawala was not a centrally-led movement and consisted of multiple, relatively autonomous groups whose only links were the filiations between each group's pastor, as only existing pastors could ordain new pastors. Some groups heeded directives from influential pastors from affiliated groups. See "Dossier Gouvernement Général (hereafter GG) (17.715)," W.J. Carels, Chargé de Mission. Léopoldville. "Mission d'Information en Province Orientale – Equipe Spécialisée Politique." March 3, 1958; "Dossier GG (10790)," R. Philippart, Administrateur Territorial Assistant Principal. District de Stanleyville. "Synthèse des premiers résultats de l'enquête Kitawala." March 6, 1956, AA, Brussels.

This chapter provides the context for examining changes to Kitawala policy in the 1950s by presenting an academic emic view of Kitawala, and a concise history of colonial agents' responses to the movement since its introduction to Africa. An emic view of Kitawala allows us to see the subjective nature of the way Kitawala was characterised in the colonial archive and permits us instead to see Kitawala on its own terms. This is particularly important because officials needed to re-imagine Kitawala in the 1950s in order to implement their new policies. A brief overview of the movement's expansion in the Congo as well as officials' and missionaries' attitudes and policies towards Kitawala prior to the 1950s is necessary to appreciate the significance and scope of mid-1950s Kitawala policy changes in subsequent chapters.

Watchtower Fundamentals

It is instructive to present some of the basic tenets of Watchtower doctrine that formed the foundation of African Watchtower and Kitawala belief. Central to Watchtower faith is the millennial belief in Armageddon, the final battle between good and evil, when Jesus Christ will banish Satan and his allies for a thousand years.[67] Witnesses believe that the Day of Judgement will follow Armageddon, at which time the living and the dead will be judged by God, allowing the just to take part in a new theocratic world order, a paradise on earth.[68] Meanwhile, Witnesses see Satan in the current world order. For instance, Joseph F. Rutherford, one time president of the Jehovah's Witnesses, wrote virulent critiques of the "satanic alliance" between established churches and the capitalist world order.[69] Members are not allowed to enter into pacts with satanic forces and only acknowledge worldly authority as long as it does not interfere with their

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[67] Signs that the final battle has already begun are believed to be visible in the world's natural disasters, wars, and general moral deterioration. Fields, 95.

[68] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 130; Fields, 96; Norman Long, *Social Change and the Individual: A study of the social and religious responses to innovation in a Zambian rural community* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), 207.

[69] After Rutherford's death and replacement by Nathan Knorr in 1942, the society's literature became more conciliatory. Fields, 93.

allegiance with God. As such, Witnesses to not salute national flags, vote, or do military service, nor do they become involved in non-religious social or political campaigns. Witnesses also practice adult baptism by total immersion as a sign of membership to the society. Like other 19th century American evangelical movements the society preaches the literal Truth of the Bible and thus urges the rejection of 'spiritism,' not the denial of the existence of spirits. It is the Watchtower concepts of the baptism as a rite of passage, the existence of spirits, and the idea of ancestors returning for the Day of Judgement that particularly appealed to Watchtower's African followers.[70] The movement also seems to have been influenced by the ideas of the Pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey, which would explain African Watchtower and Kitawala followers' usage of Garvey's famous slogan "Africa for the Africans" and their predictions of an imminent invasion of liberating African-Americans.[71] This overview of Watchtower beliefs is not meant to be exhaustive, but these key doctrines re-emerge repeatedly in African manifestations of the movement.

Watchtower in Africa

Watchtower spread to Southern and Central Africa in the early 20th century. Joseph Booth introduced Watchtower to Cape Town in 1906.[72] He proselytised migrant workers, who spread the movement into the Nyasaland Protectorate and the Rhodesias.

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[70] Fields, 94, 96.

[71] Ibid., 11-12, 143.

[72] Previously, in 1887 Brother Samuel W. Seaton made an unsuccessful attempt to introduce Watchtower doctrine to Monrovia, Liberia. Cross, 12. For more detailed information on Booth's contribution to Watchtower in Africa see Fields' *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa*.

Watchtower was particularly popular amongst Africans disillusioned with established Christian missions.[73]

Watchtower ideology in British Africa was characterised, to varying degrees, by a rejection of both secular and sectarian European over-rule, as well as 'traditional' African customs and rulers. This was exemplified by baptism, which was central to African Watchtower and broke missions' monopoly on baptism.[74] Baptism symbolised entry into a new community and was, to some extent, an assertion of political independence given Watchtower's belief that Witnesses would play a key role in an imminent, new theocratic world order.[75] Mass baptisms were also an engagement with the pre-Christian belief in witchcraft, a form of sin important even to Christian Africans' worldview, but ignored by the missions. Baptisms were frequently accompanied by converts' promises to have renounced witchcraft, and many accepted baptism to protect themselves from accusations of witchcraft.[76] Thus, Watchtower offered the political solution of a new theocratic world order to both the perceived evil of witchcraft and the foreign rule represented by missions that stressed obedience to the colonial state and the paying colonial taxes.[77]

African Watchtower frequently antagonised established missions, secular colonial powers and African authorities. Missionaries were hostile towards the movement because it criticised their authority and competed with their missions. African chiefs,

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[73]   Missionaries at the Livingstonia mission in the Nyasaland Protectorate condemned Africans as "immoral" if they were disobedient to missionaries, supported much hated colonial taxation, charged fees for health as well as educational services, and suspended members in arrears. "Because Livingstonia controlled access to things people had come to need or want, it could set conditions and rules in their acquisition," and its missionaries took this logic to heart when they enforced periods of study and waiting of at least two years on Africans before allowing baptism. Fields, 102, 105-111, 114.

[74]   Ibid., 102, 105-106.

[75]   Baptism also resonated with traditional African ceremonies of purification, and established missions' valuation of baptism. Ibid., 118.

[76]   Converts promised to have destroyed or rejected all medicines and charms. Ibid., 119, 121.

[77]   Ibid., 108. Fields reminds us that to the converts, the movement may have been more about the religious goal of exposing and renouncing evil than instigating revolution. See Ibid., 122, 125.

meanwhile, felt threatened by the Christian revivalists because they showed irreverence towards the pre-Christian beliefs on which chiefs' authority rested.[78] African Watchtower pastors preached the non-recognition of chiefs' and missionaries' directives, and slogans of racial equality, including Marcus Garvey's famous "Africa for the Africans."[79] In 1918, a Northern Rhodesian revival used *chongo*, "the inarticulate sedition of [speaking in] tongues and shouting."[80] *Chongo* undermined the traditional ritual authority of headmen and elders, which rested on supernatural sanctions, and drowned out District officials' voices at meetings with Watchtower adherents.[81] Thus, *chongo* combined African conceptions of spirit possession and missionaries' ideas on communion with the Holy Spirit into an effective political tool of religious, civil disobedience.[82] The revival culminated with members ceasing all work in anticipation of the Apocalypse. The government responded with mass arrests, dispersing Watchtower settlements and bringing the movement of mass religious defiance to an end in 1919.[83]

Watchtower Reaches the Belgian Congo

Although some African Watchtower practices were directed against 'customary' authority, African Watchtower was not fundamentally opposed to 'customary' rulers,

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[78] Fields, 116. It is likely that chiefs continued to be dependent on these beliefs when Malawi formally adopted indirect rule in 1933. Indeed, Mamdani has argued that the adoption of indirect rule in colonial Africa resulted from "a search for institutional forms of control anchored in a historical and cultural legitimacy." Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 77.

[79] Fields, 142-143. Watchtower pastors regularly preached the imminence of the Apocalypse, the urgent need for baptism, the approaching enslavement or departure of the Europeans, but also railed against polygamy, beer drinking, destroyed ancestor shrines and publicly ridiculed the beliefs of village elders. They also encouraged converts to withdraw their children from mission schools. See Ibid., 139-140.

[80] Ibid., 128-129.

[81] Members allowed themselves to be directed by Watchtower prophets and deputies. Fields, 145. *Chongo*'s noise empowered members and weakened the power of colonial agents. Cross, 204; Fields, 155.

[82] Fields, 156-157.

[83] Ibid., 144-146, 152-154.

appointed by colonial officials or otherwise.[84] Indeed, Watchtower was introduced to the Belgian Congo in 1925 as a result of collaboration between a Watchtower preacher, Tomo Nyirenda, and an African chief, Shaiwila, in which Watchtower practices were used to violently restore 'customary' rule.[85] Nyirenda, a.k.a. Mwana Lesa, the Son of God, preached the renunciation of witchcraft, charms and medicines, and chiefs requested that he cleanse their villages. Shaiwila was a weak and unpopular chief, although he was recognised by the Crown as the ruler of the Western Lala people in Northern Rhodesia.[86] He sought Nyirenda's services and accepted to be baptised after Nyirenda had identified and murdered his political opponents in a witchcraft eradication campaign. Thus, Watchtower came to replace the poison ordeal, the traditional means of killing witches outlawed by the colonial regime.[87] Shaiwila strengthened his authority by

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[84] The term 'customary' is misleading because it ignored the realities of colonial rule. The Belgian colonial regime introduced indirect rule institutions in the 1920s, acknowledging the authority of African chiefs willing to collaborate with the colonial state, and replacing those deemed unreliable. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 86. Belgian officials also imposed the institution of chieftaincy on acephalous or stateless societies. Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 103. Chiefs were expected to enforce forced labor, compulsory cultivation, conscription, labor recruitment and taxes. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila. A People's History* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2002), 35. Vansina has argued that in practice administrators "actually recognized only chiefs over small chiefdoms whom they named and deposed at will," consequently "their indirect rule often came very close to direct rule." Vansina, 178. In fact, some colonial officials claimed that the Belgian colonial state never officially committed to a specific type of colonial rule, direct or indirect. "Dossier AIMO (1979)," Général E. de Jonghe, Directeur, Ministère des Colonies. "Note en réponse à Monseigneur de Hemptinne." March 10, 1932, AA, Brussels. In any case, Mamdani has shown that 'customary' chiefs under indirect rule were hardly 'customary.' Pre-colonial Africa "did not have a single customary authority, but several," including: "age groups, clans, women's groups, chiefs, religious groups." Only the customary authority of the chief was recognized as 'genuine' by the colonial regime, removing checks on chiefly power and reorganising it "as despotic." Mahmood Mamdani, "Identity and National Governance," in *Towards a New Map of Africa*, ed. Ben Wisner, Camilla Toulmin, and Rutendo Chitiga (London: Earthscan, 2005), 268-269. See also note 78 above.

[85] Some suggest that Watchtower was introduced as early as 1920 by Northern Rhodesians. Gérard, 11.

[86] The authority of Lala chiefs had been weakened by the onset of colonial rule. Fields, 174-175. Chiefs under indirect rule undoubtedly struggled to retain enough prestige to demand the obedience of their subjects for numerous reasons. See notes 78 and 84 above.

[87] Fields, 52, 164-165, 167-168. Like other colonial regimes, the Belgian colonial state set limits to the customary in order to maintain "'public order and morality'," and more importantly to reinforce colonial power. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 115-117.

eliminating political opponents, but also by fulfilling the traditional chiefly service of murdering individuals his subjects suspected of witchcraft.[88] Aware that colonial authorities were coming to arrest him, Nyirenda accepted an invitation from Chief Mafumbi to cleanse his villages in Katanga province, Belgian Congo. In the Congo the witch killings took on massive scale, with 174 victims. Belgian and British authorities collaborated in tracking and capturing Mwana Lesa. In spring 1926, Nyirenda, Shaiwila and twelve others were sentenced to death and hung, while everyone in the twenty-nine villages in which Nyirenda was most active was sentenced to forced labour.[89]

Following Nyirenda's arrest, African Watchtower continued to spread in the Congo, albeit in a generally peaceful manner. It became known as Kitawala, although its preaching resembled that of African Watchtower in British Africa in the 1910s and 1920s.[90] Nevertheless, Nyirenda's witch-hunt is significant for Kitawala policy in the Congo, as its violent nature influenced Belgian officials' hostile attitude towards pacifist manifestations of the movement in the 1930s.[91]

Kitawala in the Belgian Congo and the Reaction of the Colonial State

In 1931 Kitawala resurfaced in Elisabethville, Katanga's capital. The movement caused great anxiety amongst officials and their reaction laid the foundation of Kitawala policy.

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[88] Fields, 178-185, 188-189. Like previous manifestations of Watchtower, the movement empowered its followers, in this case providing opportunities to young Africans who held no traditional positions of power.

[89] Ibid., 170, 172.

[90] Kitawala's religious doctrine was characterized by the belief in an imminent new theocratic world order, "African for the Africans," racial equality, protection against witchcraft, and the refusal to pay colonial taxes and to acknowledge both European and African colonial agents. "Dossier AI (1621)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Kitawala: Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels; Cross, 405. Many also preached the imminent reversal of power relations, declaring that upon death the faithful would be reborn with white skins. Gérard, 115; Paulus, 6.

[91] L. Verbeek, "Mouvements religieux dans la région de Sakania (1925-1931)," *Enquêtes et Documents d'Histoire africaine* (Université catholique de Louvain), 5 (1983), 140.

Kitawalists made themselves known to colonial authorities when they viewed the effects of the Great Depression as signs of the coming Apocalypse and supported an African boycott of European-owned establishments. They preached the advent of African-Americans, liberation from Belgian rule and a period of plenty.[92] Governor General Auguste Tilkens, associating Kitawala with the *countryside*, feared that the movement would make common cause against colonial rule with *urban* African ethnic associations.[93]

Officials' response in 1931 to Elisabethville's Kitawala cell set the tone for Kitawala policy for the next twenty-five years; namely the surveillance, deportation, imprisonment and banning of Kitawalists to remote parts of the colony. Police arrested the cell's sixty-one members and deported those who were British subjects. Congolese members were released under police surveillance, but two Kitawalist leaders were banished and imprisoned in Equateur province in 1932.[94] The movement prompted the creation of a colonial state information service, the *Sûreté*, in 1932, whose purpose it was to covertly gather all information relevant to colonial order and security.[95]

Banning or *relegation* 'internal exile' became widely practiced and entailed isolating influential Kitawalist leaders in remote parts of the colony, where they would be monitored, placed under house arrest, or imprisoned. Officials sentenced 'less dangerous' members to return to their community of origin to be watched by a local European or African agent.[96] Watchtower publications were banned in Katanga in April 1936.[97] In 1937, the Katangan provincial council, backed by the Catholic hierarchy and the Native Protection Commission, decided to create forced labour concentration camps

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[92] Higginson, "Bringing the Workers Back In," 203-204; Cross, 408.
[93] Higginson, "Bringing the Workers Back In," 204.
[94] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels.
[95] The *Sûreté* was to gather information on foreign nationals, Communists, Pan-African movements, symptoms of strikes and revolts, and all individuals suspected of espionage or of being hostile to Belgian colonial occupation. Ibid.
[96] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 138.
[97] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels.

for "irrecoverable" Kitawalists.[98] Three such penal camps, *Colonies agricoles pour rélégués* or *colagrels*, were created at Kasaji and at Malonga in Katanga, and at Ekafera in Equateur and their inmates housed in *Camps pour Anciens Relégués Dangereux* or *CARD*s.[99]

Despite the police action in Elisabethville, migrant workers rapidly spread Kitawala both to their rural areas of origin and other population centres, resulting in the movement's expansion to most of Katanga's urban centres by the late 1930s. During the 1930s, authorities identified Kitawala with a violent witchcraft eradication movement in rural southern Katanga.[100] In 1941, Kitawalists clashed with the police and the army at a mining camp in Manono, leading to over two hundred arrests.[101] As a result of such conflicts with colonial authorities, the movement was progressively banned in the Congo's provinces between 1937 and 1948, before being outlawed colony-wide in 1949.[102] It should be noted though that Kitawala did not generally advocate violence, but passivity, as noted by Belgian social-scientist Jean-Pierre Paulus.[103]

African chiefs both helped and hindered Kitawala's expansion. The success of Kitawala's expansion depended heavily on African chiefs' interest in the movement and pastors actively sought their support. When Kitawala spread rapidly in southern Katanga between 1931 and 1934, with thousands converting to the movement, it did so in part because four appointed chiefs indirectly favoured the movement, with one joining Kitawala. Meanwhile, few villages converted in areas where local chiefs opposed the

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[98] Cross, "The Watch Tower," (1973). "Dossier Rapport Annuel/Congo Belge (hereafter RA/CB) (30)," Province d'Elisabethville. "Conseil de Province 1937. Séance du Mercredi 31 Mars à 14:30h. Objet: Sectes Indigènes." 1937, AA, Brussels.

[99] In subsequent years additional camps were created. Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 138. *Colagrel*: agricultural colonies for relegates. *CARD*: camps for formerly dangerous relegates. Unfortunately, the differences between *colagrel*s and *CARD*s, as well as the layouts of these penal facilities, are unclear in both the colonial record and secondary sources.

[100] Cross, 409-410.

[101] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels.

[102] Cross, "The Watch Tower," (1973).

[103] Paulus, 3.

movement.[104] Kitawalists undermined chiefs' power by preaching that they were no longer subject to chiefly authority.[105] Kitawala's promise of freedom from witchcraft, however, made the movement appealing to chiefs who wanted to reaffirm their authority by fulfilling their traditional chiefly duty of protecting their subjects from witchcraft. Yet, Chiefs were caught in a complicated situation because they had to control and satisfy their subjects, while still remaining loyal to the colonial regime's expectations of them.[106] Indeed, in 1935 the colonial administration in Katanga informed chiefs that they would be removed from power and banned if they consulted or permitted consultations with leaders of religious sects.[107] True to their word, the four chiefs who had either encouraged or joined Kitawala in Katanga were stripped of their authority when officials became aware of their role in Kitawala's expansion.[108]

Meanwhile, both Catholic and Protestant missions condemned Kitawala, although their Christian teachings had sensitised many Africans to Kitawala's revivalist doctrine.[109] The Catholic Church viewed Kitawala as a subversive movement that expounded thinly veiled xenophobia, and reported all Kitawala activity to the authorities.[110] A conference of various Protestant missions in Elisabethville on June 1st 1932 also held Kitawala in contempt, announcing that Watchtower was subversive to the principles on which a stable church, a stable government and a stable civilisation are constructed. The conference concluded that the movement constituted a real menace to

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[104] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels.

[105] "Dossier AI (4737)," J. Paulus, Directeur, Ministère des Colonies. "Objet: Kitawala." June 24, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[106] Fields has called this the double articulation of indirect rule - officials had to shore up chiefs' control over their subjects, while keeping the same chiefs weak enough to remain subservient to their European masters. Fields, 51.

[107] "Dossier RA/CB (31)," Province d'Elisabethville. "Conseil Province 1935 – 2e session." 1935, AA, Brussels.

[108] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels.

[109] Missionary organisations played a significant role in both education and social movements in the Congo, but, aside from a few general examples, the role of these organisations, either as instruments of anti-Kitawala action or as mediators, is beyond the scope of this study.

[110] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels; "SA Kat 5 (Saint-André Katanga 5)," [no author]. "Note Annexe aux Statistiques 1932-1933." [no date], Archives de l'Abbaye de Saint-André, Zevenkerken.

colonial law and order, and at a conference two years later the missions agreed to cooperate with all efforts to counteract the movement.[111] Nevertheless, both the Catholic missions and colonial officials viewed Protestant missions with suspicion because they believed that the free interpretation of the bible, promoted by Protestantism, had resulted in the 'dangerous' dispersal of bibles amongst Africans.[112]

Ultimately, the administration's internal exile policy was a spectacular failure because it was unable to successfully isolate exiled individuals. Internal exile did not weaken Kitawala, but on the contrary gave the movement greater opportunities to spread its ideology far and wide in the colony.[113] Banned Kitawalists were frequently too numerous for colonial agents to prevent them from proselytising local populations. Kitawalists were forced to work in fields, on road construction and on other public works, but during group work or free time Kitawalists were able to slip away long enough to spread the movement's basic tenets to the surrounding region. Banned Kitawalists also met and exchanged ideas with banned Kimbanguists, members of another 'subversive' Congolese religious movement, inspired by the prophet Simon Kimbangu in 1921. Kimbanguism was prevalent in western Congo, while Kitawala spread in eastern Congo, but officials feared that the movements would join forces, uniting the entire Congo against them. Given the spread of Kitawala to Equateur and the danger of Kitawala fusing with Kimbanguism, officials decided in 1937 to transfer the incarcerated Kitawalist leaders to Lubutu Territory in Orientale in the hope that this remote part of the colony would finally isolate the leaders both from potential converts and Kimbanguists.[114]

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[111] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels.
[112] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 137-138.
[113] Cross, 413; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 139.
[114] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 139-141.

Kitawala in Orientale Province and the Masisi-Lubutu Uprising

Kitawala preachers (unsuccessfully isolated by colonial officials) spread Kitawala to Orientale in 1938, where it was particularly popular amongst the Bakumu in Lubutu Territory.[115] It is useful to briefly outline the reasons for Bakumu and other proximate groups' interest in the movement and the Masisi-Lubutu Kitawalist uprising in 1944. The sudden and violent nature of the uprising greatly contributed to officials' fear of Kitawala, but also steeled their resolve to decisively dismantle the movement. Alleged Bakumu reasons for joining the movement coloured officials' perception of how and why Kitawala expanded and ultimately shaped Kitawala policy. Officials saw the Bakumu's deplorable living conditions as the main reason for Kitawala's success and foreshadowed developmental colonialist Kitawala policies in the 1950s.

As a result of colonial rule, the Bakumu faced political and social disruption, as well as economic exploitation. The Bakumu saw their appointed chiefs as illegitimate and suffered under colonial taxation, forced agricultural production schemes, deplorable conditions in local mines, and food production shortages. Mwene-Batende argues that these conditions caused social disruption, pushing Kumu miners to seek new forms of social organisation, ethnic unity and identity in Kitawala.[116]

In 1944 a violent Kitawala revolt erupted in Masisi and Lubutu Territories in Kivu and Orientale, due to Kitawala repression, a political crisis involving Bakumu chiefs and war-time forced labour. Disempowered traditional chiefs gave tacit approval for their people to join Kitawala *en masse*, believing that Kitawala would triumph over the colonisers and restore their traditional positions of authority. The Bakumu also faced heightened economic exploitation and abominable living conditions due to increased war-time production during World War II.[117] As we shall see in later chapters, this war-

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[115] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 104.
[116] Ibid., 95-103, 106, 122-125.
[117] Ibid., 154, 213.

time exploitation is significant because it contributed to the colonial administration's desire to improve Africans' living standards in the post-war era.

A man named Bushiri led the revolt, following a religious vision in which God ordered him to free Africans from colonial rule. Bushiri's message was enthusiastically received and the rebels planned to halt all work benefitting the colonial establishment, kill all the white officials, destroy all the mines, and engage in a witchcraft eradication campaign.[118] The rebels ceased work, took white officials hostage – forcing them to dress in African garb and do 'Africans' work,' executed African rubber-gathering capitas, destroyed gathered rubber, raided mines, and forced non-members to be porters for the rebel host.[119] The rebels raped and mutilated non-members, resisters and suspected witches, killing around two hundred.[120]

The colonial authorities in Kivu and Orientale moved quickly to violently quell the revolt. The *Force Publique* dispersed the rebels in small skirmishes.[121] Within weeks Bushiri and his second-in-command, Alleluya, as well as many of their followers, were captured. Only the two leaders were executed. The *Force Publique* employed severe methods to crush the revolt, mistreating captives, shooting fifty-five unarmed rebels and using scorched earth tactics on rebel villages and fields.[122] Chief Warrant Officer Benzing and agricultural agent and police judge Paquay, with the tacit support of their

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[118] With chiefs' support, Bushiri was able to rally between five and fifteen thousand followers. Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 214-218.

[119] Ibid., 220-232.

[120] "Dossier AI (4737)," "Evénements de Février-Mars 1944 – Territoire de Masisi." [no date], AA, Brussels.

[121] The *Force Publique* was the Belgian Congo's official armed force and was composed of African soldiers and predominantly European officers.

[122] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 240-248; "Dossier AI (4737)," A. Bribosia, Administrateur Territorial, Territoire du Masisi – Opération Militaire de l'Utunda. "Note de l'Administration de Masisi." April 15 1944, AA, Brussels.

superiors, arbitrarily arrested suspected Kitawalists and had over fifty of them whipped to death.[123]

Post-1944 and 'Political Kitawala' in Orientale Province

The response of the colonial agents was effective in suppressing the revolt in 1944, but did not address the uprising's fundamental cause, namely the objective social conditions that led to the insurrection.[124] Nocturnal Kitawala meetings and baptisms continued in Lubutu Territory in 1945, and the movement continued to spread in Orientale, reaching the *centre extra-coutumier*[125] (CEC) of Stanleyville in 1950.[126] Stanleyville District became a locus of Kitawala activity, but Orientale's three other

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[123] "Dossier AIMO (1638)," Inspecteur de l'Etat. Léopoldville. "Note pour Monsieur le Gouverneur Général." August 18, 1945; A. Boivin, Agent Sanitaire, Kasese. "Objet: Décès Kitawalistes en région Kasese," August 25, 1944; "Dossier AI (4737)," Révolte de l'Utunda (Masisi) – Lubutu. "Les faits et les mesures prises pour lutter contre la révolte." [no date but attached to a letter dated August 8 1945], AA, Brussels. Benzing and Paquay were tried and sentenced to two years detention, but it is unclear whether they served their sentences. "Dossier AIMO (1638)," F. Peigneux, Chef de Service des AIMO, Gouvernement Général. "Objet: Affaire Benzing-Paquay." July 16, 1945. AA, Brussels.

[124] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 251.

[125] A CEC was a designated urban and peri-urban areas in which the state's interpretation of African 'customs' would be enforceable by law, but not subject to the power of rural chiefs. Bruce Fetter, *The Creation of Elisabethville, 1910-1940*, ed. Peter Duignan and Lewis Gann (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), 133. African work camps, at mines, rail yards, etc, were also considered CECs. Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 115.

[126] "Dossier AIMO (127)," G. Vervier, Administrateur Territorial Assistant, Territoire de Lubutu, District de Stanleyville. "Année 1945. Rapport Annuel: Affaires Indigènes & Main d'œuvre." January 19, 1946; Administrateur Territorial Principal, Territoire de Lubutu, District de Stanleyville. "Année 1946. Rapport Annuel: Affaires Indigènes & Main d'œuvre." April 14 1947; "Dossier Rapport Annuel/Affaires Indigènes et Main-d'Oeuvre (hereafter RA/AIMO) (170)," M. Kreutz, Administrateur Territorial Principal, Chef du Territoire de Stanleyville. "Note de commentaire du Commissaire de District relatifs au Rapport AIMO 1950 du Territoire de Stanleyville." February 12 1951, AA, Brussels. Some reports place the introduction of Kitawala to Stanleyville as early as 1947. "Dossier AI (4737)," Philippart. "Contribution." 1954, AA, Brussels.

districts, Bas-Uele, Haut-Uele and Ituri, were practically unaffected by Kitawala, with the exception of Mambasa Territory, Ituri District.[127]

As Kitawala spread in Orientale, officials attributed many instances of labour unrest and sabotage to the movement, including the destruction of young coffee plants at a plantation, rail-line sabotage to derail a track motorcar, as well as low morale and strikes at plantations in Ponthierville Territory.[128] At the same time, it is interesting to note that in 1953 the Provincial AIMO Director recommended that African chiefs be taught that Kitawala threatened their authority and that indigenous tribunals pursue members.[129] This recommendation suggests that some chiefs might have been relatively ambivalent towards Kitawala, potentially using it to strengthen their authority. Nevertheless, in 1954 some chiefs did complain that their Kitawalist subjects no longer obeyed orders to work.[130] In general, authorities did not break with pre-war Kitawala policy and responded to Kitawala expansion with arrests and placing individuals into internal exile.[131]

As we shall see in the following chapter, colonial agents felt anxious about Kitawala. In 1950s Orientale Kitawala was associated, not only with xenophobia, but also with the spectre of nationalism.

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[127] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[128] "Dossier GG (22.231)," A. Neutens, Représentant de l'Autorité Tutélaire (RAT) du Centre Extra Coutumier (CEC) de Stanleyville. "Objet: Actes de Sabotage par les Adepts Kitawala à Gene-Gene." May 4 1955; L. Quinet, Commissaire principal de la *Sûreté*, Stanleyville. "Objet: Kitawala en territoire Ponthierville." April 4 1956; A. Schöller, Gouverneur Provincial de Stanleyville. "Objet: Grève aux plantations de la Biaro. Kitawala en territoire de Ponthierville." April 13 1956; M. Kreutz, Commissaire de District de Stanleyville. "Objet: Grève Territoire de Ponthierville Km. 69 Biaro – Cl. M.55." March 24 1956, AA, Brussels.

[129] *Affaires Indigénes et Main d'Oeuvre* (*AIMO*): Native and Labour Affairs.

[130] "Dossier AI (4737)," Philippart. "Contribution." 1954, AA, Brussels.

[131] "Dossier GG (22.231)," L. Breuls de Tiecken, Gouverneur Provincial de Stanleyville. "Objet: Kitawala en région de Ponthierville." December 31 1953, AA, Brussels.

Chapter 3.

Colonial Anxieties

Kitawala caused a great deal of anxiety amongst colonial officials. Aside from undermining the authority of colonial agents and the occasional Kitawala-inspired revolt, the colonial archive shows that the movement was seen as constituting a continuous threat in light of its alleged anti-European xenophobia, and links to both international Communism and emerging African nationalism. Urban Africans and western-educated *évolués* were often seen as Kitawala's most efficient vectors and most dangerous members, given their frequent exposure to Europeans. An unsuccessful uprising in Stanleyville and Ponthierville in 1955-1956 stoked officials' fears of an *évolués*-driven nationalist Kitawala. The 1955-1956 plots caused the crystallisation of a new Kitawala policy and (when viewed in the context of late 1950s colonial politics) constituted one of the largest apparent threats to Belgian rule.

Government reports and circulars discussing the Kitawala threat usually reveal more about the officials that produced them, than about actual Kitawalists. Officials' constant search for a 'third force,' animating Kitawala and misleading 'superstitious Africans' is significant, as it highlights administrators' inability to understand Kitawala in its own terms. In officials' minds, Kitawala had to be a front for something else because the movement's claims were so hard to categorise or take seriously without admitting that the Kitawalists had legitimate grievances (which of course the officials were unwilling or unable to admit). Nevertheless, agents' perceptions are significant because their anxieties over the acute danger posed by Kitawala, as well as fears of heightened anti-colonialism in the post-war era, explain why the administration embarked on an ambitious new anti-Kitawala policy, the details of which we shall explore in the following chapters.

Xenophobic Kitawala

Officials, from the Belgian Ministers of Colonies to District Commissioners in the Congo, frequently characterised Kitawala as a xenophobic movement because the movement considered the end of European rule to be desirable.[132] Even in 2010 files pertaining to Kitawala were still to be found under the heading "*mouvement xénophobe*" in the Belgian Foreign Ministry archives.

Kitawala's alleged 'xenophobia,' seen as the result of American Pan-Africanism, served the practical purpose of legitimising colonial authorities' repression of Kitawala, especially when it became clear that, unlike Mwana Lesa, most manifestations of the movement were non-violent.[133] In 1931, District Commissioner V. Vermeulen explained to his subordinates that he needed evidence of Kitawala's xenophobia, as he could not propose internally exiling Kitawalist "propagandists" simply for preaching religion.[134]

African Watchtower's xenophobia, however, was only determined by the colonial situation. According to Gérard, Kitawala did not encourage Africans to fight against Europeans. Kitawala was opposed to all foreign domination and as such was only seen to be xenophobic because in colonial Africa whites represented the highest authorities. Furthermore, Gérard noted that even during the 1944 uprising white prisoners received better treatment than African prisoners from their Kitawalist captors.[135]

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[132] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955; "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Hove, Inspecteur Royal des Colonies, Extrait du rapport de mission. "Le Kitawala." May-June 1956; Auguste Buisseret, Minister of Colonies, "Intensification scolaire en province de Stanleyville." November 6 1956. AA, Brussels.

[133] AAPL Pièces non classées, V. Vermeulen, Commissaire de District. "Rapport d'inspection du Territoire de Sakania." August 24 to 30 1931, in Verbeek, 159.

[134] "Dossier (4179) Watch Tower Movement," V. Vermeulen, Commissaire de District à Jadotville. Correspondance. September 4 1931, AA, Brussels, in Verbeek, 159-160.

[135] Gérard, 114.

If anything, Kitawala reduced ethnic barriers between Africans.[136] Kitawala was adopted by many different ethnic groups in the Belgian Congo, and Kitawalist writings were in Swahili – an East and Central African *lingua franca*.[137] The use of Swahili broke linguistic barriers, showing an openness to other ethnic groups.[138] It is unclear from the colonial record whether Kitawala writings in Swahili were locally produced by Africans or foreign translations of Watchtower tracts. In the 1930s official Watchtower literature did enter Katanga from Northern Rhodesia through Watchtower networks, and some Kitawala leaders had publications mailed to them from Watchtower members in Cape Town.[139] The foreign origin of some Watchtower publications in the Congo undoubtedly contributed to officials' fears that alien and sinister forces were seeking to guide Kitawala in undermining Belgian rule in Africa.

Kitawala and Communism

Colonial officials drew connections between Kitawala and Communism throughout Kitawala's existence in the Congo. These suspected connections ranged from the passive influence of Communist propaganda on Kitawalist teachings to direct

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[136] Gérard, 114. Although Gérard used the words "racial barriers," I have chosen to use "ethnic" instead, following Mamdani's recognition that colonial states constructed individuals' political identities, their relationship to the state, by legally classifying 'natives' as members of an ethnicity and 'non-natives' as members of a racial group. Mamdani, "Identity," 267-268, 278.

[137] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 176. Swahili was introduced to the Eastern Congo basin by Swahili-Arab traders in the 19th century and was the language spoken by the Muslims in Lubutu Territory. Ibid., 193.

[138] Ibid., 193. Kitawala also spread Swahili use.

[139] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels; Cross, 452.

Communist support of Kitawala.[140] A report from the late 1930s concluded that it was the superstitious naivety of Africans and the zeal of Kitawala leaders that made the rapid diffusion of Kitawala's "bolshevising" theories possible.[141] Officials' concerns over Communism and Kitawala fit into the wider context of anxieties over African ethnic associations organised by Africans to provide social, economic and cultural support in urban centres.[142] Officials viewed these ethnic organisations with suspicion because they existed outside 'customary' laws and could thus be influenced by Pan-Africanist, Communist organisations from South Africa's Witwatersrand.[143] According to District Commissioner A. Verbeken, the time had come in 1932 to increase state control in regions not ruled by customary law because it was "incontestable that African-

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[140] Officials' fears of Communist Kitawala are better understood when placed in the context of metropolitan perceptions of Watchtower. In the 1950s, the Belgian security service noted with concern Watchtower's increasing popularity in post-war Belgium, given the movement's alleged sympathies for communism and the potential spread of its doctrines to the Congo. "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels. Such concerns were not limited to Belgium and Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted for their conscientious-objection in countries including the United States, Britain, and Germany. The British Criminal Investigation Division (CID) only determined in 1942 that Watchtower was not Communist. The CID sent these results to the administration in Northern Rhodesia to allay fears of a Communist African Watchtower. Fields, 94-95.

[141] The report's author seems to have been suggesting that Kitawala's anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist, and anti-clerical doctrine would turn Africans into Bolsheviks. "Dossier AIMO (1611)," [no author]. "Note sur le 'Kitawala', le 'Watch Tower' et les 'Eglises Indigènes'." [no date], AA, Brussels. The document's archival folder states that it is a reply to two letters dated December 12th 1937 and January 1st, 1938.

[142] Fetter, 158; Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu, *Faire de l'Histoire orale dans une ville africaine: La méthode de Jan Vansina appliqué à Lubumbashi (R-D Congo)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 36-39.

[143] "Dossier AIMO (1611)," Extrait du Rapport de la Commission de Protection des Indigènes B.O. 1925. "Associations Indigènes." 1925, AA, Brussels. Like 'customary' chiefs, 'customary' law was a product of colonialism. While 'customary' laws were not pure colonial inventions, colonial administrators did not recognise that there were conflicting views of the customary, especially as the colonial era began in "the midst of conflicting and event contrary claims about the customary" resulting in the disruption of processes of state formation, development of markets, and profound changes in gender and generational relations. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 118-119.

Americans, backed by the Soviets, seek to influence black Africans to oppose the supremacy of the dominating whites," potentially leading to African nationalism.[144]

By the 1950s Belgian colonial officials' interpretations, linking Kitawala to Communism, became more refined (if only slightly). In 1951 Governor-General Jungers distributed a circular to all Provincial Governors stating that, despite previous claims, Kitawala was not in the hire of Communism. Nevertheless, Kitawala was still to be considered a faithful ally of Communism in undermining civil, religious and political authority, and sowing hatred between the classes. Jungers concluded that colonial agents needed to prevent Kitawala becoming a tool of Communist propaganda and that Africans' secret societies, urban ethnic associations and *cercles d'évolués* should be monitored for signs of subversive activities.[145] Jungers' circular is in some ways representative of officials' perception of the relationship between Kitawala and Communism in the 1950s. Although some continued to believe that Kitawala and Communism were one and the same, the colonial record suggests that officials and the *Sûreté* mostly worried that Kitawalist cells would be co-opted by Communists, or worse, that Kitawala would merge with Kimbanguism before being taken over, resulting in colony-wide Communist cells.[146]

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[144] "Dossier AIMO (77)," A. Verbeken, Commissaire de District, Territoire d'Elisabethville. "Rapport Annuel sur l'Administration Général du District. Année 1931." February 24, 1932, AA, Brussels.

[145] *Cercles d'évolués*: Clubs for western-educated Africans. "Dossier Papiers Joset (hereafter PJ) (D4582)," [no author - document attached to a letter from Governor General Jungers to the Provincial Governors]. "Exposé succinct du rapport confidentiel éloboré par la Mission charge de l'étude des mouvements subversives." May 12, 1951, AA, Brussels.

[146] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955; "Dossier PJ (D4582)," [no author]. "Exposé succinct du rapport confidentiel éloboré par la Mission charge de l'étude des mouvements subversives." May 12, 1951; "Dossier AI (4737)," [no author]. "Commentaire au Sujet de l'Étude de Monsieur Gérard, A.T.A. Ppl. intitulé: 'le Caractère politique du Kitawala au Kivu." October 23, 1956; Philippart. "Contribution." 1954. AA, Brussels.

Kitawala, the Stanleyville-Ponthierville Plots and Nationalism

Belgian officials began to draw comparisons between subversive Kitawalist acts (real or perceived) and nationalism's threat to colonial rule in the mid-1950s. This occurred in the context of rising nationalist movements across Africa, including, but not limited to, the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya (1952-1960), and the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962).[147]

In 1955 the Belgian *Sûreté* produced a synthesis of all of its information on Kitawala, made policy recommendations and stipulated ways in which the movement could evolve in the future. Significantly, the *Sûreté*'s recommendations were aimed at stopping the spread of Kitawalist ideas because they were seen as the potential basis for a nationalist movement with a common religious ideology.[148] The *Sûreté* concluded that nothing should be held back in the fight against Kitawala, without which officials would inevitably be overwhelmed and forced to negotiate with Kitawalist leaders.[149] The report admitted that past attempts at silencing Kitawala had not only failed, but had contributed to its expansion. As a result, the report recommended increased censorship, repression in the form of detention and internal exile, as well as renewed contact between Church representatives and Africans. Significantly, the report also advocated a vast socio-economic action program targeting the Congo's "gangrenous" population of dissatisfied Africans who, in the minds of secret service agents, could threaten the future of the colony if they joined Kitawala or Kimbanguism. This program was to create "a material climate favourable to the realisation of the social and economic aspirations of the natives" and fit within the larger context of developmental colonialism discussed further in Chapter 5. The *Sûreté* conceded that this plan would take considerable time to bear fruit and that substantial information had to be gathered about Kitawala to allow

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[147] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Paul-Ernest Joset. "Nouvelle Politique à Appliquer vis-à-vis des Mouvements Politico-Réligieux," June 15 1957, AA, Brussels.

[148] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels.

[149] Ibid.

rapid state interventions. After all, the Congolese masses could "suddenly [be] led by the [Kitawala] leaders from one day to the next".[150]

The *Sûreté*'s fears of a militant nationalist threat to Belgian rule were fuelled by an unsuccessful Kitawala plot in late 1955 in Stanleyville and Ponthierville. Declaring solidarity with the Mau Mau movement in Kenya, the Kitawala cells in the two cities planned to assassinate local officials, sabotage the ferries linking the banks of the Congo River, and explode the magazines of the Stanleyville garrison.[151] Many Kitawalists were in strategic positions to put the plan into action, including clerks, soldiers and officers in the *Force Publique*, policemen, prison guards, chiefs and leading notables, officials' personal servants, and ferry boatmen.[152] The plot was foiled by state informants in the cells and was followed by mass arrests, including those of the cells' leaders, whose identities were known to authorities from Assistant Principal Territorial Administrator R. Philippart's 1954 Kitawala study.[153]

The Stanleyville-Ponthierville plot is significant because it showed several cells working in concert, thereby reawakening longstanding concerns of a nationalist

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[150] "Dossier AI (1621)," Sûreté. "Synthèse." 1955, AA, Brussels. Despite the *Sûreté*'s premonitions, some local officials seem not to have felt threatened when Kitawalists tested the limits of their movement's illegality. A 1955 AIMO report stated that in Bafwasende Territory a regional chief had to intervene and oblige Kitawalists to destroy a chapel which they had built "in good faith," believing that Kitawala would soon be legalised. "Dossier RA/CB (139)," Affaires Indigènes de Main-D'Oeuvre, Province Orientale. "Rapport Annuel 1955." 1955, AA, Brussels. The use of the words "in good faith" does not suggest that the report's author felt threatened by Kitawala.

[151] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Elsen, Administrateur Assistant Principal, Territoire de Ponthierville, District de Stanleyville. "Rapport sur les opérations contre la secrète Kitawala à Ponthierville durant les mois de Novembre et Décembre 1955." Janvier 3 1956, AA, Brussels. Some Kitawalists believed that Minister of Colonies Buisseret would legalise Kitawala after the attack, possible because he had broken missions' monopoly on education in 1954 by creating secular schools in 1954. "Dossier AI (4737)," L. Hembrechts, RAT du CEC de Stanleyville. "Réunion Kitawala du 16 janvier 1956." January 18, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[152] "Dossier AI (4737)," M. Kreutz. Commissaire de District de Stanleyville. "Objet: Kitawala." January 16 1956, AA, Brussels. The fact that some Kitawalists worked for the state demonstrates the permeability of the boundary between the colonial state and the colonized.

[153] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Elsen; "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels. AA, Brussels.

Kitawala.[154] Philippart claimed that the plot took form when Kitawala preacher Léon Parnodiso was able to unify all the Walengola Kitawala cells in the territory and push them in a nationalist direction in 1954. African informants reported that it was around the time of this unification that the tone of the Kitawala meetings changed, being no longer about God, but about open revolt, sabotage and assassinations. The Kitawalists were stating that the whites were living off African land and wealth and that they should leave the Africans in peace. For Philippart this was no longer Kitawala, but nationalism pure and simple, and needed to be dealt with using repression and counter-propaganda.[155]

The plot also brought officials' concerns regarding urban Africans, *évolués* and nationalism to the fore. Kitawala's spread to Stanleyville's CEC (a multi-ethnic environment), not only greatly increased its potential spread to many different ethnic groups and their rural areas of origin, but also to the Congo's western-educated Africans. Prior to the plots, Philippart believed that no self-respecting *évolué* would ever associate with Kitawala, but that an *évolué* could potentially use it to manoeuvre the 'ignorant' masses to seditious ends.[156] Philippart reflects some officials' ambivalence towards western-educated Africans. On one side the *évolués* were seen as the desirable result of the colonisers' civilising mission: educated, walking manifestations of European

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[154] "Dossier AI (4737)," Étude M. Gérard. "Le caractère politique du Kitawala au Kivu." August 28, 1956; [no author]. "Commentaire de l'Etude 'Caractère politique du Kitawala au Kivu." October 23 1956. AA, Brussels. The plot reawakened fears of subversive foreign meddling in Congolese affairs. The Royal Inspector of the Colonies Julien Van Hove and colonial agent Beckers suspected a link between Congolese Muslims and Kitawala because the latter sometimes dressed like Muslims to escape detection. Beckers reported Orientale's Muslim communities making collections for Nasser's Egypt and avidly listening to radio broadcasts from Cairo. He advised that Islam be contained because, as stated in Philippart's 1954 report, the Congo's Muslims could try to manipulate Kitawala to political ends. "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Hove; Rapport Beckers. "Renseignements Recueillis sur l'Evolution du Kitawala et du Mouvement Islamique ainsi que sur Diverses Tendances de la Mentalité Indigène." March 14, 1957. AA, Brussels; Stanleyville Kitawalists also intended to bribe Muslim leaders to claim Kitawalists as Muslims in Ponthierville in order to prevent their arrest. "Dossier AI (4737)," Hembrechts, AA, Brussels.

[155] "Dossier AI (4737)," R. Philippart, Administrateur Territorial Assistant Principal, District de Stanleyville. "Proposition de mise en résidence surveillée." April 30 1956; Philippart. "Contribution." 1954. AA, Brussels.

[156] "Dossier AI (4737)," Philippart. "Contribution." 1954, AA, Brussels.

bourgeois values and sensibilities. On the other side the *évolués*' alleged similarity to Europeans was cause for anxiety, as officials feared that the sophistication of the *évolués* would make them into powerful adversaries. This kind of ambivalence towards colonial subjects who complicated colonial boundary drawing, or "politics of difference," was a common feature of European colonialism.[157]

Philippart identified two parallel Kitawala networks in Stanleyville – both of which seemed to lend credence to his fears of an *évolués*-led anti-colonial mass movement.[158] The first network of ethnic Topoke-Lokele were considered a more evolved 'race' of Africans, who would be "more dangerous and tend towards nationalism."[159] Many Topoke-Lokele worked as prison guards, artisans and clerks. Philippart saw this as the "indigenous petite-bourgeoisie" being at risk of becoming Kitawala and furnishing very valuable cadres for the movement. The second Kitawala network of "primitive" ethnic Walengola-Bakumu had allegedly converted the Topoke-Lokele.[160] This lent credence to one of the conclusions of the 1951 Marmitte report, that the different layers of African

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[157] Nugent, 10-11. In 1920s Northern Rhodesia, mission-educated Africans were necessary for the economy, but white settlers distrusted their aspirations, fearing that Christianity would give Africans dangerous ideas of equality. See Cross, 213. This feature of colonialism has been prominently studied by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler; Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*. Stoler has shown that in turn-of-the-century French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies, métis subjects were seen as either "dangerous adversaries or effective partisans of the colonial state" because they called into question the criteria by which Europeans could be identified, citizenship granted and nationality accorded. Ann Laura Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 199, 209.

[158] The three main Topoke-Lokele cells were instructed by three different Kitawala pastors, two of which were interned at *colagrels*. The Walengola-Bakumu cells followed Léon Parnadiso. There were tensions between these two Kitawala tendencies, each claiming greater Kitawala orthodoxy and skills in avoiding arrest. Parnadiso's disciples saw the Topoke-Lokele as impatient and incapable of launching a well-planned uprising. "Dossier GG (10790)," Philippart. "Synthèse." 1956, AA, Brussels.

[159] "Dossier GG (10790)," Philippart. "Synthèse." 1956; "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels. AA, Brussels.

[160] "Dossier GG (10790)," Philippart. "Synthèse." 1956, AA, Brussels.

society, "primitive" majority or *évolué* minority, could collude into a single subversive movement if they followed the same "subversive theories."[161]

The 1955-1956 plots are also significant because they provoked the crystallisation of a new Kitawala policy. The new policy was implemented until the end of Belgian rule in the Congo and its details will be explored in the following two chapters. As we have seen, Philippart recommended targeted repression and propaganda in 1954 and the *Sûreté* suggested socio-economic reforms in 1955 to be implemented in the struggle against Kitawala. It is only after the discovery of the plots, however, that these new ways of trying to deal with Kitawala were actively implemented as an official policy.

In order to understand the gravity of the 1955-1956 plots in officials' minds, it is necessary to appreciate the political context of the mid-1950s. The secular *évolué* nationalism that ultimately brought about Congolese independence in 1960, was not a threat to Belgian rule in the mid-1950s. Indeed, Patrice Lumumba (later one of the Congo's most radical nationalists and the first Prime Minister) wrote in 1956,

> The day when the Congo has its own technicians in all fields, its doctors, agronomists, engineers, entrepreneurs, geologists, administrators, foremen, skilled workers...social workers, nurses, midwives: only then must we speak of independence and self-government, for then we shall be intellectually, technically, and materially strong enough to rule ourselves, should this be necessary.[162]

Lumumba's passage suggests that until the mid-1950s, many *évolués* sought to elevate themselves above the rest of the population within the strictures of the Belgian 'civilising

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[161] "Dossier GG (8604)," J. Vandersmissen, Commissaire de District Assistant, District du Congo-Ubangi, Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: Politique contre les Mouvements subversifs. Mission Marmitte." July 4, 1951, AA, Brussels.

[162] Nugent, 52.

mission' and did not actively seek Congolese independence.[163] The political complacency, or caution, of the *évolués* must have given Belgian officials some confidence in believing that Belgian rule would persist in the Congo. According to Belgian historian Jean Stengers:

> [The Belgians] were convinced, as they themselves often said, that they had "found the right formula" - that is, a formula that guaranteed them against the miscalculations other colonising countries had made. It consisted in improving the native's material condition to the point where he would not dream of the right to vote. That was the "formula": Keep the natives happy by looking after their welfare, their housing and their health.[164]

What proponents of the 'formula' did not take into consideration, however, is that although Lumumba's 1956 writings are suggestive of *évolués*' willingness to wait for independence, other Congolese were not willing to wait for the Europeans to leave. Moreover, in addition to 'the formula's' socio-economic reforms, Belgian colonial rule still rested on coercion and repression, as evidenced by Kitawala policy.

Belgian confidence in its colonial rule was challenged however, and began to change in late 1955 and early 1956, when Belgian professor of colonial legislation Anton Van Bilsen published his *Plan de trente ans pour l'émancipation politique de l'Afrique*

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[163] Starting in 1952, the Belgian government oriented its policy towards the ideal of the Belgo-Congolese community, which sought to balance "*évolués*' demands for equality and [white] settlers' insistence on retaining their privileges." This new policy sought to legislate racial discrimination out of existence and *évolués* were given the opportunity to seek immatriculation, legal equality with whites, if they were able to show "'by their upbringing and way of life' that they had reached an adequate 'state of civilisation'." Immatriculated Africans smarted under this system, as they were expected to reject all aspects of their traditional culture, were ridiculed and rebuffed by whites and non-immatriculated Africans, but did not make any nationalist demands until the second half of the 1950s. Lemarchand, 41-42.

[164] Jean Stengers, *Congo: Mythes et réalités* (Bruxelles: Éditions Racine, 2007), 253-254. I am using Nugent's translation of this passage. Nugent, 52.

belge.[165] In his publication Van Bilsen made it clear that the Belgian 'formula' could not prevent Congolese emancipation and called for Congolese self-government at the end of a thirty-year timetable. Van Bilsen's 30-year-plan was poorly received by the Belgian government, but rapidly captured the imagination of a few Congolese *évolués*. In July 1956 some *évolués* published a manifesto in the Catholic journal *Conscience Africaine*, stating very diplomatically that there should be a plan for "complete political emancipation" within thirty years.[166] The following month the Bakongo ethnic association, *Alliance des Bakongo* or Abako, called for immediate independence.[167]

From 1956 to 1958 Congolese secular nationalist discourse radicalised, in part due to Ghanaian independence in 1957, but was limited to a small minority that did not engage in militant political struggle. The first nationalist political parties emerged relatively late, with Abako transforming itself into a political organisation in 1957-1958. The anti-imperialist *Mouvement National Congolais* (MNC) entered politics in late 1958 under the leadership of a much-radicalised Patrice Lumumba.[168]

Thus, arguably, secular nationalism did not begin to pose an imminent militant threat to Belgian rule until 1958, unlike Kitawala. Belgian historian Jean Stengers has claimed that the militancy of Congolese nationalism came as a shock to officials in 1958.[169] However, the 1955-1956 plots demonstrate that officials were seriously alarmed at 'Kitawala' nationalism, several years before 1958. The Belgian 'formula' of socio-economic reforms was as much the reaction to Kitawala anxieties in the Congo as it was the result of wanting to avoid the political mistakes of other colonial powers. From the

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[165]   Van Bilsen's *Thirty-Year Plan for the Political Emancipation of Belgian Africa* was published in the the Flemish Catholic review, *Gids op Maatschappelijk Gebied* in December 1955, with a French version appearing in *Les Dossiers de l'Action Sociale Catholique* in February 1956. Previously, Van Bilsen had mentioned his 30-year plan in an inaugural address to the Institut de Formation Sociale Coloniale, in Brussels, in October 1954, as well as in *La Revue Nouvelle* in November 1954. Lemarchand, 153, 335n30-31.

[166]   Stengers, 261; Lemarchand, 153-155.

[167]   Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 73; Lemarchand, 157.

[168]   Stengers, 264.

[169]   Ibid., 268.

substantial resources spent on fighting Kitawala, evidenced by the policies we will explore in the following chapters, it is clear that the movement was considered one of the greatest threats to Belgian colonial rule in the mid-1950s. Moreover, we shall see that 'finding the right formula' was also a moving target, with Belgian colonial agents travelling to British colonies to study colonial policy.

Chapter 4.

State 'Solutions' - Part I: Repression or Toleration?

The discovery of Kitawala plots in Stanleyville and Ponthierville in 1955 caused the crystallisation of a new Kitawala policy. In June 1956 *AIMO* Director J. M. Paulus sent a memorandum to the Minister of Colonies in Brussels outlining the new Kitawala policy. As a result of the 1955-1956 plots, Paulus informed the Minister that,

> Better informed with time, the authorities are realising…that it is not in the nature of the coercive measures to asphyxiate the aspirations stemming from the inferiority complex and the rancour afflicting certain populations under tutelage; the authorities are thus searching for a means to counterbalance the growing influence of the movement with new measures of a political, religious, social and economic character which would dissociate religious action from political action at the heart of the movement, would make the sect emerge from secrecy, and would make it abandon all collusion with other sects of the same character. It has been decided to adopt an attitude of officious tolerance of Kitawala everywhere where it is possible and under the express condition that the targeted cells emerge from secrecy by making known to local authorities, as is the case with all indigenous associations: their headquarters, their purpose, their organisation, the names of their leaders, their financial means, their up-to-date membership list. The ban regarding simple sympathisers or leaders of lesser importance would be progressively lifted, coinciding with the implementation of economic and social reforms. Great severity would meanwhile be maintained towards dangerous leaders, not susceptible to

reform who, in speech, writings, actions, would oppose the envisioned reforms or would trouble public order and tranquillity.[170]

Paulus' memorandum captured the key elements of what would constitute the new Kitawala policy until the end of formal colonial rule. Post-1955 Kitawala policy sought to address the weaknesses of previous Kitawala policy and lend greater legitimacy to Belgian colonial rule in light of post-war challenges in Africa and Asia with a combination of intelligence gathering, as well as judicial, and socio-economic, reforms designed to co-opt Kitawala. These new approaches to Kitawala were coupled with increased state repression of proselytising Kitawalists opposed to the reforms.

It was in early 1956 that Governor-General Léon Pétillon (1952-1958) and the Provincial Governors developed the details of the new Kitawala policy outlined in Paulus's June 1956 memorandum. Orientale's Provincial Governor André Schöller presided over a meeting on January 23rd, 1956 at which it was agreed to create a Specialised *Sûreté* Kitawala taskforce.[171] In February, the colony's governors discussed the possibility of officially recognising Kitawala, provided that the movement operate openly. They also approved the segregation of moderate and militant Kitawalists in penal facilities. To placate the movement, they agreed to increase territorial administration, and opted for the implementation of a vast program of 'native' welfare reforms and propaganda.[172]

This chapter is about the need for Kitawala policy reform, the identification of Kitawala types for accommodation, the *Sûreté* taskforce, increased territorial administration to prevent a Kitawala uprising *à la* Mau Mau, and penal reforms.

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[170] Paulus showed the memorandum to Inspector of Colonies Van Hove before sending it to Minister of Colonies Buisseret. "Dossier AI (4737)," J. Paulus, Directeur, Ministère des Colonies. "Objet: Kitawala." June 24, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[171] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[172] "Dossier GG (18.354) Région Kitawala," "Compte Rendu des Réunions de Monsieur le Gouverneur Général avec Messieurs les Gouverneurs de Province les 6, 7, et 8 Février 1956" 1956, AA, Brussels.

Legalise it?

In 1956 the colonial administration discussed at length how to render Kitawala harmless to the colonial state.[173] The Congo's governors discussed recognising Kitawala at their meeting in February 1956, demonstrating the reasoning behind the new Kitawala policy. Pétillon announced that it was imperative to contain Kitawala expansion, while decreasing Kitawala influence in affected areas. Schöller indicated that a complicating factor for this objective was that there were in fact two Kitawala tendencies – one xenophobic, but harmless, religious movement and one small terrorist movement based in Stanleyville.[174] Events like the Stanleyville-Ponthierville plot precluded the complete legalisation of Kitawala, but the governors considered simply recognising 'religious' Kitawala, provided that it ceased to operate in secret. However, they quickly came to the conclusion that there were too few Kitawala leaders willing to collaborate with the administration and that in any case the authority of these leaders was limited to the local level.[175] Pétillon concluded from the governors' debate that Kitawala should remain officially forbidden, but tolerated where necessary, and that the state should work to depoliticise Kitawala in the hope that this would make it harmless to the colonial project.

The governors' attempts to depoliticise Kitawala gave shape to the new Kitawala policy whose objective was no longer to simply extirpate the movement.[176] As mentioned above, the governors agreed on several methods, including: penal reforms, greater territorial administration, and a program of welfare reforms and propaganda. The

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[173] The debate other whether to legalise Kitawala also passed into Belgian and Congolese newspapers, including *Le Courrier d'Afrique* and *La Libre Belgique*, but there is no evidence that this public debate influenced colonial policy. "Dossier AI (4737)," Extrait de 'Le Courrier d'Afrique.' Author: "L'Echotier du Service." "M. Buisseret va-t-il reconnaitre le Kitawala?" April 24, 1956; Extrait de 'La Libre Belgique' no. 152. "Jéhovah et ses 'témoins' en Afrique." May 31, 1956. AA, Brussels.

[174] Schöller believed that it was crucial to find the "terrorist" leaders, as any collusion between the two tendencies would radicalize the religious movement, rendering it much more dangerous as it affected the masses of the customary ruled areas. "Dossier GG (18.354) Région Kitawala," "Compte Rendu des Réunions." 1956, AA, Brussels.

[175] Ibid.

[176] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

governors also considered bringing in Rhodesian Watchtower prophets or Belgian Jehovah's Witnesses to curb Kitawala's political inclinations, and dispatched a fact finding mission to Rhodesia.

The Belgian administration was quite interested in Watchtower policy in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which officially tolerated the movement and permitted white Watchtower missionaries. In 1935 white missionaries were allowed into the British possessions to take control of African Watchtower, as British officials believed that the missionaries' 'racial loyalties' would lead the missionaries to depoliticise the African movement.[177] In January 1956, the Minister of Colonies sent agent Paul-Ernest Joset to study the effectiveness of the British policy and to determine if the Congo should adopt a similar policy using Belgian Watchtower missionaries.[178] Joset reported that neither the vast majority of African Watchtower members under the leadership of European missionaries, nor the minority of African-controlled Watchtower groups were creating difficulties for the administration. African Watchtower members refused to participate in any anti-colonial acts like strikes, and declined to associate with the nationalist African National Congress. Watchtower was tolerated, but not legal, in the Federation, hereby increasing pressure on the white missionaries to keep the movement from causing disorder. Lastly, all Jehovah's Witnesses literature was selectively censored, with each brochure having to be authorised by the federal authorities.[179]

Once back in the Congo, Joset shared his findings and recommendations with the administration. Unlike Schöller, Joset viewed 'religious' Kitawala in the Congo as Watchtower and reserved the name 'Kitawala' for the subversive political tendency of the movement. He argued that administrators erroneously saw all Watchtower followers as

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[177] Fields, 232-233.

[178] "Dossier AI (4737)," Paul-Ernest Joset, Chargé de Mission. "Rapport sur mon Voyage dans la Central African Federation." February 15, 1956, AA, Brussels. The governors meeting in February 1956 sent Philippart and Gérard on a similar mission. "Dossier GG (18.354) Région Kitawala." "Compte Rendu des Réunions." 1956, AA, Brussels. In 1944, Joset, then acting Territorial Administrator of Shabunda, accompanied one of the *Force Publique* columns that crushed the Masisi-Lubutu uprising. Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 240.

[179] "Dossier AI (4737)," Joset. "Rapport sur mon Voyage." 1956, AA, Brussels.

subversive Kitawalists, and that religious Watchtower should be legalised. He recommended that the administration experiment with allowing white Watchtower missionaries into Katanga to depoliticise Kitawala. Joset envisioned Watchtower eventually co-opting Kitawala, at which time the movement would be legalised. Joset's recommendations were repeatedly rejected by the administration in 1956 and 1957; thus serving as an example of internal divisions in the colonial state.[180] Belgian social-scientist Jean-Pierre Paulus justified the continued illegality of the movement in the Congo with the circular argument that it was too political, unlike Watchtower in the British colonies, which had been rendered "purely religious" by white missionaries.[181]

Although Joset's recommendations were rejected, they are nevertheless interesting, as they reveal what some colonial agents believed was at stake in moving towards the recognition of Watchtower/Kitawala. Joset believed that legalising Watchtower would preserve Belgian rule in the Congo. According to Joset, banning Watchtower alienated and antagonised a significant portion of the African population by violating their freedom of religion guaranteed in the Colonial Charter, the basic constitutional document for the colony.[182] As a result, a new policy towards politico-religious movements was needed in order to avoid the kind of bloodshed seen in Algeria, Indonesia and Indochina.[183] Clearly, some administrators saw the accommodation of

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[180] "Dossier PJ (D4582)," [no author - document attached to a letter from Assistant District Commissioner R. Delvaux to Joset. "P.V. de réunion des Administrateur de Territoire." February 14, 1955; "Dossier AI (4737)," Rapport Beckers. AA, Brussels.

[181] Paulus, 3, 12. Paulus failed to appreciate that Watchtower in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland not only remained both political and religious, but that white Watchtower missionaries struggled to control African Watchtower groups. See Fields, 225-237, 265; Cross, 122, 448. Watchtower's 'religious' acts, also continued to have social and political ramifications. Long, 37-38, 192, 201-217.

[182] In late 1956 the Governor-General told his governors that Africans should not be persecuted for their religious convictions, but chose not to make any decisions regarding neutralising Kitawala with Belgian Watchtower missionaries before reading Joset's report. "Dossier AI (4737)," J. Paulus, Directeur, Ministère des Colonies. "Objet: Requête 'Témoins de Jéhovah'." November 12, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[183] Joset also supported giving political rights to the "most capable" Africans in order to cultivate "devoted collaborators." "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Nouvelle Politique." 1957, AA, Brussels.

Watchtower/Kitawala as essential if Belgian colonial rule was to prevail. Congolese nationalist independence did not seem inevitable in the mid-1950s, but, as we have seen, African nationalism was considered a serious threat against which the power of the colonial state needed to be consolidated.

Many administrators undoubtedly shared Joset's concerns, but were unwilling to risk legalising Watchtower outright. By mid-1956, despite massive arrests in previous months, Kitawalists in Stanleyville District were reported to be making new plans to make "war on the whites."[184] This resurgence reinforced the idea that the movement was too dangerous to legalise.[185] In late 1956, Pétillon, with full support from the colonial service, proclaimed that it would be "a serious political mistake" to legalise Kitawala or to collaborate with Belgian Watchtower in neutralising the movement. Such an act would be interpreted by Kitawalists as a capitulation at a time when Kitawala was particularly "virulent" in Orientale and Kivu provinces. According to Pétillon, Kitawala would either reject white Watchtower oversight and become more fanatical, or would accept it but unify into a more powerful movement around Watchtower's inherently subversive ideology. Lastly, Pétillon believed that it would be hard to contain Watchtower once legalised, especially if the movement ran afoul of the administration.[186]

Significantly though, the resurgence in 1956 was seen as the result of insufficient funding for reform programs, not repression, showing the colonial regime's commitment to the new Kitawala policy centred on reform.[187] Indeed, the colonial service stated that the colonial government should first assess the results of local authorities' "'positive action'" reforms before considering legalisation. In the meantime, all appeals for

[184] "Dossier AI (4737)," M. Kreutz, Commissaire de District, District de Stanleyville. "Objet: Recrudescence Kitawala dans le district." September 5, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[185] "Dossier AI (4733)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Bulletin D'Information no. 7 – du 1er janvier au 30 septembre 1956." February 9, 1957, AA, Brussels.

[186] "Dossier AI (4737)," D. Halleux, Conseiller-adjoint, Ministère des Colonies. "Objet: Reconnaissance Watch Tower Bible Tract and Society." December 21, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[187] "Dossier AI (4733)," Sûreté. "Bulletin D'Information no. 7." February 9, 1957, AA, Brussels.

legalisation from African and European Watchtower were to be rejected.[188] The colonial service's stance was that "the economic-social program may be expensive, but less expensive than...repression."[189] Thus, the decision to co-opt Kitawala through socio-economic reforms was made as a result of the belief in the movement's continued threat to the colonial state, the failure of a purely repressive Kitawala policy, and the projected exorbitant cost of any future large-scale repression.

Threat Perception and the Elaboration of Kitawala 'types' in the 1950s

Belgian officials' perceptions of Kitawala evolved following World War II, as evidenced by the recognition of 'religious' and 'political' Kitawala tendencies. This evolution can be observed when comparing officials' reports from the late 1940s, which characterised Kitawalists as dangerous xenophobes, with those produced starting in the mid-1950s, which sought to differentiate between politically and religiously motivated members of the movement.

In the late-1940s Kitawala was still viewed as it had been before the war, as a dangerous and xenophobic movement. The religious and political characteristics of Kitawala were seen as hopelessly intertwined; consequently, Kitawala was known to the administration as a 'politico-religious' movement. This designation was somewhat accurate, as it captured the political implications of the religious movement. To be sure,

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[188] In 1956 the administration declined a petition from African Watchtower members from Leopoldville requesting legalisation and declaring members' loyalty to the state. "Dossier AI (4737)," Albert Luyinu, Serviteur de Groupe, Ernest Kavi, Serviteur Adjoint and Denis Buluzeyi, Serviteur des Études Bibliques. Léopoldville. "Association – Les Témoins de Jéhovah Groupe de Léopoldville." July 18, 1956, AA, Brussels. In 1957 American and French Watchtower representatives, adamantly repudiating any link between Watchtower and Kitawala, requested permission to send white Watchtower missionaries to the Congo. Both requests were rebuffed in 1957. "Dossier AI (4737)," Paulus. "Objet: Watch Tower de Léopoldville." March 11, 1957; "Dossier AI (4733)," Claude Dupon, responsable des Affaires Légales pour l'Afrique Equatoriale Française de l'Association 'Les Témoins de Jéhovah', Brazzaville. Correspondance au Ministre des Colonies Buisseret. [no date], AA, Brussels.

[189] "Dossier AI (4737)," Halleux, AA, Brussels.

officials' interpretations as to the true nature of Kitawala varied, but there was little doubt that the movement constituted a threat to colonial rule.[190] Although Kitawalists usually passively resisted the authority of colonial agents, the 1951 Marmitte report concluded that Kitawala constituted a serious menace to public order because it created in Africans dangerous political hopes that threatened the very foundation of the colonial State.[191] Such a conclusion may seem extreme, but it is also an apt one given that Kitawala insubordination undermined the authority of the African chiefs who constituted the front line of colonial power.

By the mid-1950s, however, colonial government reports show that the administration began to move away from viewing all Kitawala members as a threat to the colonial order. Officials started organising followers into different categories based on the degree of their alleged religiosity, political motivations and general threat to Belgian colonial order. This differentiation between different 'types' of Kitawalists is clear in both the minutes from the Governors' February 1956 meeting and Joset's reports. Joset even went so far as to assign percentages to how religiously or politically motivated he viewed Kitawala followers to be in different provinces. According to Joset, Kitawalists in Katanga were predominantly religiously motivated, while in Orientale's capital, Stanleyville, Kitawala had become fully subsumed into a xenophobic nationalist movement which used Biblical texts to justify itself.[192]

While it is unclear whether the increasingly common regional categorisation of Kitawala in the 1950s accurately reflected Kitawalists' political fervour, it did reflect the degree of conflict between members of the movement and agents of the colonial state.[193] For instance, Joset remarked that Katangan Kitawala enjoyed a certain

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[190]   "Dossier AIMO (127)," Lauwers; "Dossier AIMO (1638)," Bribosia. January 15, 1945, AA, Brussels.

[191]   "Dossier PJ (D4582)," H. Marmitte, Chargé de Mission, Politique contre les mouvements indigènes subversifs. "Watchtower." June 22 1948, AA, Brussels.

[192]   "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Synthèse." 1956, AA, Brussels; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 240.

[193]   Paulus, 3-4, 12; Gérard, 11.

prestige, and that it was tacitly tolerated by customary African authorities.[194] Meanwhile, in Orientale, even before the Stanleyville-Ponthierville plots, two chiefs in the Opienge region reported that some of their subjects were no longer heeding orders to go work and openly declaring allegiance to Kitawala.[195] As a result of such regional differences, academics like Jean-Pierre Paulus suggested maintaining Kitawala's illegality while also experimenting with Belgian Watchtower missionaries, as well as socio-economic and penal reforms in Katanga.[196]

It is not surprising that colonial administrators' categorisation of Kitawalists was accompanied by a study of each category's behaviour and motivations. In 1956, the Royal Inspector of the Colonies, Julien Van Hove, and Joset produced reports on the behaviours and views of those Kitawalists already interned by the state. Van Hove wrote a report organising Kitawalists into two categories based on the behaviour of imprisoned Kitawalists at the forced-labour camp at Kasaji. He identified religious Kitawalists and political Kitawalists. Van Hove described religious Kitawalists as law abiding, although they still refused to enter into any contracts.[197] Meanwhile, he portrayed political Kitawalists as "pure [anti-religious] xenophobes," having implacable hatred for all authority, whether lay or missionary, European or native.[198] Joset interviewed many prisoners at Ekafera and seems to have probed Kitawalist views a bit further. He opined that some Kitawalists in internal exile were sectarian extremists, but that many prisoners were 'simply religious' and wished to remain true to their beliefs. Many prisoners claimed that Kitawala was not political, and conceded that they were obliged to work for the government. They requested, however, that the government be more tolerant towards Kitawala. Several prisoners from Katanga viewed events at Masisi-Lubutu and Manono

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[194] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Synthèse." 1956, AA, Brussels.

[195] "Dossier AI (4737)," Philippart. "Contribution." 1954, AA, Brussels.

[196] Paulus, 12.

[197] Van Hove did not specify what type of contracts religious Kitawalists were rejecting. Orthodox Watchtower members are not allowed to enter into pacts with satanic forces, which could suggest that the Kitawalists in question agreed to abide by colonial laws, but still saw the colonial state as essentially evil. Fields, 94, 96.

[198] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Hove, AA, Brussels.

as having regrettably been caused by hotheads, and not by the religious elements of Kitawala.[199]

Van Hove's and Joset's reports reflect the search for accommodation between colonial agents and Kitawalists. It is unclear in what context the interviews were carried out and whether members' acceptance of armed struggle was the only criteria Joset used to differentiate between 'sectarian extremists' and 'simply religious' Kitawalists. Nevertheless, prisoners' comments expose real divisions amongst Kitawalists on the acceptability of violent struggle, doctrinal interpretations of Watchtower, and the degree of potential compromise with the colonial regime. Some prisoners seem to have had relatively benign views of the colonial authorities, while others may have been eager to present themselves in a favourable light to a visiting official in the hope of establishing greater tolerance of the movement and perhaps their release from the prison camp.

At the same time it is significant that colonial officials were beginning to distinguish between political and religious Kitawalists in the mid-1950s. Recognising that there were Kitawalists hoping to co-exist with the colonial state, Van Hove and Joset might have envisioned accommodation with the more moderate elements of the movement. Such differentiation was unprecedented and complemented the colonial administration's emerging Kitawala policy. The new policy hinged on the existence of 'moderate' or 'religious' Kitawalists who sought accommodation with the state or who could be sufficiently enticed by the proposed reforms to abandon militant opposition to the colonial state. Ultimately, the creation of this category of Kitawalist "simplified" the colonial state's relationship with this complex movement, making room for the idea that development projects could depoliticise the communities where Kitawala was active.[200]

Similar divide-and-rule approaches were taken by other European colonialists in Africa. In 1920s Northern Rhodesia, British officials initially sought to completely halt the activities of African Watchtower congregations but eventually settled on "a practical

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[199] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Synthèse." 1956, AA, Brussels.
[200] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 2-4.

policy of divide and rule: remove the harmful elements; tolerate the rest."[201] Such approaches towards African religious movements were not limited to Central African, nor to Watchtower-related movements. Indeed, David Robinson's monograph *Paths of Accommodation* illustrates how Muslim groups were classified as either "tolerant" or "fanatical," with efforts being made to limit the influence of the latter, in the consolidation of colonial rule in 19th-century French West Africa.[202]

Despite the move towards accommodating 'moderate' Kitawala in the Belgian Congo, 'political' Kitawalists were not forgotten under the new Kitawala policy. In 1956 social scientist Jean-Pierre Paulus stated that the administration's priority should lie with attacking Kitawala's political, xenophobic and nationalist aspects. Of utmost importance, according to Paulus, was distinguishing between pure religious practice and political exploitation of a mysticism that tended to provoke nationalism and the overthrow of 'traditional' as well as of European order.[203] As we shall see, officials in the Congo embarked on a policy of accommodation, one that combined tolerating and co-opting 'moderate' or 'religious' Kitawalists, while implacable Kitawalists were to be identified, repressed and isolated, in part by the *Sûreté*'s new Kitawala Team.

The Team

André Schöller, Orientale's Provincial Governor, decided to form the *Sûreté*'s Specialised Political Team at a meeting on January 23rd, 1956 as a direct result of the Stanleyville-Ponthierville plots.[204] Territorial Administrator, R. Philippart, whose 1954 Kitawala study largely facilitated the post-Stanleyville-Ponthierville plot crackdown, was

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[201] Fields, 13, 194.
[202] Robinson, 78.
[203] Paulus, 12.
[204] Schöller saw the plots as the first attempted Congolese terrorist action.

relieved of his duties and made leader of the five agent Team.[205] The Team would centralise and coordinate government responses to Kitawala in Orientale. These duties were to be executed in accordance with Schöller's 1944 Kitawala policy recommendations, when he acted as Royal Prosecutor.[206] Schöller's recommendations consisted of simultaneously employing repression, intelligence gathering and 'native' welfare reforms. The January meeting concluded not only with the creation of the Team, but also a commitment to a social action campaign, including welfare, film projections, sports and scouts, and the basis of an economic, educational, and medical program. This campaign, approved a few days later at the 1956 Governor's meeting, was designed to improve the quality of life of Africans living in Kitawalist areas, by remedying the alleged material causes of Kitawala's success.[207]

The Team's combined use of repression and co-optation made it the embodiment of the new Kitawala policy. The Team had the goal of making religious Kitawalists tolerable to colonial agents, while continuing to use the ban on the movement to legally, "judiciously and progressively eliminate [political,] subversive and xenophobic Kitawalists."[208] Viewing Kitawala's politics as the movement's only source of cohesion, the Team hoped to transform Kitawala into a depoliticised, purely religious sect. Such a sect, it was hoped, could be fragmented and manipulated by government propaganda, rendering the movement completely harmless to the colonial state. Philippart's studies showed that Kitawala cells were not homogeneous in their doctrines. As a result, the Team was to avoid the mistake of repressing passive cells, as this could push the cells

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[205] The Team included three territorial administrators in the territories of Stanleyville District: Ponthierville, Opala, Basoko, Banalia, Isangi and Bafwasende. A fourth agent was in charge of counterpropaganda, while Philippart was responsible for the Stanleyville CEC and coordinating the Team's actions.

[206] Schöller made his recommendations following the Masisi-Lubutu uprising hoping that repression would stall Kitawala, allowing for an in depth study of the movement and individual Kitawalists that would facilitate efficient state interventions. Meanwhile, 'native' welfare was to remedy the causes of incidents such as the 1944 uprising. "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid.

to become hostile towards the state. Agent W.J. Carels, who produced a detailed report on the Team in 1958, believed that the tendency of an entire Kitawala cell could be changed by the removal of a few key members hostile to the colonial authorities, and that as a result it was necessary to practice an extremely targeted type of repression.[209] Clearly, the new policy was to accommodate non-hostile Kitawalists to shore up the authority of the state.

To achieve this objective, the Team was to engage in the in-depth study of the movement and its members, counterpropaganda and repression. The Team's fact-finding missions sought to "study the movement and the evolution of its ideas at the religious and the political level, the knowledge of each cell, its tendencies and its members."[210] This information was seen as essential for knowing whether to proceed against a cell with counter-propaganda or repression. The Team handled all official correspondence relevant to Kitawala in the "contaminated" regions and monitored the letters of members under house arrest. To the Team's surprise, Kitawalists frequently volunteered all the information pertaining to their movement when Team agents called on Kitawalists to assemble in their villages. The gathered intelligence was compiled into files, tracking members' "development" and affiliation to Kitawala networks and "lineages."[211]

The Team's propaganda work consisted of travelling with film crews to "contaminated" areas to show counterpropaganda films and to project pre-recorded conversations in local languages on a public address system while the film reels were swapped or rewound. The films and conversations were meant to "rehabilitate" a portion of Kitawalists by undermining the movements' basic arguments and by "drawing their

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[209] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.

attention to" the benefits of the Belgian 'civilising mission.'[212] According to Carels, the conversations treated subjects "within the grasp of the audience" and were recorded between two musical airs "pleasing to the natives."[213] While on leave in Stanleyville, agents also organised anti-Kitawala propaganda rallies in the CEC quarters of Stanleyville.

These propaganda tours served to give Team members close access to the population they were supposed to study. Team agents had orders to observe their audience and note their reactions. Reactions varied; some audiences were noted to respond quite favourably, while others barely moved. Agents used every opportunity to fulfil their mission, using footballs to attract youth and interrupting ensuing game play with casual, pre-prepared discussions; indicating the negative effects of sects at meetings of notables, and refuting the arguments of Kitawala leaders in front of reticent Kitawalists.[214]

Lastly, the Team engaged in the repression of the Kitawala movement. Members and meetings were to be tolerated, but anyone who disturbed public order by promoting "racial hatred" or violence was to be repressed. Team agents had the authority to act as judges and used their intelligence reports to strategically identify, arrest and prosecute key militant leaders in order to undermine the morale of militant Kitawalists. In 1957, agents sentenced 224 Kitawalists to sixty days of forced labour, with heavy fines ranging

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[212] Team agent Saive was responsible for making propaganda films specifically for consumption in "contaminated" areas. Given the slow progress that was being made on this front, the Team had to content itself with existing films that fulfilled the desired precepts for anti-Kitawala propaganda. However, Saive had not been idle and had made the following films by early 1958. *Oka Mwana*: a romantic film about the Arab Campaign (1892-1894), showing the crimes of the Swahili-Arab ivory and slave traders and how Belgian intervention had put an end to them. *Co-operative Topoke*: a documentary regarding the achievements of this co-operative and its social activities. *Jean et Jeanette*: a romantic, ethnographic documentary. *Bilali Sultani*: a documentary about the investiture of a 'customary' African chief. *Fonds d'Avance*: a silent documentary on the functioning of the fund. Lastly, *Mamleo I*, *II* and *III*, and *Match Stan-Bukavu*: newsreel footage of various ceremonies. *Oka Mwana*, *Co-operative Topoke*, *Jean et Jeanette* and *Bilali Sultani* all had bilingual soundtracks in Lingala and Kingwana. "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid.

from 200 to 2000 Belgian francs. Repression was not limited to forced labour and fines, and some Kitawalists were placed under house arrest or faced internal exile at Kasaji. Kitawalist actions resulting in house arrest or internal exile included: proselytising despite warnings to stop, sabotage, reorganising "decapitated" cells, promoting violence, leading a cell with over 2000 members, and spreading Kitawala to an "uncontaminated" region.[215]

Philippart's Team employed a policy of containment towards Kitawala, requiring interventions specific to the degree of Kitawala influence in a given area.[216] Agents tolerated Kitawala meetings, baptisms and leaders in "strongly contaminated areas," provided that they did nothing to threaten public order and security. Meanwhile, in areas where Kitawala had no or little influence, agents were to arrest meeting organisers, ban baptisers to their village of origin or to a *CARD* in the case of repeat offense, and to sentence all leaders to a *CARD* or to Kasaji.[217] But the Team was not meant to reduce Kitawala's political character by itself and was complemented by a vast program of development projects (Chapter 5). Coordinated by the Team in Kitawalist regions, these projects sought to eliminate the material causes of the discontent that seemed to favour Kitawala's rapid spread.[218]

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[215] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[216] This policy of containment was also implemented in other provinces, including Equateur in 1958 on the orders of the Governor General – Kitawala in contaminated regions was to be pushed to be purely religious, while Kitawala expansion into uncontaminated regions was to be repressed. "Dossier GG (9322)," I. Jadoul, Secrétaire Provincial des Service des AI, Province de l'Equateur. Correspondance à tous les Commissaires de District et tous les Administrateurs de Territoire de la Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: Attitude à adopter envers le Kitawala et les mouvements apparentés INSTRUCTIONS." June 9, 1958, AA, Brussels.

[217] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[218] Ibid.

Greater Contact with the 'Natives,' or Avoiding a Congolese Mau Mau

In 1955, former Governor General Pierre Ryckmans published an article entitled "*Belgian 'Colonialism'*" in the journal *Foreign Affairs*. The article strongly defended Belgian colonialism in Africa and was optimistic about the small European nation's future as a colonial power. Ryckmans concluded his article,

> ...Africa is a ferment [*sic*]. The Gold Coast has an African Prime Minister; Nigeria is on the eve of self-government. Shocking violence troubles Kenya. The United Nations countenances all forms of nationalism, whether premature or not. Will not these various outside influences upset the Congo? There is the danger of it, no doubt. We are no longer quite free to set the pace of progress according to reason only. Yet I am full of hope. When a visitor asked some Congo chiefs if they did not fear an extension of the Mau Mau movement, they replied, "No, because the reasons for Mau Mau do not exist here." Congolese who have travelled elsewhere in Africa find that, all in all, life at home is best.[219]

Despite Ryckmans display of faith in Belgium's ability to keep its colonial subjects content with its style of colonial rule, colonial officials were deeply concerned that an uprising like Mau Mau could occur in the Belgian Congo. In 1956 and 1957 Joset produced reports explaining that Mau Mau had only been able to organise and attack as British officials had been ignorant of developments in Kikuyu society, having had no close contact with the Kikuyu.[220] British officials formally admitted to the Belgian administration, that the Mau Mau uprising occurred due to a lack of an intelligence service in Kenya. As a result, Joset recommended that the intelligence service be expanded in the Congo, further emphasising the significance of the Kitawala Team's intelligence gathering on Kitawala in Orientale in the late 1950s.[221] According to Joset,

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[219] Pierre Ryckmans, "Belgian 'Colonialism'," *Foreign Affairs* 34, no. 1 (1955): 101.

[220] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," P-E Joset. Report. "Désaffection du Service Territorial." 1956, AA, Brussels.

[221] "Dossier PJ (D4587)," Joset. "Les Sociétés Secrètes Politico-religieuses du Congo Belge." January 27, 1957, AA, Brussels.

Kitawala cells constituted the beginning of a nationalist movement that would become very dangerous if a leader were able to unify them, as Jomo Kenyatta had unified and directed the Kikuyu.[222] Joset was not alone in drawing parallels between Mau Mau and Kitawala. Kreutz, Stanleyville's District Commissioner, stated that Kitawala had "knowledge of Mau Mau and a tendency to act like them," while the newspaper *La Libre Belgique* claimed that the Stanleyville-Ponthierville plots had been inspired by Mau Mau.[223] Philippart reported that Kitawalists were vaguely aware that Mau Mau was fighting against the Europeans in Kenya, and saw this as sufficient grounds to see themselves as brothers in arms against a common enemy.[224]

Despite significant differences between Mau Mau and Kitawala, the parallels drawn by officials were not without grounds, as government informants reported repeated references to Mau Mau at the Kitawala meetings preceding the 1955-1956 attacks. For example, a certain Djadi announced, during a mass in honour of Simon Kimbangu on November 22nd 1955 in Stanleyville, that on the given day they would kill Mr. Kreutz, before proceeding "like the Mau Mau in Tanganika [*sic*]." At a later meeting, on December 16th, a Kitawala member stated that,

> The Mau Mau have killed many Judases. Now here by the river our father Simon Kibangi [*sic*], the chief of all the pastors tells you: why are you not fighting for the cross? You all, big and small, with the Judases: they are bothering us for the third time. Now act the same towards them. They have sent me so that I stay here to make war on the Europeans that are here.[225]

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[222] "Dossier PJ (D4587)," Joset. "Sociétés Secrètes." 1957, AA, Brussels. Joset amassed a large file on Mau-Mau, suggesting that he was interested in both the movement and British measures to crush Mau-Mau. Folder 7 of "Dossier PJ (D4583)," AA, Brussels.

[223] "Dossier AI (4737)," Extrait de 'La Libre Belgique' no. 152. "Jéhovah et ses 'témoins' en Afrique." May 31, 1956; Kreutz. "Objet: Kitawala." 1956. AA, Brussels.

[224] "Dossier AI (4737)," Philippart. "Proposition." 1956, AA, Brussels.

[225] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Elsen. AA, Brussels.

Clearly, the Kenyan Mau Mau movement, while significantly different from Kitawala, captured the imaginations of both colonial administrators and Kitawalists.[226]

In the face of a potential militant Kitawala mass movement, officials pushed for an increased administrative presence in 'customary,' non-urban areas, hoping that it would lend legitimacy to the regime and thereby undermine Kitawala influence. Calls for increased contact between white officials and the African population at the provincial level were not unprecedented, but the calls following the Stanleyville-Ponthierville plots were widely discussed by the higher echelons of the administration.[227] In early 1956 the Governors unanimously agreed that greater contact with the 'natives' was necessary and that the numbers of territorial personnel needed to be bolstered.[228] Joset explained in a report to Auguste Buisseret, Minister of Colonies (1954-1958), that the post-war generation of territorial agents was understaffed and overworked, sought the comforts of urban posts and tended to spend little time in rural areas to form relationships with local people. This lack of rapport, Joset concluded, was dangerous given the rise of subversive political and religious movements in the Congo and neighbouring colonies, in what Joset described as a very serious political turning point for Belgium's presence in Africa. Joset's recommendations were to increase the number of territorial agents and to improve the living conditions at territorial posts (especially in Kitawalist areas), so that

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[226] Mau Mau, unlike Kitawala, emerged as a result of land expropriations in the context of the establishment of a white settler community in the Kenyan highlands. Mau Mau was mostly limited to the Kikuyu, while Kitawala was an interethnic movement. Also, Mau Mau did resort to the use lethal violence as a way of achieving its objectives and as a way of exacting reprisals, meanwhile Kitawala did not use lethal violence to achieve its goals, with the notable exceptions of Mwana Lesa's witchcraft eradication campaign, the Masisi-Lubutu uprising, and the failed Stanleyville-Ponthierville plots. Freund, 191.

[227] "Dossier AIMO (127)," L. Dekoster, Administrateur Territorial Principal, Territoire de Lubutu, District de Stanleyville. "Année 1944. Rapport Annuel: Affaires Indigènes & Main d'Oeuvre." January 16, 1945; "Dossier RA/CB (113)," H.L. Keyser, Commissaire Provincial d'Elisabethville. "Rapport Annuel AIMO 1943." June 15, 1944; "Dossier GG (22.231)," de Tiecken. 1953, AA, Brussels.

[228] "Dossier GG (18.354) Région Kitawala." "Compte Rendu des Réunions." 1956, AA, Brussels.

agents would stay to build the positive relationships with Africans, which he saw as the foundation of civilisation and development.[229]

The question of the contact between Africans and European colonial administrators touched on broader questions, in the Congo and elsewhere, about the pace of Europeans' 'civilising mission.' Paulus claimed that Kitawala was popular with Africans in remote areas because they were resentful of not having access to the agents of the civilising mission.[230] Meanwhile, in Kenya the Mau Mau movement was generally seen as the result of Africans either having progressed too quickly or being in a "crisis of transition," neither primitive nor modern.[231]

Concerns over greater contact with the 'natives' also extended into urban areas where state initiatives for increased state penetration into the everyday lives of Africans generally targeted *évolués.* As we have seen, *évolués* were particularly feared as the potential leading cadres of a subversive, mass Kitawala movement. Officials organised *cercles d'évolués*, clubs for 'evolved' Africans, in both urban and non-urban locations. The *cercles d'évolués* were to serve as sites for indoctrinating *évolués* with colonial propaganda, and monitoring their attitudes. Starting in 1952, the Belgian Information Service composed and diffused texts to be used by officials when leading *évolués* in discussion. Each text contained a lesson for its *évolué* audience and the Chief Director of the *AIMO* instructed officials to report and submit *évolués*' reactions to the texts.[232] Discussion topics sought to promote the Belgian civilising mission, hygiene, and colonial

[229] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Désaffection." 1956; "Dossier PJ (D4587)," Joset. "Sociétés Secrètes." 1957, AA, Brussels. Jean-Pierre Paulus seconds Joset's conclusions; Paulus, 12.

[230] Paulus, 12.

[231] Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Pimlico, 2005), 112. French colonial officials voiced similar concerns after World War I, claiming that "'civilizing' actions had caused a breakdown of social relations in West Africa, which now threatened French hegemony and had to be reversed." Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 185.

[232] "Dossier GG (5991)," Directeur-Chef des Service des AIMO, Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: Causeries pour cercles." September 12, 1955, AA, Brussels.

hierarchy.[233] One political text went so far as to praise King Leopold II as a liberator who gave Africans access to "the ladder of moral and intellectual progress"![234]

Prison and Concentration Camp Reform

In the 1950s, the Belgian colonial administration sought to reform its penal system by improving the treatment of moderate Kitawalists in the hope of reintegrating them into Congolese society. Meanwhile, militant members were to be effectively isolated to break their influence on Kitawalists both inside and outside detention facilities. Also, in an attempt to respect Africans' freedom of religion, a new arrest policy stated that Africans should henceforth be arrested for their actions and not their ideas.[235] These reforms began in the early 1950s but intensified in 1956 with the new Kitawala policy, when both central and local officials recognised that existing coercive measures

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[233] Other discussion topics promoted the 'civilising mission' by indicating the need for African women to manage their households like Belgian women, and the superior quality of Belgian consumer products. More explicitly political texts informed Africans that literacy and use of a typewriter did not make them *évolués*, and stressed subservience to Belgian bosses as the path to economic success. "Dossier GG (5991)," G. de Walsche, Administrateur de Territoire, Territoire de Djolu, Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: Causerie no2/55." August 11, 1955; G. de Walsche, Administrateur de Territoire, Territoire de Djolu, Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: Causerie no12 et 13/55." August 11, 1955. AA, Brussels. De Walsche was corresponding with the Bureau de l'Information in Léopoldville.

[234] "Dossier GG (5991)," G. de Walsche, Administrateur de Territoire, Territoire de Djolu, Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: Causerie no14/55." August 11, 1955. AA, Brussels. This characterization of King Leopold II's rule is ludicrous as it is estimated that 5 to 10 million Africans succumbed to his rubber-gathering regime and its consequences; Philippe Marechal, "La controverse sur Léopold II et le Congo dans la littérature et les médias: Réflexions critiques," in *La mémoire du Congo: le temps colonial* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 2005), 48.

[235] "Dossier GG (9322)," Jadoul, 1958, AA, Brussels.

were ineffective in removing the perceived danger of Kitawala and would not achieve tangible results by themselves.[236]

Colonial officials worked to gradually improve living conditions, "rehabilitate" inmates, grant amnesty, and recognise some legal rights of Kitawalists. Already in 1952 the Kasaji *colagrel*, penal camp, was reorganised to allow inmates' wives and children to cohabit with them, greatly increasing morale and discipline. Officials even allowed prisoners, who had renounced proselytising, to return to their regions of origin to live under the supervision of the local notable.[237] In subsequent years, Kasaji's infrastructure and living quarters were improved with a housing, plumbing, sanitation and lighting program, suggesting that all of these were previously either inadequate or absent. A school was created for inmates' children, with three older children being allowed to attend the *Institut St. Boniface* in Elisabethville.[238] The camp director and his wife at the Oshwe *colagrel* started six schools to educate inmates' children, and at a penal colony near Ponthierville inmates were being exposed to anti-Kitawala propaganda.[239]

Yet, some agents believed that these changes did not go far enough. Van Hove noted in 1956 that the atmosphere at Kasaji remained oppressive, with "no sports or

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[236] "Dossier AI (4737)," Kreutz. "Objet: Recrudescence." 1956, AA, Brussels. Governor General Jungers voiced doubts over the effectiveness of incarceration and internal exile in 1949, but no tangible change of policy was made until 1956. See "Dossier GG (8604)," Jungers, Gouverneur Général, to Monsieur le Gouverneur de la Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: politique contre mouvements indigènes subversifs." March 3, 1949, AA, Brussels. Incarceration and internal exile had only succeeded in spreading Kitawala. For example, there were less than 500 inmates in the Ekafera *colagrel* in 1957, but 3,356 known Kitawalists in the surrounding communities. "Dossier GG (9322)," A. Cocquereaumont, Sous-commissaire principal de la *Sûreté* à Coquilhatville. "Objet: Secte Kitawala." July 3, 1957; "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Nouvelle Politique." 1957, AA, Brussels.

[237] "Dossier RA/CB (113)," R. Wauthion, Gouverneur Provincial d'Elisabethville. "Rapport Annuel AIMO 1953." April 1954, AA, Brussels.

[238] "Dossier RA/CB (113)," R. Wauthion, Gouverneur Provincial d'Elisabethville. "Rapport AIMO. Katanga. 1954." April 1955; J. Paelinck. Gouverneur Provincial du Katanga. "Rapport Annuel AIMO 1955." March 30, 1956. AA, Brussels.

[239] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Synthèse." 1956; "Dossier AI (4737)," Rapport Beckers. AA, Brussels.

entertainment to relax and tame" the Kitawalists and their families.[240] In 1957, Joset complained to Buisseret that nothing was being done to re-educate the 4,320 Kitawala *CARD* inmates in the Congo, while the British were achieving "brilliant results" with their re-education system, called "screening."[241] Joset recommended several hours a day of theory, public addresses and courses for inmates because "nothing is better and more effective than good propaganda."[242] Meanwhile, Joset suggested the modest recognition of Kitawala legal rights, stating that it was "abnormal" that a number of inmates had been detained for over thirty years without trial! He recommended the creation of a commission to review the continued incarceration of these inmates. Joset's comment, however, that it was "better to have a judgement than an arbitrary measure to relegate Kitawalists," suggests that he was more concerned with lending greater legal legitimacy to the basis of Kitawalists' incarceration, than with their legal rights.[243]

At the same time, detention facilities were spatially reorganised to segregate inmates based on their degree of militancy, and security was heightened at select penal colonies. Van Hove was concerned that 'religious' and 'political' inmates at Kasaji intermingled freely, allowing militant inmates to radicalise the prison population, thereby complicating their reintegration into society. As a result, Van Hove advocated sending 'religious' Kitawalists home to be reintegrated, and releasing all elderly inmates regardless of their beliefs.[244] Meanwhile, the camps were to be reorganised to increase security for 'political' Kitawalists.[245] Such calls for isolating militant Kitawalists were not

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[240] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Hove, AA, Brussels.

[241] Joset's praise of "screening" is chilling, given that "screening" was the term used for the violent, and sometimes lethal, interrogation of suspected Mau Mau in Kenya. Elkins, *Britain's Gulag,* 62-63.

[242] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Nouvelle Politique." 1957, AA, Brussels.

[243] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Synthèse." 1956, AA, Brussels.

[244] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Hove, AA, Brussels. There was some basis for Van Hove's concerns. In 1953, the most pious Kitawalist inmates at Kasaji spread rumours that those who repented and had the possibility of returning home were, in actual fact, either sent to worse camps or would never be accepted back into their villages. "Dossier GG (13.915)," M. Dullier, Directeur de la Colagrel-Kasaji. District du Lualuba. Province du Katanga. "Objet: Relégués Kitawala." January 8, 1953, AA, Brussels.

[245] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Hove, AA, Brussels.

without precedent, with Governor General Jungers decreeing in 1949 that Kitawalists only be sentenced to isolated prisons and *AIMO* Service Chief V. Brébant requesting in 1951 the legalisation of solitary confinement for dangerous political prisoners like Kitawalist and Kimbanguist leaders.[246]

While these changes to prison policy were taking place, Kitawalists continued to be sent into internal exile to wherever they were deemed to pose the least danger of spreading their doctrine, whether to their community of origin, into temporary exile, to labour or concentration camps, or to already contaminated regions. Given the ineffectiveness of using internal exile to contain Kitawala doctrine, only reoffending Kitawalists were to be banned and in 1949 Governor General Jungers admitted that "only true concentration camps" would guarantee the adequate surveillance of the movement's followers.[247] At the 1956 governors' meeting, the governors decided to make Jungers' "true concentration camps" a reality by sending the most dangerous Kitawalists to the Kasaji *colagrel* and surrounding it with a barb-wire enclosure. All provinces were to be fitted with lesser *colagrels* for less dangerous inmates.[248] There is some indication that the recommended changes were made to Kasaji, as Carels' 1958 report differentiated between Kasaji and *CARD*s, a distinction that was not made previously.[249]

Ultimately, the penal reforms regarding Kitawala were quite mixed. Some penal reforms, including improvements to sanitation and access to family, may have improved inmates' quality of life, while other reforms were designed to further isolate 'militant' Kitawalists. What all of these reforms seem to have had in common, however, is that they represented the colonial administration's commitment to solidifying forced-labour camps and prisons as part of the long term solution in dealing with Kitawala.

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[246] "Dossier GG (8604)," Jungers. "Politique." 1949; "Dossier GG (5532)," V. Brébant, Directeur-Chef des Service des AIMO "Objet: Aménagement prison Elisabethville." January 19, 1951, AA, Brussels.

[247] "Dossier GG (8604)," Jungers. "Politique." 1949, AA, Brussels.

[248] "Dossier GG (18.354) Région Kitawala." "Compte Rendu des Réunions." 1956, AA, Brussels.

[249] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

At the same time, the Kitawala Team, greater contact between the administration and Africans, and penal reform were not meant to address the issue of Kitawala alone, and were to work in concert with developmental colonialist projects.[250] It is to these *FBI* and *Plan Décennal* projects that we now turn.

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[250] According to Carels the Team was never meant to crush the political nature of Kitawala by itself, but that it was to work in concert with development projects. "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

Chapter 5.

State 'Solutions' – Part II: Colonial Development, and Co-optation

Having examined the genesis of the new Kitawala policy, including the Kitawala Team, the need for more rural administration and penal reform in Chapter 4, we now turn to post-war development as a tool for countering the perceived Kitawala threat. This Chapter further elaborates the new Kitawala policy outlined at the beginning of Chapter 4, exploring the social and the economic development projects that were conceived to co-opt Kitawala after the Stanleyville-Ponthierville plots. I will address the wider context and politics of Belgian developmental colonialism before examining specific projects linked to the struggle against Kitawala. Proposed projects included, but were not limited to, state-funded youth scouting programs, agricultural projects, as well as the construction of roads, administrative buildings, schools, and medical centres. These projects were to be implemented by the *FBI* and as part of the colony's socio-economic *Plan Décennal*, but in many cases they were never executed.

Post-War Developmental Colonialism in the Belgian Congo

Following the Masisi-Lubutu uprising, colonial officials increasingly associated Kitawala's popularity with socio-economic marginalisation. One official's report blamed wartime forced labour, the resulting economic, political and social disintegration of the Kumu people in Kivu, and the total lack of government medical services.[251] A ministerial

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[251] "Dossier AI (4737)," Révolte de l'Utunda (Masisi) – Lubutu. "Les Causes." [no date], AA, Brussels.

report attributed the revolt to a lack of contact between administrators and the local peoples, and some officials' "systematically hostile and contemptuous attitude towards the Africans."[252] Schöller wrote in the same vein when he made his 1944 Kitawala policy recommendation to address Africans' material needs in order to undermine Kitawala.[253] Into the 1950s, officials, including Royal Colonial Inspector Van Hove, continued to view social and economic want as the underlying factors in the spread of Kitawala and to emphasise development as the solution.[254] Without a doubt, these officials were acknowledging real social and material problems, but they were also de-politicising Kitawala; viewing the movement as a protest against the quality of colonial rule, instead of colonial rule as such.

The growing administrative discourse on development as a tool against Kitawala was part of a larger move towards developmental colonialism in the post-war era. The economic crisis of the 1930s and World War II had revealed the Congo's economic dependency on exports. Furthermore, the colonial administration's commitment to doubling production in support of the war effort placed considerable strain on existing infrastructure, and generally lowered Africans' living standards.[255] Wartime production meant colony-wide doubling of *corvée* labour days, massive recruitment drives for

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[252] "Dossier AI (4737)," Edgar De Bruyne, Ministre des Colonies. June 13, 1945. AA, Brussels.

[253] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[254] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Hove; "Dossier RA/AIMO (167)," Territoire de Ponthierville. "Rapport Annuel AIMO – 1953," AA, Brussels.

[255] This commitment followed Japan's 1942 conquest of British Malaysia and the Dutch East Indies, the Allies main producers of rubber and other strategic resources. Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 154. At the same time Africans' life-ways also saw significant change with the number of male salaried workers nearly doubling from 480 000 in 1935 to 800 000 in 1945. Vanthemsche, 7.

mining and agricultural enterprises, and increased production quotas for Africans.[256] African workers' "material and social conditions were largely neglected [during this period], resulting in low salaries, makeshift housing, deplorable sanitary conditions and a general rise in the costs of living."[257] In the post-war period, the administration's close involvement in the management of the economy, as well as public finances bolstered by increased tax revenue, made development a viable option for addressing the Congo's socio-economic problems.[258] Meanwhile, Britain and France were putting into place important colonial development policies after World War II in the form of ten-year plans. Britain launched its Colonial Development Acts in 1940 and 1945, while France created its *Fonds d'investissement pour le développement économique et social des territoires d'outre-mer* (*FIDES*) in 1945.[259]

It is in this specific post-war context that Belgian developmental colonialism was organised under the *FBI* (1947-1963) and the *Plan Décennal* (1949-1959).[260] Both the *Plan*'s projects and projects funded by the *FBI* were implemented colony-wide, although

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[256] In peace-time, able-bodied men with no wage employment were obliged to work for a total of 60 days per year on public works such as road construction and maintenance, building guest houses for itinerant administrators, *etc*. During the war, the period of *corvée* labour was extended to 120 days, and included despised tasks like porterage and wild rubber collection. Nzongola-Ntalaja, 29; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 154. However, in some regions women actually did most of the road construction and maintenance work, as well as the initial work of clearing the forest. Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880-1960* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 222.

[257] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 154. In Masisi Territory in Kivu, all Bakumu men were forced to gather 50 kilograms of wild rubber per year, a time intensive task requiring them to live in the forest in appalling conditions, unable to contribute to their families' subsistence. Ibid., 211-212.

[258] Vanthemsche, 7. Available sources do not identify the taxes in question, nor the reason they were increased.

[259] These were created after vague and limited attempts by both France and Britain at planned colonial development in the interwar period. Vanthemsche, 8.

[260] The *FBI* and the *Plan Décennal* were not the first Belgian attempts at colonial development. In 1921 Colonial Minister Louis Franck had suggested a vast program of public works for the Congo. However, unlike the developmental colonialism of the 1950s, the "Franck Plan" did not include any welfare projects and ultimately was never implemented for lack of funding. Ibid., 8. It should be noted that it is unclear from the colonial record whether some development projects discussed in this thesis were part of the *Plan*, the *FBI*, or whether they were independent projects conceived in the spirit of development colonialism.

the *FBI*'s actions were limited to "customary native society,"[261] namely Africans subject to indirect rule in non-urban and non-industrial regions, in Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi.[262] The *FBI* was founded by royal decree two years before the launch of the *Plan Décennal*, but came to be considered a cornerstone of the *Plan* by Pierre Wigny, Minister of Colonies (1947-1950).[263] The Fund was created after a commission, heavily influenced by French and British post-war developmental colonialist thought, recommended a fund under the authority of the Minister of Colonies to promote the "moral and material wellbeing of the population."[264] The *FBI* was not without precedent as a parastatal development organisation in the Belgian Congo, but was created as a result of specific post-war circumstances.[265] A 1964 *FBI* publication asserted that World War II had accentuated the inequality between urban and rural living standards and that "it became urgent to embark on a coordinated, widespread course of action" designed to give the rural communities living conditions equal to those enjoyed by Africans already integrated into the industrial economy.[266] Wigny even claimed that the future of

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[261] Officials referred to African communities ruled by 'customary' African chiefs as 'customary' societies. The term 'customary' is misleading because it ignored the reality of colonial rule. For more information, see notes 84, 87, 144 above.

[262] It is noteworthy that through the *FBI* Belgian colonial authorities were looking beyond the African colonial context for possible strategies of how to manage Kitawala. Indeed, the *FBI* stated that its desire for sustainable development of rural communities had been tried and proven by the Tennessee Valley Authority, the development of the Zuyderzee, various colonial projects, and similar United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) work in Haiti. Henri Beckers, *Le Fonds du Bien-Etre indigène* (Bruxelles: Editions Universitaires, 1951), 25. The *FBI* compared its work with that of international organisations like the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the UNESCO, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Although the *FBI* was to limit its interventions to the Congo's rural 'customary' society, it is important to note that in 1957, 77.5% of the Congo's population was considered rural. Fonds du Bien-être Indigène, *A Work of Co-operation in Development; Fifteen Years' Operation by the Native Welfare Fund in the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, 1948-1963* (Gent: Snoeck-Ducaju, 1964), 19, 36.

[263] Pierre Wigny, "Introduction," in *Plan Décennal pour le développement économique et social du Congo Belge* (Bruxelles: Les Éditions de Visscher, 1949), XVIII.

[264] Fonds du Bien-être Indigène, 19.

[265] In 1930 the *Fonds Reine Elisabeth pour l'Assistance Médicale aux Indigènes* (FOREAMI) was founded; and in 1933, the *Institut national pour l'étude agronomique au Congo belge* (INEAC). Ibid., 18.

[266] Ibid., 18-19.

numerous African groups living under 'customary,' was in serious danger, if Africans continued to move to the cities in search of better living conditions.[267] Henri Beckers, a civil engineer working for the *FBI*, stated in 1951 that merely improving hygiene and medical assistance would not keep 'natives' in the *brousse* [bush], and that the rural standard of living needed to be raised together with the abolition of porterage and *corvée* labour.[268] A goal of the *FBI* then, one also later shared by the *Plan Décennal*, was to create a standard of living in 'customary' areas comparable in all respects to that of the industrial centres and cities.[269]

While the *FBI*'s resources were substantial during its fifteen years of activity, they were in fact quite limited given the *FBI*'s vast mandate, which included everything from bee-keeping to campaigns against falling birth-rates. The *FBI* was funded by the Belgian government and the proceeds of the *Loterie Coloniale* and accumulated a working capital of 4.4 billion francs, of which 2.9 billion were invested in the Congo.[270] However, it was estimated that if the *FBI* divided its annual resources amongst the Congo's rural

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[267] Pierre Wigny, "Création d'un fonds du bien-être indigène – Rapport au Régent," in *Fonds du Bien-être Indigène – Etablissement Public; Arrêté Royal Constitutif et Arrêtés d'Exécution* ([n.p.]: 1954), 5.

[268] Beckers, 16.

[269] Vanthemsche, 30, 33.

[270] The *FBI* received 1.78 billion Belgian francs from the Belgian treasury, in what was a major part of Belgium's repayment of its war debt to the Congo, and a donation of 100 million francs from the Belgian government. Beckers, 3. It also received 220 million francs from the '*Loterie Coloniale*''s 1946 and 1947 proceeds. Between 1948 and 1953, it became the sole beneficiary of the Lottery, whose contribution ultimately amounted to 2.5 billion francs. *FBI* annual expenditure is estimated to have been 300 million francs up to 1960 and it continued to fund projects in the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi until 1963, by which time both territories had gained independence from Belgium. After Congolese independence in 1960, the *FBI*'s work slowed due to a massive decrease in its financial resources, notably the loss of the African Lottery profits, and Congolese political conflicts. Fonds du Bien-être Indigène, 31-32, 182. Legally, the *FBI* was a Congolese institution, but financially, especially since 1957, all of its resources had come from Belgium and in 1963 it was replaced by the *Fonds national de la promotion et de service social* (*FNPSS*). The *FNPSS* manages national and international NGO aid to finance social services in the DRC. "Kinshasa: un nouveau comité de gestion pour redynamiser le FNPSS," *Radio Okapi*, 29 July 2010, http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2010/07/29/kinshasa-mise-en-place-du-nouveau-comite-de-gestion-au-fnpss/. Whether the *FBI* or the *FNPSS* continued anti-Kitawala work after independence is beyond the scope of this study.

population of twelve million, it would only be able to buy each person three bars of soap.[271] As a result, the *FBI*'s administrative council opted to concentrate the majority of its resources in five geographic zones seen as in particular need of development.[272] From 1948 to 1957, twenty-six territories were treated as "areas of intensive action" and even after the *FBI* officially discontinued this policy in 1958, the *FBI* continued to focus its resources in regions "considered to be of particular interest."[273] It is unclear from the colonial record whether Stanleyville District was one of these regions, but the *FBI* did repeatedly increase funding to the District and the neighbouring Territories of Lubutu and Walikale in Kivu because of the strong Kitawala presence in the region.[274] According to Beckers, the *FBI* was to work within its limits and position itself within the *Plan*'s programme and "avoid problems closely linked to native policies which are the exclusive responsibility of the Government's services."[275] It shall be seen, however, that the *FBI* did not in fact avoid questions of "native policy"; rather it worked extremely closely with the government especially in regards to policies towards Kitawala.

Wigny announced the decision to develop a ten-year plan for post-war development in the Congo in July 1947, the same month that saw the *FBI*'s creation.[276] The *Plan Décennal* officially went into effect in 1949 and broke with previous policy by proposing a long-term socio-economic plan meant to affect all aspects of life in the colony.[277] Indeed, the *Plan*'s programs were to replace the "vicious cycle of misery" with the "virtuous circle of prosperity."[278] Economic and social development became an

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[271] Beckers, 5.
[272] Beckers, 5-9; Fonds du Bien-être Indigène.
[273] Fonds du Bien-être Indigène, 35-42.
[274] "Dossier AI (4737)," W. Van Remoortel, Président du Fonds du Bien-être Indigène. November 28, 1956, AA, Brussels.
[275] Beckers, 16.
[276] Belgium, like France and Britain, had launched a limited development plan in the interwar period. Vanthemsche, 8.
[277] "Dossier GG (18.354) Agricole," E. Warnier, Directeur-Chef de Service. "Kitawala en Province Orientale – Programme agricole." September 9, 1957, AA, Brussels.
[278] The *Plan* had an initial budget of 25 billion francs to accomplish this task, but ultimately cost 51 billion francs. Vanthemsche, 10-30, 43.

important goal for the colonial regime, and after 1950 officials were required to report on all "social actions" undertaken in their regions.[279]

On the ground in Stanleyville District, the Kitawala Team coordinated all *FBI* and *Plan Décennal* projects at every stage, from making project recommendations and requisitioning required materials, to monitoring the progress of projects and dealing with all relevant correspondence.[280] This close working relationship between development projects and the Kitawala Team demonstrates how intimately development was integrated with active Kitawala repression and counterpropaganda.

Kitawala and the Politics of Belgian Colonial Development

Minister of Colonies Pierre Wigny explicitly stated in 1950 that the *Plan Décennal* did not seek to shape the development of Congolese politics, nor the colony's political future. That the *Plan* included no provisions for political emancipation is unsurprising, as the possibility of political emancipation was at best a vague goal, to be accomplished in an indistinct future. Indeed, Léon Pétillon, Governor-General (1952-1958) and later Belgian Minister of Colonies (1958), admitted that even in 1958 there was no plan for the Congo's independent political future in his administration.[281] Even so, when the completed *Plan* was presented to the Belgian parliament, critics expressed fears that the development of 'civilisation' in the Congo, stimulated by the *Plan*, would accelerate political emancipation. Wigny reassured these critics that working for the welfare of the colony was "the best guarantee to ensure and retain the friendship of the [Congolese] population," echoing similar assurances made in 1947 that the *FBI* would make Africans

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[279] Jean-Luc Vellut, *Guide de l'étudiant en Histoire du Zaïre*, Série "Essais", no. 8 (Kinshasa: Éditions du Mont Noir, 1974), 142.
[280] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.
[281] Stengers, 245.

into "conscientious and loyal associates to the Belgian colonial enterprise."[282] From Wigny's statements it is clear that developmental colonialism was to have a strong political role in maintaining Belgian hegemony in its colony.[283]

The *Plan Décennal* was designed to politically reinforce Belgium's hold on the Congo at both the international and the colonial levels. Internationally, the *Plan* worked to justify continued Belgian colonialism in the face of criticism voiced by the United Nations and the United States, as well as to counter the USSR's anti-colonial rhetoric.[284] Ironically, the United States indirectly financed Belgium's developmental colonialism, as the Belgian economy was stimulated by the Marshall Plan from 1947-1951.[285] Furthermore, specific *Plan* projects, including the INGA hydroelectric project, were to favour foreign investment to show the international legitimacy of Belgian colonial rule.[286]

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[282] Vanthemsche, 32; Wigny, "Création d'un fonds du bien-être indigène," 10. The prominence of both officials' and the *FBI*'s struggle against political Kitawala in the colonial record is especially significant because no mention of Kitawala was made in official *FBI* literature. See Henri Beckers, *Le Fonds du Bien-Etre indigène*, 1951; Fonds du Bien-être Indigène, *A Work of Co-operation in Development; Fifteen Years' Operation by the Native Welfare Fund in the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, 1948-1963*, 1964; Fonds du Bien-Etre Indigène, *Fonds du Bien-être Indigène – Etablissement Public; Arrêté Royal Constitutif et Arrêtés d'Exécution*, 1954. This omission suggests that the *FBI* wished to keep its involvement in colonial politics out of the public eye.

[283] French and British colonial development was also undertaken with the intent of maintaining colonial rule. Vanthemsche, 32; Freund 170, 172, 176.

[284] Vanthemsche, 32. Former Governor-General Pierre Ryckmans countered criticism from the United Nations and the United States by claiming that there was no need to abolish Belgian colonialism because it was not exploitative and that "self-government is no substitute for good [colonial] government." Ryckmans, 92-94.

[285] Eighty percent of the *Plan* was to be financed by loans from the Belgian financial market. Vanthemsche, 37. The United States positioned itself as a mild critic of colonial rule after World War II, but with the birth of NATO in 1949 began to support British interests in the Middle East against the perceived Soviet threat. Glen Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Relinquishment of Power in her Last Three Arab Dependencies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 14, 76-78. The United States provided military aid for Portugal's colonial wars against Marxist guerrillas in the 1960s. Richard J. Reid, *A History of Modern Africa: 1800 to the Present* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 251.

[286] Stengers, 200. The *Plan* undoubtedly also worked to legitimise Belgian colonialism in Belgium.

The *Plan Décennal* was also meant to strengthen Belgian control in the Congo itself by protecting the Congolese population from economic instability and raising its incomes in order to stymie the masses' "dangerous revolutionary potential."[287] Beckers saw development as essential in preventing the rapid creation of a large, impoverished, urban proletariat that would be susceptible to "subversive propaganda," the origin of which he did not specify.[288] Given officials' tendency to associate Kitawala with subversion, it is not unreasonable to conclude that this "subversive propaganda" included Kitawala's doctrines. Officials believed that impoverished conditions in 'customary' areas contributed to both Kitawala's popularity and rapid urbanisation. As a result, administrators believed that addressing poor living conditions in 'customary' areas would both slow Kitawala expansion and prevent the formation of a radicalised united front between Kitawalists from 'customary' and 'non-customary' regions.[289]

To achieve this goal, officials foresaw a wide range of economic and social programs designed to "ameliorate the standard of living and the well-being of Africans in contaminated [Kitawala] regions by attending to the external causes for Kitawala's success."[290] In Orientale, these programs ranged from the construction of schools and medical centres to an economic program seeking to increase African employment opportunities with the establishment of various plantations in Ponthierville, Bafwasende and Opala Territories. State-organised leisure activities included colonial propaganda

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[287] Vanthemsche, 33.

[288] Vanthemsche, 30; Vellut, 121-123, 127; Beckers, 23-24.

[289] "Dossier GG (8604)," J. Vandersmissen, Commissaire de District Assistant, District du Congo-Ubangi, Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: Politique contre les Mouvements subversifs. Mission Marmitte." July 4, 1951, AA, Brussels.

[290] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

film screenings and discussions; athletic facilities and sports clubs at administrative headquarters, as well as rural theatre groups.[291]

Recreation programs were especially directed at African youth. Officials developed youth movements everywhere in Orientale, but gave particular importance to developing scouting in Kitawala regions. Carels stated that "healthy leisure activities" were essential to deter youth from subversive ideas and that scouting's rules were "the most appropriate to enthuse feelings of respect and loyalty in the youth for the [civilising] mission" and to "prepare their future participation in this mission."[292] Scout groups were to be introduced to as many villages as possible with the aim of winning youths over to "the side of the state and thus represent a serious advantage in the struggle against Kitawala."[293]

The *FBI*'s services were applied strategically to co-opt perceived Kitawala threats. In November 1956, Buisseret contacted W. Van Remoortel, president of the *FBI*, to rally more financial support to combat the Kitawalist resurgence undermining colonial agents, chiefs and *FBI* projects in Orientale. According to Buisseret, the resurgence was the result of the poor economic and social conditions in the region. He entreated Van Remoortel to contribute thirty million francs to the region for the next three years to

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[291] Education projects were funded by the colony, the *FBI* and the *Caisses administrative des circonscriptions indigènes* (*CACI*). "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels. The *FBI* funded medical dispensaries, social centres, surgical centres, new hospital wings, and maternity wards. "Dossier GG (18.354) Agricole," Vice-Governor Général, Correspondence to the Minister of Colonies, "Lutte contre le Kitawala, Personnel Territorial." March 2, 1957. AA, Brussels. A similar strategy for undermining Kitawala influence was used in neighbouring Equateur Province. Equateur's Djolu Territory had "an anti-Kitawala propaganda and social events" budget for building a sports club, two soccer fields, equipment for eight soccer teams and funds to cover the costs of moving the teams to their matches. "Dossier GG (5991)," F.M. Dethier, Directeur Provincial des AIMO, Province de l'Equateur. "Objet: Propagande et loisir indigènes régions menacées par le Kitawala." November 22, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[292] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[293] Ibid.

insure the construction of 452 primary schools in an act of "public salvation."[294] Van Remoortel heartily agreed explaining that, "given the gravity of the situation," the *FBI*'s Administrative Council had not only decided to provide the requested subsidies, but to further increase the *FBI*'s general activities in Stanleyville District and in the territories of Lubutu and Walikale.[295] The *FBI*'s approval of Buisseret's plan is significant as, at 10 million francs a year, it constituted over three percent of the *FBI*'s annual budget, and is testimony to the perceived seriousness of the Kitawala threat.

FBI funding of anti-Kitawala 'development' only increased in the late 1950s and was avowedly political. In 1957 the Congo's vice-governor-general, speaking of an *FBI* project, stated that "the political character of this [project] militates in favour of an urgent realisation of the general program of the struggle against Kitawala," and Buisseret made further requests to increase the construction of schools in areas "contaminated" by Kitawala.[296] Van Remoortel followed Buisseret's recommendation for eight of Orientale's territories and the *FBI* increased the province's funding quota from 32 million to 46 million francs per year, in light of Kitawalist activity in Stanleyville District, to the detriment of the funding quotas of Leopoldville, Kivu and Kasai provinces.[297]

By raising rural living standards, both the *FBI* and the *Plan* projects' sought to hold Africans in their 'traditional' communities of origin, where they would continue to

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[294] The resurgence included hostility towards Europeans and their Congolese auxiliaries, rebellion against European and indigenous authorities, refusal to work or to accept rations, sabotage, boycotting European agents, non-attendance at medical census collection, etc. "Dossier AI (4737)," Auguste Buisseret, Ministre des Colonies. "Intensification scolaire en province de Stanleyville." November 6, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[295] "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Remoortel, November 28, 1956. AA, Brussels.

[296] The vice-governor general stated that this project would help stop "the propagation of evil in Orientale." "Dossier AI (4737)," Moleli [*sic*], Vice-Gouverneur Général. "Objet: Lutte contre le Kitawala – Personnel Territorial," February 6, 1957; "Dossier AI (4737)," Auguste Buisseret, Ministre des Colonies. "Objet: Lutte contre le Kitawala." October 17, 1957, AA, Brussels.

[297] Van Remoortel also justified this shift of resources in light of the spread of Islam "by external forces" and "border influences from Sudan and Uganda." "Dossier AI (4737)," W. Van Remoortel, Président du Fonds du Bien-Etre Indigène. "Objet: Lutte contre le Kitawala en Province Orientale." November 19, 1957, AA, Brussels. *FBI* provincial budget quotas were calculated in function of each province's 'customary' population. Ibid.

submit themselves to the power of their 'customary' leaders. According to Vanthemsche, this constituted an implicit attempt to slow the political transformation of African society.[298] Officials sought to prioritise a "political action program" intended to shore up the prestige of appointed chiefs in Kitawalist areas. Stanleyville District Commissioner M. Kreutz opined that colonialism and Congolese society's "natural evolution towards humane democracy" and "Europeanism" had progressively stripped African chiefs of their autocratic powers, allowing Kitawalists to withdraw from chiefs' control.[299] Officials intended to prioritise restoring chiefly prestige by building administrative buildings as well as colonial agents' residences from durable materials and fitting all territorial headquarters with public address systems.[300] This prioritisation demonstrates the colonial regime's dependency on the chiefs and the need to keep them both powerful and loyal as they constituted the regime's frontline in dealing with Kitawalists and the vast majority of the population.

Whatever resources and opportunities *FBI* and *Plan* projects did provide to their target population, projects also fulfilled an implicit political role by increasing state presence and surveillance in areas marked for development. The regular presence of colonial agents was needed to effectively realise projects and in 1956 Van Remoortel informed Buisseret that additional *FBI* program funding would be contingent on agents'

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[298] The desire to use development to maintain 'traditional, customary' chiefly authority constituted a major contradiction in Belgian developmental colonialism, as the *Plan*'s economic and social projects would fundamentally change the foundation of 'traditional' socio-political structures. Vanthemsche, 33. This contradiction is akin to those found in colonizers' 'civilising mission' in general. See Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*; Stoler, 199, 209.

[299] "Dossier GG (17.715)," M. Kreutz, Commissaire de District, District de Stanleyville. "Note pour Monsieur le Gouverneur de la Province Orientale." October 8, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[300] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Kreutz. October 1956; Carels, AA, Brussels. Following World War I, officials in French West Africa expressed similar concerns over the need to restore chiefly authority in order to stabilize French rule and civilize Africans, contributing to the policy of *Association* from 1919 to 1930. Conklin, 174, 177, 185, 188-211.

increased, regular and long-term presence.[301] Colonial development projects were meant to provide various government services to the African population, but in the words of anthropologist James Ferguson, "'government services' are never simply 'services'...it may be at least as appropriate to think of 'services' which serve to govern."[302]

The dual purpose of development projects in the Congo is clearly shown by the *Plan*'s program to expand and modernise the colony's road network, ostensibly to boost export and internal trade.[303] One such road was to be constructed through Kitawala-influenced areas, linking Stanleyville with Costermansville (today Bukavu), via Ponthierville. A 1953 *AIMO* annual report stated that the road would enable greater territorial occupation, medical services and economic development in Ponthierville Territory, improving colonial agents' relations with African subjects and reducing customary authorities' reliance on Kitawala repression. The imminent creation of the road would "*firstly*" have good results for 'native' policy, and "*secondly*" lead to economic improvements.[304] Officials also saw building roads as a question of security, as many parts of Ponthierville Territory influenced by Kitawala were only accessible by footpaths, limiting officials' and missionaries' access.[305] In 1956 Schöller insisted that the Stanleyville-Ponthierville road be completed to expedite travel between the two cities, improve surveillance, provide an alternative route in case the rail link was sabotaged and

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[301] Van Remoortel echoed Joset's 1956 report, identifying frequent agent transfers, excessive bureaucracy and insufficient personnel as a significant problem in the fight against Kitawala. Officials' irregular presence was helping Kitawala popularity and the lack of official-African contact was preventing the execution of *FBI* programs. "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Remoortel. November 28, 1956. AA, Brussels.

[302] James Ferguson, *The Anti-politics Machine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 253.

[303] Vanthemsche, 25-26.

[304] The report's author wrote that road construction would lead to better native policy *d'abord*, either 'first' or 'foremost,' and better economic conditions *ensuite*, either 'later' or 'secondly.' It is unclear whether the author meant to place these two results in order of importance or chronology. "Dossier RA/AIMO (167)," Territoire de Ponthierville. "Rapport Annuel AIMO – 1953," AA, Brussels. New roads would also have eased Africans' access to new services like *FBI*-built medical clinics, and shows *FBI* and *Plan* programs' interdependence. "Dossier AI (4737)," Van Hove, AA, Brussels.

[305] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

create the possibility for a new centre of European occupation in the region.[306] Schöller's list of benefits reveals the level of danger Kitawala was seen to present and by 1958 two roads were being constructed under the *Plan Décennal* with another three roads planned for the proposed second *Plan Décennal* (1959-1969).[307]

Officials consciously used *FBI* and *Plan Décennal* projects as political tools to pacify Kitawala, but it is also important to note that Kitawala pacification may also have been a means to an end in terms of allowing projects to be carried out undisturbed. The colonial record is explicit about officials' desire to accommodate 'subversive' religious groups in order to carry out development projects that may have been undertaken to attract Western capital investment. For instance, in 1957 Paul-Ernest Joset wrote to Buisseret that a better policy vis-à-vis Kimbanguists was needed, especially as the government was planning to build parts of the INGA hydroelectric project in the heavily Kimbanguist Bas-Congo.[308] Colonial records making similar statements regarding projects in Kitawalist areas do not exist or are currently inaccessible, but it is not inconceivable that the accommodation and co-optation of Kitawalists was motivated by similar motives.

Thus, the development and integration of 'customary' regions into the market economy can be seen as the pursuit of social, economic and political goals. Officials believed that development projects would raise African living standards and wages, hereby stabilising and strengthening the colonial economy. At the same time, they sought to expand state services in peripheral 'customary' areas in Orientale Province in order to co-opt and undermine threats to colonial authority and offset the advances of nationalism. Given the ambitious nature of these proposed projects, it is essential to examine their actual implementation in Stanleyville District.

[306] "Dossier GG (18.354) Agricole," A. Schöller, Gouverneur Provincial de Stanleyville. "Objet: Kitawala." Stanleyville, January 25, 1956. AA, Brussels.

[307] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[308] "Dossier PJ (D4586)," Joset. "Nouvelle Politique." 1957, AA, Brussels. The electrification of the Congo was a key project in the *Plan*, as it would enable a rise in living standards, industrial growth, mechanisation, *etc*. Vanthemsche, 25.

The Implementation of *FBI* and *Plan Décennal* Kitawala Projects

Interestingly, if not unexpectedly, many of the development projects did not perform as expected, faced serious delays in execution, or only saw limited implementation, allowing us to question their potency in dampening Kitawala. For instance, the program to build up chiefly prestige was sidelined by the *Plan*'s urban construction projects, and by early 1958 it was clear that the colony would not even spend enough to build sturdy administrative centres in rural Kitawalist areas.[309]

At the same time, the scouting project was stalled by diverging priorities between officials and the Catholic missions. Carels noted with satisfaction that troops were performing as expected in Ponthierville, Bafwasende and Isangi, but lamented that the Catholic missionaries who received state funding in 1956 for mission scout troops did not understand that the funds were contingent on an anti-Kitawala agenda. As a result, the state funds were given to Territorial Administrators in subsequent years. Carels also deplored the cancellation of a special training camp in Stanleyville for scouts operating in Kitawalist areas after Catholic federation scout leaders were forbidden to attend. Despite officials' assurances that each scouts' creed would be respected, Catholic authorities did not want their followers to come into contact with Africans of other denominations.[310] The Catholic missions shared the state's opposition to Kitawala, but in this case the missions' concerns over their wards' religion took precedence over the anti-Kitawala struggle.

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[309] Like the *FBI*, the *Plan Decénnal* faced many obstacles in implementing its program and exceeded its budget by about 100 percent. The *Plan* failed to reach its goals for rural areas, prompting the planned launch of a second *Plan Decénnal* in 1959. Clearly, urban development took precedence over rural development, but the reasons for this discrepancy in expenditure are unclear. Vanthemsche, 44-53; "Dossier GG (17.715)," M. Kreutz, Commissaire de District, District de Stanleyville. "Objet: Intensification Action Politique en District de Stanleyville." February 12, 1957; F.M. Dethier, Commissaire de District, District de Stanleyville. "Objet: Construction Centres Administratifs." Stanleyville, February 12, 1958. AA, Brussels.

[310] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels. The number of scouts in Stanleyville District is unclear. In neighbouring Paulis Territory in Orientale's Haut-Uele District scout troops counted 800 in mid-1957. "Dossier RA/CB (139)," AIMO, Province Orientale. "Rapport Annuel 1956." March 22, 1957. AA, Brussels.

Even when projects were successfully completed, some officials felt that the new methods being used to fight Kitawala were either producing mixed results or creating new threats to colonial rule. Road construction through Kitawala areas brought conflicting reports. In 1959 the *Sûreté* reported that Kitawala virtually ceased to exist in the area between Stanleyville and Ponthierville following the construction of a road. Meanwhile, it was predicted that the road would facilitate the transmission of Kitawala directives from Lubutu, and another 1959 report explained that Kitawala was spreading along a road into Mambasa Territory.[311]

School construction in Kitawala areas faced both material and ideological deficits.[312] In 1956 Buisseret called for the construction of 452 primary schools in Kitawala areas in Orientale by the *FBI*, but by 1960 only 242 primary schools had been constructed in the entire colony.[313] *FBI* funded schools were also meant to raise African living standards and indoctrinate youth, but the schools ironically heightened the anxiety of officials like Vice-Governor General and *Plan Décennal* Commissioner Henri Cornelis. In 1956, Cornelis warned the provincial governors that *FBI* intervention would result in greater African primary school instruction in rural areas, causing serious problems for state surveillance. Indeed, European teaching inspectors could only irregularly visit the increased number of schools and their African instructors. Cornelis viewed the schools as a potential political danger, fearing that they would fall prey to subversive propagandists and politico-religious movements who would "compromise the education of the youth or...corrupt the sense of civic responsibility we are trying to inculcate in the

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[311] "Dossier AI (4753)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Bulletin d'Information no. 18 1e trimestre 1959"; "Bulletin d'Information no. 20 4e trimestre 1959," AA, Brussels. The report did not explain why the road had this effect, perhaps the additional state surveillance enabled by the road pushed Kitawalists to relocate their meetings to more discreet locations.

[312] In general, the *FBI* was plagued by budget shortfalls and ultimately constructed only a fraction of its originally planned projects. "Dossier AI (4737)," Moleli [*sic*], AA, Brussels. The *Plan Décennal* was also plagued by budget shortfalls; Vanthemsche.

[313] "Dossier AI (4737)," Buisseret, November 6, 1956. AA, Brussels; Georges J. Plumier, Ministère des affaires africaines; Secrétariat du plan décennal. *Le Plan Décennal pour le Développement Economique et Social du Congo Belge 1950*-1960. Investir c'est Prospérer (Bruxelles: IMIFI, 1960), 109. It is unclear from Plumier's book how many of the constructed schools were in Kitawala areas.

young."[314] Territorial administrators, especially those in regions affected by subversive movements like Kitawala, were to stay in permanent contact with the 'native' milieu, remain attentive to the development of education and, through covert surveillance, prevent or remove all deleterious actions.[315] Thus, not only was the colonial state unable to intervene with *FBI* projects to the degree that it wished, but the socio-economic development that was to converge with the anti-Kitawala agenda in theory, was in practice seen by some as standing in the way of colonial security.

Some Belgian academics, like the ethnographer Daniel Biebuyck, also criticised the new socio-economic programs. Biebuyck conceded that the socio-economic projects were necessary and would have an effect if systematically and carefully implemented. Biebuyck was convinced, however, that all these measures would only provide limited results because they addressed "external" problems and not the crisis in indigenous cultural institutions that he saw as the root of Kitawala in Kumu communities. According to Biebuyck, only a policy that worked inside Kumu society and institutions, and provided security, homogeneity, internal coherence, better leadership and ceremonial compensation for illegal customary ceremonies could thwart Kitawala.[316]

Officials sought to use development projects to both raise living standards and increase state penetration of Africans' lives in the hope of depoliticising Kitawala. As we have seen, these projects faced many serious obstacles in their realisation. The following chapter will examine what effect, if any, the new Kitawala policy had on Kitawala in Stanleyville District.

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[314] "Dossier GG (9322)," Henri Cornelis, Vice-Gouverneur Général, Correspondance with Gouverneurs Provinciaux de Léopoldville, Coquilhatville, Stanleyville, Bukavu, Elisabethville et Luluabourg, "Objet: Surveillance écoles primaires par autorités territoriales," June 16, 1956, AA, Brussels.

[315] Ibid.

[316] Biebuyck, 39-40.

Chapter 6.

The Effect

The colonial record does not clearly elucidate the overall patterns of change following the implementation of *FBI* and *Plan Décennal* programs. Ultimately, no effects can be solely attributed to the new policies. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Kitawala was never a centrally-led movement and consisted of several relatively autonomous groups. This multiplicity is not reflected in the archival sources consulted discussing the effect of the new policies.[317] As a result, it is difficult to determine how individual Kitawala groups responded to the new policies, and the Kitawalist response is treated here in the same general terms found in the colonial archive.

Sûreté reports indicate that the Kitawala Team was relatively successful in containing Kitawala from 1956 to 1958 in Stanleyville District, but that Kitawala enjoyed resumed expansion from 1959 to Congolese independence on June 30, 1960. Yet, the accuracy of reports declaring decreased Kitawalist activity can be questioned. The years 1956-1958 still saw vibrant Kitawala activity in many regions and were characterised by frequent arrests of followers and *Force Publique* deployment in Kitawala areas.[318]

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[317] The African Archive includes documented attempts to map-out the filiations between various Kitawala cells, but none of the documents consulted elucidated the long-term effect of the new policies on specific cells. "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[318] "Dossier AI (4733)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Bulletin d'Information no. 7 – du 1er janvier au 30 septembre." February 9, 1957; "Bulletin d'Information no. 12 – 4e trimestre 1957,"; "Dossier AI (4734)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Bulletin d'Information no 15 – 3e trimestre 1958,"; "Dossier AI (4753)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Bulletin d'Information no. 18 1er trimestre 1959."; "Bulletin d'Information no. 20 – 4e trimestre, 1959," AA, Brussels.

To what extent was Kitawala's regression in the colonial record real? It could be the result of a frightful, anti-colonial spectre disappearing simply as a result of a systematic investigation by the Kitawala Team. The colonial state had a relatively thin presence on the ground, and most of the information about Kitawala would have been skewed towards villages whose African authorities requested aid against Kitawalists. It is possible that officials perceived a Kitawala retreat only because they had overestimated both the movement's prevalence and general threat to their authority. Because of the shifting intensity of state surveillance, it is unclear whether reports of 'decreased' Kitawala activities before 1959 can be credited to developmental colonialism, targeted repression, or reasons internal to Kitawala.

Before January 13th 1959, when the Belgian government and King Baudouin announced the beginning of the Congo's move towards independence, there was no indication that independence would actually occur. It is likely that for this reason colonial administrators persisted in implementing the new Kitawala policies until the very end of Belgian rule. It is surprising that officials continued to seek to accommodate Kitawala, even once independence was imminent. One can only assume that officials were instructed to contain Kitawala the best they could while they remained at their posts.

It is instructive to familiarise oneself with the major political changes in the final years leading up to independence in order to understand the outcomes of the new Kitawala policy. The move towards independence happened very rapidly at the end of the 1950s. The January 13th, 1959 declarations followed riots in Leopoldville on January 4th, 1959 that were violently crushed by colonial security forces and a 1958 Belgian fact finding mission that concluded on the inevitability of Congolese political independence. The January 13th declarations were a monumental break in policy, but were also vague in that they did not specify the date of independence. Nevertheless, by the end of 1959 the projected year of independence was moved from "in fifteen years" to 1960.[319] The path towards independence was accelerated for too many reasons to be discussed here

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[319] Stengers, 274-275.

in detail, but included a series of urban riots, popular support for nationalist leaders' calls for immediate independence, a massive Abako campaign of civil disobedience, and the Belgian Social Christian Party minority government being dependent on the parliamentary opposition, precluding the option of a colonial war. Ultimately, formal talks, known as the Brussels Round Table, were held between the nationalist leaders and the Belgian government from January 20th to February 20th, 1960. The ninety-six Congolese delegates, representing thirteen different parties, formed a united front on the issue of independence and the date was fixed for June 30th, 1960.[320] Elections were held in May 1960 with no party gaining the majority of the votes. The MNC, however, received the most votes and Lumumba became prime minister.

Team Success?

Despite development project shortfalls, critiques, and concerns, a number of reports were quite optimistic regarding the effectiveness of the Kitawala Team. Carels' report attests that, at least until 1958, the Kitawala Team was seen as exceeding expectations. The Team was achieving its goals of gathering intelligence, producing anti-Kitawala propaganda, and (as predicted) being "forced to 'decapitate' several cells to make them change tendency and prevent the spread of the movement to non-contaminated areas."[321]

According to Carels, previously politicised Kitawala cells were "confining themselves to religious acts and disintegrating" due to the Team's arrest of their leaders, constant surveillance and intensive counter-propaganda campaigns.[322] Carels claimed that under the Team's watch, Kitawala preachers had been unable to spread the movement beyond its 1956 boundaries. The Team's knowledge of Kitawala was increasing substantially, with files on individual members and leaders ensuring

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[320] Lemarchand, 47-51. For more information on Congolese independence, see Lemarchand.
[321] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.
[322] Ibid.

immediate and targeted interventions in case of Kitawalist agitation.[323] The abeyance of Kitawala expansion was corroborated both by *Sûreté* reports and the writings of contemporary social scientists.[324] In 1956 social scientist Jean-Pierre Paulus stated that Kitawala's following was rapidly diminishing.[325] Meanwhile, the Team's counterpropaganda film screenings were deemed to be effective given their popularity, with between 400 and 1000 people attending each session, and even more in Stanleyville's CEC. Carels saw the screenings as influential because Kitawala leaders forbade their members to attend. Nevertheless, Philippart, the Kitawala Team leader, suspected that the religious attitude of Kitawalists was only a "superficial attitude," making continued vigilance essential.[326]

Team agents took strong judicial action against Kitawalists. In 1957 the Team sentenced 240 members to sixty days forced labour along with fines ranging from 200 to 2000 Belgian francs.[327] It also placed 'too virulent' and 'too politicised' members under house arrest or incarcerated them at the Kasaji *CARD*. The number of Kitawalists placed under house arrest banned or jailed dropped precipitously between 1956 and 1958 (from thirty to two) which could suggest that the Team was achieving its objective of eliminating Kitawala's most "subversive" elements.[328]

The Team agents were not the only officials who took judicial action against Kitawalists, leading to tensions among officials. For instance, the Territorial Administrator of Isangi came into conflict with the Team when he ignored the Team's policies and by being much more repressive.[329] In neighbouring Equateur, all District Commissioners and Territorial Administrators were even instructed in 1958 to remove from office all

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[323]   "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[324]   "Dossier AI (4733)," Administration de la *Sûreté*. "Bulletin d'Information 4e trimestre 1957, no. 12."; "Dossier AI (4734)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Bulletin d'Information no 15 – 3e trimestre 1958."; "Bulletin d'Information 4e trimestre 1958, no. 16." AA, Brussels.

[325]   Paulus, 4.

[326]   "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[327]   Ibid.

[328]   Ibid.

[329]   Police tribunals infrequently sentenced Kitawalists in Stanleyville District. Ibid.

African and European personnel who were too heavy-handed in their dealings with Kitawala. A nuanced approach was understood as policies akin to those implemented by the Team in Stanleyville District, including anti-Kitawala propaganda, targeted judicial action against those who "disturbed public order," and dialogue with Kitawala cells.[330] Apart from demonstrating the tensions and pluralism within the colonial administration, these examples show administrators' concerns of jeopardising a policy that (in light of its use of accommodation and co-optation) required consistent implementation. At the same time, Carels criticised administrators who left all judicial actions to the Team, as the Team's small size added consistency to the state's reaction to Kitawala, but made for unacceptably long delays between the Kitawalist 'crime' and state repression.[331]

The accuracy of the reports declaring decreased Kitawalist activity can be questioned, however, and one must once again ask oneself to what extent the Kitawala regression in the colonial record was simply the result of a systematic investigation of the movement.[332] Prior to the creation of the Kitawala Team, information on Kitawala was not centralised and reports claiming widespread Kitawalist activity could have been influenced by officials' paranoia and memories of the 1944 Masisi-Lubutu uprising, resulting in an overestimation of Kitawala's influence. In addition, 1950s studies of the movement (including Gérard and Biebuyck's), together with the Team's Kitawala intelligence would have produced a more accurate assessment of Kitawala's character and extent, decreasing the likelihood of a paranoid reaction amongst officials. Indeed, Joset's 1956 report, calling for more contact with rural Africans, seems to have contributed to an increase in rural agents. The colony deployed thirteen additional agents to the provinces in 1957 to implement the new Kitawala policy, including the

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[330] "Dossier GG (9322)," Jadoul, 1958, AA, Brussels. There is some indication that police may have dealt with Kitawala inmates quite violently. One suspicious report mentions a Kitawala member dying in police custody as a result of having eaten poisoned rice. "Dossier AI (4737)," R. Philippart, Administrateur Territorial Assistant Principal, District de Stanleyville. "Le Kitawala en Territoire de Basoko," July 25, 1956. AA, Brussels.

[331] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[332] A possible way of testing the veracity of these reports would be to conduct oral history research.

Kitawala Team's five additional agents in Stanleyville District.[333] Such an increase in personnel would have further facilitated monitoring Kitawalist activity in the colony in general. In the end, it is entirely possible that Kitawala did in fact become less expansionist and less politicised from 1956 to 1958 in Stanleyville District, as indicated in colonial reports. However, it is impossible to tell from the colonial record whether this would have occurred due to the shifting intensity of state surveillance, developmental colonialism, increased Kitawalist fears of surveillance and repression or reasons internal to Kitawala.

Continuing Kitawala – Continuing Repression

Despite development programs and the relative success claimed by the *Sûreté* and Carels for the years from 1956 to 1958, Kitawala continued to be active during this time period. In 1957 District Commissioner M. Kreutz warned a colleague in neighbouring Kivu that a banned Kitawalist in Kivu, Majoro Ligili, was receiving delegations from Orientale. Ligili was instructing Kitawalists to stop supplying Europeans, their personnel, and their farms and businesses with *posho*, chickens, eggs, bananas, *etc.* in order to starve them into leaving. Kitawalists were also to stop cultivating fields.[334] These instructions constituted a significant call for resistance against colonial exactions. Bananas were not only one of the staple foods of the region's officials and substantial mining industry personnel, but also the product of a very time intensive forced cultivation scheme imposed on the local Bakumu, who had to carry the bananas long distances for sale at extremely low profit.[335] Ligili also instructed Kitawalists to cease consulting sector tribunals to settle disputes, and to rely instead on the decisions

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[333] "Dossier AI (4737)," Vice-Gouverneur Général. "Requête de la Watch Tower Bible Tract and Society." October 29, 1956. AA, Brussels.

[334] "Dossier GG (22.231)," M. Kreutz, Commissaire de District, District de Stanleyville. "Objet: Kitawala." May 10, 1957. AA, Brussels.

[335] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 108-109.

of a Kitawalist tribunal.[336] If put into action, these instructions would have passively undermined and complicated colonial rule, as they sought to extract followers from established colonial political and economic relationships. It is also clear from this example that interned Kitawala leaders continued to issue directives regardless of officials' implementation of the new policy.

Kitawalists continued to openly defy colonial authorities under the new policy. In late 1957 in Ponthierville territory the Batiajinja refused to propose a new headman for their village. The previous headman had been stripped of his office for being the son of a banned individual. As a result, the local Territorial Administrator, A. Dereine, called on the men of the village to assemble, but received the reply that "if he wanted them to present themselves before him, he merely had to come get them with soldiers."[337] Dereine followed their advice. A Kitawala Team agent arrived in the village to sentence these men for Kitawalist activities. The detained village men chanted "go back where you came from, we no longer need Europeans here" and a policeman was attacked for ordering them to be silent. Dereine concluded that most of the villages in the area were completely contaminated by Kitawala's xenophobic ideology and called for the immediate military occupation of the region.[338]

When the development projects and the Kitawala Team proved insufficient to stop what was seen as Kitawalist insubordination, the *Force Publique* was brought in to restore colonial order and to re-assert the authority of 'customary' rulers. In such cases the Team would advise the District Commissioner, who in turn would issue directives to the military authorities. Once deployed, the *Force Publique* platoon was accompanied by

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[336] "Dossier GG (22.231)," Kreutz. May, 1957. AA, Brussels. It is interesting to note that Zambian Jehovah's Witnesses in the early 1960s also avoided parish heads and chiefs' courts in disputes only involving their brethren. Long, 205.

[337] "Dossier GG (22.231)," A. Dereine, Administrateur de Territoire, Ponthierville. "Objet: Situation politique. Groupement Limanga." February 22, 1958. AA, Brussels.

[338] Ibid.

a Team agent.[339] In Orientale, the army was deployed five times to Kitawalist areas between 1956 and 1958 when Kitawalists seemed to be behind collective insubordination vis-à-vis colonial agents.[340]

Military deployments took place both in areas deemed at risk of adopting Kitawala and in Kitawalist areas where the movement was to be tolerated under the new policies. Deployments were frequently accompanied by recommendations to improve road networks in the given area to facilitate *Force Publique* access. For instance, in 1958 plans were underway to construct a road in the Yahisuli region to increase the future effectiveness of military operations, as well as that of the economic programs and *FBI* social services already present in the region.[341] Also, after the military occupation of Batiajinja, the region's District Commissioner F.M. Dethier began pushing for the opening of the nearby Sayo-Kalimendo road in the hope that it would bring greater economic opportunities to the region and improve the "native mentality."[342] This kind of reasoning shows once again the close connection between infrastructure development and the state's search for accommodation and co-optation.

Apart from conducting manoeuvres to display the power of the colonial government, the *Force Publique* enforced the completion of public works. It is unclear whether these works were designed to be collective punishment or whether they were reason enough for military deployment. Public works included hygiene works, village repairs, land clearing and latrine digging. Philippart claimed in 1957 that the military-enforced public works in the Walengola-Lilu region initially provoked uneasiness, but that

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[339] Carels did not see the need for military occupation as a sign of the new policy's failure, as it was only the first year of the Team's operations. "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[340] The *Force Publique* conducted manoeuvres in Ponthierville, Lubutu and Opienge territories in September 1956, and in early 1958 twice more in Ponthierville territory and the Yahisuli region of Isangi territory. "Dossier AI (4733)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Bulletin d'Information no. 7 – du 1er janvier au 30 septembre 1956." February 9, 1957; "Bulletin d'information 1er trimestre 1958, no 13." AA, Brussels.

[341] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[342] "Dossier GG (22.231)," F.M. Dethier, Commissaire de District, District de Stanleyville. "Objet: Occupation." March 6, 1958. AA, Brussels.

it was replaced by a climate of confidence between Africans and Europeans when "the natives realised that it was for their own welfare."[343]

The Team agents coordinating these interventions saw them as effective tools against Kitawala, and Team agent Bastin reported that these kinds of military actions always produced schisms between Kitawalists and non-followers. Bastin noted that these schisms did not radicalise Kitawalists, and that in regions of weak Kitawala influence they recanted their beliefs.[344] The non-followers, claiming that they were no longer afraid of the Kitawalists, openly denounced them and told them to leave. Such reactions made Kitawala lose face and dulled its propaganda. According to Philippart, it was at this point that the Team's propaganda worked best.[345]

Reading Philippart's report critically, it seems likely that Africans had a number of motives when responding to public works exactions. Many undoubtedly chose to avoid confrontation with the army by resigning themselves to forced labour. Some Africans probably sought favour with the authorities by playing to ideas of 'dangerous' Kitawala and repudiating the movement. At the same time, others may have had actual grievances with the movement as a result of ideological differences. Those who sought to benefit most from the military interventions were probably the African chiefs or headmen who had initially reported the Kitawala insubordination in their communities. Agents Bastin and Vermeulen reported that village headmen expressed their gratitude during the military exercises because they saw them as an opportunity to re-assert their authority. After the exercises, villagers and headmen promptly reported all Kitawala activity. One capita, Batiamoya, even provided all the names of local Kitawalists, something that, allegedly, no one had previously dared for fear of reprisals.[346]

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[343] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[344] Ibid.

[345] Ibid.

[346] Ibid.

The Final Years to Independence

Despite the Team's success from 1956 to 1958, Kitawala activities did continue until Congolese independence in June 1960. The colonial record does not provide extensive information on Kitawalists' actions in 1959, but does seem to suggest that Kitawala was regaining a stronger following in 1959 in spite of the new policy. White Watchtower missionaries' appeals for immigration continued to be rejected regardless of increasing pressure in both Belgium and the Congo to honour Kitawalists' right to religious freedom within the confines of law and order.[347]

The Team had been able to halt Kitawala expansion from 1956 to 1958, but in 1959 Kitawala expansion resumed in Stanleyville District. It is possible that the January 13th 1959 declarations, announcing eventual independence, renewed Africans' interest in Kitawala. The movement was either spread by pastors or by unemployed members, returning to their communities of origin from Stanleyville.[348] As a result, Kitawala also spread east into Mambasa Territory in neighbouring Ituri District.[349]

The popularity of Kitawala in the final years of Belgian rule is unclear, as there are multiple reports from this period of Kitawalists either reaffirming or recanting their beliefs. Indeed, there was great fluidity in Kitawalists' responses to the new policy. Given Kitawala's diversity and the limited information regarding African perspectives in the colonial record, it is not possible to make conclusive statements about Africans' perceptions of Kitawala and the colonial state. For instance, in January 1959 in Bafwasende territory, four people publicly recanted their adherence to the movement,

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[347] "Dossier GG (9322)," Jadoul. 1958, AA, Brussels. One memorandum from the central colonial government noted that it was becoming less dangerous than before to tolerate Kitawala, as the underlying xenophobic sentiments of African religious movements were now being more easily expressed by the emerging nationalist parties. "Dossier AI (4737)," J.M. Paulus, Directeur, Ministère du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi. "Objet: Requête du Watch Tower." October 5, 1959. AA, Brussels.

[348] "Dossier AI (4753)," Administration de la *Sûreté*. "Bulletin d'Information 2e trimestre 1959, no. 18." AA, Brussels.

[349] "Dossier AI (4734)," Administration de la *Sûreté*. "Bulletin d'Information no. 17 1e trimestre 1959." AA, Brussels.

but another seven, including a former *Force Publique* soldier, openly affirmed their Kitawalist faith.[350] These public declarations do not inform us of the strength of Kitawala in late 1950s Bafwasende territory, but they do permit some preliminary conclusions. The declarations could suggest that it was becoming socially advantageous to publicly reject the movement and curry favour with officials in light of their increased presence. At the same time, the possibility that devout Kitawalists reaffirmed their beliefs publicly as an act of religious defiance should not be discounted. Indeed, when Kitawalists in Mambasa Territory reaffirmed their faith in late 1959 after having recanted in March of the same year, they were perhaps heartened by the knowledge that independence was only a matter of time.[351]

In January 1959 R.J.C. Somers, Territorial Administrator of Bafwasende, reported two Kitawala rumours that illustrated the fluidity of Kitawalists responses to the colonial state. Somers reported unconfirmed rumours that the pastors had instructed members to withdraw their children from schools in order to shield them from European and Christian influence.[352] Indeed, a February 1959 *Sûreté* report noted widespread absenteeism at schools in the Bombo constituency in Mambasa Territory, where in previous months Kitawala had gained nearly five hundred new converts. The rumour went that Kitawalist children were to be taught by Kitawalist monitors. Some claimed that instruction at these schools would be pseudo-religious, while others affirmed that instruction would be accompanied by general lessons.[353]

[350] "Dossier GG (14.432)," R.J.C. Somers, Administrateur de Territoire, Territoire de Bafwasende. "Note à Mr. Darrimont – c/o District Stanleyville." January 19, 1959; January 22, 1959; January 19, 1959 [a]; R.J.C. Somers, Administrateur de Territoire, Territoire de Bafwasende. "Objet: Kitawala." January 19, 1959, AA, Brussels.

[351] "Dossier AI (4753)," Administration de la Sûreté. "Bulletin d'Information no. 20 – 4e trimestre 1959." AA, Brussels.

[352] "Dossier GG (14.432)," R.J.C. Somers, Administrateur de Territoire, Territoire de Bafwasende. "Rapport sur l'état d'esprit des populations et sur le Kitawala en secteurs Bakumu et Barumbi (sauf le clan Mambodi)." January 29, 1959, AA Brussels.

[353] "Dossier AI (4734)," Administration de la *Sûreté*. "Bulletin d'Information no. 17 1e trimestre 1959." AA, Brussels.

Kitawalists absenteeism at government-run schools shows that some officials' fears, that schools would become breeding grounds for Kitawala propaganda and insubordination, were unfounded. Kitawalists undoubtedly recognised the danger of having their children educated and acculturated by the state. Kitawalists may not have known that their regions were being targeted for 'development' meant to undermine their ideology, but they did recognise a threat to Kitawala when they saw one.[354]

Meanwhile, Somers was clearly searching to compromise with the Kitawalists on the school question. Somers envisioned negotiating a school program acceptable to both the state and Kitawala, one that would prevent withdrawals from schools and 'inevitably produce fruit at the tree of western civilisation.'[355] Clearly, Somers' sought an accommodation that was initially acceptable to both sides, but one that would ultimately favour the colonisers' 'civilising mission.'[356]

Somers also reported a rumour that the Team supported Kitawala. Kitawala meetings were spreading this rumour because members had relationships with Team agents but were not receiving any form of punishment for their religious beliefs.[357] As mentioned above, Team agents met openly with known Kitawalists to question them on their recent activities.[358] This phenomenon led Kitawalists to conclude that they had the patronage of the "big bwanas" from Stanleyville and no longer had to heed territorial authorities. Kitawalists seem to have believed this despite the Team actively sentencing militant members.[359] A certain Maurice, a known Kitawalist, was claiming that his *dawa* 'medicine' was so strong that it not only protected him from reprisals, but that he was also the friend of the "big whites" from Stanleyville. "Translating his thoughts through

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[354] It is important to note that Kitawalists were recalcitrant towards state schools, but not opposed to the concept of formally educating their youth as the rumour indicated a desire for Kitawala-run schools.

[355] "Dossier GG (14.432)," Somers, AA Brussels.

[356] Somers also suggested sowing disunity among local Kitawalists by enticing moderate members with the fake legalisation of the movement. Ibid.

[357] Ibid.

[358] "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels.

[359] "Dossier GG (14.432)," Somers, AA Brussels.

ancestral parables, Maurice would blow the dew from a banana leaf onto a fire, declaring that the actions of the Europeans barely had greater effect than the pathetic droplets against the fire."[360] Somers declared that the rumour was causing his Cartesian spirit to fail, especially when he learned that the main source of the rumour were two inmates at Opienge prison, Angalikiana and Bokebi Camille, one of whom was actually imprisoned for Kitawalist activities![361]

Depending on their audience, there are several (not necessarily mutually exclusive) ways in which these "big bwana patron" rumours could have worked for Kitawalists. That the Kitawalists openly shared information pertaining to their sect with Team agents may indicate that many Kitawalists wanted to avoid confrontation, and felt that they had nothing to hide in following their religious convictions. Claims of "big bwana" patronage could have been put to work to find new converts, reassuring them that they would not be persecuted by state agents. Such claims would have been especially convincing in Bafwasende territory, as it was one of the Kitawalist regions where the Team sought to tolerate the movement. Given Kitawalists' knowledge that the Team was sentencing members, one could also conclude that Kitawalists were perhaps hoping for accommodation with the colonial state, or at least for some leverage over local authorities. The Team's open meetings with members probably weakened the authority of local agents trying to shore up their power, which was already being undermined by Kitawalists. Kitawalists preached that one day Africa would belong to the Africans, but prior to January 13th 1959 there was no indication as to when independence would occur and some members might have been seeking to co-exist with the state in the meantime. This co-existence could have been achieved either by currying favour with high ranking officials or at least further curbing the authority of local colonial agents. After all, Kitawalists had the most regular contact with local agents, whether low-ranking Europeans or 'customary' African chiefs.

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[360] "Dossier GG (14.432)," Somers, AA Brussels.
[361] Ibid.

Alternately, if news of the January 13th declarations had travelled fast, Kitawalists might have assumed that the officials now condoned Kitawalist hopes for an end to European rule. The case of Maurice is particularly interesting because his statements both acknowledged and dismissed the power of the colonisers. Maurice's claim to personal power rested on the potency of his traditional medicine and his alleged access to powerful European networks. At the same time, Maurice emphasised the transitory nature and weakness of European influence and power in Africa, possibly to assert the durability of Kitawala. Perhaps Maurice was hedging his bets in this period of political transition, neither dismissing nor praising the power of European colonialism.

Kitawala experienced a surge of new members in February 1960, following the post-Round Table announcement that the Congo would gain its independence on June 30th, 1960.[362] Kitawalists had high hopes for independence, preaching that in the independent Congo justice, peace and wealth would prevail. Also, the oppression wrought by the whites would end and blacks would become white, not necessarily their skin, but they would be powerful, rich and the masters of their own destiny.[363]

While some Kitawalists sought a variety of ways of engaging with the colonial state as members of a millenarian religious movement, other members saw a positive correlation between secular nationalist aspirations and Kitawala beliefs.[364] The MNC's ideology appealed to some Kitawalists because it presented independence as an imminent and radical break with Africans' impoverished colonial conditions, as well as a reconquest of the long subjugated Congolese personality.[365] In 1959 Kitawala pastors in

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[362] Greschat, 64.

[363] Anyenyola Welo, 21.

[364] This rapprochement with nationalist politics stands in stark contrast with the political choices of African Watchtower in Northern Rhodesia, who did not take part in strikes aimed against the colonial economy. Also, there were tensions just before Zambian independence, when Watchtower members refused to buy United National Independence Party membership cards or to vote in local elections. Long, 192.

[365] Mwene-Batende, "Le Kitawala dans l'évolution socio-politique récente." *Cahiers des Religions Africaines* 10, no. 19 (1976): 93. The MNC's leader, Patrice Lumumba, also promoted the creation of secular schools in 1954 to end the missionary monopoly on education, which may also have appealed to some Kitawalists. Fabian, 73.

Opala and Ponthierville territories became members of the MNC and expressed interest in political involvement following frequent visits to the region by Joseph Kasongo, president of the MNC at Stanleyville.[366] After the MNC's massive 1959 victory in local Stanleyville elections, a Kitawala cell under the spiritual leadership of Belukela Ismaël came out into the open and began promoting the MNC's ideology. Belukela's group identified with the Congo's independent future and saw itself replacing the dominant Christian denominations of the colonial era as the new national religion, founded by and accessible to Africans. At the same time, the group rejected African ancestral beliefs, which they considered an obstacle for the desired changes after independence.[367]

While some Kitawalists may have left the movement in the late 1950s to become involved in secular nationalist political organisations, there is no indication in the colonial record that Kitawalists largely became secular nationalists on the eve on independence. Kitawala was not an intermediate stage between the initial resistance to colonial rule and the development of secular nationalist parties. Indeed, for many Kitawalists the movement seems to have remained as much about baptism, prayer and healing, as it was about resisting unequal power relations. This is illustrated by *figure 2* showing a Kitawala procession photographed while passing through the Yakusu Mission, approximately twenty kilometres west of Stanleyville, only a few weeks before independence.

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[366] "Dossier AI (4753)," Administration de la *Sûreté*. "Bulletin d'Information no. 19 – 3e trimestre 1959." AA, Brussels.

[367] The MNC won 55 out of 61 seats. Mwene-Batende, "Kitawala dans l'évolution," 93-94.

Figure 2   Kitawala procession through the Yakusu Mission, 1960
(Reproduced by permission from Dr. Jim Taylor.)

The photographer, Dr. Jim Taylor, was a British Missionary Society doctor working at the Yakusu hospital. After witnessing the procession, Taylor wrote in a letter that "...the Kitawala sect had a procession through the mission [Yakusu] proclaiming their religious independence."[368] Interviewed in 2010 by Linda Devereux, Taylor added that "the procession…was most obviously to assert national independence from a mission-based church in the context of liberation from Belgian rule. Both adults and children carried

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[368] Linda Devereaux, e-mail message to author, 19 December 2010.

banners and shouted - though not expressing hatred."[369] The fact that the Kitawala procession made a religious statement of independence on the eve of the Congo's political independence is significant. The procession shows that while being fully cognisant of the contemporary political context, some Kitawala groups remained religious movements and did not become subsumed into secular nationalist politics, as some historians have suggested. At the same time, a certain political element seems evident in the photograph, including uniform clothing, a flag and a sign. This material culture, usually associated with political causes, suggests once again that Kitawalists were not only concerned with the transcendental and also sought to use aesthetics as "a resource for a critique of dominant politics."[370] Kitawala's millenarianism was not "an under-developed mode in which the downtrodden express their discontent," but, as Fields has shown, a reaction to a colonial state whose very structure relied on the propagation of religious belief in order to legitimise its rule.[371]

[369] Taylor added in 2010, however, that he was no longer completely certain whether the procession was Kitawalist or Kimbanguist. Belgian authorities legalised Kimbanguism on December 24th, 1959. Linda Devereaux, e-mail message to author, 15 September 2010. Kimbanguism was legalised "presumably as a political concession in [the Bas-Congo] where passive resistance had reached alarming proportions." Bustin, 114. Taylor's retrospective uncertainty is understandable since in Orientale the two movements had become quite synthesized. According to Carels, some Kitawalists in Orientale province worshipped Kimbangu as the liberating messiah of the black race, or as a prophet that the whites had murdered to keep blacks from the Truth. "Dossier GG (17.715)," Carels, AA, Brussels. Some Kitawalists regarded Kimbangu as the apostle of Jesus and prophet of their movement. Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 163, 180. Thus, one cannot be certain as to the identity of the procession in the photograph. Either way, the photograph shows Congolese religious dissidents making a religious statement, as a religious group, in the context of imminent political independence.

[370] It is interesting to note that the Kitawalists used material culture (uniform clothing, flags and signs) that overlapped with that used by the colonial state. Birgit Meyer, "Aesthetics of Persuasion: Global Christianity and Pentecostalism's Sensational Forms," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109, no. 4 (2010): 755-756.

[371] Fields, 15, 21-22.

Epilogue: Independence

Kitawala continued to exist following independence, but at the margins of Congolese society, further demonstrating that the religious movement's "anti-colonialism" was a question of the movement's context and not its content. Kitawala doctrine evolved for some Kitawalists from a strict and generalised stance against what they perceived as the establishment to specific reactions to perceived injustices. Kitawala continued to attract those who were discontent with the establishment, unwilling to take refuge in traditional institutions, but also alienated from the contemporary political, social and economic dispensation, risking the mistrust and antipathy of those in power.[372]

Some Kitawalists backed Lumumba because of his uncompromising anti-imperialist nationalism, and despite of his secular political office outside Kitawala's theocratic ideals. Indeed, from 1960 to early 1961 Belukela's cell placed its hopes on Lumumba, whom it saw as "their liberator and the ideal man to realise their fundamental objectives."[373] At first, this seems to represent a tension between orthodox Kitawalist notions of unholy states and the practices and hopes of individual Kitawalist cells or members. However, Lumumba's significance in Congolese history cannot be neatly separated from religion, as some influential Congolese did ascribe a religious significance to him. For instance, the famous singer Tabu Ley Rochereau evoked accounting for one's deeds to Lumumba with his lyrics "if you were to meet Lumumba now, what would you say?" and the painter Tshibumba Kanda Matulu represented the story of Lumumba "as the suffering of Christ" because "Lumumba was like the Lord Jesus of Zaire."[374]

When independence did not result in the anticipated liberation or Golden Age, some Kitawala groups found themselves disillusioned, and some members left the

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[372] Bustin, 114; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 269.
[373] Mwene-Batende, "Kitawala dans l'évolution," 94.
[374] Fabian, 258, 266-267.

movement.[375] Lumumba's assassination in early 1961 threw many Kitawalists into disarray, causing them to move their movement to the margins of Congolese society.[376] In the case of Belukela's group, it became increasingly isolationist starting in 1962, building an isolated community that rejected modern consumer goods, deified Lumumba and awaited the apocalypse with its reconstruction of social order; they also rejected what they saw as the westernised values and practices of Congolese elites.[377]

Decolonisation was marked by a period of political strife, known as the Congo Crisis (1960-1966), until Joseph Mobutu seized power. If anything, independence renewed some Kitawalist's hopes for an imminent utopia because, while independence did remove foreign rule, it failed to resolve many social, economic and political inequalities.[378] The Congo remained economically and geo-politically dependent on foreign powers like the United States and Belgium.[379] As a result, Kitawalists viewed most black political elites as fulfilling the same function of political domination and economic exploitation as former colonial officials.[380] Nevertheless, Kitawala's general ideology was not changed by independence, with baptism continuing to mark the boundary between the corrupt world and the Kitawala community and the pursuit of a new world order remaining touchstones of the movement.[381] Kitawala continued to fulfil similar functions in members' lives, protecting them from witchcraft and the hazards of nature with prayer, holy water, and Kitawalist medicines, while also allowing them to

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[375] Mwene-Batende, "Kitawala dans l'évolution," 82; Anyenyola Welo, 22.

[376] For a detailed account of the circumstances surrounding Lumumba's assassination see Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*, trans. Ann Wright and Renée Fenby (Verso: London, 2001).

[377] Mwene-Batende, "Kitawala dans l'évolution," 94-95; Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 267-268. The vast majority of Watch Tower members in Northern Rhodesia also set themselves apart by organising small communities outside established villages in the early 1960s. Long, 37-38.

[378] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 263.

[379] In the context of the Cold War, Mobutu received economic and political support from Western capitalist powers. Britain, South Africa, Italy, Japan, France and the Federal Republic of Germany also established strong economic interests in all sectors of the Congolese economy. Nzongola-Ntalaja, 94, 142-143, 146-148.

[380] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 265-267.

[381] Ibid., 262.

continue pursuing the construction of a more egalitarian society. Kitawala also cultivated a sense of collectivism, with members providing mutual aid within post-colonial society rife with social inequality.[382]

As under colonial rule, authorities continued to be relatively hostile towards Kitawala in post-independence Congo, especially as some Kitawala groups continued to perform political acts. Almost immediately after independence, Katanga declared independence with Belgian support under Moïse Tshombe, head of the local CONAKAT party. Fearing opposition to the secession, the Katangan regime outlawed all associations of a political nature and the "activities of the Watch Tower association 'under any appellation'" were banned.[383] It also suspected the leaders of the BALUBAKAT (BBK) opposition of using Kitawala. By mid-1961 it became clear, however, that although some Kitawalists sought to aid the BBK in opposing a common enemy, they wanted to do so on their own terms. For instance, Kitawalists arrested a pro-Tshombe chief, but the BBK rejected this contribution because Kitawalists refused to accept both the BBK initiation and to man roadblocks. Despite the official ban, Watchtower texts continued to circulate through the mail or along rail lines, much as they had done under colonial rule.[384]

The central government was initially tolerant towards Kitawala immediately after independence, but gradually hardened its policies towards the movement. Some Kitawalists critiqued the government's abandonment of its Lumumbist elements, incurring the government's displeasure.[385] For example, Belukela's group refused to use the national currency, to pay taxes or to become members of and carry the insignias of the *Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution*, the Congo's only legal political party from

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[382] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 270-271.

[383] Bustin, 124.

[384] Ibid., 126.

[385] E.g. the 1964 Mulelist uprising. Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 261; Greschat, 65. According to de Mahieu, while some Kitawalists did support the uprising, believing that it would make Kitawala the national religion, they did not form the bulk of Mulele's forces. De Mahieu, 63.

1967 to 1990. In Katanga, Kitawala distanced themselves from the new regime by not paying taxes, refusing to collaborate with census takers, and failing to register to vote in legislative and presidential elections in 1965 and in 1970.[386] Tshombe's accession to the premiership in 1964, after the end of the Katanga secession in 1963, accelerated this trend and resulted in the declaration that all "pre-1960 ordinances against Kitawala and the Watch Tower were still in force."[387] Officials on the ground made attempts to draw a line between Kitawala and Jehovah's Witnesses. These attempts led to widespread confusion and authorities simply tried to maintain a balance between tolerance and repression, only repressing activities that were in against law and order, much as the Belgian authorities had done in the late 1950s.[388] After Mobutu seized power in 1965, contradictory ordinances were issued in 1966 at the national and Katangan provincial levels, respectively legalising and banning Jehovah's Witnesses.[389] As a result of the national legalisation of the Jehovah's Witnesses, some Kitawalists joined the orthodox Watchtower out of disdain for the rural Kitawala and in order to avoid persecution.[390] Clearly, some Kitawalists continued to seek accommodation with the state in post-colonial Congo.

During the early 1970s Mobutu's government "not only asserted unqualified primacy of state over church but also made it clear that it would not tolerate any sort of mobilisational activities by religious groups that might infringe upon the single party's monopoly on social organisation."[391] On December 31st, 1971 a presidential degree declared Kitawala illegal.[392] Protestant denominations were pushed into a single confederation, the *Eglise du Christ au Zaïre* (ECZ), and a 1972 act created costly and complicated procedures for religious groups seeking legal-status. As a result,

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[386] Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements Messianiques*, 267-268; Bustin, 130.
[387] Bustin, 127-129.
[388] Ibid., 129-131.
[389] Ibid., 132.
[390] Anyenyola Welo, 22.
[391] Bustin, 133.
[392] Anyenyola Welo, 21.

independent religious movements like Kitawala found it impossible to be accepted by established Protestant denominations in the ECZ and were unable to meet the independent legalisation criteria of the government. Thus, Kitawala remained beyond the pale of legal existence for both political and denominational reasons.[393]

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[393] Bustin, 134. Interestingly, although Watchtower and related movements had not been outlawed by the British, they were banned or restricted in 1967 in Malawi and Zambia, and in 1973 in Kenya. Ibid., 135.

Chapter 7.

Conclusion

The *FBI* and the *Plan Décennal*, manifestations of developmental colonialism, were used as a tool to co-opt Kitawala in Orientale in 1950s Belgian Congo. The creation of new categories of 'less-dangerous' Kitawalists, in light of rising nationalist threats to colonial rule and officials' search for accommodation, enabled the implementation of development projects which sought to appeal to this segment of Kitawala. The *FBI* hereby serves as an example of a colonial parastatal development agency actively employed in accommodating and co-opting religious and political dissidents in the defence of colonialism. For the Kitawalists, this meant that they were watched, categorised and introduced to development initiatives with the agenda to govern, all the while their communities were slowly furnished with new resources and relationships.

At the same time the Kitawala Team's judicial authority, the *Force Publique* interventions, as well as officials' commitment to securing and developing detention facilities show that repression was to remain part of Kitawala policy. The continued use of penal labour camps and prisons to mitigate the alleged Kitawalist threat to Belgian colonial rule confirms the findings of historian Florence Bernault, namely that European colonial states in Africa did not turn away from penal labour, even after the liberalisation of labour laws in the 1930s and 1940s. Furthermore, "prisons endured as key sites for preserving economic and racial hierarchies, remaining remarkably immune to reforms

implemented in the late colonial period."[394] Not only did the use of penal labour continue in the late colonial period, but the Kitawala Team's coordination of development projects, military deployment and enforced labour demonstrates how coercion, accommodation and ideas of African welfare were tightly interwoven in the Belgian Congo.

Using available sources from the colonial record, I have attempted to show the effectiveness of the Kitawala Team and the development projects at depoliticising and/or repressing Kitawala. Kitawala never became the mass, nationalist movement colonial officials feared, but it remains unclear whether the new Kitawala policy played a decisive role in affecting this outcome. The responses of Kitawalists and other Congolese to developmental colonialist initiatives deserve closer questioning. A much more complete assessment of the impact of these new policies could be made by taking into account African perspectives and experiences, unfettered access to the colonial archive, as well as a thorough consultation of private memoirs and Missionary archives.

Belgium's use of development as a political tool in the Belgian Congo also raises the question as to how development was used for political purposes by other colonial powers. Indeed, one can draw some parallels with the Mau Mau "Pipeline" in Kenya, a detention and rehabilitation system which included confession, paid physical labour, craft training, recreation, and civic and moral re-education.[395] Like the new Kitawala policy, the "Pipeline" also included attempts to differentiate between hard-core and moderate elements and to treat them with corresponding degrees of severity.[396] More generally, agricultural development in post-war colonial Kenya was also seen as the path towards an orderly and productive society free of cultural and racial tensions.[397]

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[394] Florence Bernault, "The Shadow of Rule: Colonial Power and Modern Punishment in Africa," in *Cultures of Confinement: A History of the Prison in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, ed. Frank Dikötter and Ian Brown (London: Hurst and Company, 2007), 55, 68-70.

[395] Caroline Elkins, "The Struggle for Mau Mau Rehabilitation in Late Colonial Kenya," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no. 1 (2000): 38-39.

[396] Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, 193-195.

[397] Frederick Cooper, "Mau Mau and the Discourses of Decolonization," *The Journal of African History* 29, no. 2 (1988): 316-317.

Unfortunately, an examination of how Belgian ideologies of 'development' contribute to critical theories of contemporary 'development' in Africa lies beyond the scope of this study. It will have to suffice here to reiterate that Belgian colonial development projects were meant to provide various government services to the African population, but that, as anthropologist James Ferguson remarked when analysing a development project in 1970s and 1980s Lesotho, these services also served to expand state power.[398]

This thesis confirms many of the conclusions drawn by the literature on 20th century colonialism. European colonisers were ambivalent towards Western-educated Africans because they challenged the "politics of difference" of the colonial system.[399] Indeed, Belgian colonialism had the alleged goal of 'civilising' Africans, but Belgian administrators were particularly anxious about an *évolué*-led, nationalist Kitawala. However, my study also challenges some of the conclusions drawn by the scholarship on late Belgian colonialism. I have shown that Belgian administrators could not have been surprised by the militancy of Congolese nationalism in 1958, as Stengers and Nugent have suggested, because administrators perceived the 1955-1956 Stanleyville-Ponthierville plots as 'Kitawala' nationalist attempts to overthrow Belgian rule.[400] The substantial resources expended on socio-economic reforms aimed at accommodating and co-opting Kitawala are a testament to how seriously Belgian officials took what they perceived as the 'Kitawala' nationalist threat.

I have demonstrated that Belgian colonial administrators showed great interest in and sought to learn from British policies towards Watchtower in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland; and towards Mau Mau in Kenya. I hope that my findings regarding the circulation and role of trans-colonial ideas in shaping Belgian colonial policy will open new avenues of inquiry for colonial history. I believe that this topic deserves more investigation. Much has been written about African colonies' relationship to their

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[398] Ferguson, *The Anti-politics Machine*, 252-253, 255, 265.
[399] Cross, 213; Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*; Stoler, 199, 209.
[400] Stengers, 268; Nugent, 53.

respective metropoles. While early colonial histories treated metropole and colony as separate entities, temporarily drawn together, more recent scholarship has increasingly viewed colonising states and colonies as part of a single analytical framework.[401] This new analytical framework has forced scholars to rethink African and European colonial histories in important ways, but it still places priority on the African-European relations to the detriment of trans-colonial connections. From an administrative standpoint European imperialism did divide Africa, but Africans did continue to trade, travel, organise and live across these boundaries. How and why did European colonial agents seek to police these exchanges? Colonial administrators communicated with their metropolitan superiors on questions of policy, but to what extent did administrators also look to neighboring colonisers in Africa when developing colonial policies? I hope that in a small way I have made a contribution to answering these important questions.

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[401] Matthew G. Stanard, *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 18.

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