

Marketing Cold War Tourism in the Belgian Congo: A Study in colonial propaganda 1945 - 1960

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am owner of the copyright thereof and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

This study focuses on the nascent colonial tourist sector of the Belgian Congo from 1945 until independence in 1960. Empire in Africa was the last remaining vestige of might for the depleted European imperial powers following the Second World War. That might, however, was largely illusory, especially for Belgium, which had been both defeated and occupied by Germany. Post-war Belgium placed much value on its colonial role in the Belgian Congo, promoting and marketing its imperial mission to domestic and international audiences alike. Such efforts allowed Belgium to justify a system that was under fire from the new superpowers of the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union. This thesis makes the case that the Belgian authorities recognised the opportunity to harness the ‘new’ economic activity of tourism to help deliver pro-colonial propaganda, particularly to the USA which had a growing affluent class and where successive administrations were keen to encourage overseas travel. In building a tourism sector post the Second World War, efforts in diversifying the economy were secondary to the objective of using the marketing of tourism to actively position and promote Belgium’s long-term involvement in the Congo.

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List of Abbreviations

AIT	Alliance International de Tourisme
CAB	Cabinet Office
CDWA	Colonial Development & Welfare Act
CO	Colonial Office
COI	Central Office of Information
EAPA	East Africa Publicity Association
EATTA	East Africa Tourist Travel Association
FPSFA	Federal Public Service, Foreign Affairs (since 2000)
FIDES	Fonds d'Investissement et de Développement Economique et Social
FO	Foreign Office
ICAT	International Congress of African Touring
IUOTO	International Union of Official Travel Organisations
MFAB	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium (until 2000)
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	UN World Tourism Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WWII	World War II

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The motivation to write this thesis stems from the discovery of a 1956 guidebook to the Belgian Congo. Happenstance led me to acquiring a battered copy of the second edition of the *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi*.¹ Inscribed on the inside front cover was the name of, I assume, its previous owner – Ms Connie Walker of Seattle, Washington.

As I began to turn its pages, the book enthralled me. It transported me on a vicarious adventure through central Africa in the 1950s; a journey that continues every time I open it. Its vivid depiction of a colonial society is exacting in every detail – from the numbers of natives in education to the comprehensive kilometre-by-kilometre account of driving along the Belgian Congo's road network. Over 800 pages of detailed narrative and imagery amounted to a vast and comprehensive undertaking to map the Belgian Congo's tourist experiences to English language audiences.

As someone who has worked in political communications and public relations, the guidebook triggered a curiosity, which took me beyond the vivid imagery of colonial Africa. The representation of colonialism intrigued me, layered as it was in the language of past achievements and on-going progress for the good of Africa.

The guide conveys the ideas that the Belgian presence in the Congo was a study in selfless determination to help those less fortunate and to guide them in the process of 'civilising' a vast territory the size of Western Europe. Building on the 'benign' legacy of the founder of the Congo Free State, King Leopold II and decades of Belgian stewardship, the 'enlightened' colonial leadership of the 1950's was delivering against a comprehensive ten-year plan to transform the Congo. This was only the current stage of an on-going process of development, which one might conclude would take yet many decades to achieve. The Belgian government, the Church and industry were all playing their part in this great endeavour.

Of course, from my undergraduate tutorials in post-War African history with Professor David Birmingham, I was all too aware that the story of the Belgian Congo after 1956 was a tragedy yet to unfold. African political demands were given short shrift by the Belgians who refused to

¹ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi* (1956)

acknowledge the “wind of change” sweeping through the continent. While the French and British colonial administrations had set about establishing the institutions for participatory local governance during the 1950s, the Belgians provided no such concessions, nor saw any need to do so.² Their reading of the demands of African self-determination was at complete variance with the permanent members of the United Nations’ (UN) Security Council and the vocal delegates of the 1955 Bandung meeting representing the so-called ‘non-aligned movement’ of newly independent countries.³

Faithfully sticking to the Government line, the 1956 guidebook then seemed at odds with the international order of the time, bearing in mind for example that this was the same year that the British passed into law the Ghana Independence Act leading to its decolonization the following year. The conclusion I found myself reaching was that this guidebook served, perhaps, a different purpose from merely providing information to the casual visitor to the Belgian Congo; and besides how many Britons and Americans were vacationing in the Congo?

This book provided a window on to a colonial ward seemingly basking in the achievements of their European rulers. This weighty tome (which must have involved some significant investment by the colonial authorities who were the publishers) amounted to a very finished and rather sophisticated form of pro-colonial propaganda. Moreover, the guidebook informs the reader that the Tourist Bureau of the Belgian Congo had the benefit of twelve offices on three continents; which was a lot of infrastructure with a huge cost outlay. Tourism and its marketing, I concluded, had been used to deliver Belgian colonial propaganda. The purpose of this thesis, then, was to test that hypothesis.

In seeking to test this, I have drawn heavily on a combination of Belgian and British primary resources. At the outset I had planned to provide a comparative study with British East Africa. However, as my research evolved it became apparent there was more than sufficient information available about the Belgian Congo to focus primarily on this country. However, the British material referred to in this thesis is valuable for three reasons.

First, I considered it important to understand the thrust of European colonial thinking during the post-War years. The United Kingdom (UK) National Archives provides an extremely complete picture of British policy, which perhaps provides a greater contrast to Belgian colonialism than, say, that of the French.

² Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L., & Duignan, P. (1969), p.488

³ Cheesman, D., Butskell and the Empire: The House of Commons Prepares for the Scramble from Africa, 1946-56; *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2009), p.259

Second, British colonial archive material is accessible, as is the very considerable amount of secondary sources which draw heavily on the British post-War experience. This material, which is largely in English, provides historical analysis that is weighted accordingly.

Lastly, Belgian colonial material, as reported in the Primary sources section, was more challenging to access and this presented a particular concern at the outset of my research. While the relatively small body of Belgian secondary source material was freely available, Belgian colonial archives kept at the Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs (as Belgium's foreign ministry was renamed in 2000) were not.

1.1.1 Definitions

In making this case, it is important to establish from the outset some definitions to essential terms that recur in this thesis.

1.1.1.1 Propaganda / Propagande

The term propaganda is used in this thesis. It is defined in the Oxford English dictionary as "information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or a point of view". The French word 'propagande' is defined by Larousse as "action systématique exercée sur l'opinion pour lui faire accepter certaines idées ou doctrines, notamment dans le domaine politique ou social" [systematic bias exercised on opinion to accept certain ideas or doctrines, especially in the political or social domain]. For the purposes of this thesis, 'propaganda' and 'propagande' essentially have the same meaning.

It is important to note, however, that I am faithfully following the nomenclature used by both Belgian and British administrations during this era. In post-War government communications, terminology appeared to be defined to a very large extent by the wartime experience. Communication was framed in the paradigm of 'propaganda', coloured as it was by the uncertainties of the post-War order. By 1950 the terminology in Britain had largely evolved to 'information' or 'marketing'. The Belgian archives suggest the shift in terminology to less politicized terms such as 'publicité' did not happen until the late 1950s. 'Propagande' was still being used to officially categorise tourist marketing and information in 1955.⁴ In other words, 'propagande' was used to define Belgian government communications including its activities in relation to tourism for much of the period, and archive definitions/categorizations reflect that.

⁴ MFAB Office colonial A4 (512) E.0. - Report dated 29 September 1955 of the journey to the Belgian Congo by M de Meyer in July 1955

1.1.1.2 Tourism

The meaning which has been given to the term ‘tourism’ in this paper is broadly the definition accepted by the Committee of Statistical Experts of the League of Nations in 1937 and which has been used ever since including by the Belgian colonial authorities (as well as the British) during this period of research. In short, that definition is “any person travelling for a period of twenty-four hours”.⁵ In the Critical Review of Literature I highlight the current definition of tourism provided by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), which remains faithful to the League of Nations original meaning.

1.1.1.3 Office du Tourisme Colonial / Office of Colonial Tourism

Central to this study is the activities of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*. In the course of the 15 years under review (1945-1960) there were in fact three iterations of this body. The changes in name did not reflect a change to their fundamental mission of tourism promotion. Rather it reflected a change only in its management and supervision in the Ministry of the Colonies administration.

From 1945-1949 it was known as the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* [Office of Colonial Tourism] within Belgium’s Ministry of the Colonies. From 1949-1955, the entity was re-named the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* [Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi].⁶ It maintained its position as an independent department within the Ministry of the Colonies. From 1956 onwards while it retained the same name, it underwent an important shift in its reporting structure. Please note that the Belgian authorities themselves used these translations during the period. They clearly migrated from the term ‘Office’ to ‘Bureau’ as part of the re-badging of the entity in 1949.

In this thesis, I have tried to refer to the entity in keeping with its period name. As such, the names of that entity are interchangeable.

1.1.2 Language

This research has drawn on French and, occasionally, Flemish sources. I have sought to provide the most accurate translation possible, in consultation with native speakers. I have also tried to be faithful to the period in which the original text was penned. As such, I am responsible for all translations included in this work and apologise for any inaccuracies.

⁵ National Archives CO822/153/3 - Memorandum dated 3 October 1950 and accompanying report of the Commonwealth Liaison Committee Working Group on Tourism

⁶ *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge*, Vol. 3 (1952), p.472

1.2 Critical Review of Literature

In approaching an historical review of tourism in Africa, it becomes apparent that there is a remarkable dearth of literature and analysis on the subject. The lack of material on tourism history in general has been observed by a number of academics who have sought to make the case that it warrants due recognition in its own right (Engermann 1994,⁷ Baranowski & Furlough 2001,⁸ Walton 2005⁹).

While there is a significant body of literature on the methodology and uses of history studies (e.g. Appelby, Hunt & Jacob 1994,¹⁰ Evans 1997¹¹) little attention has been given to the role of tourism in history and the lessons which can be discerned from it.

Walton, a leading proponent of tourism history, maintains this is a surprising omission given that tourism today is one of the world's largest economic activities¹² (accounting for 5 per cent of global economic activity in 2011).¹³ Moreover, he argues, tourism is a significant driver of globalisation and is having a transformative effect on cultures, geographies and environments. Baranowski and Furlough echo this, pointing to an emerging, if limited, body of research which demonstrates the relationship of tourism and vacations to broad, social, political, economic and cultural change.¹⁴ It is for this reason, they argue, that a greater understanding of tourism history is needed.

In considering the paucity of literature, the conclusion is reached by a number of concerned academics that tourism is seen as either 'frivolous',¹⁵ 'trivial',¹⁶ or relegated to a "residual category devoid of political significance and entailing fringe economic activities".¹⁷ Walton argues that this is due to the innate conservatism of the culture of historians, which has failed to recognise the global

⁷ Engermann, J., A Research Agenda for the History of Tourism: Towards an International Social History, *American Studies International*, Vol. 32 (1992), pp.3-31

⁸ Baranowski, S., Furlough, E., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (2001)

⁹ Walton, J., Introduction: Histories of Tourism: *Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005)

¹⁰ Appleby, J., Hunt, L. & Jacob, M, *Telling the Truth about History* (1994)

¹¹ Evans, R., *In the Defence of History* (1997)

¹² Walton, J., Introduction: Histories of Tourism: *Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.1

¹³ United Nations World Tourism Organisation website: <http://step.unwto.org/content/tourism-and-poverty-alleviation-1>

¹⁴ Baranowski, S., Furlough, E., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (2001), p.7

¹⁵ Page, M. (ed.) *Colonialism: An International Social, Cultural and Political Encyclopaedia Vol. 2* (2003), p.589

¹⁶ Turner, L., and Ash, J., *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (1975), p.12

¹⁷ Walton, J., Taking the History of Tourism Seriously, *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1997), pp.563-71

importance of tourism in transforming economies and economic activities.¹⁸ Culver, too, makes the case that tourism's associations with fun and leisure have left academics viewing it with circumspection, failing to grasp that tourism and recreation are complex historical phenomena, that resist easy simplification.¹⁹

Supporting that argument, it is clear that tourism has not been a marginal economic activity for decades. In 1970 it generated US\$17.4 billion in foreign exchange earnings and by 2010 that figure reached US\$919 billion.²⁰ Its financial and political impact is significant. However, it is explained by Towner and Walton that tourism runs the risk of being pigeonholed as a pastime of the Western wealthy,²¹ in other words the few, and as a result side-lined "to the margins of the inconsequential".²²

Where historical analysis is applied to areas of economic activity, it weighs often on heavy industries such as the extractives sector, steel production or agriculture including commodities such as cotton, sugar or coffee; the services sector rarely is adequately addressed.²³ Indeed, Walton makes the case that the historical developments of even the most established disciplines of business rarely are reviewed or studied at universities or business schools.²⁴

Still, with the propensity for review of the more established commercial activities associated with the industrial revolution, there is clearly a significant historical omission. Not only do the hospitality trades have economic significance today, they are as old as commerce, migration and pilgrimage.²⁵ As Walton explains, there is evidence of premises providing refreshments and accommodation in Roman times and clearly being recorded in thirteenth century London, pre-dating by over five hundred years the heavy industries associated with industrialisation. Population growth, expanding internal and external trade, the emergence of the rule of law and a system of governance which sought to control public order, together with religious concern to regulate the morality of public behaviour, contributed to making the hospitality trades increasingly important and visible.²⁶ This became more

¹⁸ Walton, J., Tourism and History, *Contemporary Tourism Reviews* (2011), p.3

¹⁹ Culver, L., History News Network, www.hnn.us/article/39893 (2007)

²⁰ United Nations World Tourism Organisation website

²¹ Towner, J., What is Tourism's History?, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 16, No. 5 (1997), pp.339-343

²² Walton, J., Introduction: Histories of Tourism: *Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.1

²³ Walton, J., Introduction, Histories of Tourism: *Representation, Identity and Conflict*, ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.1

²⁴ Walton, J., Tourism and History, *Contemporary Tourism Reviews* (2011), p.7

²⁵ Walton, J., Chapter 4: The Hospitality Trades: A Social History, *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates*, ed. by Lashley, C. & Morrison, A., (2001), p.57

²⁶ Walton, J., Chapter 4: The Hospitality Trades: A Social History, *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates*, ed. by Lashley, C. & Morrison, A., (2001), p.57

pronounced with industrialisation in the early nineteenth century, mercantilist expansion of overseas trade, naval power and territorial claims that fuelled imperialism.²⁷

Travel, it can be argued, was part and parcel of the European colonial adventure. Said implies this when he argued that colonialism was essentially a commercial activity dominated as an occupying force.²⁸ Others have observed that while tourism and colonialism may have occurred at different historical periods, they arise from the same social formation.²⁹

MacKenzie expands the argument, making the case that the European empires concerned themselves with war, with economic exploitation, with settlement and with cultural diffusion, all necessitating travel in some kind. Moreover, he argues, they were empires of travel displaying advances in progress, particularly expressed in the technology of steam as well as the telegraph, sanitation, urbanism and Western science and medicine.³⁰ In this regard, d’Hauteserre concludes that tourism has its roots in colonialism.³¹ Certainly the conclusion I have drawn from this research is that the foundations of modern tourism in Africa were laid by European colonialism, curiously an assumption rarely made by either social scientists or historians of this subject.

This argument is supported by Nunn who highlights the impact that colonial rule had on the domestic institutions that persisted after independence.³² Drawing on the work of three economists, he says that the institutions of a society are an important determinant of a long-term economic development and, to that end, historical events can be an important determinant of the evolution of those domestic institutions.

The alluring appeal of the ‘other’ and the ‘exotic’ found its expression in art and literature.³³ It was a seductive by-product of empire building, especially for those who could afford to experience the exotic for themselves, as travel abroad was becoming increasingly connected to the development of European empires.³⁴ MacKenzie argues that imperialism, as a sophisticated concept, had been and

²⁷ Said, E., *Culture & Imperialism* (1993), p.266

²⁸ Said, E., *Orientalism* (1978), p.75

²⁹ Sylvain, R., Disorderly Development: Globalisation and the Idea of ‘Culture’ in the Kalahari, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 32 No. 3 (2005), p.356

³⁰ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 2: Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity, and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J. (2005), p.19

³¹ d’Hauteserre, A., Chapter 19: Postcolonialism, Colonialism and Tourism, in *A Companion to Tourism* ed. by Lew, A., Hall, C. & Williams, A. (2008), p.237

³² Nunn, N., The Importance of History for Economic Development, *Annual Review of Economics*, Vol. 1 (2009), p.66

³³ Dunn, K., Fear of a Black Planet: Anarchy, Anxieties and Postcolonial Travel to Africa, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2004), p.487

³⁴ Moffat, R., *Perspectives on Africa in Travel Writing: Representations of Ethiopia, Kenya, Republic of Congo and South Africa, 1930–2000*, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow (2010), p.32

remained the preserve of an elite.³⁵ Indeed, travel had been the preserve of the few – largely the adventurous, the privileged and the wealthy.³⁶ Said, too, claims that Africa provided for the West a privileged terrain for travel.³⁷ It has been argued by a number of historians that this began to change in the second half of the nineteenth century when the British entrepreneur, preacher and social reformer, Thomas Cook, seized on the interest aroused by empire and began offering Britons ‘package tours’ to the Holy Land and Egypt.³⁸

Thomas Cook’s contribution to the development of mass travel and modern tourism should not be in doubt and there is a reasonable amount of work that references his contribution, including one well-cited book by Brendon.³⁹ Caution is required, however, especially when reading literature that sets out to produce ‘official’ accounts or draw largely on the archives of one institution. Brendon’s very complete book on the development of the Thomas Cook business and its expansion of tourism in colonial North Africa (notably Egypt) during the nineteenth century, which was published to mark the 150th anniversary of his travel company, is valuable but may risk lacking impartiality in order to convey the most interesting or benign business narrative possible. This touches on a point which has been articulated, again by Walton, that the paucity of source material in respectable sources such as national government archives and other trustworthy data also contributes to the marginalisation of tourism history as a subject area.⁴⁰

This assessment, then, makes the study of tourism history in an African context challenging. Where considered historical review exists, it relates often to just a handful of countries which have seen their modern tourist industries flourish. As already noted, there is some historical material that relates to the evolution of tourism in Egypt. Yet even South Africa with its successful tourism sector today has received little analysis. As Grundlingh explains “the history of tourism in South Africa is largely uncharted”.⁴¹ This is an observation that speaks for the continent as a whole.

³⁵ MacKenzie, J., *Propaganda and Empire* (1984), p.1

³⁶ Wigley, A., Tourism Development and the Foundation, *Development Dialogue*, No. 60 (2012), p.120

³⁷ Said, E., *Orientalism* (1978), p.104

³⁸ Brendon, P., *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (1991); Norwich, J., *A Taste for Travel* (1985), p.1; Pudney, J., *The Thomas Cook Story* (1953); Turner, L., & Ash, J., *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (1975), pp.50-59;

³⁹ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.2. Also see: Green, M., *Thomas Cook and Tourism History: A critical analysis*, M.A. dissertation, University of Central Lancashire (2004); Pirie, G., Elite Exoticism: Sea-rail Cruise Tourism to South Africa 1826-1939, *African Historical Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2011), p.74; Ward, S. & Hsu-Ming, T., Chapter 9: Wandering in the Wake of Empire: British Travel and Tourism in the Post-Imperial World, in *British Culture and the End of Empire* ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.168.

⁴⁰ Walton, J., Tourism and History, *Contemporary Tourism Reviews* (2011), p.4

⁴¹ Grundlingh, A., Revisiting the Old South Africa: Excursions into South Africa’s Tourist History under Apartheid, *South African Historical Journal*, Issue 56 (2006), pp.103-122

Furthermore, as Walton explains, archive material is hard to come by and its availability rests on the judgment of the archivists of the day as to what is valuable and what is not.⁴² In the course of this research in archives in London and Brussels, tourism activities were found to be archived under labels such as transportation, publicity and ‘propaganda’. Given the case is made convincingly that tourism has not been recognised as a serious area of study, the dearth of material on African tourism history is not a surprise.

Some valuable material is provided in a number of works on environmental and conservation history.⁴³ Walton makes the case that tourism history follows a similar trajectory to the history of sport, with a time lag of some years, maintaining that as a sub-discipline it has been slow to gain acceptance.⁴⁴ I would argue that the same argument can be made in relation to environmental and conservation history.

As part of his significant contribution to the social and cultural dimensions of empire, MacKenzie argues that hunting played a central role in the imperial mission and that it was recounted in numerous publications during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, shaping profoundly awareness of the natural riches of the colonial environment.⁴⁵

This, Beinart argues, stoked the appetite for colonial hunting adventures “fuelled by the increasing accessibility of African game”.⁴⁶ Game hunting in Africa, he continues, was synonymous with modernity, explaining that hunters dwelt on the sophistication of their weaponry, as well as their contribution to forging scientific knowledge; museums, he says, filled with stuffed tropical animals.⁴⁷ The process of travelling to Africa, and the experience of going on safari, were no doubt also seen through the same lens.

In the period under review in this study, it was the remedial steps taken to address the over-exploitation of game that contributed to the post-War expansion of travel and tourism. Beinart & Hughes explain that as colonial officials began to appreciate the enormity of the destruction of wildlife, official reserves were established to conserve animals and landscapes while making them

⁴² Walton, J., Introduction: *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J. (2005), p.2

⁴³ Anderson, D., & Grove, R. (eds.), *Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practices* (1987); MacKenzie, J., *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1988); Neumann, R., The Post War Conservation Boom in British Colonial Africa, *Environmental History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2002), pp.22-47

⁴⁴ Walton, J., Tourism and History, *Contemporary Tourism Reviews* (2011), p.4

⁴⁵ MacKenzie, J., *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1988), p.86

⁴⁶ Beinart, W., Empire, Hunting and Ecological Change in Southern and Central Africa, *Past & Present*, No. 128 (1990), p.165

⁴⁷ Beinart, W., Empire, Hunting and Ecological Change in Southern and Central Africa, *Past & Present*, No. 128 (1990), p.165

accessible to visitors.⁴⁸ To that end, the national parks “were designed for an age of tourism, the era of the motor car and the camera”.⁴⁹

Some material also exists in related fields of research, such as ‘tourism studies’ and other social science disciplines. Social science provides the core definition of tourism and tourism policy. As already mentioned the Committee of Statistical Experts of the League of Nations in 1937 defined tourism as “*any person* travelling for a period of twenty-four hours”.⁵⁰ This meaning informs the more contemporary definition of tourism that is “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes”.⁵¹ A visitor (domestic, inbound or outbound) is classified as a tourist “if his/her trip includes an overnight stay”.⁵² These definitions inform this research and, helpfully, were used to gather tourist figures for the Belgian Congo in the post-War years. Tourism policy, therefore, has been defined broadly by a number of researchers as a policy which sets the direction or course of action that a particular country, region, locality or an individual destination plans to take when developing or promoting tourism.⁵³ This definition provides the framework for this research. The marketing and presentation of tourism, then, is the next factor that informs this study.

One of the first considered concepts of tourism and its marketing appears to be discussed in 1899 by Veblen who argued a key to successful tourism was understanding the needs, desires and perception of the visitor/tourist. Equally, he argued, it requires a knowledge of the potential visitors and what services they require while making a trip.⁵⁴ One hundred years later, Mercer explained that marketing is an attitude of mind with the need of marketing decisions to be taken from the viewpoint of the consumer.⁵⁵

This was subsequently researched by Baloglu & Brinberg who investigated consumer behavioural reactions to images and representations of destinations.⁵⁶ It suggested a link between the

⁴⁸ Beinart, W. & Hughes, L., *Environment and Empire* (2008), p.290

⁴⁹ MacKenzie, J., *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1988), p.264

⁵⁰ National Archives CO822/153/3 - Colonial Office Circular Memorandum dated 3 October 1950 entitled ‘Tourism’ and attached Commonwealth Liaison Committee Report by the Working Group on Tourism

⁵¹ United Nations’ World Tourism Organisation Basic Glossary: <http://media.unwto.org/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary>

⁵² United Nations’ World Tourism Organisation Basic Glossary: <http://media.unwto.org/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary>

⁵³ Biedermann, P., *Travel and Tourism: An Industry Primer* (2007), cited by Edgell, D., DelMastro Allen, M., Smith, G. & Swanson, J., in *Tourism Policy and Planning: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (2008), p.7; and in Goeldner, C., & Ritchie, B., *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies* (2006)

⁵⁴ Veblen, T., *Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (Indian edition 2005), p.58

⁵⁵ Mercer, D., *Marketing* (1992) p.11

⁵⁶ Baloglu, S., & Brinberg, D., Affective Images of Tourism Destinations, *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (1997)

representation of a destination and the propensity to visit.⁵⁷ Equally, the link between marketing and modifying image was also claimed in their work; those destinations that have a negative affective image can apply marketing techniques to modify the image, they concluded.⁵⁸ Given this association, more relevant evidence to this study is provided, then, by Seaton who argued that tourism is highly determined by political considerations along with other factors.⁵⁹ This argument is supported by Morgan and Pritchard who have made the case tourism identities are packaged to dominant value systems and meanings, and that just as tourism sites are associated with values, historical events and feelings, so values, feelings and events are used to reinforce dominant ideologies.⁶⁰

While not seeking to critique the contribution of social scientists to the historical review of tourism, it is fair to observe that it is often brief and, as Walton argues, passes on unchanged and without much exposure to the development in historical writings.⁶¹ This appeared to be the case in the material that I found in relation to Kenya's tourist history. As part of my research to understand the context of tourism development in Africa during the post-War years, I looked at Kenya since it is one of the few African countries where there is a body of tourism history research, most of which is authored by social scientists.

Two authors are cited significantly by social scientists; Ouma⁶² and Rajotte⁶³ themselves social scientists. A number of respected academics (Dieke,⁶⁴ Harrison,⁶⁵ and Sindiga⁶⁶) who provide cursory overviews of the history of tourism's development in Kenya - particularly prior to independence in 1962 – reference Ouma and Rajotte heavily. It is apparent the two authors are considered authorities on Kenya's tourism history. Given the lack of tourism's historical review and analysis, it should not come as a surprise that the work of the few can go unchallenged, but it does throw open the potential for factual inaccuracies or glaring omissions. I believe their work (notably Ouma's) provides a good basis but omits important elements in the historical development of tourism in Kenya, such as the role of the East Africa Commission and the 1947-9 Sterling crisis, which I believe significantly shaped

⁵⁷ Baloglu, S., & Brinberg, D., Affective Images of Tourism Destinations, *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (1997), p.15

⁵⁸ Baloglu, S., & Brinberg, D., Affective Images of Tourism Destinations, *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (1997), p.15

⁵⁹ Seaton, A., Chapter 1: The Marketing Concept in Tourism, in *The Marketing of Tourism Products: Concepts, Issues and Cases* ed. by Seaton A & Bennett, M. (1996), p.11

⁶⁰ Morgan, N. and Pritchard, A., *Tourism Promotion and Power: Creating Images, Creating Identities* (1998), p.5

⁶¹ Walton, J., *Tourism and History*, Contemporary Tourism Reviews (2011), p.4

⁶² Ouma, J., *Evolution of Tourism in East Africa 1900-1969* (1970)

⁶³ Rajotte, F., *The Tourist Industry in East Africa* (1981)

⁶⁴ Dieke, P., Policies for Tourism Development in Kenya, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1991), pp.260-294

⁶⁵ Harrison, D., Chapter 3: Tourism in Africa: the Social and Cultural Framework, in *The Political Economy of Tourism Development in Africa* ed. by Dieke, P. (2000), pp.37-50

⁶⁶ Sindiga, I., Chapter 9: Tourism Development in Kenya, in *The Political Economy of Tourism Development in Africa* ed. by Dieke, P. (2000), p.129-152

policymaking in Nairobi and London for some years subsequent. I reach this conclusion following my own research at the UK's National Archives.

As for the Belgian Congo / Zaïre, there was almost no secondary material relating to its tourism history. Some relevant material came from two graduate theses written at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.⁶⁷ Their work provides a good understanding of the various actors in the Belgian Congo's tourism sector and subsequently in independent Congo / Zaïre, however, little analysis has been applied to the drivers of tourism, and the wider external factors that influenced its development.

Tourism, as noted before, has been defined as a pastime of the privileged. It is certainly the case for the period of this study (1945 - 60) that tourism continued to be characterised chiefly as the preserve of 'Westerners' (Europeans and North Americans) and the affluent.⁶⁸ Travel and tourism from 1945, then, should be seen as the continuation in a long heritage, with its roots in the paradigm of the Grand Tour in which "the wealthy and educated [...] visit countries that have passed their peak of prestige and creativity but are still venerated for historic and cultural reasons".⁶⁹

In his assessment of changing attitudes towards personal finance and consumer behaviour after 1945, Cohen argues that although the UK (along with other European states) came out of World War II (WWII) economically weakened, the individual emerged from conflict in a stronger financial position than he or she had previously experienced.⁷⁰ In other words, the consumer had increased financial capacity to travel, and could escape post-War austerity by way of taking a holiday. This analysis is echoed by Endy who agrees that 'middle class American prosperity' at the end of the war contributed to the rise of international tourism.⁷¹

In other words, leisure travel emerged as a growing element of a consumerist society. Tourism, it seems, can and should be "understood as part of the history of consumption".⁷² With increased growth and greater consumption, the elitism of travel was to be challenged and Thomas Cook's vision

⁶⁷ Da Cruz, C., *Tourisme et Politique: Le Cas du Zaïre*, M.A. dissertation, Université Libre de Bruxelles (1976); Meert, N., *Le Tourisme au Congo Belge: Son Implantation et son Développement*, M.A. dissertation, Université Libre de Bruxelles (2007)

⁶⁸ Kopper, C., The Breakthrough of the Package Tour in Germany after 1945, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2009), p.74

⁶⁹ Turner, L., and Ash, J., *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (1975), p.29

⁷⁰ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-war Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.297

⁷¹ Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.4

⁷² Gorsuch, A., Koenker, D., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (2006), p.2

of travel as an agent of ‘democratisation’ slowly began to emerge.⁷³ This gives rise to the shifting relationship between status and travel.

Veblen made the argument that ‘conspicuous consumption’ offered an explanation for leisure activities, and that as wealth accumulates the leisure class develops, as do their pursuits.⁷⁴ In other words, recreation and travel became intractably linked with the desire to demonstrate wealth and status. This, Culver asserts, is anchored in a critique of capitalist society.⁷⁵ Wright Mills has subsequently argued that Veblen’s theory relates to a particular element of the upper classes in one period of the history of one nation (the USA).⁷⁶ Regardless, it laid the foundations for the assumption that travel was largely an activity of the affluent. This, in part, leads into the need for a brief discussion of the concept of the ‘tourist’ and the ‘traveller’ and that of ‘tourism’ and ‘travel’, which arose in the course of this research.

As already stated, the UNWTO explains a tourist as a temporary visitor staying at least twenty-four hours in any country that is not their normal place of residence.⁷⁷ (For consistency in the study, it is important to note that this, too, was the received definition used by the Belgian colonial authorities).⁷⁸ This definition includes people visiting for leisure purposes and business visitors: an important consideration for this research, as data from the period under review rarely distinguishes between the two.

Yet the terms ‘tourist’ and ‘tourism’ have given rise to some negative connotations. This is less prevalent among dedicated tourism historians, but is certainly apparent among authorities who provide otherwise valid perspectives. An example is the social and political historian, Daniel Boorstein, who distinguished the traveller from the tourist as follows: “The traveller was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to him”.⁷⁹ The cultural historian Paul Fussell laments that “tourism requires that you see conventional things, and that you see them in a conventional way”.⁸⁰ Turner and Ash are more hyperbolic, stating that “it is perfectly legitimate to compare tourists with barbarian

⁷³ Turner, L., and Ash, J., *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (1975), p.53

⁷⁴ Veblen, T., *Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (Indian edition 2005), p.58

⁷⁵ Culver, L., *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (2010), p.8

⁷⁶ Wright Mills, C., Appendix to Veblen, T., *Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (Indian edition 2005), p.311

⁷⁷ Harrison, D., Chapter 1: International Tourism and the Less Developed World: the Overall Pattern, in *Tourism and Less Developed Countries* ed. by Harrison, D., (1992), p.2

⁷⁸ Grünthal, A., Trends of Tourism in Southern Africa, *Revue de Tourisme*, No. 3 (1959), p.136

⁷⁹ Boorstein, D., *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1978), p.85

⁸⁰ Fussell, P., *The Norton Book of Travel* (1987), p.651

tribes” and that “they are now virtually out of control”.⁸¹ Distinguished historian, John Julius Norwich, bemoans the ‘age of the tourist’ claiming that “the man who started the rot, I fear, was that disagreeable old abstainer Thomas Cook”.⁸²

This propensity to cast social comment on the patterns and behaviours of tourism has obfuscated otherwise useful sources of material. Clearly, among some writers there has been and remains a romance associated with travel; the notion of the more social scientific term ‘tourism’ perhaps dispels any such romance, especially for the more discursive style that often characterises cultural historians and commentators.

Baranowski and Furlough provide a persuasive account that the distinction between ‘travel’ and ‘tourism’ betrays the social anxieties of those commentators who draw attention to this. Tourists induce class anxieties by means of its association with volume and behaviours, goes the argument; “travellers tend to cultural superiority and authentic experiences”.⁸³

It is, however, the linkage between tourism with politics and international diplomacy that sits at the centre of this research.⁸⁴ It is clear that the end of WWII brought profound changes to the international stage, including to Africa. Young summarises that the primary colonial powers were no longer dominant on the world scene and that an entirely different international alignment resulted from the emergence of the USA and the Soviet Union as hostile superpowers.⁸⁵ This hostility was to spawn international political tensions, to which Africa would not be immune.

Those tensions impact Africa in an enormous variety of ways. They have been captured collectively by a significant number of authors who include Crowder,⁸⁶ Duignan & Gann,⁸⁷ Gifford & Roger Louis,⁸⁸ Meredith⁸⁹ and Young.⁹⁰ Young stands out as the pre-eminent commentator on how superpower tensions played out in the Belgian Congo / Congo – Zaïre, although his work is

⁸¹ Turner, L., and Ash, J., *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (1975), p.11 & p.289

⁸² Norwich, J., *A Taste for Travel* (1985) p.1

⁸³ Baranowski, S., & Furlough, E., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe* (2001), p.2

⁸⁴ Walton, J., Introduction: *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.4

⁸⁵ Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L., & Duignan, P. (1969), p.453

⁸⁶ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984)

⁸⁷ Gann, L., & Duignan, P., *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, (1969)

⁸⁸ Gifford, P., & Roger Louis, W., *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60*, (1977)

⁸⁹ Meredith, M., *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since Independence* (2005)

⁹⁰ Young, C., *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (1994); Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965)

augmented by a number of other highly regarded historians such as Dunn,⁹¹ James,⁹² Merriam,⁹³ Stengers,⁹⁴ and Vanthemsche.⁹⁵ Additionally there is a notable body of work also in French and Dutch/Flemish which tends to address foremost the Belgian colonial structures and its impact on the metropolitan both pre and post-independence. These include Van Reybrouck,⁹⁶ Van Schuylenbergh⁹⁷ and Vanthemsche.⁹⁸

Given the theme of this research, two outstanding pieces of work address the topic of colonial propaganda. MacKenzie's *Propaganda and Empire*⁹⁹ and Stanard's *Selling the Congo*¹⁰⁰ both provide valuable context to colonial publicity and propaganda efforts up until the eve of independence. An interesting adjunct of such 'propaganda' thrown up in this research, is the role of the royal tour and its application in marketing what Sapire terms "the fundamental contradiction of a crown being at once the source of rights, and complicit in settler conquest and expropriation".¹⁰¹ Sapire,¹⁰² along with Baxendale¹⁰³ and Long¹⁰⁴ make the historiographical case that the royal tour emphasised both imperial grandeur as well as reinforcing the influence of empire on domestic culture and politics.

This area of study is further informed by the body of material on the manipulation of tourism by European dictatorships in the twentieth century.¹⁰⁵ While post-War Belgium could not be compared to authoritarian regimes such as pre-Second World War Germany, Italy or Portugal, there are valuable

⁹¹ Dunn, K., *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity* (2003)

⁹² James, A., *Britain and the Congo Crisis, 1960-63* (1996)

⁹³ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961)

⁹⁴ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60*, ed. by Gifford, P., & Roger Louis, W.M. (1977)

⁹⁵ Vanthemsche, G., *The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo* (2006)

⁹⁶ Van Reybrouck, D., *Congo: Een Geschiedenis* (2010)

⁹⁷ Van Schuylenbergh, P., *Patrimoine d'Afrique centrale: Archives Films - Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, 1912-1960* (2010)

⁹⁸ Vanthemsche, G., *Congo: De impact van de kolonie op België* (2008)

⁹⁹ MacKenzie, J., *Propaganda and Empire* (1984)

¹⁰⁰ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011)

¹⁰¹ Sapire, H., African Loyalism and its Discontents: The Royal Tour of South Africa, 1947; *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 54, Issue 1 (2011), p.217

¹⁰² Sapire, H., African Loyalism and its Discontents: The Royal Tour of South Africa, 1947; *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 54, Issue 1 (2011), p.220;

¹⁰³ Baxendale, J., Chapter 1: The Construction of the Past and the Origins of Royal Tourism in 19th Century Britain, in *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P., & Palmer, N. (2008), p.46;

¹⁰⁴ Long, P., Introduction, *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P., & Palmer, N. (2008), p.4

¹⁰⁵ Costa, R., The 'Great Façade of Nationality'; Some Considerations on Portuguese Tourism and the Multiple Meanings of Estado Novo Portugal in Travel Literature, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2012), pp.50-72; Hom, S., Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), pp.281-300; Semmens, K., Chapter 8: Travel in Merry Germany: Tourist Culture in the Third Reich, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), pp.144-161

parallels on the efforts made by those governments to depict a vision of society and the role of the state in safeguarding its provision.

Trying to summarise the body of literature that looks at superpower tensions and the consequences for Africa is an inexhaustible task. But it is worth highlighting the observation made by Said pillorying a rationale of the time for the West's on-going influence and engagement in Africa and other regions of the world following the process of decolonisation. "After all", he writes "the 'West' since WWII had faced a clever totalitarian enemy who collected allies for itself among gullible (African, Asian, undeveloped) nations".¹⁰⁶

However, the essence of this study is on the interplay of post-War tourism, in particular its marketing, and international diplomacy and politics. Morgan and Pritchard note, too few authors have studied the dynamic of power relationships involved in tourism and what this reveals about societies' prevailing views and its politics.¹⁰⁷ This seems curious since, as Light observes, nations make considerable efforts to project positive images of themselves to the wider world and tourism is an important means to achieve that.¹⁰⁸ Light, Morgan and Pritchard, and Palmer have stated that the way in which a country promotes itself as a tourism destination provides deeper, national policy messages to international audiences.¹⁰⁹ For example, in commenting about post war Romania from 1947-65 (a comparable period to this study) Light explains that international tourism had a propagandist role, being a means for socialist Romania to present itself to the socialist and non-socialist world in its own way and on its own terms.¹¹⁰ Indeed he points to a limited body of literature making the case that the post war Soviet Union and its satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe used tourism to explicitly ideological objectives such as demonstrating to visitors, particularly from non-socialist countries, the achievement of socialism.¹¹¹ The Soviet Union and its communist allies didn't have the monopoly on this form of propaganda.

¹⁰⁶ Said, E., *Orientalism* (1978) p.106

¹⁰⁷ Morgan, N. and Pritchard, A., *Tourism Promotion and Power: Creating Images, Creating Identities* (1998), p.5

¹⁰⁸ Light, D., Chapter 1: Tourism, Identity and Popular Culture in *The Dracula Dilemma: Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania* (2012), pp.12-13

¹⁰⁹ Light, D., Chapter 1: Tourism, Identity and Popular Culture in *The Dracula Dilemma: Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania* (2012), p.12; Morgan, N. and Pritchard, A., *Tourism Promotion and Power: Creating Images, Creating Identities* (1998), p.5; Palmer, N., Chapter 8: By Royal Association: British Monarchy as a Place Representation Tool, in *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P., and Palmer, N. (2008), p.159,

¹¹⁰ Light D., 'A Medium of Revolutionary Propaganda': The State and Tourism Policy in the Romanian People's Republic, 1947-1965, *Journal of Tourism History* Vol. 5, No. 2 (2013), p.200

¹¹¹ Light D., 'A Medium of Revolutionary Propaganda': The State and Tourism Policy in the Romanian People's Republic, 1947-1965, *Journal of Tourism History* Vol. 5, No. 2 (2013), p.186

In short, there is a very small body of work in this field and virtually none in relation to Africa. Strands of tourism's role in the international dynamics of the Cold War do exist in two growing areas of work expounded by a number of historians, addressing how the Cold War ushered in an era of 'cultural diplomacy' as well as 'consumer policy'.¹¹²

First, cultural diplomacy: Post-1945, the USA and other powers sought to complement their political and diplomatic reach by means of facilitating a policy known as cultural diplomacy.¹¹³ Both Bu and Endy have written how American cultural relations programmes began to be organised and designed in accordance with national security interests, explaining that it was geared to promoting American values and combating negative impressions.¹¹⁴ This clearly has particular pertinence to Europe, a crucible in which the tensions of the Cold War were at their most acute. Educational and cultural exchanges were used to promote American values in Western Europe and to shore up trans-Atlantic unity. While I have found no secondary research on cultural exchanges organised by the USA in relation to Africa, the topic is apparent in primary resource material in relation to such arrangements with Belgium.¹¹⁵

Second, consumer diplomacy: Furlough has explained that the expansion of post-War commercial tourism was fuelled by its conceptual fit within an emergent society and economy fashioned by the USA.¹¹⁶ Tourism and vacations were fast emerging focus of consumer spending, she argues.¹¹⁷

Anderson and Endy have written about the USA franchising out investment overseas to the consumer by exploiting leisure travel for broader economic policy goals and, in so doing, creating a consumer delivered version of the dollar diplomacy.¹¹⁸

While focusing on another continent, Merrill describes how tourists, hosts and the transnational travel industry generated multi-stranded contacts across the Americas, actively shaping the social and

¹¹² Bu, L., Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War, *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 33, Issue 3 (1999), p.393; Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.2; Merrill, N., *Negotiating Paradise: US tourism and empire in twentieth century Latin America* (2009) p.13; Walton, J., Introduction, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J. (2005), p.4

¹¹³ Bu, L., Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War, *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 33, Issue 3 (1999), p.393; Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.2

¹¹⁴ Bu, L., Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War, *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 33, Issue 3 (1999), p.393; Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.4

¹¹⁵ MFAB Office colonial, A4 (2940) 595 – Ministry of the Colonies papers relating to the Fulbright Accord for the financing of a cultural and educational programme exchange between Belgium (and Luxembourg) and the USA, signed 8 October 1948 in Brussels

¹¹⁶ Furlough, E., Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France 1930s to 1970s, *Comparative Studies in Society & History*, Vol. 40 (1978), p.273

¹¹⁷ Furlough, E., Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France 1930s to 1970s, *Comparative Studies in Society & History*, Vol. 40 (1978), p.262

¹¹⁸ Anderson, C., Cold War Consumer Diplomacy and Movie-Induced Roman Holidays, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2011), p.1; Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004)

cultural life of their sphere and influenced American foreign relations.¹¹⁹ He goes on to argue that tourism and other cultural interactions have allowed citizens of the USA to participate in the diplomatic process, sharing Endy's view that it was in the interest of Washington D.C. to facilitate post-War economic reconstruction by means of tourism.¹²⁰

Endy goes further in putting the case that the United States' Government sought to use Americans' private travels as a complement to official foreign aid.¹²¹ There is clear evidence from primary material found during the course of this research to support that hypothesis as the Marshall Plan for Europe included a programme to stimulate economic activity by the medium of travel.¹²² There is evidence that the British, too, saw benefits from stimulating the economy through tourism while reaping wider political dividends.¹²³

1.3 Primary sources

As indicated previously, the limited body of secondary sources led to significant research of primary sources at institutions in the UK, Belgium, France and Sweden.

The National Archives at Kew in London provided helpful insights into the British colonial administration in East Africa, and specifically Kenya. The National Archives is the principal repository for all archived state papers, including colonial archives. The Colonial Office (CO) archives were the focus of much of my enquiries although some relevant material was discovered in Foreign Office (FO) papers, notably about the perception of third countries towards colonialism and specific colonies. Equally, the Foreign Office files also held useful information about the political and economic situation in relevant neighbouring colonies, notably the Belgian Congo.

Research into the Colonial Office archives threw up a very small number of relevant papers categorised as 'tourism' which is an important consideration in understanding not only the recognition – or lack of it – that tourism was afforded by colonial administrations at the time, but also the prevailing views of archivists charged with the process of retaining and archiving material. Consequently, considerably more material was found in files archived under economic development. Colonial Office archives under CO852 retain files relating to the Economic General Department (and

¹¹⁹ Merrill, N., *Negotiating Paradise: US tourism and empire in twentieth century Latin America* (2009), p.13

¹²⁰ Merrill, N., *Negotiating Paradise: US tourism and empire in twentieth century Latin America* (2009), p.13

¹²¹ Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.4

¹²² National Archives CO822/153/3 - Transcript of a speech dated September 1947 given by Mr C.V. Whitney, US Under Secretary of Commerce at the International Union of Official Travel Organisations, Luxembourg

¹²³ National Archives CAB 129/5 - Cabinet Paper: Report dated 30 November 1945 by the Lord President entitled 'Government Publicity Services' including a note by the Foreign Secretary entitled 'Co-ordination of Overseas Publicity' as Annex II

its predecessors) within the Colonial Office. Specific information was then found in the files in relation to East Africa. It should be noted that the colonial authorities governed many aspects of East Africa as a collective for much of the period reviewed in this research. The other main area of research in the Colonial Office archives was the East Africa section (CO822) which retains, among other things, correspondence. It was in this section the most valuable and informative insights into the development of tourism policy and the tourism sector was found.

Other relevant files were found in the Colonial Office archives relating to co-operation with other Government ministries, notably the Ministry of Information (CO875) and its successor the Central Office of Information (COI). Files relating to tourist activities including its promotion were consciously managed, retained and subsequently archived as PR activities.

The last set of archives looked at in the National Archives related to the Cabinet Office files (CAB 128, 129 and 134). These spanned economic development as well as publicity and information strategies. The process of requesting and reviewing material was easy and transparent, and all files I requested were made available to me. Conversely, the process to review relevant colonial archives in Belgium was fraught with obfuscation and obstacles.

Like the UK, Belgium has its national archives – the Belgian State Archives. This is the national repository for government archives but not its colonial archives. These are deposited in the archives in Belgium's Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs. In order to establish where I should focus my attention, I wrote to the State Archivist explaining my area of study – specifically the political dimension of tourism and its promotion, and requesting advice as to which files I should look at.

In replying, she identified a number of specific files that reside in the archives of Federal Public Service, Foreign Affairs (FPSFA). Those files include various files relating to the political administration of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. Specifically, they were files belonging to the private office of the Colonial Minister de Schryver (A17), the Administrator General of the Ministry of the Colonies M van den Abeele (A35), the Department of African Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (A32), the 1st General Directorate (A33), the Press Collection (A54) and the Service of Colonisation and of Colonial Credit (A26).

At FPSFA, I was denied access to all of those files. The FPSFA archives are managed independently from the State Archives by its own team of archivists. However, I was pointed towards a number of other archives. These included some material relating to tourism in the A4 Colonial Office collection relating, material relating to the evolution of national parks (A21) and tourism within them (A21) and (A730), as well as transportation and logistics (A32), which clearly had some relevance and

contribute to this study. A very small number of papers categorised under Tourism were made available but, on their own, had limited value (A46). Despite numerous requests over a period of three weeks at FPSFA archives, I was unable to complete the research as I had hoped. Indeed I even met the Chief Archivist at FPSFA who explained that the State Archivist had wrongly advised me about the availability of files and, regardless, many of the ones germane to my study had simply disappeared.

The experience highlights the challenge that historians face at a number of levels, especially when probing into an aspect of colonial history which has had unsettling consequences for both the colonial and colonised nations, something Hochschild described as “the politics of forgetting”.¹²⁴ Light has recorded the “challenging” experience of trying to find the archive relating to tourism policy in post war communist Romania saying “according to some accounts it had disappeared, while others claimed that it had been deliberately broken up”.¹²⁵ At the time of my research in Brussels, Belgium was going through a period of being unable to form a government between the two main linguistic groups (the Walloons and Flemish) and there was much commentary about the break-up of the nation. That period of considerable uncertainty may have had a bearing on the decision not to allow me access to certain papers about a period of history that remains controversial. Equally, I know that my experience is not unique. Historian and former Belgian diplomat Jules Marchal summed up the orthodoxy of 40 years ago: “There was a rule in the Foreign Ministry archives. They were not permitted to show researchers material that was bad for the reputation of Belgium. But everything about this period was bad for the reputation of Belgium. So they showed nothing”.¹²⁶ When speaking to historians in Brussels in the course of this research, I understood that culture to prevail.

Consequently, this experience has frustrated my research and the extent of this work is affected by it. I did, however, find useful period journals and Government reports on the Belgian Congo in the FPSFA library. Given those frustrations, I turned to other repositories of primary source material in Belgium that I hoped could provide some insights into tourism and the policy-making behind it.

The first was the Archives of the Royal Palace. The purpose was twofold: First the Belgian monarchy had, among European monarchies, an unusual degree of political influence and involvement in the governing of Belgium’s colonies. I had hoped archived papers might throw up useful material about decision-making vis-à-vis the positioning of colonialism to international audiences by means of tourism; I found none. Second, I wanted to look at the role of, and motivation for, two high profile royal visits to the Belgian Congo. The first in 1947 when the Prince-Regent of Belgium paid a visit

¹²⁴ Hochschild, A., *King Leopold’s Ghost* (1999), p.294

¹²⁵ Light, D., Chapter 1: Tourism, Identity and Popular Culture in *The Dracula Dilemma: Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania* (2012), p.4

¹²⁶ Hochschild, A., *King Leopold’s Ghost* (1999), p.297

there and a subsequent royal visit in 1955 by the new King Baudouin. Material relating to these visits was useful. All archive material I requested to review was made available to me.

I conducted research at two other Belgian institutions. The Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren provided limited material for my research, although its library provides excellent material on Central Africa's social, anthropological and natural history. The Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History in Brussels hosts a civilian aviation archive which includes material relating to the former national airline Sabena. The state-owned airline was an important actor in the promotion and delivery of tourism to the former colony.

My research took me to the National Archives of France – Colonial Archives Centre, Aix-en-Provence which – not surprisingly – provided little useful material since the focus of the countries looked at in this study were not governed by the French. Lastly, I visited the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation & Library in Uppsala, Sweden, to review archive material on some capacity building programmes on tourism in Africa undertaken by the Foundation in 1969 and 1970. This was fruitful and provided the only occasion to review primary source material relating to post-colonial tourism development.

I used a number of university libraries and institutions to review secondary source material. They included:

- Stellenbosch University Library
- School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London
- Birkbeck University Library, University of London
- Université Libre de Bruxelles & Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala
- Centre des Hautes Etudes Touristiques, Université d'Aix-Marseille
- International Centre for Research and Study on Tourism (CIRET), Aix-en-Provence

Budget and uncertainty about the archive material available (I was unable to access inventories remotely) precluded me from conducting primary research at the Congo National Archives, Kinshasa.

Given decolonisation happened fifty years ago, first-hand experience and memories of colonial African and immediate post-colonial Africa are difficult to find. However, I have also undertaken interviews with a number of people who either visited colonial Kenya or Belgian Congo as tourists, or who were involved in the sector. This included a short conversation over a poor quality telephone line to Mr N'Joli Balanga in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mr N'Joli Balanga served as

independent Congo's first Tourism Minister, and Director General of the National Tourism Service. The esteemed historian Crawford Young, who wrote a definitive study on the decolonisation of the Belgian Congo, recounted in an email some anecdotal observations about tourism, and his own experience of touring in the country some years after independence. Journalist and author Tim Butcher also facilitated a telephone interview with his mother who travelled through the Belgian Congo as a young lady in 1958.¹²⁷ This line of research did not reap as much benefit as first hoped. The passing of time leaves broad-brush observations and, not unreasonably, little consideration to the role of propaganda in the presentation of tourism. In short, the research undertaken has been as conclusive as means would allow and the material accessible to me.

1.4 Conclusion

Tourism, and its development in post-War colonial and newly independent Africa, was shaped by colonialism and its international context; the politics and social mores that governed it and, in particular, the economic structures that underpinned it. Consequently, the literature search points to a diverse range of sources spanning social science, political and economic history, colonialism, international diplomacy as well important elements such as transportation and infrastructure.

The existing body of knowledge provides a limited recognition of the role of tourism in the political development of a nation (more relates to its economic impact), and its rather unique and multi-layered contribution to building profile and independent standing in post-colonial Africa. The literature search highlights however a very profound lack of material, which will characterise the completeness of this research.

There are also a limited number of academics focusing on tourism history – especially in an African context – presenting other challenges. Clearly the primary conclusion is that there is an inordinate amount of more research required to begin to paint an accurate and faithful picture of the tapestry of recent African tourism and related dimensions, notably on its complex contribution to pre-independence and post-colonial Africa. Social, cultural and political historians such as Grundlingh,¹²⁸ Pirie,¹²⁹ Stanard,¹³⁰ and Vanthemsche¹³¹ have all remarked on this as already noted in my discussion

¹²⁷ Butcher, T., *Blood River: A Journey to Africa's Broken Heart* (2007), p.10

¹²⁸ Grundlingh, A., Revisiting the Old South Africa: Excursions into South Africa's Tourist History under Apartheid, *South African Historical Journal*, Issue 56 (2006), p.103

¹²⁹ Pirie, G., Passenger traffic in the 1930s on British imperial air routes: refinement and revision, *Journal of Transport History*, Vol. 25 Issue 1 (2004), p.80

¹³⁰ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.11

¹³¹ Vanthemsche, G., *The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo* (2006), p.106

on the literature. Moreover, the issue of accessibility, as voiced by Walton, is a considerable challenge.¹³²

The structure of this dissertation, therefore, aims to expose the layered character of tourism and its marketing. The thesis begins with an overview of the post-War political context and the principles that governed pro-colonial propaganda, information and the overlap with tourist promotion. Chapters 3 and 4 provide an overview of the development of post-War tourism both internationally and as it related to Africa, especially those colonies of the European powers. Chapter 5 precedes with the early emergence of tourism in the Belgian Congo and its marketing to international audiences. It continues with a review of contemporary marketing material produced by the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* as well as the national airline Sabena and looks at how initiatives such as the 1955 tour by the Belgian monarch Baudouin II were conveyed to international audiences. I continue with an assessment of the contributing factors that prevented tourism to the Belgian Congo. In Chapter 6 I undertake a content analysis of the 1956 *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi*. My conclusion is presented in Chapter 7.

¹³² Walton, J., *Tourism and History, Contemporary Tourism Reviews* (2011), p.4

2 The post-War political context

2.1 Introduction

The Second World War was a watershed in the redefining of the international order. The might of pre-war imperial powers had been exposed as illusory; new powers emerged in part as victors of war, in part as dominant economic players on the international scene.

This chapter sets out the political and economic context at the end of WWII, the consequences that had for European colonial powers and their responses in that new world order. I will argue that this led to Belgium adopting a different political approach from other colonial powers such as Britain. That said, they both undertook similar exercises in ‘re-positioning’ their colonial roles in Africa. In effect this led to a re-branding of the notion of colonialism and an increased range of communications deployed to convey that change. Information, publicity and propaganda are used widely in an interchangeable form in both primary and secondary sources. Nomenclature aside, post-War colonial powers engaged in a process of addressing anti-colonial sentiment, explaining intentions and, to some degree, justifying their imperialist mission.

At the same time, an important consequence of the burdens of war – as well as other external factors – led to the expansion of economic activity beyond traditional industries such as mining and agriculture to include services. I conclude that both the need for positive publicity about colonialism and new economic activity meant that tourism served a unique dual purpose for the European colonial powers.

2.2 The political and economic impact of war and views of the role of empire in the post-War world order

At the outbreak of the Second World War, it seemed impossible for many in both the colonial European and colonised African nations that independence would follow in the next two decades. Few could have anticipated the levelling effect that world war would have on the international order.

While the British Labour party espoused Indian independence (15 August 1947), the Labour Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald said in December 1938 that “It may take generations, or even centuries, for the peoples in some parts of the colonial empire to achieve self-government. But it is a

major part of our policy, even among the most backward peoples of Africa, to teach them always to be able to stand a little more on their own two feet.”¹³³

There is no evidence that the Belgian Government differed from that view. A 1943 publication entitled the *Belgian Colonial Policy* produced by the Belgian Information Bureau in New York indicated no doubt about the foundations of the colonial mission, nor the consequence of war on it. Indeed it bullishly reaffirmed the mission by arguing that “the fact remains that there are still regions in the world which are in the colonial stage of evolution, and any termination of this stage would throw the people of these regions back into barbarism from whence they came, bringing about a disastrous regression in their steps towards civilisation”.¹³⁴

In reality, WWII had, as Young puts it, diminished the world rank of colonial powers, with the capitulation of Belgium (as well as France) significantly undermining both its military and political prestige.¹³⁵ That fall, coupled with the emergence of the USA as a global power meant that the centre of world power shifted from Europe – notably London – largely to the USA and, to some extent, the Soviet Union.¹³⁶

It was not just the blow to the standing of colonial nations as a consequence of war losses that fostered questions about their imperial mandates. In August 1941, the USA and the UK signed the Washington-inspired Atlantic Charter, which set out the principle of self-determination “affirming the right of all people to choose the form of government in which they live” and “to see the sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them”.¹³⁷ Winston Churchill claimed to have understood the commitment in reference to the people of Europe; while Theodore Roosevelt firmly believed it should apply to the entirety of the post-world war order – including colonial subjects.¹³⁸ Moreover, Roosevelt was a ‘fervent’ anti-colonialist and made it his mission to widely communicate this principle, causing embarrassment to both the French and British.¹³⁹ On a visit to Morocco in 1943, he told Sultan Mohammed V that the Atlantic Charter

¹³³ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.4

¹³⁴ Vleeshauwer, A., *Belgian Colonial Policy*, published by the Belgian Information Centre in New York (1943), p.3

¹³⁵ Young, C, Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L. & Duignan, P. (1969), p.454

¹³⁶ Louis, W.M. & Robinson, R., *The United States and the liquidation of British Empire in Tropical Africa, 1941-51* (1977), p.31

¹³⁷ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.22

¹³⁸ Louis, W.M. & Robinson, R., *The United States and the liquidation of British Empire in Tropical Africa, 1941-51* (1977), p.32

¹³⁹ Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L. & Duignan, P. (1969), p.453

applied to the Colonies.¹⁴⁰ Recalling his experience of a visit to The Gambia at a press conference in February 1944, Roosevelt was even more blunt: “It’s the most horrible thing I’ve seen in my life... The natives are five thousand years back of us. Disease is rampant, absolutely. It’s a terrible place for disease... For every dollar the British, who have been there for two hundred years, have put into Gambia, they have taken out ten. It’s plain exploitation of those people.”¹⁴¹

Both the British and Belgian governments viewed American attacks on empires as hypocrisy. The British questioned why the USA did not consider the overseas territories of Hawaii, the Philippines and Puerto Rico as colonies.¹⁴² Equally, the Belgians viewed the attacks as unjustifiable, given segregation characterised large areas of the southern USA.¹⁴³ Indeed, there was a strong suspicion that the motivation for American criticisms of colonialism, as Crowder explains, was borne from a desire to have freer access to colonial markets.¹⁴⁴ This analysis was shared by the Soviet Union. Along with China, another of the ‘Big Five’ signatories of the fledgling UN, the Soviet Union was defiantly opposed to European colonialism.¹⁴⁵

Foreign Minister Molotov argued that the war had caused a political and economic ‘dislocation’ for the colonial powers and that was difficult to remedy in the medium term. Consequently, he believed it created a “situation [which] provides American monopolistic capital with prospects for enormous shipments of goods and the importation of capital into these countries [...] to infiltrate their economies”.¹⁴⁶

The UN became an important crucible for the opponents of colonialism to galvanise support and to make the case for hastening decolonisation. At its founding, anti-colonial delegations such as the Soviet Union and China brokered unexpected alliances with Commonwealth countries such as Australia in advocating the proposal that colonies and dependent territories be placed under a UN trusteeship causing mirth for the imperial nations¹⁴⁷. Equally, Article 37 of the founding Charter

¹⁴⁰ Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L. & Duignan, P. (1969), p.453

¹⁴¹ Louis, W., *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (1978), p.356

¹⁴² Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.23

¹⁴³ MFAB Office colonial A4 (3240) 1393 Foreign Affairs II - Communiqué dated 19 July 1954 from the Chargés d’affaires in Washington to the Belgian Foreign Minister

¹⁴⁴ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.23

¹⁴⁵ Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L. & Duignan, P. (1969), p.456

¹⁴⁶ Ball, S., *The Cold War: An International History, 1947-1991* (1998), p.13

¹⁴⁷ Okoth, A., *A History of Africa Vol. 2* (2006), p.7

recognised the right of colonies and territories to develop self-government.¹⁴⁸ That article placed profound pressure that was difficult for the UK and Belgium to resist.

Belgian papers following a meeting in Washington in 1950 between the USA, France, the UK and Belgium spoke to frustrations felt about the “the complexities of the problem” facing colonial countries and the lack of understanding in the UN.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, the UN’s primary seat was to be anchored not only in the USA, which had adopted a forceful anti-colonial position, but also in New York, one of its most liberal American cities. The policy debate on the future of colonialism was to be played out in the city which, by 1947, was stoked by nations that included India, both a creditor nation to Britain during the war and newly independent of its colonial yoke. Arriving on the international scene, India also became a new ‘champion’ of the colonies.¹⁵⁰

There is, however, clear evidence from a British Cabinet paper which included a memorandum from the Secretary of State from the Colonies from the same year that indicates a level of coordination among the British, the French and the Belgians in responding to “the attitude of the rest of the world towards colonial powers... and we had to consider our policy in connection with the ad hoc Committee which was set up to assist the General Assembly in considering the information submitted under Article 73 of the UN Charter”.¹⁵¹

Consequently, the UN became the fulcrum for the Cold War conflict. The challenge – and opportunity – for the British in particular, was that on the one hand America was an avowed foe of British imperialism, while on the other hand, the victory of the Soviet Union established another new power which the British feared would also seek to ‘subvert’ their long held international interests.¹⁵² Such fear was likely held by other colonial powers, including Belgium.

The Soviet influence and its demands for decolonisation presented the USA with a stark choice about its interests. It was conflicted by a deeply held policy against colonialism and a fear of the expansion of Soviet influence.¹⁵³ America had to either force the post-War pace of decolonisation, and with it run the risk of Soviet interests taking hold in nascent states, or accept that European empires

¹⁴⁸ Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L. & Duignan, P. (1969), p.456

¹⁴⁹ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 609.13503 - Foreign Office papers circa 1950 relating to a meeting which took place between the US, France, UK and Belgium from 14-18 July 1950 in Washington.

¹⁵⁰ Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.113; Judd, D., *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present* (1996), p.13

¹⁵¹ National Archives CAB 129/19 - Cabinet Paper: Memorandum dated 30 June 1947 entitled ‘Anglo-French-Belgian Collaboration in Africa’ by the Secretary of State for the Colonies

¹⁵² Judd, D., *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present* (1996), p.13

¹⁵³ Bu, L., Educational exchange and cultural diplomacy in the Cold War’, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 33, issue 3 (1999), p.393

ultimately were, in the short to medium term, strategically beneficial to the USA – at least until those colonised nations had reached a level of pluralist and democratic maturity.

In short the USA found itself forced to accommodate a compromise by not pressing for immediate decolonisation. In return, colonial powers undertook to modernise their empires.¹⁵⁴ In essence, European empires became a new front in the Cold War, providing a bulwark against Communism.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the consequence of this logic was that the colonies (and former colonies) were to become “pawns of the great powers”.¹⁵⁶

Notwithstanding reluctant American acquiescence of colonialism in the short term, there was a recognition among colonial powers that mitigating strategies needed to be adopted to counteract American anti-colonial sentiments.¹⁵⁷ The primary response was an overtly vigorous commitment by Belgium, Britain and France to both social and economic development of their empires. That commitment was tied into a diplomatic positioning or doctrine articulated forcefully by the then British Chancellor of the Exchequer Stanley Cripps when he said “the further development of African resources [...] is one of the same crucial importance to the mobilisation and strengthening of Western Europe as the restoration of the European productive powers is to the future progress and prosperity of Africa”.¹⁵⁸ It echoed an argument advanced by the pre-war colonial administrator Lord Lugard and embraced by the Belgian government, that the duty of colonial powers is to promote “the well-being of the world at large and humanity in general [...] and of doing so by developing the resources of dependencies”.¹⁵⁹

In other words a doctrine of complementarity was posited and delivered at the diplomatic level; the development of both the colonising and the colonised nation was mutually dependent. The convenience of this argument was anchored in the dire economic predicament of the war-battered and near broke powers. As Cain and Hopkins summate “the financial imperatives were fed into the machinery of formal rule and emerged, synthesised in the concept of ‘trusteeship’ ”.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.629

¹⁵⁵ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.625

¹⁵⁶ Louis, W.M. & Robinson, R., Chapter 2: The United States and the liquidation of British Empire in Tropical Africa, 1941-51, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60*, ed. by Gifford, P., & Roger Louis, W.M. (1977), p.48

¹⁵⁷ Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.29

¹⁵⁸ Bowden, J., *Development and Control in British Colonial Policy, with reference to Nigeria and the Gold Coast 1935-48*, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham (1981), p.361

¹⁵⁹ Vleeshauer, A., *Belgian Colonial Policy*, published by the Belgian Information Centre in New York (1943), p.30

¹⁶⁰ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.570

Writing to his Cabinet colleagues in 1944, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that in the post-War environment “the task of statesmanship is to build a new international economic order on the basis of freedom for individual countries to regulate their external economies effectively [...] But we shall greatly increase the difficulties of doing so if we persist in associating the idea of international economic co-operation with the subordination of human welfare to the absolute rule of market forces”.¹⁶¹

The Treasury in London was alert to the advantages of economic development of the Empire post-War,¹⁶² but its success and returns for the British economy relied on the highly insulated imperial economy in which the countries of the Sterling Area (including the Commonwealth dominions with the exception of Canada, the colonies and certain other states) traded freely with each other but controlled purchases from outside – especially dollars.¹⁶³ Britain’s imperial single market bound empire and economics together.

Yet, American hostility to this closed preferential trading system,¹⁶⁴ and the British resistance to allowing full convertibility of the dollar with Sterling, reflected a twofold problem which other colonial powers also struggled to square. On the one hand the USA agitating for access to European colonial markets raised concerns that American access to markets could divert much needed resources from European recovery.¹⁶⁵ On the other, dollar investment was inevitably needed to stimulate the economic and development activity in the colonies.¹⁶⁶ Dollar diplomacy was set to undermine Sterling and frustrate British efforts to ‘manage’ its economic revival.

In comparison, the Belgian Congo was not as shielded as the British Empire from the international markets. The economic consequences of war had presented a boom to the Belgian Congo. The colony, detached from Nazi occupied Belgium and in step with American and British war efforts, became one of the major providers of raw materials for the Allied Forces. Its economy saw growth rates approaching ten per cent and industrial production exceeding those levels.¹⁶⁷ On the eve of war, the value of its exports amounted to two billion Belgian francs; by 1948 it had reached 10 billion

¹⁶¹ National Archives CAB 66/45/41 - Cabinet Paper: Note from the Chancellor of the Exchequer on *The International Economic History of the Inter-War Period* (1944)

¹⁶² White, N., *Decolonisation: The British Experience Since 1945* (1999), p.9

¹⁶³ Darwin, J., British Decolonisation since 1945: A Puzzle or a Pattern?, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 12 (1984), p.197

¹⁶⁴ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.625

¹⁶⁵ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.23

¹⁶⁶ National Archives: CAB134/222 - Cabinet paper, Memorandum dated 5 July 1949 entitled ‘*Investment of Foreign Capital in the Colonies*’ by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

¹⁶⁷ Buelens, F., & Marysse, S. *Returns on Investments during the Colonial Era: The Case of Congo* (2006), p.20

francs.¹⁶⁸ There had been a tenfold increase in the production of rubber alone between 1939 and 1944 largely destined to foreign markets.¹⁶⁹ Belgium clearly saw an opportunity to recover its lost status following the war by harnessing the economic value of its colonial estate.¹⁷⁰ Part of its challenge appears to have been reconciling the appetite to unleash Congo's economic potential with its own domestic protectionist sentiments.

The extraordinary influence the USA brought to bear on the Allied Western world clearly stoked pro-colonial responses. Writing a dispatch to the Belgian Foreign Ministry in November 1944, the Consul General of Belgium to Jerusalem reported discontent about Belgo-USA relations among the Corps Expéditionnaires du Congo-Belge en Moyen-Orient who were stationed there at that time: "Une des critiques que j'entendis émettre fut que le Gouvernement avait 'vendu' le Congo aux Américains." [A criticism I hear being made of the Government is that it has 'sold' the Congo to the Americans.]¹⁷¹

The reference comes about from the rental of land in the Belgian Congo for the needs of the American military which was agreed during the war, and which would last an additional 15 years after the war. The actual agreements signed on 15 October 1942 allowed the USA to rent land necessary for the establishment of installations required for the reception, refining and distribution of petroleum products required by the USA for the needs of the military. In fact, commercial needs were excluded but it vividly demonstrated the balancing act in the immediate post-War years that the ailing imperial powers faced in managing domestic expectations about the future of the colonies.¹⁷²

MacKenzie makes the case that while far-sighted mandarins in the Colonial Office in London recognised decolonisation as a necessary option, it did not seem that way "to the ordinary Briton on the street".¹⁷³ Although, I would suggest domestic appetite for empire was not always clear or consistent; the *Manchester Guardian* reporting on a 1947 Colonial Office survey exposed "an ignorance of colonial affairs which is remarkable even when one grants that most people are not much interested in the subject".¹⁷⁴ Equally, in a 1948 edition of the *Revue Coloniale Belge*, an article on the

¹⁶⁸ Union Royale Belge pour les Pays d'Outre Mer, *La Colonisation Belge* (2006), p.231

¹⁶⁹ Van Reybrouck, D., *Congo: Een Geschiedenis* (2010), p.211

¹⁷⁰ Austin, R., *African Economic History* (1987), p.205

¹⁷¹ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 593.135392 – Letter dated 15 November 1944 from the Consul General of Belgium to Jerusalem to the Foreign Office regarding morale of the Congo Expeditionary Corps in the Middle East stationed in Jerusalem

¹⁷² MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 591 - Belgian Foreign Office papers circa 1942 relating to the Lend Lease agreement signed between the US and Belgium

¹⁷³ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: The Persistence of Empire in Metropolitan Culture, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. Ward, S. (2001), p.25

¹⁷⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 23 December 1948

prospects for tourism in the colony laments that there are a considerable number of Belgians who were ignorant that Belgium even possessed a colony.¹⁷⁵

Unlike the British focus on its framework of economic controls to shore up Sterling's position on the world markets, early post-War Belgium was able to foster its colonial economic development plans largely unencumbered. The Marshall Plan for European Recovery played a role in strengthening European investments in its colonies, as well as helping fund the large economic and welfare development programmes which France and Belgium put in place. Indeed, enhancing production both for the colonial powers but also bolstering American strategic interests was in complete alignment.¹⁷⁶

The immediate post-War years for the Sterling area were altogether choppier. The Sterling Crisis of 1947 had a profound effect on the economic fortunes of the British, stimulating a reflection about post-War recovery efforts and the colonial economic base. Not only did the crisis expose the UK's economic fragility, it also prompted renewed focus on the expansion of economic production in Africa. Subsequent devaluations, notably in 1949, brought about painful adjustments to the value of the pound on the international markets and created dollar shortages.¹⁷⁷ In this context, the Treasury in London placed an increasing focus on colonial economic development to boost colonial exports to the dollar area.¹⁷⁸

In a memorandum attached to the Cabinet's Economic Policy Committee on Investment of Foreign Capital in the Colonies on 5 July 1949 the Colonial Secretary stated that "there is considerable scope for the private enterprise to assist in the development of the Colonies".¹⁷⁹ He goes on to explain to his Cabinet colleagues that, indeed, dollar investment is both necessary and in line with President Truman's 'Four Point Program' announced in January 1949, which placed an emphasis on the role to be played by American private capital for technical and economic assistance in developing countries.¹⁸⁰

The framework for that development in the case of Britain had begun to take shape in the early stages of the war. Following riots in the British Caribbean in 1938, the Colonial Development & Welfare Act (CDWA) was borne in 1940 out of recognition that colonial neglect would lead to colonial

¹⁷⁵ *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 61 (1948), p.240

¹⁷⁶ Wilson, S., *African Decolonisation* (1994), p.87

¹⁷⁷ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.625

¹⁷⁸ White, N., *Decolonisation: The British Experience Since 1945* (1999), p.9

¹⁷⁹ National Archives CAB 134/222 - Memorandum dated 5 July 1949 by the Colonial Secretary attached to the Cabinet's Economic Policy Committee on Investment of Foreign Capital in the Colonies

¹⁸⁰ National Archives CAB 134/222 - Memorandum dated 5 July 1949 by the Colonial Secretary attached to the Cabinet's Economic Policy Committee on Investment of Foreign Capital in the Colonies

disaster.¹⁸¹ It served to make a commitment to the economic and social development of British colonies. The privations of war meant that there was little reality to the law until a subsequent act was passed in 1945. But the very policy had, as Pearce describes, “a propaganda value”.¹⁸² The Second Reading of the 1940 Act coincided with German occupation of France and the measures, he argues, “could be seen as an act of selfless devotion to her imperial trust”.¹⁸³

The CDWA passed in 1945 made a significant investment commitment with the dual purpose of improving conditions for colonial subjects while revitalising the metropolitan and colonised economies.¹⁸⁴ It was a difficult one to meet given the parlous economic circumstances of the immediate post-War years. However, it triggered a level of unparalleled government activity in its colonial wards, dubbed the “second colonial occupation”.¹⁸⁵

This activity was reflected in a significant programme of recruitment with British and Commonwealth personnel filling enlarged technical departments overseas. Between 1945 and 1948 alone, the Colonial Service attracted 4,100 new recruits.¹⁸⁶ They undertook programmes delivering aid, providing investment, technical skills, educational opportunities, health and agricultural science, as well as devising long term development plans. It was packaged, at least by the British, as preparing colonial subjects for eventual independence.¹⁸⁷

Clearly, the activity reflected a pledge made to the USA. However, it also served another purpose; it allowed Britain, as Pearce suggests, to re-brand. Britain’s policy was no longer imperialism, but ‘responsible colonialism’,¹⁸⁸ or ‘good neighbourliness’.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, the CDWA afforded Britain ‘general propaganda’ about its good intentions¹⁹⁰ in preparing subjects for self-government.¹⁹¹ In 1951, the Imperial Institute in London mounted an exhibition entitled ‘Focus on Colonial Progress’ as part of the Festival of Britain, described by MacKenzie as part of a renewed strategy of colonial development and welfare.¹⁹²

¹⁸¹ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.47

¹⁸² Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.21

¹⁸³ Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.21

¹⁸⁴ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.28

¹⁸⁵ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.628

¹⁸⁶ White, N., *Decolonisation: The British Experience Since 1945* (1999), p.10

¹⁸⁷ Hatch, J., *Africa Emergent* (1974), p.68

¹⁸⁸ Forbes Munroe, J., *Africa and the International Economy* (1976), p.180

¹⁸⁹ Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.30

¹⁹⁰ Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.30

¹⁹¹ Hatch, J., *Africa Emergent* (1974), p.90

¹⁹² MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: The Persistence of Empire in Metropolitan Culture, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. Ward, S. (2001), p.29

The Belgians, it seems, were also affected by a “concern to refurbish the image of empire”, although had no appetite for political concessions.¹⁹³ In line with the Lugard doctrine emphasising a mutual co-dependency between the rulers and ruled which, in turn, fostered benefits from shared economic progress (although minimal social and political change)¹⁹⁴, the Belgians too set about drawing up a plan premised on delivering prosperity, which in turn would raise the living standards of the Congolese. Conceived in 1949, although not adopted by Parliament until 1952, its ten-year plan known as *Plan Décennal* was a massive investment for Belgium. Originally conceived with a price tag of 25 billion francs (US\$500 million), the estimates were way off the mark with total costs almost doubling that figure.¹⁹⁵ Comparable figures for the same time period for British investment are difficult to extrapolate, however, some indication of the scale of their investment comes from the fact that between 1954-58 Britain supplied to its colonies in East Africa US\$62million as part of the development programme for that region.¹⁹⁶

The arrival of the Belgian plan coincided with an unparalleled decade of economic boom for the Belgian Congo following the buoyant years of the Second World War. Congo’s exports enjoyed good demand from overseas markets, in particular for its copper, which represented fifty to sixty per cent of the total value of minerals exported.¹⁹⁷

With the mining economy booming, national income rose from 29 to 47 billion francs. Efforts in the areas of medical and public health, also had definite, and sometimes “spectacular” impact on the circumstances of a large part of the Congolese population.¹⁹⁸ For example, Young reports that the Belgian Congo’s excellent medical services led to large-scale immunization campaigns to eliminate epidemic disease. In 1930 2,780,000 Africans received medical examinations; in 1955, the figure was 6,550,000.¹⁹⁹ Congolese historian Matamba offers a more levelling argument saying that “any local development [...] must be understood not as the result of a policy deliberated with the aim of emancipation of the local populations but with the goal of reaching the optimal (economic) output”.²⁰⁰

It was, therefore, in the framework of the British CDWA, France’s *Fonds d’Investissement et de Développement Economique et Social* (FIDES) and Belgium’s *Plan Décennal*, coupled with the

¹⁹³ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.26

¹⁹⁴ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.577

¹⁹⁵ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.38

¹⁹⁶ Forbes Munroe, J., *Africa and the International Economy* (1976), p.181

¹⁹⁷ Davidson, B., Chapter 14: Zaire, Rwanda & Burundi, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.739

¹⁹⁸ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* Edited by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.306

¹⁹⁹ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.12

²⁰⁰ Matamba, T., *The Development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (2006), p.44

1945/6 post-War accommodation with the USA over the precepts of colonialism, that long-term colonial policy towards Africa began to take shape.

Historians are not in agreement about whether WWII and the immediate post-War circumstances signalled the arrival of a conscious awareness among the colonial powers that they were at the beginning of the end of their imperial mandates. There are those who argue it set in train a process of decolonisation that was irreversible.²⁰¹ There are those who argue the investment into empire made during the late 1940s and early 1950s indicated there was no expectation that empire would soon be run down.²⁰²

Equally, there is a compelling argument to be made that there was a basic difference between the British and Belgian cases. Crowder states that, following the independence of India in particular, Britain accepted that “decolonisation of her empire was inevitable”, even if this would take place at a distant future time for her African colonies.²⁰³ The Belgians, he asserts in common with others such as von Albertini, Merriam and Young²⁰⁴, were in no mood for disbandment of their African empire, and immediately after the war there was no thought of independence for their Congo, even in the far distant future.²⁰⁵

Moreover, there was an inability by the Belgian authorities – informed by no historic experience whatsoever – to be able to shape a colonial and post-colonial future for their wards.²⁰⁶ This is made vividly clear when compared with an initiative undertaken by the Colonial Office in Britain to set up a committee in early 1947 charged with mapping a new approach to African policy.²⁰⁷ That British committee delivered the *Durham Report of the African Empire*. While its findings were premised on an expectation of being able to “control the course of events in Africa”, it set out a long-term goal, and process, towards the creation of locally elected councils, viewed as a first stage in nurturing pluralist, democratic societies in the colonies.²⁰⁸ Ultimately, and while there were no official

²⁰¹ Judd, D., *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present* (1996), p.14

²⁰² Darwin, J., British Decolonisation since 1945: A Puzzle or a Pattern? *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol 12 (1984), p.191; James, A., *Britain and the Congo Crisis, 1960-63* (1996), p.6

²⁰³ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.22

²⁰⁴ von Albertini, R., *Decolonization: The Administration and Future of the Colonies, 1919-1960* (1982), p.505; Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.32; Young, C., *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2., ed. Gann, L. & Duignan, P. (1969), p.484

²⁰⁵ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.41

²⁰⁶ Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L., & Duignan, P. (1969), p.484

²⁰⁷ Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.162

²⁰⁸ Low, D., Chapter 1: The Asian Mirror to Tropical Africa's Independence, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.27; Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.162

pronouncements, it is argued that this focus on cultivating a political base while fostering economic development characterised a coherent British strategy towards decolonisation. As Young states, power was to be devolved in “an orderly series of steps, by which representative political institutions were built around the bureaucratic core”.²⁰⁹ In contrast, there is no evidence that the Belgians conceived an equivalent policy for their empire. A positioning of ‘patient empiricism’ was adopted but did little other than advocate the status quo.²¹⁰ Their colonial policy in the early post-War years remained “defiantly paternalistic [...] control was exercised directly by Belgian administrators [...] and neither African nor Belgian residents of the colony had a voice in the government”.²¹¹

Where similarities in the two metropolitan strategies exist, was in the area of economic development. Both colonial powers focused on increasing the productive capacity of the colonies, and full expansion of African production and services, as well as reorganising existing industries and establishing new ones.²¹² Equally, both never envisaged altering the existing economic structures with the purpose of improving facilities for private business to expand and prosper. There is little evidence that economic control was to be devolved; the pattern of economic activity remained the same.²¹³

What emerges, then, is a complicated international scene in which imperial powers adopted differing strategies concerning their colonial missions, but that their licence to pursue those goals was propped up by an awkward accommodation with the USA, which extended an almost grudging acceptance of the colonial status quo. Therefore, mitigating those tensions and managing risk to achieve their stated ends could not only be conducted at the diplomatic level. Resources and efforts appear to have been invested both economically and commercially and by means of ‘soft’ diplomacy.

2.3 Post-War publicity, propaganda and tourism

We have seen that in the immediate post-War context, historians discuss the deployment of ‘propaganda’, ‘branding’ and the ‘refurbishing’ of the image of empire. It becomes apparent, therefore, that the delivery and presentation of government colonial policy – and its merits – was a subject of considerable energy.

²⁰⁹ Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L., & Duignan, P. (1969), p.488

²¹⁰ von Albertini, R., *Decolonization: The Administration and Future of the Colonies, 1919-1960* (1982) p.507

²¹¹ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.38

²¹² Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.166

²¹³ Hatch, J., *Africa Emergent* (1974), p.68

In a Cabinet Office memorandum from 1945, which looked at the future role of government publicity services, British Information Minister Edward Williams observed to his Cabinet colleagues that the “Foreign Office regards publicity as a branch of foreign policy”.²¹⁴ He goes on to make the case that overseas publicity is a function and interest of the Government as a whole, explaining that when creating the Ministry of Information in 1939, it was tasked with organising overseas publicity on an international scale for the first time. Williams made the case that this was for war purposes, but took the view “I can see nothing in present-day conditions which makes this form of organisation less necessary now”.²¹⁵

The recommendations of the accompanying report to Williams’s note set out the remit for a Central Office of Information (COI) which, while slimmed down, represented the evolution of the Ministry of Information in a post-War context. The remit of the original Ministry of Information was to enable Britain to meet its need for soldiers, increase production, and command political loyalty – especially from the colonies.²¹⁶ Not only is the language of ‘propaganda’ in the document used in the context of peace as in war, the Government continued to face similar challenges. Certainly, what appears to be an interchangeable nomenclature in this document and other period Foreign and Colonial Office papers reviewed indicates that in the embers of war, promotion and publicity needed to be ‘managed’.

Britain, of course, was in severe straitened economic circumstances in the post-War years and Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin considered the effective delivery of promotion and publicity necessary: “In view of the vital importance of our foreign trade, which will be greater than at any time before in our history, publicity for the promotion of British trade and industry (including, inter alia, the stimulation of tourist trade...) will require special attention. It will be necessary to undertake not only specific publicity to bring before the people of overseas countries the advantages of trade with Britain, the achievements of British industry and science, and the goods which we have to offer, but also special measures to secure a better understanding in Overseas countries of Britain’s commercial and economic policy”.²¹⁷ In short, he considers the objective should be “to build up a sympathetic attitude

²¹⁴ National Archives CAB 129/5 - Cabinet Paper: Report dated 30 November 1945 by the Lord President entitled ‘*Government Publicity Services*’ including a note by the Information Minister entitled as ‘Co-ordination of Overseas Publicity’ as Annex III

²¹⁵ National Archives CAB 129/5 - Cabinet Paper: Report dated 30 November 1945 by the Lord President entitled ‘*Government Publicity Services*’ including a note by the Information Minister entitled as ‘Co-ordination of Overseas Publicity’ as Annex III

²¹⁶ Gadsen, F., Wartime Propaganda in Kenya: The Kenya Information Office, 1939-1945, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1986), p.401

²¹⁷ National Archives CAB 129/5 - Cabinet Paper: Report dated 30 November 1945 by the Lord President entitled ‘*Government Publicity Services*’ including a note and report entitled ‘Co-ordination of Overseas Publicity’ by the Foreign Secretary as Annex II

towards the commercial and economic policy of Britain, as the world's greatest trading nation, as well as specifically 'to push' British goods".²¹⁸

As Foreign Secretary, Bevin did not have responsibility for either the Colonial Office nor for relations with the Dominions, which were separate Cabinet posts and, as such, the policy he articulates relates to the delivery of policy in the context of Britain, first and foremost. However, since the Foreign Secretary out-ranked the other two roles, the policy that "official or semi-official organisations like the British Council, the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Travel Association, which undertake one form or another of British national publicity to overseas countries, should receive guidance and information" would undoubtedly have a policy influence on the development of tourism in colonial Africa and the strategic importance it was afforded.²¹⁹

There are indications that the same orthodoxy influenced Belgian strategy. In 1945 Alfred Moeller de Laddersous was appointed the President of *les Fonds Colonial de Propagande Economique et Sociale*,²²⁰ a body responsible for promoting the modernising mission of the Belgian Congo by providing funds to efforts, initiatives and organisations which aid the broad process of promoting colonial economic and social progress.²²¹

In 1950 this became the *Centre d'Information et de Documentation du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* with the objective of: "de faire connaître par tous les moyens d'information, de documentation et de propagande en Belgique et ailleurs, tout ce qui se rapporte au CB, et au RU et de promouvoir l'expansion commerciale de ces territoires (Arrête royale, 25 janvier 1952)" [promoting by all means of information, documentation and propaganda in Belgium and elsewhere, all that relates to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi and the commercial expansion of these territories (Royal decree, 25 January 1952)].²²² Ensuring Belgium's modernising success in its colonial mission was, then, to be structured and well resourced.

However, Moeller de Laddersous was also the President of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* as well as serving as a board director of Sabena.²²³ Indeed the inter-relationship between *les Fonds Colonial de Propagande Economique et Sociale* and the agencies responsible for tourism ran deep. 1947 papers on

²¹⁸ National Archives CAB 129/5 - Cabinet Paper: Report dated 30 November 1945 by the Lord President entitled 'Government Publicity Services' including a note and report entitled 'Coordination of Overseas Publicity' by the Foreign Secretary as Annex II

²¹⁹ National Archives CAB 129/5 - Cabinet Paper: Report dated 30 November 1945 by the Lord President entitled 'Government Publicity Services' including a note entitled 'Coordination of Overseas Publicity' by the Foreign Secretary as Annex II

²²⁰ Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre Mer VIII *Biographie Belge d'Outre-Mer*, (1974)

²²¹ Geary, C., *In and Out of Focus: Images from Central Africa, 1885-1960* (2003), p.50

²²² MFAB, Office colonial, Introduction to the inventory of the (A4) Archives

²²³ Sabena Raad van Beheer, Bibliotheek Luchtvaart Afdeling, Koninklijk Leger Museum, Brussels

the decree and creation of the Leopoldville-anchored *Conseil Supérieur de Tourisme* [Superior Council of Tourism], a consultative body on the promotion of tourism in the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, show that the body would include a representative of the *les Fonds Colonial de Propagande Economique et Sociale*.²²⁴ It speaks to an emerging relationship in the early post-War years between the efforts to promote tourism and colonial agents charged with promoting economic and social progress.

Post-1945 both British and Belgian governments undertook reorganisations to their publicity machines. The British established the COI in the UK in 1946;²²⁵ this was augmented by the establishment of information posts created at diplomatic missions and regional information offices and roles being appointed in the empire. The COI issued the terms of reference for the functions of the Empire Information Service, a bureau dedicated to “working in close consultation with the Dominions, Colonial and India Offices, will [...] undertake production of publicity material on Empire subjects for distribution in this country [...] It will arrange the distribution of material to schools, voluntary organisations etc. It will also advise and guide the Production Divisions in their work on Empire subjects in overseas publicity”.²²⁶

A 1947 Colonial Office report on the establishment and functioning of Regional Information Offices – including one in Nairobi replacing the wartime body charged with delivering British and Allied propaganda²²⁷ – is more explicit in its explanation of government policy in relation to colonial positioning, stating that “His Majesty’s Government had some degree of responsibility for developing publicity in the United Kingdom and in foreign countries about its colonial achievements”.²²⁸ Notwithstanding the Colonial Office’s new strategy approach as set out in the *Durham Report*, this indicates that the communication of that course of action, including the modernising efforts in the economic and social realm as articulated by the CDWA, was sufficiently important, especially in view of the relationship to the USA.

In the context of the immediate post-War boom and investment at the Colonial Office, this remit appears to have received added clarity and focus in 1948. A Colonial Office memorandum to the Treasury sets out a three-year expansion of publicity services. Colonial Office thinking appears to

²²⁴ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Copy of the draft decree establishing the *Commissariat Général* and the *Conseil Supérieur du Tourisme* dated 2 October 1947

²²⁵ National Archives CO875/21/1 - Note dated 1 August 1946 from the Central Office of Information defining functions of the Empire Information Service

²²⁶ National Archives CO875/21/1 - Note dated 1 August 1946 from the Central Office of Information defining functions of the Empire Information Service

²²⁷ Gadsen, F., Wartime Propaganda in Kenya: The Kenya Information Office, 1939-1945, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1986), p.401

²²⁸ National Archives CO875/23/3 - Colonial Office report dated 16 October 1948 entitled ‘*Regional Information Offices: Functions*’ by the Director of Information Services

have distilled the objectives of its publicity efforts as the “projection of Britain” to the colonies and the “projection of the Colonies” to Britain.²²⁹ Such was the concern about growing Russian influence in Africa that a meeting of the Cabinet on 22nd July 1948 agreed to “approve in principle the appointment of a Committee to co-ordinate colonial propaganda”.²³⁰

With an annual budget of £232,000 and an existing staff of 30, there was a recommendation it should be expanded in order to enable the Department to handle the increased workload resulting from the steady development of colonial information work in the colonies and in the UK.²³¹ The degree to which ‘management’ of the flow of information and publicity was proposed is reflected in the memorandum which goes on to explain that “steps are being planned for the improvement of the press in the Colonies. It is considered that one of the most potent weapons now available to Communist propaganda is the Colonial Press which is for the most part of a deplorably low standard and does more than anything to stir up racial and anti-British feeling”.²³² This not only suggests evidence of an appetite to ensure positive communication about Empire was generated and issued, but that there was also a policy to intervene and affect the means by which that information in the colonies was disseminated.

This was not a challenge faced by the Belgian colonial authorities since the colonial press was not free and no such guarantee had been made under the general provisions of the 1908 Colonial Charter.²³³ While the number of suppressions remained relatively few and articles critical of certain aspects of the administration were tolerated,²³⁴ the Belgian authorities were largely able to direct and dictate appropriate material to rebut any communist propaganda that could infiltrate its domains.

The British positioning on colonial publicity was further refined and articulated in July 1952 by the Committee of Enquiry in their report on overseas information services, explaining that: “World opinion regarding the Colonial relationship is a matter of [...] international relations generally. The paramount objects of overseas information work in relation to the Colonies are twofold: first, as political control from London is loosened by constitutional advance, to strengthen the bonds of sentiment and enlightened self-interest between the Colonies, Great Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth, and, secondly, to present British Colonial policy, achievement and world importance

²²⁹ National Archives CAB134/98 - Cabinet Office papers including interim report to the Committee on Colonial Information Policy dated 15 December 1948

²³⁰ National Archives CAB134/98 - Minutes of a Cabinet meeting dated 22 July 1948

²³¹ National Archives CAB134/98 - Cabinet Office papers including interim report to the Committee on Colonial Information Policy dated 15 December 1948

²³² National Archives CAB134/98 - Memorandum by the Colonial Office entitled ‘*Expansion of Publicity Services: Three year plan*’ and accompanying Treasury note dated 15 December 1948

²³³ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.53

²³⁴ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.53

to the world”.²³⁵ The Committee of Enquiry goes on to acknowledge that: “relations with the Colonies are increasingly affected by what the world thinks and says of them, and world opinion is much influenced by what it is told of the way in which Colonial policy is working out, [...] displays the economic, technical and military achievements and [...] demonstrates the ways in which Britain is helping the Colonies to achieve the political and economic development which they desire”.²³⁶

Set against the need for both increasing and expanding economic activities as well as attracting valuable dollars into the Sterling Area, a significant intervention on the post-War contribution of tourism was delivered to the Cabinet by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations (previously the Dominions) Lord Addington on 25 July who announced: “I believe that the greatest single opportunity for increasing European dollar earnings lie in increasing the number of tourists who come from North America”.²³⁷ Arguing that the potential importance of tourism as a factor in the balance of payments was usually under-estimated, he evidenced his assertion with three supported facts:

- a. “Canada over many years has done everything possible to facilitate and promote the growing and export of wheat. Yet, in the years before 1939, Canada earned more on her balance of payments account from tourism than she did from wheat.”
- b. “In 1949 our earnings of foreign exchange from tourism are estimated to be £40 million from tourism, and it is estimated £15 million from sea and air passages. The amount of dollar earnings is continually increasing. The President of the Board of Trade told the House of Commons that tourism is already our single greatest dollar earner.”
- c. “The French understand the tourist industry very well and have always earned large sums from it; but their estimate for dollar earnings for 1949-50 is three times greater than their actual estimate of earnings in 1948”.²³⁸

The case for tourism’s role, then, was taken to the highest decision making body in Government. Equally, there is compelling anecdotal evidence suggesting the importance attached at this time by the Belgian government (at various levels) to the positioning of its colonies, and their development, overseas. First, in the minutes of a meeting of the *Conseil d’Administration* of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* in Brussels on 10 October 1947, a point is made clearly about the role for representing

²³⁵ National Archives CAB129/54 - Report dated 24 July 1952 entitled ‘*The Overseas Information Services*’ by the Committee of Enquiry set up by the Foreign Office

²³⁶ National Archives CAB129/54 - Report dated 24 July 1952 entitled ‘*The Overseas Information Services*’ by the Committee of Enquiry set up by the Foreign Office

²³⁷ National Archives CAB134/222 - A note dated 1 July 1949 circulated by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to the Cabinet’s Economic Policy Committee

²³⁸ National Archives CAB134/222 - A note dated 1 July 1949 circulated by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to the Cabinet’s Economic Policy Committee

Government information offices in Belgium and overseas in: “effectuer une centralisation des organismes officiels de tourisme ainsi que de la propagande touristique et colonial en général.” [achieving a centralisation of the official tourism organisations, as well as of tourist and colonial propaganda in general].²³⁹ Furthermore, in the 1947 draft papers for the decree to establish the *Conseil Supérieur du Tourisme*, there are echoes of the British two-pronged national and international strategy towards publicity and information. Article 2.7 states that the *Conseil* should be responsible annually for “les moyens de propagande pour la Belgique et pour l'étranger” [the means of propaganda for Belgium and overseas].²⁴⁰

Second, in that same year the Belgian Head of State the Prince Regent (brother of King Leopold III who was in exile from 1944 to 1950) paid a visit to the Belgian Congo. It was the first such visit since Albert I in 1928.²⁴¹ Every detail of this visit was minutely managed, with an eye to the pro-colonial publicity benefits it would deliver. Vice-Governor Pétilion wrote to the respective provincial governors and the governor of Ruanda-Urundi saying that: “Il n'est pas nécessaire que j'attire votre attention sur l'intérêt que présente au point de vue de la propagande, tant sur le plan national au international, la réussite de ce programme.” [It is not necessary that I draw your attention to the interest that arises on the issue of propaganda relating to the success of this programme, for the national and international strategy].²⁴² Evidently such was the importance of harnessing the success of the visit that the *New York Times* wrote: “Ostensibly the trip will be a good-will voyage to thank the colony for aiding the Allies during the war. It will serve as the impetus for a wide range of Government public works – food, health, educational and cultural programs for the natives. Objectives of a deeper nature include the need to publicise the Belgian Congo abroad and at home”.²⁴³

Third, in 1951 a conference was organised which suggests Belgium was vexed by criticisms of its colonial activities. The conference held in Brussels and organised by the Association of Belgian Colonial Press was entitled “The Colonial Problem in Public Opinion”.²⁴⁴ It was held under the patronage of the Minister for the Colonies and, given colonial correspondents in the Belgian Congo had been subject to government censorship, the output of the conference was unlikely to be other than

²³⁹ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Minutes of a meeting on 10 October 1947 of the *Conseil d'Administration* of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*

²⁴⁰ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Copy of the draft decree dated 2 October 1947 establishing the *Commissariat Général* and the *Conseil Supérieur du Tourisme*

²⁴¹ Boon, R., *Tot meerdere eer en glorie van de Prins-Regent, het (verscheurde) moederland en de Belgische koloniën: De Reise van Prins-Regent Karel naar Belgisch-Congo en Ruanda-Urundi 29 juni-12 augustus 1947*, M.A. dissertation, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (2011), p.33

²⁴² Boon, R., *Tot meerdere eer en glorie van de Prins-Regent, het (verscheurde) moederland en de Belgische koloniën: De Reise van Prins-Regent Karel naar Belgisch-Congo en Ruanda-Urundi 29 juni-12 augustus 1947*, M.A. dissertation, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (2011), p.203

²⁴³ *New York Times*, 5 May 1947

²⁴⁴ Le Problème Colonial devant l'Opinion Publique, *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 149 (1951), p.913

broadly in step with government thinking. The leitmotif governing debate during the conference was well expressed at the outset of proceedings by the Chairman of the Association of Belgian Colonial Press, Fred van der Linden, who said “Les puissances qui ont entrepris la lourde et noble tâche d'assurer un régime social à des peuples arriérés ont le droit de revendiquer avec fierté les services qu'elles ont rendus à la cause de la Civilisation. Ce serait un déni de justice de leur en contester les mérites” [The powers that have undertaken the heavy and noble task of ensuring a social system to backward peoples have the right to proudly claim the services they have rendered to the cause of civilization. It would be a denial of justice to challenge their merits].²⁴⁵

It is reported in his speech at the conference the former Governor General of the Belgian Congo, Pierre Ryckmans, linked government policy with the Truman Four Point Programme explaining that “le vieil impérialisme, l'exploitation au profit de l'étranger, n'a aucune place dans nos programmes” [the old imperialism - exploitation of profit for abroad - has no place in our programmes].²⁴⁶

A more robust defence of colonialism comes from the left-wing Senator for Gabon in the French Senate, Luc Durand-Reville, who lashes out at anticolonial sentiment in the USA in a most remarkable way: “Il n'en reste pas moins que nos amis américains sont injustes. Parce que leurs problèmes de colonisation ont été résolus dans le cours du XIXème siècle, alors que les nôtres sont nés pratiquement avec le XXème; parce que les populations indigènes qu'ils ont rencontrées sur leur chemin ont pratiquement disparu, tandis que notre présence à leurs côtés a partout développé les nôtres. [...] Il est souverainement injuste de leur part de reprocher aujourd'hui aux nations coloniales européennes une présence colonial au-delà des mers, que leurs propres ancêtres ont eu le privilège de pouvoir assurer à l'intérieur même d'un seul continent.” [The fact remains that our American friends are unfair. Because their problems of colonisation were solved in the course of the nineteenth century, while ours were practically born in the twentieth century, because the indigenous peoples they encountered on their way have virtually disappeared, while our presence at their sides has developed ours everywhere. [...] It is patently unjust for them to blame the European colonial nations today for a colonial presence beyond the seas, while their own ancestors had the privilege to be able to ensure that power across an entire continent].²⁴⁷

This was not conciliatory language. Arguably, since the speaker came from the French Empire, he was not in any capacity representing a Belgian point of view, although it has been observed by a number of historians and commentators that in the early post-War years these two colonial powers

²⁴⁵ Le Probleme Colonial devant l'Opinion Publique, *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 149 (1951), p.913

²⁴⁶ Exposé de M Pierre Ryckmans, *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 149 (1951), p.914

²⁴⁷ Exposé de M Pierre Ryckmans, *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 149 (1951), p.914

were at one with their resistance to change.²⁴⁸ However, the organisers clearly knew the views of the speaker. Moreover, the conference taken as a whole was not a broad and critical discussion on colonialism, rather, served as positive reinforcement or validation of official Government policy. And since it dedicated a session on American public opinion, it is noteworthy that there were no speakers presenting a counter position from the USA, nor indeed was an American present among the attendees.

The conference also reflects what Young describes as Belgium's lack of "tradition of critical appraisal of its colonial effort".²⁴⁹ Scholarly research, he argues, was oriented toward social and economic matters, and political study was largely restricted to improving the techniques of colonial administration, based on the assumption of the permanence of the system.²⁵⁰ This is echoed in a dispatch from the British Embassy in Brussels to the Foreign Office dated 1 February 1957. "There is a noticeable gap to be filled between the superficiality of the popular press and the highly technical or scientific reviews and periodicals covering ethnological, linguistic or economic matters in a form that can interest only the specialist. The Belgians have not in fact been empire-minded in the sense that the British and the French are, and there has not hitherto been a sufficient body of thinking to produce anything in the nature of a Congo policy".²⁵¹

Lastly, the following year, the former Belgian Minister of Colonies, Pierre Wigny, paid a visit to the USA and was stunned by the anti-colonial sentiment directed towards Belgium. "Concerning Congo, I was struck by the liveliness of the slander against Leopold II. Everywhere one still mentions the cut hands and the red rubber. The class books on contemporary history still mention the atrocities. The current literature keeps these recollections alive". His recommendation was the launch of a propaganda campaign in order to gain some sympathy for the Belgian Congo.²⁵²

2.4 Conclusion

The argument presented is that Colonial governments viewed it as their responsibility to ensure, manage and deliver a continuum of pro-colonial communications with a view to convincing colonised and metropolitan audiences alike of the merits of their imperial missions – regardless of whether they had been re-cast or not as a result of WWII. MacKenzie and Stanard write with authority on both the British and Belgian approaches (respectively) to the precepts of colonial propaganda.

²⁴⁸ Hatch, J., *Africa Emergent* (1974) p.98

²⁴⁹ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.22

²⁵⁰ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.22

²⁵¹ National Archives FO371/125394 - Dispatch dated 1 February 1957 from the British Embassy in Brussels to the Foreign Office

²⁵² Vanthemsche, G., *The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo, Europe and the World*, in *European Historiography* ed. by Lévai, C. (2006), p.116

MacKenzie makes the case that post-War British governments were increasingly under pressure to maintain a stream of constant positive information to offset the domestic privations and colonial resistance: “If the [colonial] economic image had been relatively uncontroversial in the 1930s, the growing power and pursuit of self-interest by white settler groups in eastern and Southern Africa, the revolt of a peasantry in the Mau Mau campaign in Kenya and other revolts in South-East Asia rendered it highly controversial in the 1950s [...] it was no longer possible to celebrate an Empire of peace and prosperity when it was patently at war with itself and the old colonial economic altruism was revealed as a hollow sham”.²⁵³ Stanard concurs arguing that pro-colonial propaganda was a basic part of the Belgian administration of the Congo and that it successfully conveyed the concept of an everlasting colonial presence in Africa.²⁵⁴

There is also sufficient evidence set out above to show a conscious strategy was adopted by both British and Belgian governments for the delivery of pro-colonial propaganda to complement diplomatic efforts at the international level. Equally, in so adopting this strategy, there appears to be evidence to suggest that, at the very least, it was recognised that tourism and its marketing contributed to these efforts.

²⁵³ MacKenzie, J., *Imperialism & Popular Culture* (1984), p.184

²⁵⁴ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.14

3 Emerging trends in post-War international tourism

3.1 Introduction

Tourism is an economic activity which stretches back to biblical times and beyond; after all the story of the nativity as recorded in the Gospel of St Luke is played out in the context of a tourist activity.²⁵⁵ The provenance of ‘modern’ tourism is rooted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and there is a body of evidence that concludes post-War tourism was significantly influenced by pre-war tourism.²⁵⁶ This chapter argues that there were a number of impetuses – economic, political and migratory, as well as advances in transportation – which helped both spawn a ‘golden age’ of both prosperity and tourism after WWII.²⁵⁷ It will also highlight that ‘soft diplomacy’ and ‘dollar diplomacy’, such as education and cultural exchanges, served the dual purpose of boosting the tourist industry while skilfully advancing foreign policy ambitions. This, I argue, amounted to statecraft.

3.2 The arrival of a ‘golden age’

In June 1939, a month after Italy’s invasion of Albania, the Italian Director of National Tourism travelled to its newly acquired colony to assess the touristic infrastructure and create a tourism master plan.²⁵⁸ European dictatorships of the 1930s viewed tourism as a means to strengthen their hold over recently occupied countries. It also played to the notion of imperialist aims, ambition and might while serving as both a tool to maintain a sense of domestic well-being and stability, and as an instrument of propaganda.²⁵⁹ In that sense tourism helped deliver overall messaging of past glories and imperial aspirations. As Page argues, colonialism laid the foundations for tourism, and tourism then plays a role in the re-invention of colonial relations in a post-colonial world.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁵ ‘there was no room for them in the inn’, St Luke, Chapter 2 v.7, *The King James Bible* printed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1897), p.818

²⁵⁶ Harrison, D., *Tourism and the less developed world: issues and case studies* (2001), p.3; Pirie, G., Incidental Tourism: British Imperial air travel in the 1930s, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 1: No. 1 (2009), p.49

²⁵⁷ Baranowski, S., & Furlough, E., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe* (2001), p.17

²⁵⁸ Hom, S., Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), p.294

²⁵⁹ Costa, R., The ‘Great Façade of Nationality’: Some Considerations on Portuguese Tourism and the Multiple meanings of Estado Novo Portugal in Travel Literature, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), p.51; Semmens, K., Chapter 8: Travel in Merry Germany: Tourist culture in the Third Reich, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.159; Spode, H., Some Quantitative Aspects of Kraft durch Freude Tourism 1934-1939, in *European Tourism and Culture* ed. by Dritsas, M., (2007), p.123

²⁶⁰ Page, M., (ed) *Colonialism: An International Social, Cultural and Political Encyclopedia* (2003), p.589

Of course, tourism was not simply a means to propagate political messages. It became an economic legacy of empire. Shipping and airlines all played their part in servicing the movement of personnel from the metropolitan to the outpost and back again. This generated a commercial viability for and breathed life into tourism, and it became recognised as an economic activity. The shipping lines (e.g. Castle Line and Maritime Anvers), whose foundations and success were bound up with the development of the British and Belgian Empires, recognised the viability of travel as pleasurable and healthy, as well as profitable and culturally enlightening.²⁶¹

The maritime links provided the lifelines for European empires in the nineteenth century. They were augmented by aeronautical links in the twentieth century, notably in the late 1920s and early 1930s, as commercial airline operations became established.²⁶² In Europe and North America the aeronautical industry matured rapidly serving military, postal, commercial and leisure purposes.²⁶³

The war disrupted international travel and the pre-war fledging international tourist industry. However, post-War there were a number of significant impetuses.

3.3 Post-War travel stimuli

The war disrupted international travel and the pre-war fledging international tourist industry. However, post-War there were a number of significant impetuses.

First, there was a concerted political effort to foster international travel by Americans. We have seen already the recognition of the value – politically and economically – attached to tourism in the immediate post-War years by the British government. Equally, the USA became a vocal advocate of fostering travel and using ‘dollar diplomacy’ or ‘soft diplomacy’ to extend economic and cultural influence in a bid to resist creeping communist influences. This was articulated most vividly by the United States’ Under Secretary of Commerce C.V. Whitney in November 1949 who explained: “My country has declared as a basic policy of its belief in the encouragement of bona-fide travel [...] between all countries as a vital factor in promoting trade, economic and cultural understanding”.²⁶⁴ As Endy explains, America recognised the opportunity “to exploit leisure travel on behalf of broader

²⁶¹ MacKenzie, J, Chapter 1: Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Conflict and Identity* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.27

²⁶² Pirie, G., Incidental Tourism: British Imperial air travel in the 1930s, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 1: No. 1 (2009), p.49

²⁶³ Pirie, G., Incidental Tourism: British Imperial air travel in the 1930s, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 1: No. 1 (2009), p.49

²⁶⁴ National Archives CO822/153/3 - Copy of a speech circa September 1947 given by Mr C.V. Whitney, US Under Secretary of Commerce at the International Union of Official Travel Organisations, Luxembourg

economic policy goals or cultural propaganda efforts”, and in so doing they developed a consumer-orientated version of ‘dollar diplomacy’.²⁶⁵

Europe was the principal target of American efforts. Its Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Western Europe included a four-pronged programme of stimulating economic recovery through the “efficient and economical” medium of travel.²⁶⁶ A strong Western Europe would serve as a buttress to the Soviet threat; tourism had its role to play in that effort. The four relevant areas of economic activity set out in the Marshall Plan included the development of intra-European travel; a programme to foster American visitors to Europe; a travel financing programme to help businesses in the sector; and a travel investment guarantees programme.²⁶⁷

Tourism, in this context, was a complement to official American aid, and state support played a very significant role in the rise of post-War tourism.²⁶⁸ As Merrill argues, American citizens not only participated in the diplomatic process, they facilitated post-War economic reconstruction by means of tourism.²⁶⁹ Moreover they built a market in which to sell American conveniences to make the stay of the visitor from the USA as pleasant as possible, and in so doing contributed to the building an anti-communist community. This was a holistic approach to ‘soft diplomacy’.

Further evidence of the political and economic value attached to tourism, and its contribution alongside more informational or diplomatic responsibilities is provided by the establishment in 1950 of the Commonwealth Liaison Committee Working Group on Tourism which reported the same year with a raft of recommendations on the promotion of intra-Commonwealth tourism. Among its conclusions, it called for “representatives in London of some Commonwealth countries to meet from time to time in an informal Tourism Committee, arranged by the British Travel and Holidays Association, to discuss matters of mutual interest, and also encouraged cooperative publicity schemes”.²⁷⁰ It also made an overt call to prioritize dollar tourism and other tourists and that “in those cases where distinction can be made, a degree of discrimination in favour of dollar visitors is justifiable”.²⁷¹

²⁶⁵ Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.4

²⁶⁶ National Archives CO822/153/3 - Copy of a speech circa September 1947 given by Mr C.V. Whitney, US Under Secretary of Commerce at the International Union of Official Travel Organisations, Luxembourg

²⁶⁷ National Archives CO822/153/3 - Copy of a speech circa September 1947 given by Mr C.V. Whitney, US Under Secretary of Commerce at the International Union of Official Travel Organisations, Luxembourg

²⁶⁸ Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.4

²⁶⁹ Merrill, D., *Negotiating Paradise: US tourism and empire in twentieth century Latin America* (2009), p.9

²⁷⁰ National Archives CO822/153/3 - Colonial Office Circular Memorandum dated 3 October 1950 entitled *Tourism* and attached Commonwealth Liaison Committee Report by the Working Group on Tourism

²⁷¹ National Archives CO822/153/3 - Colonial Office Circular Memorandum dated 3 October 1950 entitled *Tourism* and attached Commonwealth Liaison Committee Report by the Working Group on Tourism

The UK, it appears, had taken heed of such recommendations and by 1949, as part of the Britain's renewed emphasis to draw in dollar earnings, the Foreign Office set about expanding its trade promotion organisation in the USA, establishing offices across the country.²⁷² The effect of the Marshall Plan on tourism, then, was to see the rapid emergence of European states investing in the marketing of their nations to foreign tourists (notably in the USA), identifying appropriate attractions and investing in supporting the development of touristic infrastructure, and the training of people in the sector.²⁷³

As we have seen in Chapter 2, foreign policy as well as overseas embassies and missions were to serve as both agents and advocates for travel to the homeland. Such functions often shifted to national tourist organisations, which in turn set up dedicated offices overseas. The British Travel Association was set up in 1950, which had evolved from a succession of private sector organisations dating back to the late 1920s.²⁷⁴ With the expansion of national airlines, they too began to play a dual purpose: in part facilitating tourism by providing the means of transportation, in part taking on an ambassadorial role. By opening up strategically important air routes, setting up national airline offices and flying the national flag, they complemented the diplomatic efforts.

Clearly, increased prosperity had a marked effect on tourism development. The legacies of the war and its subsequent period of reconstruction and regeneration were full employment, rapid advances in technology and anticipation of a prosperous and caring society.²⁷⁵ Baranowski and Furlough have argued this was a 'golden age' of prosperity in which the "goal of material well-being [was] a birth right" and consumerism and leisure signified well-being.²⁷⁶

A Sabena publication from 1959 explains that: "Formerly, tourists were privileged and few; today, there are millions of active enthusiasts in the field of travel. In all parts of Europe, gigantic efforts have been made to enable workers and their families to enjoy holidays under the happiest possible conditions. [...] Until recently, tourism was limited to national frontiers; today the glamour of international travel is within the grasp of all".²⁷⁷

²⁷² National Archives CO852/1039 - Cabinet Committee on Colonial Development Note dated 2 November 1949 entitled *Promotion of Colonial Dollar Exports* and attached Circular Telegram to All Colonies

²⁷³ Baranowski, S., & Furlough, E., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe* (2001), p.18

²⁷⁴ Jeffries, D., *Governments and Tourism* (2001), p.81

²⁷⁵ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-war Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.13

²⁷⁶ Baranowski, S., & Furlough, E., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe* (2001), p.17

²⁷⁷ Aviation and Social Tourism, *Sabena Revue*, No. 1 (1959), p.18

To be fair, travel and tourism were expensive. When Heathrow Airport opened on 1st January 1946 there were very few passenger flights, and the few that existed were extortionately expensive.²⁷⁸ Across much of Europe, basic infrastructure such as roads and rail links were in a poor state of repair and accommodation needed to be re-furbished. Travel offered few comforts and considerable bureaucracy and frustrations.²⁷⁹ This included strict controls on the amount of currency a traveller could take out of their home country.

As I have noted in Chapter 2, this was a particular problem for the UK set on pursuing a policy of bolstering Sterling against the dollar through a strict framework of controls. Those frustrations were discussed at the Cabinet Whitehall papers from 1948 reveal, which reviewed foreign travel allowances and the impact of petrol rationing. The case was presented to the Cabinet by the Minister for Fuel and Power that the ban on private motoring and other petrol restrictions had an adverse effect on hotels, which as a result were unable to afford to re-equip their premises to the standards acceptable to American tourists.²⁸⁰

This presented a very serious concern to the government in the year when the UK was to host the Olympic Games, expecting an unusually large numbers of American tourists to visit, generating an estimated spend of \$30 million²⁸¹. It was explained to the Cabinet that if the conditions in British hotels were such that they curtailed their stay, valuable dollar income would be lost, and even more importantly, would seriously prejudice British prospects of earning dollar income from the tourist trade in subsequent years.²⁸²

At the same time the Cabinet recognised that the policy for promoting a closer political and economic integration of Western Europe, which they had approved in Cabinet on 8th January 1948, would be stultified by continuing restrictions (i.e. limitations on exchange controls) on the free movement of, and exchange between, the peoples of Western Europe. In line with that foreign policy commitment, the Government was vexed by the dilemma that travel could not become, nor be seen as, the prerogative only of the wealthier classes.²⁸³ The Chancellor of the Exchequer was, therefore, charged

²⁷⁸ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-war Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.138

²⁷⁹ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-war Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.138

²⁸⁰ National Archives CAB 128/12 - Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 January 1948 (including a discussion entitled *Foreign Travel Allowances and Basic Petrol Ration*)

²⁸¹ National Archives CAB 128/12 - Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 January 1948 (including a discussion entitled *Foreign Travel Allowances and Basic Petrol Ration*)

²⁸² National Archives CAB 128/12 - Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 January 1948 (including a discussion entitled *Foreign Travel Allowances and Basic Petrol Ration*)

²⁸³ National Archives CAB 128/12 - Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 January 1948 (including a discussion entitled *Foreign Travel Allowances and Basic Petrol Ration*)

to investigate the possibilities of providing foreign exchange for tourists to a limited number of countries under bilateral agreements and, therefore, not to jeopardise loss of dollar revenues.²⁸⁴

Indeed, there appeared to be greater enthusiasm for travel after the Second World War than, perhaps, there had ever been in British history.²⁸⁵ Stanley Adams told *The Times* in April 1946 that “the urge to travel is sweeping the people of this land and other war-weary lands like an epidemic”.²⁸⁶ While this was probably an exaggeration, the holiday appeared on the personal agenda of non-material post-War expenditure.²⁸⁷ By 1950, it was reported a million Britons were travelling abroad each year;²⁸⁸ Thomas Cook announced that “thousands of requests are being received daily about travel and continental holidays”.²⁸⁹ Its founder’s vision of democratising travel appeared to be taking hold.

Second, the end of the Second World War witnessed many complex migratory flows and pressures. In Britain, there was growing public and political concern about the implications of a declining population resulting in an unprecedented labour shortage. The Ministry of Labour reports recorded the decline, prompting fears that an already frustrated economy would be further hampered.²⁹⁰ The immediate solution was threefold; the recruitment of ‘displaced persons’ from continental Europe; huge volumes of Irish immigration; and the arrival of immigrants from the West Indies.²⁹¹ In 1948, the Windrush arrived in Britain bringing 492 subjects of Jamaican origin, who were to be some of the first arrivals in a steady flow of immigration from the Caribbean and other parts of the Commonwealth to the UK.²⁹²

The consequence was Government reluctance to promote or encourage post-War migration – even to the Empire. And yet, emigration was underway. Between 1946-49, there was a substantial surge with 590,022 emigrants leaving Britain, primarily for Australia, Canada and other Commonwealth

²⁸⁴ National Archives CAB 128/12 - Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 January 1948 (including a discussion entitled *Foreign Travel Allowances and Basic Petrol Ration*)

²⁸⁵ Ward, S. & Hsu-Ming, T., Chapter 9: Wandering in the Wake of Empire: British Travel and Tourism in the Post-Imperial World, in *British Culture and the end of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.166

²⁸⁶ Brendon, P., *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (1991), p.281

²⁸⁷ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-war Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.137

²⁸⁸ Ward, S. & Hsu-Ming, T., Chapter 9: Wandering in the Wake of Empire: British Travel and Tourism in the Post-Imperial World, in *British Culture and the end of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.166

²⁸⁹ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-war Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.138

²⁹⁰ Constantine, S., British Emigration to the Empire/Commonwealth since 1880, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2003), p.25

²⁹¹ Constantine, S., British Emigration to the Empire/Commonwealth since 1880, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2003), p.25

²⁹² Goodwin, S., *Africa in Europe* (2009), p.265

countries.²⁹³ As has been explained in Chapter 2 a ‘second occupation’ of empire followed the war, as colonial governments committed to intensify efforts to press ahead with development and reform.²⁹⁴

Tantamount to what Crowder describes as a renewal of colonial missions, colonial administrations dispatched technicians, engineers and civil servants to implement development and change.²⁹⁵ White describes the influx into the Belgian Congo in the post-War years as a “massive second colonial invasion”.²⁹⁶ However, in overall terms Belgian emigration remained constrained in the post-War years. Belgium’s colonial enterprise, Vanthemsche explains, never led to the level of emigration that took place with the British and French empires.²⁹⁷

In short, inbound and outbound migratory patterns in Europe were having a discernible effect both societally, but also in helping revive the travel and transportation sector.

Third, technological advances meant that the experience of travel was becoming both more comfortable and increasingly more affordable. In the 1930s, travel and particularly air travel became less and less of a novelty as commercial airline operations took off in the 1920s and 1930s.²⁹⁸ However, the development of commercial air travel between the two world wars was nothing compared to the boom that started in the 1950s, when jet propulsion, the introduction of wider-bodied aircraft and low-cost carriers helped to create and accelerate mass air tourism.²⁹⁹

In 1959 *Sabena Revue* reported that the growth of international travel was due to the advent of the aeroplane which had “solved a double problem: lack of time, lack of money”.³⁰⁰ After the war, the world was left with a surplus of planes and military airfields, established in locations previously not served by air transport. The three growth areas of early post-War tourism activity were Europe which attracted from North America “new imperialists visiting the fading cultures”,³⁰¹ North Americans visiting the Caribbean, and Europeans visiting the Mediterranean; all made more accessible by the advent of the airline. Countries, destinations and resorts that had previously required days to reach

²⁹³ Constantine, S., British Emigration to the Empire/Commonwealth since 1880, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2003), p.25

²⁹⁴ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.628

²⁹⁵ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.28

²⁹⁶ White, N., *Decolonisation: The British Experience Since 1945* (1999), p.90

²⁹⁷ Vanthemsche, G., *Belgium and the Congo: 1885-1980* (2012), p.62

²⁹⁸ Pirie, G., 'Incidental tourism: British Imperial air travel in the 1930s', *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2009), p.49

²⁹⁹ Pirie, G., 'Incidental tourism: British Imperial air travel in the 1930s', *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2009), p.49

³⁰⁰ *Sabena Revue*, No. 1 (1959), p.18

³⁰¹ Turner, L., & Ash, J., *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (1975), p.97

were now accessible in a fraction of the time by air.³⁰² The growth story of Pan American World Airways (Pan Am) characterised the era and America's place in the jet age; in short its post-War domination of the overseas air travel market was "nothing less than post-War America's economic imperialism in practice".³⁰³

Fourth, it has been observed by some commentators that in the aftermath of an appalling war, there emerged a nostalgia for the perceived return of the pre-war "good old times".³⁰⁴ Fears of return to war, deprivation or unemployment, began to give way to more optimistic images of peaceful modernisation and cultural development.³⁰⁵

Empire had its role in fostering that greater sense of pride and national well-being. Colonial exhibitions, colonial months and trade fairs took place in the European metropolises during the 1940s and 1950s.³⁰⁶ The cinema drew inspiration from colonial adventure providing the spectacle of exotic settings;³⁰⁷ in the post-War world the imperial epic appealed to mass audiences.³⁰⁸

Consequently, businesses sought to capitalise on this nostalgia. Marketing conveyed the genre, as did imperial travel guide books published by the shipping lines whose success was intimately bound up in the endurance of Empire.³⁰⁹ As MacKenzie explains, this nineteenth century genre continued until the 1960s, perpetuated notably by the Union-Castle Shipping Line which produced guides to Southern and Eastern Africa.³¹⁰

Fifth and finally, aside from the increase in international business as a result of increased global economic activity, there was another form of travel which further contributed to the political aim of fostering greater understandings among people; educational and cultural exchanges. We have already seen the British Cabinet adopt a strategy in 1948, and a range of measures to extend cooperation and travel, notably with other European countries. This was clearly in line with the Truman doctrine as

³⁰² Wigley, A., *Tourism Development and the Foundation, Development Dialogue*, No. 60, (2012), p.120

³⁰³ Yano, C., *Airborne Dreams: "Nisei" Stewardesses and Pan American World Airways* (2011), p.34

³⁰⁴ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-war Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.158

³⁰⁵ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-war Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.158

³⁰⁶ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: The Persistence of Empire in Metropolitan Culture, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S. (2001), p.29

³⁰⁷ MacKenzie, J., *Propaganda and Empire* (1984), pp.68-70

³⁰⁸ MacKenzie, J., *Propaganda and Empire* (1984), p.90

³⁰⁹ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Conflict and Identity* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.27

³¹⁰ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Conflict and Identity* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.36

set out by C.V. Whitney in his 1949 speech.³¹¹ The USA attached significant value to the furthering of knowledge and understanding by means of exchanges.

In light of its confrontation with the Soviet Union, cultural relations programmes began to be organised and designed by the USA in accordance with its national security interests. Cultural contacts allowed a method to combat negative impressions about the US.³¹² Cultural policies were to be determined by Cold War political concerns – including the implementation of “cultural diplomacy via educational exchange”.³¹³

British Cabinet papers from 1952, which showed the UK had continued to look carefully at foreign information activity, viewed American expenditure resulting from the Fulbright and Smith-Mundt Acts (both educational and cultural exchange programmes signed in 1946 and 1948 respectively) as vast, with over 4,000 scholarships offered to foreign students. This compared to 406 offered by the British Council and 1,200 by the French Government.³¹⁴

The thinking behind the Fulbright Act was that a portion of the payments made by foreign governments in their own currency to Washington for the purchase of war property was to be used in the case of each country to finance educational exchanges between that country and the USA. A transaction model often dubbed ‘offset’ and used in modern terms in relation to arms and military procurement, it was a far-sighted way to extract maximum economic benefit from inward investment with built-in returns of cultural influence.³¹⁵ The first Fulbright bi-lateral exchanges took place with nationalist China in 1948, a country facing an imminent communist threat.

Pells argues that the primary motivation of the USA was about influencing the leaders of Western Europe with the Fulbright programme integrated into the Marshall Plan for reconstructing Europe.³¹⁶ Creating sympathetic constituencies among the European elite was considered crucial in the face of the Soviet peril, and which increasingly became more sophisticated at managing its own form of ‘soft

³¹¹ National Archives CO822/153/3 - Transcript of a speech dated September 1947 given by Mr C.V. Whitney, US Under Secretary of Commerce at the International Union of Official Travel Organisations, Luxembourg

³¹² Bu, L., Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 33, Issue 3 (1999), p.393

³¹³ Bu, L., Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (1999), p.393

³¹⁴ National Archives CAB 129/54 - Report entitled *The Overseas Information Services* dated 24 July 1952 by the Committee of Enquiry set up by the Foreign Office

³¹⁵ Prevots, N., *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (2001), p.19

³¹⁶ Pells, R., *'Not like us': How Europeans have loved, hated and transformed American culture since World War II* (2008), p.87

diplomacy'. With its narrative of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, peaceful co-existence and social justice, that 'soft diplomacy' became increasingly directed to Africa and other developing regions.³¹⁷

In 1952 President Eisenhower's declaration for "vigorous action to demonstrate the superiority of the products and cultural values of our system of free enterprise" frames the complex international political imperatives that shaped early post-War travel and tourism.³¹⁸

3.4 Conclusion

The rise of tourism was not simply a consequence of prosperity in isolation, nor can it be put down to improved trans-Atlantic transportation. Endy explains persuasively that tourism's growth was dependent on an international alliance of business groups – such as shipping and airlines – government, cultural and educational sectors co-operating within and across national borders.³¹⁹

In this chapter I have set out some of the trends that shaped the development of post-War tourism. I have argued that post-War tourism was influenced very considerably by advances in technology and economic prosperity, resulting in migratory shifts and increased educational and cultural exchanges. Ultimately, this all required high levels of political leadership and management.

To that end, the evidence supports Endy's hypothesis that the USA sought to exploit leisure travel on behalf of broader economic policy goals and for cultural propaganda purposes.³²⁰ Collectively this contributed to tourism playing a significant role in American 'dollar diplomacy'. As we shall see, early post-War African tourism was shaped by a similar conflation of politics, economics and propaganda, adjusted to the age of 'benevolent imperialism'.³²¹

³¹⁷ Immerman, R., & Goedde, P., Introduction, *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, ed. by Immerman, R., & Goedde, P., (2013), p.8

³¹⁸ Prevots, N., *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (2001), p.11

³¹⁹ Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.4

³²⁰ Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.4

³²¹ James, L., *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (1998), p.516

4 Emerging trends in African tourism

4.1 Introduction

Elements behind the rise in post-War tourism in Africa mirror that at the international level; a mix of economic imperatives and technological advances, notably in transportation, led to the rise of a tourist industry we recognise today. However, there are other elements, which are peculiar to colonial Africa. Some of the political drivers behind the promotion of tourism are more distinct. For example, there is evidence that in certain imperial administrations fostering tourism was deemed a useful channel for pro-colonial propaganda – at a time, as has been argued, when colonialism received widespread approbation in the international community.

Additionally, the character of early tourism in Africa was profoundly different from that in Europe or North America – epicentres of the growth in international tourism. Biedermann argues that a key principle of tourism is that it should “ensure that the nation (region or locality) would benefit to the maximum extent possible from the economic and social contributions of tourism”.³²² He goes on to argue that the “ultimate objective of a tourism policy is to improve the progress of the nation (region or locality) and the lives of its citizens”.³²³

It is questionable whether early tourism in Africa sought to achieve that or meets that explanation. Leisure activities for indigenous subjects of colonial regimes was very limited and largely “beyond the control of colonial rule”.³²⁴ Tourism for indigenous Africans under colonial rule may have extended to overnight stays at weekends “as town residents on bicycle and on foot streamed into the surrounding countryside [...] for nearby homesteads whose owners served food and home-brewed beer”.³²⁵ There is little to no evidence of organised tourism among indigenous subjects primarily because they did not have the means to participate in Western patterns of consumerist behaviour.

The tourism economy in Africa historically was developed, Harrison argues, “by colonialists for colonialists”.³²⁶ Also it has been asserted that most tourism is “intra-regional”.³²⁷ The levers of

³²² Biedermann, P., *Travel and Tourism: An Industry Primer* (2007), cited by Edgell, D., DelMastro Allen, M., Smith, G. & Swanson, J., in *Tourism Policy and Planning: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, (2008), p.7

³²³ Biedermann, P., *Travel and Tourism: An Industry Primer* (2007), cited by Edgell, D., DelMastro Allen, M., Smith, G. & Swanson, J., in *Tourism Policy and Planning: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, (2008), p.7

³²⁴ Akyeampong, E., and Ambler, C., Leisure in African History: An introduction, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2002), p.9

³²⁵ Akyeampong, E., and Ambler, C., Leisure in African History: An introduction, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2002), p.8

³²⁶ Harrison, D., Chapter 3: Tourism in Africa: the Social and Cultural Framework, in *The Political Economy of Tourism Development in Africa* ed. by Dieke, P., (2000), p.3

economic power were held in the hands of colonialists. (In the case of post war Belgian Congo, Marchal argues that the colonial government actively favoured European industry and disadvantaged native industry).³²⁸ The wealth generated to pay for tourist activity also went to colonialists.³²⁹ Consequently, unlike the rise of tourism in other regions of the world, tourism was not to be a democratising process and a further expression of mass consumerism undertaken at an intra-regional level. It was, first and foremost, an economic and leisure activity for colonials.

In this chapter, I will identify those post-War trends in the rise of tourism in Africa. While I recognise there was “no single African experience” as Harrison observes, and that to suggest such would be “immensely misleading”,³³⁰ I will argue that there were certain common themes coming out of tourism which contributed in conveying colonialism to international audiences. I shall also argue that by means of tourism and its development domestic colonial audiences were also to be reassured about the longer-term commitment of the imperial powers in Africa.

4.2 Early twentieth century tourism in Africa

Post-War tourism in sub-Saharan Africa is rooted in organised tourism pre-dating the First World War and there are a number of historians who have written authoritatively on this.³³¹ Reference has already been made to nineteenth century tourism in Egypt in Chapter 1. In 1880, the Egyptian government gave Thomas Cook exclusive control of all passenger steamers up and down the Nile. Package tours down the Nile were marketed, and such was the company’s commercial and, therefore, political influence, that writer and journalist G.W. Steevens quipped that Egypt’s “nominal governor is the Khedive, its real governor [...] is Thomas Cook”.³³² Hom has also written about tourism used as a “colonising strategy” by the Italians in colonised Eritrea and Libya in the early years of the twentieth century.³³³

³²⁷ Harrison, D., Chapter 1: International Tourism and the Less Developed World: the Overall Pattern, in *Tourism and Less Developed Countries* ed. by Harrison, D., (1992), p.7

³²⁸ Marchal, J., *Lord Leverhulme’s Ghosts* (2008), p.221

³²⁹ Jommo, R., *Indigenous Enterprise in Kenya’s Tourism Industry* (1987), p.13

³³⁰ Harrison, D., Chapter 3: Tourism in Africa: the Social and Cultural Framework, in *The Political Economy of Tourism Development in Africa* ed. by Dieke, P., (2000), p.37

³³¹ Hom, S., Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4. No. 3 (2012); Pirie, G., Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in pre-independence Africa, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013)

³³² Turner, L., and Ash, J., *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (1975), p.56

³³³ Hom, S., Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), p.282

Most of equatorial Africa remained unexplored by Europeans until the late nineteenth century and mass tourism did not exist in that region during the first half of the twentieth century.³³⁴ Freed reminds us that most of sub-Saharan Africa remained distant, difficult and dear, and until the advent of air travel, time-consuming to reach for large numbers of European tourists.³³⁵ Historical research provides compelling evidence that the beginning of organised, international tourism in sub-Saharan Africa appearing to first take hold in South Africa. The story of the evolution of South Africa's tourism sector has been chronicled by historians such as Pirie, Carruthers, and Wolf.³³⁶

Tourism and its promotion were given a significant boost by the government-owned South African Railways & Harbours, which created a Publicity and Travel Department.³³⁷ Tourist activities beforehand were organised on a localised basis in the Cape Peninsula. Its primary target was wealthy European visitors, and its activities and scope grew during the interwar years when Government approved funding for overseas publicity campaigns in Europe, North America and Australia which were deemed target markets, not least because in the era of shipping "it would help deflect the Australia-Europe-England business and holiday traffic away from the direct Mediterranean / Red Sea Axis" to a route via the Cape.³³⁸ In that context, tourism was a by-product of wider economic and political policies.

There is evidence of other, more piecemeal tourism, which resonates of the grand European tours undertaken by the privileged and wealthy in the 18th and 19th centuries. The former US President Theodore Roosevelt undertook a widely reported safari to East Africa from April 1909 to March 1910, during which he shot, preserved and shipped to Washington DC more than 3,000 specimens of African game.³³⁹ African tourism, then, demonstrates certain elements that mirror the evolution of European tourism. However, the attraction of game hunting in particular as a tourist activity is one which is relatively unique to the development of African tourism. It is an important element of the narrative of post-War African tourism to which we shall return.

³³⁴ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.1

³³⁵ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.1

³³⁶ Carruthers, J., *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (1995); Pirie, G., Elite Exoticism: Sea-rail Cruise Tourism to South Africa 1826-1939, *African Historical Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1, (2011), pp.73-99; Wolf, J., A Grand Tour: South Africa and American Tourists between the Wars, *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 25, Issue 2 (1991)

³³⁷ Pirie, G., Elite Exoticism: Sea-rail Cruise Tourism to South Africa 1826-1939, *African Historical Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2011), p.74

³³⁸ Pirie, G., Elite Exoticism: Sea-rail Cruise Tourism to South Africa 1826-1939, *African Historical Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2011), pp.75-76

³³⁹ Akama, J., The Evolution of Tourism in Kenya, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 7, Issue 1, (1999), p.12

That said, while East Africa may have had some appeal for the adventurer / explorer, there was no meaningful inflow of tourism to the region before the Second World War, common with most other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, primarily because many areas remained remote and expensive to reach.

Beyond South Africa, where tourism was fostered before the Second World War, it was an elite “confined almost entirely to the white settlers producing primary commodities destined for exports to the European metropolises” that partook.³⁴⁰ Rajotte goes on to explain that in East Africa, which saw more tourism development than most of Africa, “beach holidays on the Kenyan and Tanganyikan coasts primarily served South Rhodesia and the facilities owned exclusively by white colonialists [...] consisted of small family-operated hotels and beach cottages”.³⁴¹ This supports Page’s assertion that “colonialism laid the foundations for tourism”.³⁴²

In the context of East Africa, this period of tourism evolution has been identified by Noronha as the first in a three-stage development. He argues that this organic stage of “exploring and wandering tourists, few in number” lasted until 1945. The second stage he argues was one of deliberate tourism planning which “unquestioningly accepted tourism as one more potential sector of economic development”.³⁴³

It has already been explained that post-1945, European imperial powers embarked on a programme of economic development. It has also been argued that tourism came to be seen as part of the toolbox for economic development, and that its expansion was part of a process for diversifying colonial economies which had traditionally been reliant on commodities and natural resources. To that end, tourism had a role to play in the wider project of attracting much sought after investment. We have already noted that there had been a considerable focus on bringing in to colonial Africa dollar revenues. This was not only a policy pursued by the British but by other imperial powers such as the French.³⁴⁴ Equally the Portuguese had their own goal of securing dollar investment and, as we shall see, the Belgians.³⁴⁵

Of course, the Whitney speech to the International Union of Official Travel Organisations (IUOTO) in 1949 advocated a doctrine of fostering tourism since, as a letter in November of that year from the East Africa Office spelt out, “the US is now extremely anxious to encourage in every possible way

³⁴⁰ Rajotte, F., *The Tourist Industry in East Africa* (1981), p.4

³⁴¹ Rajotte, F., *The Tourist Industry in East Africa* (1981), p.6

³⁴² Page, M., (ed) *Colonialism: An International Social, Cultural and Political Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2 (2003), p.589

³⁴³ Noronha, R., *Social and Cultural Dimensions of Tourism: A Review of the Literature in English*, published by the World Bank (1979), cited by Rajotte, F., *The Tourist Industry in East Africa* (1981), p.3

³⁴⁴ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.28

³⁴⁵ Davis, J., Allies in Empire: Part I: U. S. Economic Involvement, *Africa Today*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1970) p.6

travelling by American citizens overseas. Not only do they look upon this from the dollar earning angle but also it is sincerely believed by many of their leading country men that for the future peace of the world it is essential that nations should get to know each other as much as possible”.³⁴⁶ The letter goes on to explain that this was not a doctrine targeting only travel to Europe; it was global and Africa was very much in its sights. Politics permeated international post-War tourism development.

As early as 1949, the Head of the American delegation to the IUOTO conference, Dr H. A. Wilkinson, told the East Africa Commissioner that it would be “very advantageous if a visit to America was made by representatives of the African tourist organisations, with a view to discussing with his own committee and with the leaders of the African tourist organisations the best lines on which the African countries should proceed with a view to encouraging American tourism”.³⁴⁷

Indeed, to ensure opportunities were harnessed and steps taken, an offer of help was extended on 16 November 1950 in a dispatch from the British Secretary of State for the Colonies to African colonial administrations offering to provide “advice and assistance in promoting dollar-earning tourist trade”.³⁴⁸

However, there was also recognition that tourism also had an important role in bringing into the colonies revenues from the metropolitans. In a letter dated 30 November 1950 to the Colonial Office, the East Africa Commissioner advised “In my view, without minimising the importance of securing dollars, the Sterling tourist is almost, if not equally, desirable”.³⁴⁹

Harrison has argued that there was a peculiar colonial mode of tourism development which did not fit the pattern of such development elsewhere.³⁵⁰ Unlike tourist facilities in developed countries, which were initially funded with local capital (and by local people), Harrison explains that those in sub-Saharan Africa were provided and funded by expatriate settlers, mostly Europeans.

In other words, for most of the colonial period indigenous Africans held neither the finance, the means nor the “cultural capital” to invest in tourism, which from its inception, was operated by

³⁴⁶ National Archives CO822/137/9 - A letter dated 7 November 1949 from the East Africa Commissioner to the Colonial Office

³⁴⁷ National Archives CO822/137/9 - A letter dated 7 November 1949 from the East Africa Commissioner to the Colonial Office

³⁴⁸ National Archives CO822/153/3 - A Colonial Office dispatch dated 16 November 1950 from the Colonial Secretary to the Governor of Tanganyika

³⁴⁹ National Archives CO822/153/3 - A letter dated 30 November 1950 from the East Africa Commissioner to the Colonial Office

³⁵⁰ Harrison, D., Chapter 3: Tourism in Africa: the Social and Cultural Framework, *The Political Economy of Tourism Development in Africa* ed. by Dieke, P. (2000), p.40

Europeans for the benefit of other Europeans.³⁵¹ This is an analysis shared by Barack Obama, an economist at the Kenyan Tourism Development Corporation writing in 1969.³⁵² Going further, Jommo points to evidence that when indigenous Africans did possess the material means to involve themselves in the hotel industry, colonial governments discouraged them from doing so, pointing to notions of racial superiority underpinning post-War notions of tourism evolution.³⁵³

4.3 Migratory trends on post-War African tourism

If tourism began to increase in post-War Africa, and it remained an exclusive pursuit of primarily Europeans and North Americans, then one significant contributing factor in that boom has to be the wave of colonial migration to Africa post-1945. We have already learnt there was a “second colonial occupation” which followed as a result of the commitment and efforts to develop and reform colonial economies and implement welfare plans.³⁵⁴ There was as White describes a fresh invasion of “personnel to fill expanding technical departments overseas”.³⁵⁵

Historians such as Constantine and Harper have argued that despite the relatively limited numbers of colonial settlers and sojourners in Africa historically, they had a significant impact economically. Notably, this includes in the areas of mining, farming, industrial development and administration.³⁵⁶ Logically, this extends to the field of tourism.

Historians such as MacKenzie have written of the allure of Empire as a destination for emigration and, as Constantine reminds us there was a surge of outbound migration from the UK between 1946-49.³⁵⁷ This topped nearly 1.5million during the 1950s. MacKenzie writes that in the UK the *Daily Express* continued to try to persuade its readership to emigrate to South Africa throughout the 1950s, and that the great imperial shipping lines received their surviving ships back from troop transportation and “thought in terms of conveying emigrant hordes”.³⁵⁸ For example, the European population in Kenya in 1943 was estimated to be 21,000.³⁵⁹ By 1948, that figure had reached nearly 30,000 and that

³⁵¹ Harrison, D., Chapter 3: Tourism in Africa: the Social and Cultural Framework, *The Political Economy of Tourism Development in Africa* ed. by Dieke, P. (2000), p.40

³⁵² Obama, B., *The Role of Kenya Tourism Development Corporation in the Development of Tourism in Kenya*, Archives of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (1969), p.8

³⁵³ Jommo, R., *Indigenous Enterprise in Kenya's Tourism Industry* (1987), pp.13-14

³⁵⁴ Cain, P. & Hopkins, A., *British Imperialism* (2001), p.628

³⁵⁵ White, N., *Decolonisation: The British Experience Since 1945* (1999), p.10

³⁵⁶ Constantine, S. & Harper, M., *Migration and Empire* (2010) p.113

³⁵⁷ Constantine, S., British Emigration to the Empire/Commonwealth since 1880, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2003), p.25

³⁵⁸ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: The Persistence of Empire in Metropolitan Culture, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.26

³⁵⁹ Gadsen, F., Wartime Propaganda in Kenya: The Kenya Information Office, 1939-1945, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1986), p.401

number lifted to 61,000 by 1960.³⁶⁰ This was a story not unique to British colonies in Africa. Economic growth in the Belgian Congo led to an increase in the European population there, swelling from 50,000 to 100,000 between 1950 and 1960.³⁶¹

In March 1950, the *Glasgow Herald* associated the growth of tourism in Kenya with immigration into the colony; tourism, it reported, “is now regarded as one of the most important elements in Kenya’s economic structure. The unprecedented immigration into the colony which began in 1943 [...] provided a most valuable body of experienced people of whose services considerable use was made by the Government and private employers”.³⁶² With migration, then, came increased economic wealth and an appetite for leisure pursuits. Tourism was one element of such economic activity, and local and intra-regional tourism began to accelerate.

4.4 Intra-regional tourism

Consistent with the pattern of tourism development in Europe and North America, early tourism was localised and later, regional.³⁶³ Efforts to affect greater tourism are evidenced in an array of early post-War material. In April 1950, the *Transafricaine Company* established a regular weekly automobile service between Goma-Kisenyi in the Belgian Congo and Kampala in Uganda, further facilitating already existing regional travel and tourist connections in the Great Lakes region.³⁶⁴ The minutes of a British intra-governmental conference on closer association in Central Africa (namely, North Rhodesia, South Rhodesia and Nyasaland) in 1951 show that one recommendation stated that “the reduction of customs posts following the abolition of tariff barriers [...] would also be of advantage from the point of view of tourism”.³⁶⁵

Also in that year, the East Africa Commissioner argued that rather than focusing energies on attracting American tourism, which was “limited to the fairly rich”, efforts in building the Zanzibar tourist trade should focus on “the Sterling area, particularly by increasing visitors from South Africa”.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁰ Constantine, S. & Harper, M., *Migration and Empire* (2010) p.118

³⁶¹ Forbes Munroe, J., *Africa and the International Economy 1800-1960* (1976), p.185

³⁶² *Glasgow Herald*, 6 March 1950

³⁶³ Harrison, D., Chapter I: International Tourism and the Less Developed World: the Overall Pattern, in *Tourism and Less Developed Countries* ed. by Harrison, D., (1992), p.10

³⁶⁴ *Information Bulletin of the East Africa Tourist Travel Association*, July 1950

³⁶⁵ National Archives CAB 129/45 - Cabinet Paper Memorandum dated 3 May 1951 from the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations entitled *Closer Association in Central Africa* and accompanying minute of a conference of officials and associated report dated 31 March 1951 (Annex IV)

³⁶⁶ National Archives CO 822/153/3 - A letter dated 30 November from the East Africa Commissioner to the Colonial Office

While emigration presented challenges to the European metropolitans in their post-1945 reconstruction efforts,³⁶⁷ immigration into Africa not only helped to boost the economic development agenda in the colonies, it also had an effect in appearing to reinforce the imperial mandate. Indeed, European settlers were provided reassuring messages about imperial intentions through government pronouncements and period travel literatures.

4.5 Infrastructure (transportation & accommodation)

We have seen that following the Second World War in Europe the key tenets of tourism infrastructure – transport networks, vehicles and hotel accommodation – were in a poor state, and that had caused sufficient concern to Governments recognising that infrastructure was vital for the building of a modern tourism sector. There is clear evidence that very similar challenges were present in post-War Africa. While the continent had largely escaped the wanton destruction of infrastructure that had affected Europe, the challenge for colonial African administrations and tourist entrepreneurs was the limited infrastructure framework – particularly the road network – and suitable hotel accommodation.

Investment in expanding the road network was a core element of colonial development plans irrespective of the colonial power. ICAT devoted much of its time in calling on the development of existing and new hotel accommodation across geographies in Africa. For example, at its 1949 congress in Nairobi, it adopted a resolution (no. 9) calling for “the necessity of providing adequate accommodation at strategic tourist points on the main African highways passing through their countries, and at places of particular tourist interest”.³⁶⁸ It went on to press colonial administrations “to plan a programme of construction and enlargement of hotels or rest-houses where this is required. If private enterprise should prove unable to attain the required results, Governments are asked to facilitate the realisation of the construction programme by every means in their power”.³⁶⁹

Reinforcing Pirie’s argument for post-War colonial reinforced racial delineation, the resolution also stated “the creation of hotel schools or of training centres for Native personnel is recommended in all countries where the development of the hotel industry justifies such a measure”.³⁷⁰ The resolution is in keeping with the post-War notions of social development; the implication, however, echoes Harrison’s paradigm that the tourism economy in Africa was developed “by colonialists for

³⁶⁷ Constantine, S., Constantine, S., British Emigration to the Empire/Commonwealth since 1880, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2003), p.25

³⁶⁸ National Archives CO 822/137/9 - Resolutions approved by International Congress of African Touring (ICAT III) dated October 1949

³⁶⁹ National Archives CO 822/137/9 - Resolutions approved by International Congress of African Touring (ICAT III) dated October 1949

³⁷⁰ National Archives CO 822/137/9 - Resolutions approved by International Congress of African Touring (ICAT III) dated October 1949

colonialists”.³⁷¹ ICAT even took it upon itself to make representations and calls to specific colonial administrations. At the Nairobi conference, another resolution relating to roads and infrastructure suggested “representations be made to the authorities in the Belgian Congo to establish suitable hotel accommodation along the route Elisabethville – Costermansville via Jadotville – Albertville – Uvuru, in view of the scenic attractions for tourists”.³⁷² Given the not insignificant official Belgian Congo delegation – largely made of representatives of state or semi-official institutions – this adds further complexity to the idiosyncratic character of post-War tourism policy development there.

The issue of the standard of hotel accommodation and transportation infrastructure is a recurring theme in period colonial papers relating to tourism development. In a letter to the British Colonial Office in 1951, the Ugandan Governor expresses concerns that “we are not entirely satisfied that the facilities for tourists were as satisfactory as they should be, either in quality or in capacity to handle a large tourist trade”.³⁷³ He goes on to specify the comparatively poor standard of some Ugandan hotels and their inadequacy “to cope with any considerable influx of visitors”. Equally, the same issue was raised in a letter dated 8 November 1950 by the British Resident (Governor) of Zanzibar, highlighting pressure from London to foster tourism to drive dollar revenues while trying to reconcile that policy with the reality on the ground in terms of limited adequate tourist provisions and services.³⁷⁴

So we see that along with the issue of adequate road networks, airports and air routes across the vast distances with of many of the colonies, adequate hotel accommodation proved to be recurring theme in the Belgian Congo.

4.6 Organisation of the tourist sector

There is evidence that early tourism in Africa followed similar patterns of sector organisation in Europe and North America. Automobile touring clubs had been founded in Paris, London and New York by the end of the nineteenth century and proliferated in the first part of the twentieth century as car ownership rose and road networks improved.³⁷⁵ In turn, the activities of national clubs led to the emergence of international motoring and touring organisations such as the *Alliance Internationale de*

³⁷¹ Harrison, D., Chapter 3: Tourism in Africa: The Social and Cultural Framework, in *The Political Economy of Tourism Development in Africa* ed. by Dieke, P. (2000), p.3;

³⁷² National Archives CO 822/137/9 - Resolutions approved by International Congress of African Touring (ICAT III) dated October 1949

³⁷³ National Archives CO 822/153/4 - Letter dated 21 May 1951 to the Colonial Secretary from the Governor of Uganda

³⁷⁴ National Archives CO 822/153/3 - Letter dated 8 November 1950 to the Colonial Secretary from the British Resident in Zanzibar

³⁷⁵ Pirie, G., Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in Pre-Independence Africa, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013); Prideaux, B., Chapter 7: *The Role of Automobile Associations and Clubs, in Drive Tourism: Trends and Emerging Markets*, ed. by Prideaux, B., and Carson, D., (2011), p.84

Tourisme (AIT) in 1919. In the early 1930s it had grand ambitions for a transnational road network in Europe, stretching from London to Istanbul, and to be extended within two years to Calcutta to the East and Cape Town to the South.³⁷⁶ The reach of the automobile, then, had its role in consolidating Empire. Pirie argues that drive touring started after the First World War in colonial Africa and that by the 1930s motorists were driving themselves on scenic holiday road tours or on “safari”.³⁷⁷

Pirie argues that the pattern of development of touring clubs started in South Africa before being emulated in Rhodesia and East Africa when, in 1919, the *East African Automobile Association* was established.³⁷⁸ In the Belgian Congo, the *Touring club du Congo Belge* was established in 1933. The automobile, then, played a not insignificant role in the development of pre-war tourism, primarily domestic and intra-regional tourism into “near neighbouring countries”.³⁷⁹

As we have seen, the beginnings of organising and promoting tourism emanate from railway companies and automobile clubs. Pirie explains that the first concrete shift to an alternative, specialised group emerged at a conference in Bulawayo in 1937 and the African section of the AIT was established at an inaugural conference in Costermansville in the Belgian Congo (now Bukavu close to the Ugandan border) in October 1938. The meeting was presided over by Alfred Moeller de Laddersous who then served as Honorary Vice Governor General of the Belgian Congo and, as we shall see, played an instrumental role in promoting tourism in the Belgian Congo in the years after the Second World War. Certainly the initiative gained not insignificant official backing with the Belgian Ministry of the Colonies providing a BEF100,000 subsidy as seed funding to the organisation.³⁸⁰

The second meeting of what became the *International Congress of African Touring* (ICAT) was scheduled for 1940 in Algiers and Belgian colonial papers show that considerable preparation was underway for that meeting at the outbreak of war. A pre-conference paper prepared by the organising committee stated that the object of the Algiers congress was to continue the work from Costermansville in looking at the development of African tourism, including organised tourism, issues of customs, policing, transportation and marketing. It also stated that the meeting would focus on the

³⁷⁶ Badenoch, A., *Touring Between War and Peace: Imagining the Transcontinental Motorway, 1930-1950*, *Journal of Transport History* Vol. 28 (2007), p.192-210; Pirie, G., *Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in Pre-Independence Africa*, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), p.2

³⁷⁷ Pirie, G., *Non Urban Motoring in Colonial Africa in the 1920s and 1930s*, *South African Historical Journal* Vol. 63 (2011), p.38-60; Pirie, G., *Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in Pre-Independence Africa*, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), p.3

³⁷⁸ Pirie, G., *Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in Pre-Independence Africa*, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), p.5

³⁷⁹ Pirie, G., *Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in Pre-Independence Africa*, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), p.18

³⁸⁰ MFAB Office colonial, A4 (483) 205.849 & A4 (552) 220.183.2 - Papers reporting meeting of International Conference African Touring dated 6-11 October 1938, including acknowledgement of BEF100,000 subsidy given by the Ministry of the Colonies

improvement of the “grandes voies de penetration” [major arterial routes], notably the Algiers to the Cape highway, as well as the issue of hotels and guesthouses.³⁸¹ However, the Second World War suspended cooperation and limited efforts on building the tourism sector. ICAT II reconvened in October 1947 at a three-day meeting in Algiers. The AIT established an office “for the Africa zone” in Johannesburg, reinforcing South Africa’s role as not only an economic and political centre in sub-Saharan Africa post-War, but also as a lead regional centre for tourism.

Intra-territorial and regional associations also emerged in Africa. In 1947 the East Africa Tourist Travel Association (EATTA) was founded, revitalising a pre-war initiative in the region known as the East Africa Publicity Association (EAPA). Formed in 1938, it was effectively still-born due to the war. At the Inter-territorial conference on tourist traffic held in Nairobi in September 1947 which saw the EATTA come into being, the conference chair Sir Charles Lockhart concluded that the question of reviving the EAPA “was not then ripe for such a move owing to shipping difficulties, shortage of hotel accommodation etc.”.³⁸²

The importance of tourism and automobile touring becomes apparent in a guide produced collectively by colonial African automobile associations and published in 1949 as the AA’s *Trans-Africa Highways*. In nearly 400 pages, the guide provided trans-African trunk routes, as resolved as an action at the Algiers ICAT. In the foreword to the guide South African Minister of Transport Paul O. Sauer made the case for the development of new and improved highways, which would help develop “mutual understanding of local conditions and local problems”.³⁸³ Part of a recently elected, and overtly nationalist government, this messaging had distinct political messaging for domestic as well as external audiences.

In Johannesburg, the AIT secretariat maintained its work through the post-War period “co-ordinating tourism policies, practices and promotion”.³⁸⁴ The advance of tourism development was fostered by the ICAT congresses, which took place in the post-War era in key colonial centres of Nairobi (1949), Lourenço Marques (1952), Elisabethville (1955) and Dakar (1958). The congress subsequently met in Morocco in 1961. It is worth noting that ICAT itself appears to have become embroiled in the politics of South Africa. A congress was expected to be held in 1951 in Johannesburg but this was

³⁸¹ MFAB Office colonial, A4 (483) 205.849 - Conference planning paper prepared by the organizing committee for ICAT II circa 1939

³⁸² National Archives CO822/137/9 - Proceedings of a conference entitled *Tourist Traffic in East Africa* held on the 23 September 1947 in Nairobi

³⁸³ Pirie, G., Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in Pre-Independence Africa, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), p.13

³⁸⁴ Pirie, G., Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in Pre-Independence Africa, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), p.16

subsequently postponed by one year and its location shifted to Portuguese Mozambique.³⁸⁵ It is unclear why that occurred, but the election of the nationalist South African government in 1948 may have had a bearing.

Pirie has argued that during the late colonial period “tens of thousands of European (White) motorists read about, planned and then undertook road trips”, and that most international touring was into near neighbouring countries. Automobile organisations, he concludes, “contributed significantly to the development of socially and racially delineated domestic and cross-border tourism in Africa in the middle decades of the twentieth century”.³⁸⁶ To that end, tourism – and its promotion – played a contribution in reinforcing messages about the political and economic status quo in post-War colonial Africa.

Evidently, this was at its most extreme in post-War South Africa’s evolution where racial apartheid was expressed in membership policies of automobile associations and the guests hotels chose to accommodate. Since tourism implementation catered not just for South African residents, but also for visiting foreign tourists coming from countries with alternative social policies, this inevitably meant tourism would become a tool of official government policy. In this sense, post-War tourism in colonial Africa could do little else other than reinforce political messages.

4.7 Publicity and travel literature

For tourism to flourish, marketing was needed to generate demand. Consciously or unconsciously, this provided an opportunity for Europeans and other audiences a glimpse of African modernisation and development under European administration.³⁸⁷ In October 1950 the *East African Standard* reported a visit organised for American and British journalists to promote the region’s tourism. Mr Bob Althuler of the American magazine *Feature* commented “I was surprised at the absence of cannibals; the industry and foresight of the British and surprised to find that they did not exploit the Natives, but really try to do what is best for the Africans and the country itself”.³⁸⁸ Meanwhile, Mr D. A. Drakeford, Director of H. Drakeford of London, told the same newspaper that “East Africa has a possibility as a wintering place for well-to-do Europeans who want to get away [...] I was impressed

³⁸⁵ National Archives CO822/137/9 - Papers relating to the International Congress of African Tourism (ICAT III) meeting in Nairobi 4-8 October 1949, including resolutions adopted.

³⁸⁶ Pirie, G., Automobile Organisations driving Tourism in Pre-Independence Africa, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), p.18

³⁸⁷ Ward, S. & Hsu-Ming, T., Chapter 9: Wandering in the Wake of Empire: British Travel and Tourism in the Post-Imperial World, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.165

³⁸⁸ Views of East Africa After Lightning Tour by Overseas Experts, *East African Standard*, 28 October 1950

by the scenery offered. I found what one expected to find in England and what one expected to find in the Sahara".³⁸⁹

There was a threefold public relations value of such observations; first, in reinforcing the development mandate of the colonial powers to sceptical political influencers in the USA and elsewhere; second, building prospective tourist business to key target audiences; and third, in playing back messaging to domestic colonial audiences in Africa. In other words, this type of publicity was entirely in step with the Colonial Office's objectives of the "projection of Britain" to the colonies and the "projection of the Colonies" to Britain as well as influential third countries.³⁹⁰

The playing-back of reassuring messages about colonial commitment continued, argues MacKenzie, throughout the 1940s and 1950s, leaving many Britons convinced that the British Empire in the Dominions and Africa would endure.³⁹¹ Phillips echoes this view suggesting that colonialism was primarily experienced in the coloniser's homeland, from a distance and through representations, especially literary ones.³⁹² Tourism, whether undertaken by holidaymakers from the metropolitans or recently arrived post-War migrants, would have been shaped by such largely pro-colonial publicity and propaganda.

This was, perhaps, most noticeable in the travel guides produced by colonial shipping lines such as Union Castle Line whose foundation and success were bound up with the development of the British Empire, and which began to issue travel guides of their destinations whose content illuminated many aspects of cultural and other forms of imperialism.³⁹³ As Ward and Hsu-Ming have pointed out the "travel abroad and the production of travel books were inextricably linked with the expansion and consolidation of empire".³⁹⁴

In common with Noronha's view of a three-stage development of African tourism, Freed argues that the development of African travel guides also followed a three-step evolution, which broadly followed a similar pattern to Noronha's principle.³⁹⁵ She makes the case that travel guides to colonial

³⁸⁹ *East African Standard*, 28 October 1950

³⁹⁰ National Archives CAB134/98 - Memorandum by the Colonial Office entitled *Expansion of Publicity Services: Three year plan* and accompanying Treasury note dated 15 December 1948

³⁹¹ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: The Persistence of Empire in Metropolitan Culture, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. Ward, S., (2001), p.26

³⁹² Phillips, R., Chapter 33: Colonialism & Postcolonialism, in *Introducing Human Geographies*, ed. by Cloke, P., Crang, P., & Goodwin, M. (1999), p.280

³⁹³ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Century, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Conflict and Identity* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.27

³⁹⁴ Ward, S. & Hsu-Ming, T., Chapter 9: Wandering in the Wake of Empire: British Travel and Tourism in the Post-Imperial World, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.166

³⁹⁵ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.4

Africa reflected evolving colonial goals, and that the third period in travel guides begins after the Second World War and reflects a strong upsurge in the narrative of infrastructure and amenities.³⁹⁶

This is a view shared by MacKenzie who has argued that post-War travel guides were characterised by notions of imperialism.³⁹⁷ Freed goes further in explaining that “the narrative of progress and European achievement is especially noticeable, as these ‘achievements’ (buildings, institutions, monuments, as well as cities themselves) became more numerous” and reflected a slow shift in target audience from colonial officials to tourists.³⁹⁸

Such descriptions, Freed argues, catered to tourists’ expectations and needs while also drawing attention to the ways in which colonial administrations had transformed and “modernized” Africa, thus reminding readers of colonial accomplishments. This is clearly the case in a suite of literature and tourist materials looked at during the course of the research of this study, most notably in relation to the Belgian Congo. Most tellingly, Freed states, guidebooks from the 1950s, the last decade of European colonial rule in equatorial Africa, displayed no indication of impending African independence.³⁹⁹ Until the eve of the transfer of power, in fact, European travel guides, especially those produced by the Information and Public Relations Office for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Burundi, continued to promote a vision of Africa as testament to European achievements and superiority. This is entirely consistent, Light argues, with countries’ appetite to use tourism to fulfil particular political agendas, including showing of their achievements to visitors.⁴⁰⁰

As such, post-War travel guides – purchased equally by the wealthy North American tourist or the local European colonial tourist – implicitly and sometimes overtly reinforced political messages, conveying continuity of the status quo. It was in the interest of the producers of travel guides, such as the shipping companies like the Union Castle Line (whose business-model pivoted on Empire) to emphasise the ease and comfort with which travellers could access imperial territories.⁴⁰¹ The same is true of the publishers of the series of travel guides known as the *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi*, which was a government public relations arm. To this end, the development of travel and tour guides for Africa, as an aspect of tourism evolution, was not always in

³⁹⁶ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.4

³⁹⁷ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Century, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Conflict and Identity* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.27

³⁹⁸ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.13

³⁹⁹ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.14

⁴⁰⁰ Light, D., Chapter 1: Tourism, Identity and Popular Culture in The Dracula Dilemma: Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania (2012), p.12

⁴⁰¹ MacKenzie, J., Chapter 1: Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Century, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Conflict and Identity* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.27

keeping with the pattern of that witnessed in Europe and North America, where guides such as *Baedeker* were independently produced and marketed.⁴⁰²

4.8 National parks

An important aspect of colonial Africa's tourism development was the emergence of the national park. Safari and game hunting had been the preserve of colonials settled in Africa and the few adventurers, such as President Theodore Roosevelt, who were "both hardy enough to withstand the long sea voyage, and wealthy enough to organise a scientific or hunting safari [with the] armies of porters and guides" required to penetrate the game-rich interior.⁴⁰³

Africa's first national park was established by the Belgian colonial authorities over a vast area spanning 2,000,000 acres in the Great Rift Valley. The Prince Albert National Park (today known as the Virunga National Park) was established by royal decree in 1925 and in recognition of the serious plight of the mountain gorillas, which the Belgian colonial authorities recognised faced extinction.⁴⁰⁴ This park was followed soon after by the founding of the Kruger National Park in South Africa in 1926. Many more were to be established, often with the dual mandate of fostering scientific research and accommodating tourism, insofar as the latter was compatible with nature conservation.

From the outset, tensions existed between conservationists running the national parks and those exerting political pressure to allow increased numbers of tourists into an area dedicated to the primary well-being of animals. Such tensions are well set out in letters exchanged in 1939 between the Belgian Colonial Ministry and the Institute of Colonial National Parks for the Belgian Congo about tourism facilities at the Albert National Park.⁴⁰⁵

With tourism on the rise, the 1950s saw a plethora of national parks established across Africa and swelling ranks of tourists – colonial and extra-territorial – coming to the continent largely to shoot game on camera.⁴⁰⁶ With conservation and greater understanding of the causes of the massive depletion of Africa's wildlife, game-hunting became less fashionable and was increasingly criticised. However, specific tourism programmes offered game shooting expeditions, most notably led by the Belgian Congo, which hosted an International Big Game Hunting Competition in 1956, among other

⁴⁰² Kopper, C., The breakthrough of the package tour in Germany after 1945, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2009), p.86

⁴⁰³ Rajotte, F., *The Tourist Industry in East Africa* (1981), p.4

⁴⁰⁴ National Archives FO371/125407 - Dispatch dated 4 July 1956 from the British Consul General in Leopoldville to the Foreign Office on the role of National Parks in the Belgian Congo and attached report.

⁴⁰⁵ MFAB Office colonial, A730 / AGRI - Correspondence circa 1939 between the Institute of Colonial National Parks and the Ministry of the Colonies.

⁴⁰⁶ MacKenzie, J., *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1997), p.307

such initiatives.⁴⁰⁷ Rebutting such criticism in 1958, Vice-President of the Permanent Hunting and Fishing Commission of the Ministry of the Colonies, Charles vander Elst, suggested the case of stewardship by arguing that “the true hunter will refrain from killing the first animal that appears but instead will eagerly seek a trophy”.⁴⁰⁸

Indeed, scholarship has afforded the Belgian colonial administration modest recognition for the establishment of its national parks, instead preferring to focus on the evolution of national parks, environmental awareness and conservation in South Africa and East Africa, which perhaps have had a more enduring appeal in terms of modern tourism. But as Neumann reminds us, at the end of the Second World War and 20 years after the first parks were established, there was neither one piece of national park legislation nor corresponding department across any part of British East and Central Africa⁴⁰⁹. He goes on to argue that many did not even have a game department or any scientifically trained staff. Such was the concern among some scientists, it prompted the future United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Secretary General, Julian Huxley, to write to the then British Colonial Secretary of State lamenting the failure of Government foresight not to establish a national park. Making the case that East Africa’s wildlife and fauna was richer than that of the celebrated Kruger National Park, he made the prescient observation that national parks “could be the most profitable form of long-term investment”.⁴¹⁰ Tourism provided a level of return on that investment.

Colonial states, Beinart argues, tended to view economic development as the priority, as opposed to conservation and the environment.⁴¹¹ From the outset, historians such as Beinart, Hughes and Neumann argue that, at least in the British experience, conservation aimed to “preserve natural assets by exclusion, and to devise controls that might guarantee [their] long-term, efficient use”.⁴¹² Such policies were then imposed on colonised people regardless of their traditional practices to manage the land, and so demonstrating the “asymmetries in power which were the hallmark of Empire”.⁴¹³ This serves to remind us once again of Matamba’s observation that development during this period was primarily preoccupied by optimal economic output, and not the interests of the local populations.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁷ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 6 (1956), p.1

⁴⁰⁸ vander Elst, C., *Safari, Sabena Revue*, Vol. 3 (1958), p.108

⁴⁰⁹ Neumann, R., The Postwar Conservation Boom in British Colonial Africa, *Environmental History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2002), p. 22

⁴¹⁰ Neumann, R., The Postwar Conservation Boom in British Colonial Africa, *Environmental History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2002), p.30

⁴¹¹ Beinart, W., Empire, Hunting and Ecological Change in Southern and Central Africa, *Past & Present*, No. 128 (1990), p.178

⁴¹² Beinart, W., & Hughes, L., *Environment and Empire* (2009), p.3

⁴¹³ Beinart, W., & Hughes, L., *Environment and Empire* (2009), p.3

⁴¹⁴ Matamba, T., *The Development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (2006), p.44

There was an additional case for wildlife conservation. MacKenzie explains that in exploiting game, Europeans removed an important source of protein from the African diet. This was most apparent in the 1922 famine when game meat was no longer a back-up alternative to starvation.⁴¹⁵ There was undoubtedly a recognition among colonial administrations that effective management of natural resources was in the best interests of maintaining their licence to govern.

With the advent of post-War tourism, and the long-term need for dollar revenues resulting from it, national parks were set to expand. By 1960, there had been a marked volte-face, with colonial development funds investing in national parks and safari sitting as the central proposition of African tourism. Prepared in 1947, Uganda's post-War development plan called for the creation of national parks and the building of roads to places of scenic and scientific value with a view to developing the tourist trade.⁴¹⁶ As Neumann explains "its plan for tourism exemplified a new trend emerging throughout the region".⁴¹⁷ National parks "were designed for an age of tourism, the era of the motor car and the camera".⁴¹⁸ Yet, according to Irandu, tourist activities in the national parks during the 1950s still amounted to sport hunting, sport fishing, collection of trophies, and generally viewing wildlife.⁴¹⁹

In short, the evolution of wildlife conservation and the national parks in post-War Africa served environmental, economic and social purposes. The model for their long-term sustainability rested on tourism providing a means of securing revenues to maintain upkeep and conservation activity. In a period of less than 30 years, unconstrained hunting, which MacKenzie asserts constituted imperial propaganda,⁴²⁰ evolved in another badge of colonial honour, providing other beneficial propaganda.⁴²¹ To this extent, the about-turn during a short period time about the character and mission of colonial land and wildlife management is directly in step with Pearce's assessment of Britain 're-branding' its mission from imperialism to "responsible colonialism".⁴²² In other words, tourism had a direct contribution to play in that 're-branding' by dint of its central role in the establishment of the national parks. Not only were the national parks and active wildlife conservation very much in step with the progressive colonial mission of the British and other European empires, tourists from North America and Europe were able to witness and report first hand "responsible colonialism" in action.

⁴¹⁵ MacKenzie, J., *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1997), p.140

⁴¹⁶ Neumann, R., The Postwar Conservation Boom in British Colonial Africa, *Environmental History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2002), p.36

⁴¹⁷ Neumann, R., The Postwar Conservation Boom in British Colonial Africa, *Environmental History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2002), p.36

⁴¹⁸ MacKenzie, J., *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1997), p.264

⁴¹⁹ Irandu, E., The Role of Tourism in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Kenya, in *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2004), p.135

⁴²⁰ MacKenzie, J., *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1997), p.10

⁴²¹ MacKenzie, J., *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1997), p.226

⁴²² Pearce, R., *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (1982), p.30

4.9 Conclusion

Tourism touched many aspects of the development of Africa post-1945. Rajotte observes that in some parts of colonial Africa, the early development of planned tourism was notable for its high degree of integration in to the worldwide tourism industry.⁴²³

Indeed there is strong evidence that the commoditising of the African tourist proposition was well developed by the 1950s. Ward and Hsu-Ming suggest that the former routes of imperial travellers in the 19th and early 20th centuries quickly became packaged into tours for modern-day travellers.⁴²⁴ The Thomas Cook Group, they argue, “took advantage of the Kipling image of pith helmets and paddles up the river” to organise cruise, tours and journeys that duplicated en masse the Victorian and Edwardian routes of exploration throughout the world.⁴²⁵

Ultimately, tourism’s manifold reach meant that not only did it serve as a key element in economic development and diversification, but also served an important political purpose in helping to fudge a series of different messages to a variety of completely different audiences: To the indigenous African, the tourism message was about developing your country and providing new social and economic opportunities; to the European colonial, the message was we are making a long-term commitment to building a stronger economy and infrastructure in Africa to afford you a better standard of colonial living; to the European in the metropolitan tourism development conveyed the message of a commitment to “responsible colonialism” and working in partnership with our colonial wards; and to colonial-sceptic audiences tourism helped convey the message that the metropolitans are working to improve the economic and social well-being of the colonies and, in turn, prepare subjects for eventual self-government. The challenge then is identifying to what extent those messages were purposefully manipulated, and to what extent colonial messaging was open to sufficient interpretation.

History demonstrates that tourism has been wilfully used to convey overt political messages. In the example of Italy building a tourist industry in North Africa with an eye to offer pro-colonial propaganda, Hom argues that “tourism’s ideological power intensified as Italy’s colonial project advanced”.⁴²⁶ Semmens makes a similar argument about the evolution of tourism in 1930s

⁴²³ Rajotte, F., *The Tourist Industry in East Africa* (1981), p.7

⁴²⁴ Ward, S. & Hsu-Ming, T., Chapter 9: Wandering in the Wake of Empire: British Travel and Tourism in the Post-Imperial World, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.168

⁴²⁵ Ward, S. & Hsu-Ming, T., Chapter 9: Wandering in the Wake of Empire: British Travel and Tourism in the Post-Imperial World, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.168

⁴²⁶ Hom, S., Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), p.283

Germany.⁴²⁷ Responsibility for tourism was placed under the Ministry of Propaganda in 1933 and Joseph Goebbels became the president of the Reich Committee for Tourism. In so doing, Semmens explains “the regime institutionalised its concept on leisure travel as an ideological matter and not merely an economic or transportation one”.⁴²⁸

Making a direct comparison between tourism development under dictatorships in pre-war Europe, and colonial administrations in post-War Africa, would be erroneous. However, recent period history could have informed metropolitan governments, and their strategy towards fostering tourism. Such transferral of notions, be it conscious or inadvertent, is not surprising.

We have already seen that historians such as Judd, Darwin, MacKenzie and Crowder are at odds about the messages London conveyed about the British strategy towards African decolonisation.⁴²⁹ A reasonable conclusion is that there was probably a deliberate element of imprecision to allow different audiences to draw such different conclusions.

Equally, Horne has commented on the deliberate obfuscating of “je vous ai compris” [I have understood you] message by President de Gaulle, for example, in the handling of France’s decolonisation of Algeria.⁴³⁰ It is, however, a comment rarely made about the Belgians. Consequently, this begins to provide an indication that the Belgian Congo’s approach to tourism development may have differed from other African colonies, as it was fashioned by the distinctly different political approach (and associated communications) the Belgians adopted towards its colonial commitments.

⁴²⁷ Semmens, K., Chapter 8: Travel in Merry Germany: Tourist culture in the Third Reich, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005)

⁴²⁸ Semmens, K., Chapter 8: Travel in Merry Germany: Tourist culture in the Third Reich, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.147

⁴²⁹ Darwin, J., British Decolonisation since 1945: A Puzzle or a Pattern? *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 12 (1984), p.191; James, A., *Britain and the Congo Crisis, 1960-3* (1996); Judd, D., *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the present* (1996); MacKenzie, J. Chapter 1: The Persistence of Empire in Metropolitan Culture, in *British Culture and the End of Empire*, ed. by Ward, S., (2001), p.25

⁴³⁰ Horne, A; *A Savage War of Peace* (2006 ed.), p.303

5 Belgian Congo tourism and propaganda

5.1 Introduction

“Ici les blancs ont mis fin a la barbarie” [Here the whites have put an end to barbarianism],⁴³¹ so read the front cover of *Paris Match* carrying a major report by the respected journalist Raymond Cartier on his trip to the Belgian Congo. In many period pieces, this was the narrative that the Belgians sought to place to audiences domestic and international about their colonial mission. After all the official guidebook to the Belgian Congo (published by the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*) ensured tourists were made aware of Belgium’s progress in stamping out cannibalism, polygamy and fetishism.⁴³²

The analysis provides additional weight to the policy of what was described by the Belgians to British Foreign Office mandarins as late as 1957 as “prudent paternalism”.⁴³³ Paternalism was a euphemism for control. As Merriam writing in 1961 argued “control over the paramount idea”.⁴³⁴ That control characterises not only colonial governance, and the economic and social development of the Belgian Congo in the post-War years, it also goes some way to defining how tourism evolved. Government control characterised how tourism was managed, delivered and publicised. Most importantly, tourism to the Belgian Congo and its positioning to overseas audiences played an important role in reinforcing the Belgian colonial mandate. Articles such as Cartier’s in *Paris Match* were significant, therefore, since they provided a window for international audiences to glimpse Belgian successes and, indeed, helped to foster the notion that the Belgian Congo was very much a place to visit as a tourist.

In this chapter, I will argue that Belgian policies towards tourism development were both highly controlled and occasionally confused. Tourism and the policies behind it, I will argue, played an important contributing part to the promotion of Belgium’s colonial mandate to domestic and external audiences. I will support this argument by demonstrating that tourism’s institutional structures were incorporated into the Belgian colonial publicity machine. I shall also highlight the bureaucratic and political barriers to visiting the colony that give the lie to the real purpose of Belgian colonial tourist promotion.

⁴³¹ *Paris Match*, No. 248, 19 December 1953

⁴³² Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.15

⁴³³ National Archives FO371/125394 - Dispatch dated 1 February 1957 to the Foreign Secretary from the British Ambassador to Belgium

⁴³⁴ Merriam, A. *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.32

5.2 Promoting Prudent Paternalism

At the outset, it is helpful to provide a very short summary of the character of colonial rule in the Belgian Congo in 1945. Merriam echoes Cartier's observations that the primary concern of the Belgians always was and continued to be economic development. To that end control was exercised directly by Belgian administrators responsible to the colonial system, which in turn was responsible to Brussels. At no point did the residents of the colony – African or Belgian – have a voice in the governing of the state.⁴³⁵

Decision-making took place through a cumbersome and long process.⁴³⁶ New laws and policies would be conceived by the Colonial Office, and subject to cross-ministerial consultation before being sent to the Governor General's office in Leopoldville for review and comment. They would then be passed on to provincial councils in the colony for comment, which met just once a year, before the Governor General then submitted them to the Government Council on the Belgian Congo, another consultative body also anchored in Leopoldville. Finally there followed a re-examination by the Governor General with an expression of his opinion, and a return to Brussels. Once back in Brussels the drafts were returned to their relevant departments, and then put before the Minister for a decision. Thereafter, they had then to be submitted to the Colonial Council seated in Brussels. At each step of the process, Young says, progress of the course of the new policy or legislation was at the mercy of being referred to ad hoc subcommittees, vacations, absences 'en mission' [in the field], and changes of ministers, further compounded by the process having to be conducted in two official languages – Flemish and French.

There are two additional and important facts to note regarding the legislative and policy making process: First, according to Young, while decision-making about the Belgian colonies rested ultimately in the Belgian parliament, meaningful discussion about the Congo was only a matter of concern when it required a Belgian subsidy, with brief and perfunctory debates often giving rise to the suggestion that metropolitan Belgium was not interested in its giant colony.⁴³⁷ In other words, there was no evidence of scrutiny or challenge. Second, the monarchy held an influential role in the appointment of certain colonial figures, such as the colonial secretary and colonial governors, and had powers to veto proposed appointments, which King Baudouin (monarch from 1955-1991), chose to exercise. According to Foreign Office papers dating from 1957, Baudouin vetoed "a number of

⁴³⁵ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.32; Cartier, R., *Paris Match*, No. 248, 19 December 1953, p.41

⁴³⁶ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.30

⁴³⁷ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), pp.21 & 14

candidates in the field to succeed Monsieur Governor Pétilion”, leading to the extension of his term of office.⁴³⁸

In practice, governing the colony was a complex affair. As we shall see, the bodies involved in the development and implementation of tourism policy in the Belgian Congo were equally numerous adding to the layer of bureaucracy.

Scholars of the Belgian Congo have also written at some length on the so-called trinity of power that controlled the colony.⁴³⁹ Along with Government, the other two players were the Roman Catholic church – the Belgian administration itself was far more committed to evangelisation as an integral part of its objective than were the British or French⁴⁴⁰ – and business. Both played an unambiguous role in tourism. 6,000 Christian (primarily Roman Catholic) missionaries were in the Belgian Congo by the



Figure 1: Missionaries being dispatched to the colony, *Sabena Revue*, Vol. 3 (1958), p.18

⁴³⁸ National Archives FO371/125394 - Dispatch dated 31 January 1957 to the Foreign Secretary from the British Ambassador to Belgium

⁴³⁹ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.14

⁴⁴⁰ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.14

end of the colonial era, manning nearly 700 missionary posts.⁴⁴¹ Their presence was actively encouraged by the state since they had a role in delivering both a moral framework for the colony, as well as augmenting state efforts in the provision of basic healthcare as well as primary and secondary education.⁴⁴²

A 1958 edition of the *Sabena Revue*, a tri-annual publication produced by the national airline, included a photograph of missionaries being dispatched to the colony (see Fig. 1).⁴⁴³ The photograph is captioned with “A group of missionaries happily setting out”.⁴⁴⁴ Boarding an aircraft, clad in the robes of their orders, clutching pith helmets and donning sunglasses, this presented a very modern and somewhat glamorous image of the Church’s evangelising activities in the colony.

Business, as we have seen, flourishing in the boom post-War years, was involved in tourist activity as businessmen – based in the Congo and from abroad – criss-crossed the country, primarily in the economic important centres of Leopoldville and Elisabethville in the mineral-rich Katanga province. The element of control is revealed by Merriam, who explains that over 70 per cent of all businesses were held by just five holding companies in 1952.⁴⁴⁵ Furthermore, the state held substantial interests in all five companies ranging up to 50 per cent. Large companies, Merriam explains, were not only dependent upon the government for continued goodwill, they were to varying degrees controlled by the government.⁴⁴⁶ That significant concentration of state control manifests itself, therefore, in the management and delivery of the *Plan Décennal* in which all three actors of the colony had a role in delivering the economic and social well-being of the Belgian Congo.

Unlike the British approach of a balance of critical government-funded investments, primarily in infrastructure, and fostering economic investment from the private sector as set out in a Cabinet paper dated 1 November 1948 entitled *Colonial Investment Policy*,⁴⁴⁷ the Belgian approach relied to a very great extent on a combination of direct or indirect government interventions and investments. Davidson goes further in asserting that the entire Belgian Congo economy was fundamentally a national enterprise.⁴⁴⁸ Tourism, then, was no exception.

⁴⁴¹ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.13

⁴⁴² Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.306

⁴⁴³ *Sabena Revue*, Vol. 3 (1958), p.18

⁴⁴⁴ *Sabena Revue*, Vol. 3 (1958), p.18

⁴⁴⁵ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.36

⁴⁴⁶ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background to Conflict* (1961), p.38

⁴⁴⁷ National Archives CAB134/219 - Various Cabinet papers including a report entitled ‘*Colonial Investment Policy*’ dated 1 November 1948 prepared by the Colonial Development Working Party

⁴⁴⁸ Davidson, B., Chapter 14: Zaire, Rwanda & Burundi, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.701

Tourism had a role to play in the *Plan Décennal*, which dominated economic activity in the Belgian Congo in the post-War years. The plan acknowledged that the expansion of economic activity in the colony would drive an increased demand for transportation.⁴⁴⁹ An article in the Belgian daily *La Libre Belgique* in 1949 confirms that African tourism would contribute in the colony's development, explaining that "roads, the construction of which, is foreseen in the *Plan Décennal*, will be certainly sufficient to allow eventual tourists to see everything worth seeing in the Congo".⁴⁵⁰

In a copy of the *Belgian Trade Review* in 1951, it is reported that the Ten Year Plan included a programme to build 10,000 miles of new roads, an upgrade of the existing 60,000 miles of road (much of which was dirt track) and the improvement of river services and associated infrastructure.⁴⁵¹ The article goes on to report that the Belgian government was soliciting bids for the purchase of equipment to the value of \$8 million USD to help deliver the road-building programme. This expansion was not limited to road-building.

A 1958 publication reports a massive expansion in boat, train and air travel in the Belgian Congo during the post-War years.⁴⁵² The total number of passengers carried by all companies in all three transportation services, increased six fold in 15 years, from under 350,000 in 1939 to over 2 million in 1957.⁴⁵³ It also points to significant investment and growth in carriers, which in large part were all controlled by the state.

This indicates, therefore, a high level of state involvement in the delivery of post-War colonial tourism, but also in its promotion and publicity.

5.3 Evolution of travel and tourism after 1945

Writing in the *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge* in 1952, President of the Tourism Bureau for the Belgian Congo Alfred de Moeller de Laddersous reported on the role of government in tourism's development: "Le tourisme est une industrie, avec sa technique, son outillage, avec aussi une forte dose d'inspiration gouvernementale (c'est peut-être la seule industrie dont toute le monde admet qu'elle soit dirigée)" [Tourism is an industry, with its own art, tools, also with a strong dose governmental inspiration (maybe it's the only industry in the world that every one admits government

⁴⁴⁹ *Plan Décennal pour le Développement Economique et Social du Congo Belge*, Bruxelles, Les éditions de Visscher (1949), p.224

⁴⁵⁰ Plan Décennal: Nécessité de Développer les Routes, *La Libre Belgique*, 15 December 1949

⁴⁵¹ Road Building and Maintenance in the Belgian Congo, *Belgian Trade Review*, September (1951), p.18

⁴⁵² *Le Congo Belge*, édité par L'Office de l'Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, Bruxelles (1958), p.347

⁴⁵³ *Le Congo Belge*, édité par L'Office de l'Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, Bruxelles (1958), p.347

should direct)].⁴⁵⁴ Tourism, asserts Moeller de Laddersous, requires heavy government direction. This appears to characterise the evolution of post-War colonial tourism.

The *Office du Tourisme Colonial* was established on 13 January 1940⁴⁵⁵ with activities and budgets being set for the wartime years of 1941 and 1942.⁴⁵⁶ Previously, colonial tourism promotion had been serviced by an office within Belgium's national tourist office.⁴⁵⁷ It is reasonable to assume there was limited activity undertaken in the wartime years, and research has found no meaningful evidence of this, although a letter dated 18 December 1942 from a Mr Gustav Lecocq requests a brochure to be sent to him entitled *Visitez le Congo Belge*, since he wished to undertake a journey through the colony after the War.⁴⁵⁸ This appears to attend to Cohen's observation that during the Second World War and immediate post-War years, the hopes for the future merged with nostalgia for the best of pre-War life.⁴⁵⁹

The function of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* was essentially limited to "la propagande en Belgique et à l'étranger" [propaganda in Belgium and abroad].⁴⁶⁰ At the outset, the Office had a range of mainly state but also some private interests involved in aspects of the tourist sector. Oversight of the Office was to a board comprising the Minister of the Colonies (who was to be nominally represented by the Director of the Ministry of the Colonies), the Honorary Vice-Governor General of the Belgian Congo Alfred Moeller de Laddersous (who served not only as its President but also in the same capacity for the Colonial Fund for Economic & Social Propaganda), the President of the Association of Belgian Colonial Interests, Secretary General of the Special Committee of Katanga, President of the Committee of Direction of the Institute of National Parks, Secretary of the Permanent Committee of the Coordination of Transport in the Belgian Congo, the General Commissioner for Tourism as well as representatives of the Touring Club of the Belgian Congo and the Flemish Tourist Union.⁴⁶¹ As papers relating to the Office's founding explain the governing board was "tous de

⁴⁵⁴ Moeller de Laddersous, A., *Le Tourisme au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi*, *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge* Vol 3 (1952), p.473

⁴⁵⁵ MFAB, Office colonial (552) 220.181.1 - The constitution of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* dated 13 January 1940

⁴⁵⁶ MFAB, Office colonial (552) 220.181.2 - Proposed 1941 and 1942 budgets for the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* circa 1940

⁴⁵⁷ *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge*, Vol. 3 (1952), p.472

⁴⁵⁸ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (501) African Archives - A letter dated 18 December 1942 from Gustav Lecocq requesting a brochure entitled *Visitez le Congo Belge*

⁴⁵⁹ Cohen, M., *The Eclipse of Elegant Economy: Post-War Changes in Attitudes to Personal Finance in Britain*, PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London (2007), p.13

⁴⁶⁰ Le Tourisme Colonial et le Touring Club du Congo Belge, *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 18, (1946) p.10; Moeller de Laddersous, A., *Le Tourisme au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi*, *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge*, Vol. 3, (1952), p.472

⁴⁶¹ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (552) 220.181.1 - The constitution of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* dated 13 January 1940

nationalité”, in other words all members were of Belgian nationality, conveying a further sign of control was to be held by the Belgian state and not shared with subjects of their colonial wards.⁴⁶²

The intensity of state involvement, represented at a senior level, notably from the Minister of the Colonies down, indicates that there was considerable political value attached to the role and function of the Office. It is also in marked contrast to any broadly comparable body established by the British authorities. In fact, tourism in British Colonial Africa was largely left to the industry sector itself to organise.

The *Office du Tourisme Colonial* [Office of Colonial Tourism] functioned from 1945-1949 when it was re-branded. From 1949-1955, the entity was called the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* [Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi].⁴⁶³ It maintained its position as an independent department within the Ministry of the Colonies. We have no understanding as to why it changed its title although one reason could be that the Belgian authorities considered the term ‘colonial’ not in step with the times, with target audiences or with a new and progressive industrial sector. As part of the re-brand, it was grouped together with the newly formed *Centre d’Information et de Documentation du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*.⁴⁶⁴ Its origins also pre-date the Second World War.

The Colonial Fund of Economic and Social Propaganda was established in 1937 with the aim of raising support in Belgium and overseas for the colonial idea.⁴⁶⁵ It embraced relatively modern techniques of sponsoring film and photography to convey the colonial mission. Moeller de Laddersous served as its President from 1945 until 1950 when it was folded into the *Centre d’Information et de Documentation du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*.⁴⁶⁶

Geary explains there was a twofold purpose of these agencies.⁴⁶⁷ First, they were to highlight the accomplishments of Belgian colonialism. As we saw in Chapter 2, Pierre Wigny was aggrieved by his experience in the USA and his discovery of lingering associations of the Belgian Congo with atrocities committed during the reign of Leopold II over fifty years before.⁴⁶⁸ Second, Geary explains

⁴⁶² MFAB, Office colonial A4 (552) 220.181.1 - The constitution of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* dated 13 January 1940

⁴⁶³ *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge*, Vol. 3 (1952), p.472

⁴⁶⁴ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.9a – Ministry of the Colonies paper circa 1949 on the rationalizing of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* and the *Centre d’Information et de Documentation du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*.

⁴⁶⁵ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.9b - Annual report of the *Centre d’Information et de Documentation du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* circa 1949

⁴⁶⁶ Geary, C., *In and Out of Focus: Images from Central Africa, 1885-1960* (2003), p.50

⁴⁶⁷ Geary, C., *In and Out of Focus: Images from Central Africa, 1885-1960* (2003), p.51

⁴⁶⁸ Vanthemsche, G., *Belgium and the Congo: 1885-1980* (2012), p.2

that to counteract negative impressions of colonialism, the agencies provided material including “thousands of photographs of modern colonial cities, industries, training and instructions for Africans, Africans working side by side with Belgian supervisors and their model urban living quarters”.⁴⁶⁹ Such images were to make their way into period guidebooks and tourist literature.

The role of Moeller de Laddersous and his dual mandate as a Chairman of a body charged with marketing the economic and social development of the Belgian Congo while also overseeing the marketing and delivery of tourism suggests an obvious crossover of interests and reinforces the notion that tourism was viewed as a channel to deliver propaganda about colonial progress. Given then, the close relationship between the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* and the *Centre d'Information et de Documentation du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* from 1950 onwards, it becomes increasingly apparent that there was an overlap of the delivery of positive messaging and communications to external audiences.

Integrating tourism further into the body politic of the Belgian Congo, a number of additional bodies were to be established which characterised the bureaucratic nature of the colonial administration. In March 1950, the *Conseil Supérieur du Tourisme* anchored in Leopoldville was established by the Governor General which brought together in a consultative body representatives of the hotel and transportation sectors, chambers of commerce and tourist associations such as the *Touring Club du Congo Belge*.⁴⁷⁰ Meeting twice a year, its primary function was to study means to develop tourism in the colony and convey those suggestions to the Governor General for consideration.⁴⁷¹

At the end of 1949, a royal decree dated 3 December provided for the function of the Tourism Section of the General Government within the Governor General's offices, which was fundamentally to act as a secretariat to the *Conseil Supérieur du Tourisme*.⁴⁷² It was charged with looking at tourism propaganda, improvement in tourism infrastructure and coordinating legal, fiscal and administrative measures that would benefit the development of tourism.⁴⁷³ The body, which appeared to have some overlap with the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* based in Brussels, was also charged with the promotion of tourism, and was to be staffed by a Commissioner General, a Deputy Commissioner General, a deputy head of the office, and three African clerks.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁹ Geary, C., *In and Out of Focus: Images from Central Africa, 1885-1960* (2003), p.52

⁴⁷⁰ Meert, N., *Le Tourisme au Congo Belge: Son Implantation et son Développement*, M.A. dissertation, Université Libre de Bruxelles (2007), p.25

⁴⁷¹ Meert, N., *Le Tourisme au Congo Belge: Son Implantation et son Développement*, M.A. dissertation, Université Libre de Bruxelles (2007), p.25

⁴⁷² Moeller de Laddersous, A., *Le Tourisme au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi*, *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge*, Vol. 3, (1952), p.473

⁴⁷³ *Bullet Official du Touring Club du Congo-Belge*, No. 9 (1952), p.21

⁴⁷⁴ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848

In an otherwise unremarkable construct of colonial administration, the important aspect of the establishment of the Tourism Section in the Governor's organisation was that it was not to be anchored in an economic or industry section of his bureaucracy. The Tourism Section was to be anchored in the politically significant department of the General Secretariat of the General Government in Leopoldville. In other words, tourism's importance to the colonial regime was such that it had been elevated into the central co-ordinating function across the colonial administration and reported to the Governor General's office. This reflected tourism's ability not only to touch many aspects of economic activity, but also indicates high political value.

Examination of Belgian colonial archive papers reveal there was also a Conseil Technique du Tourisme Colonial [Technical Council for Colonial Tourism] which appears to have had a consultative role in reviewing and advising on infrastructure and other more technical aspects of tourism. A meeting held on 18 November 1947 addressed the question of hotels, and with it a proposal to create a further consultative body in relation to the hotel sector in the colony.⁴⁷⁵ At the very least, the establishment of these bodies, and talk of yet others, demonstrate further evidence of the maturing of tourism as an important economic and political activity, with standing organisations reviewing and advising on its long term evolution.

Moreover, this adopted an additional dimension when the Ministry of the Colonies undertook a re-organisation of its publicity divisions in January 1956. The *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* and supervision for it was brought under the recently established *Office de l'Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi* (INFORCONGO). This newly established office was a product of three previous entities - *Office de l'Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi*, *Centre d'Information et de Documentation du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*, and the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*.⁴⁷⁶ In the new world order, the tourism function then became the third directorate of the Ministry of the Colonies information and public relations office.⁴⁷⁷

Institutionally, tourism promotion, then, became a fully integrated component of official Government information and public relations machine. Consequently, all colonial tourism promotion was very likely to have been co-ordinated to a very significant level with wider colonial promotion. It is, in this respect, difficult not to view Belgian colonial tourism as an extension of Belgian colonial propaganda. What prompted this move? 1955 and 1956 witnessed significant changes internationally.

⁴⁷⁵ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - An invitation circa 1947 to a meeting of the *Conseil Technique du Tourisme Colonial* on Tuesday 18 November 1947

⁴⁷⁶ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.9a - Ministry of the Colonies memorandum circa 1955

⁴⁷⁷ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and the Ruanda Urundi* (1956), p.661

5.4 International perceptions of Belgian colonialism

We have seen from Chapter 2 that in the immediate post-War years, anti-colonialism and self-determination were a doctrine of the emergent superpowers. That strain of thought only become more defiant during the 1950s and yet distinguished historians have observed that, to quote Young, “the Belgian colonial system enjoyed relative immunity from outside criticism”.⁴⁷⁸ There had been some recognition of changing times in 1946 by the Belgian Congo’s respected wartime Governor-General Pierre Ryckmans who famously declared “les jours du colonialisme sont révolus” [the days of colonialism are over].⁴⁷⁹ According to Young, it caused a sensation in Belgian colonial circles and expressed an uneasiness that the colonial system was beginning to go on the defensive.⁴⁸⁰

During the late 1940s and 1950s, the French and British colonial administrations began a process of handing over decision-making to their colonial subjects, initially at the local council level, serving to show that decolonisation was underway.⁴⁸¹ A last ditch attempt by the British and French to shore up waning imperial power was exposed traumatically by the Suez Crisis of 1956 demonstrating those metropolitans no longer had the capacity to preserve their imperial roles.⁴⁸² By December 1956, Britain introduced the Ghana Independence Bill in to Parliament, and within a five-hour debate, African de-colonisation in the post-War era was confirmed.⁴⁸³

Just one year before, in December 1955, the Belgian academic Antoine Van Bilsen caused a stir by openly addressing Congo’s independence and proposing a 30-year phased plan of decolonisation. Within Belgium this was greeted with mirth and viewed as the naïve dream of a soft-headed ‘indigenist’.⁴⁸⁴ This followed an intervention a few months before by respected writer and commentator Louis Dumont-Wilden who appeared to capture the mood of the Belgian colonial establishment when he wrote that “the Belgian Congo is the most prosperous and tranquil of colonies,

⁴⁷⁸ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.23

⁴⁷⁹ Davidson, B., Chapter 14: Zaire, Rwanda & Burundi, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.704

⁴⁸⁰ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.33

⁴⁸¹ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.22; von Albertini, R., *Decolonization: The Administration and Future of the Colonies, 1919-1960* (1982), p.505; Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.32; Young, C., Chapter 13: Decolonisation in Africa, in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, Vol.2, ed. by Gann, L., & Duignan, P. (1969), p.484

⁴⁸² Cheesman, D., Butskell and the Empire: The House of Commons Prepares for the Scramble from Africa, 1946-56; *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2009), pp.260-261

⁴⁸³ Cheesman, D., Butskell and the Empire: The House of Commons Prepares for the Scramble from Africa, 1946-56; *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2009), p.263

⁴⁸⁴ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.36

the one whose evolution is the most peaceful and normal”.⁴⁸⁵ It is argued that by the Congolese not apparently demanding any political changes, there was an implicit mandate to maintain the colonial mission in a colony seemingly “calm and happy”.⁴⁸⁶ Such language characterised the official narrative in government communications and the pitch it made to the outside world. In his 1953 *Paris Match* article Cartier writes “Le Congo Belge offert l’image d’une société indigène gaie et heureuse” [The Belgian Congo offers the image of a native society gay and happy].⁴⁸⁷

The challenge for the Belgian colonial authorities, however, was that in concluding it saw no reason to change course, how then should it combat external criticism, notably from the USA. As we have seen, like the British and the French at the end of the War, the Belgians also chose to “refurbish the image of empire”.⁴⁸⁸

As already noted, the colonial brand had become tainted. Writing to the Belgian Government Information Officer in New York in 1952, Dr. Maynard of the French University of New York provides a preliminary report on the activities of the University’s Centre of African Studies in which he observed of American audiences that one of the greatest obstacles is the ignorance of the general public who are turned off by the word colonialism.⁴⁸⁹ The same year, former Colonial Minister Pierre Wigny recommended the launching of a propaganda campaign in order to gain some sympathy for the Belgian Congo among American audiences.⁴⁹⁰

Efforts then appeared to be directed to the USA in combatting the negative connotations of colonialism, but little further evolution of its colonial policy and strategy appears to have followed. In a 1956 publication entitled *Belgium’s Policy in the Belgian Congo* issued by the Belgian Government Information Center in New York, an article re-printing a speech by the colony’s liberal Governor General Léon Pétillon merely made reference to an emphasis on fostering human relations “between the blacks and the white” and “of the broadest mutual understanding”.⁴⁹¹

The language used even at this hour was anchored in the paradigm of racialism, and not self-determination. In an edition of *Sabena Revue* published in the autumn of 1958, it made the case that

⁴⁸⁵ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W. (1977), p.305

⁴⁸⁶ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.305

⁴⁸⁷ Cartier, R., *Paris Match*, No. 248, 19 December (1953), p.44

⁴⁸⁸ Crowder, M., Chapter 1: The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.26

⁴⁸⁹ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 608.13592 – Letter dated 27 March 1952 to the Belgian Government Information Officer in New York from Dr J A Maynard of the French University of New York.

⁴⁹⁰ Vanthemsche, G., The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo in Europe and the World, in *European Historiography* ed. by Lévai, C., (2006), p.116

⁴⁹¹ Belgian Government Information Centre, *Belgium’s Policy in the Belgian Congo* (1956), p.3

the “development of Africa is the work of the White Man; but it could not have been achieved without the help of local labour. We are faced in the Congo by the core of the black race, a race endowed with exceptional artistic gifts, a race of charming human sensitiveness and vivid inborn intelligence, checked by I do know not what excessive juvenility, by a youthful spirit akin to infancy”.⁴⁹²

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the Belgians appeared to take exception to American post-War criticism of colonialism, given segregation characterised large areas of the southern USA.⁴⁹³ Yet a warning came from the Belgian Embassy in Washington to the Foreign Minister reflecting on the consequences of the 17 May 1954 Supreme High Court Ruling banning segregation in public schools. In his concluding remarks, the Chargé d’Affaires observed that “Du point de vue de la politique extérieure, les États-Unis escomptent retirer de cette mesure des avantages. Elle permettra de nier la propagande ennemie qui accuse fréquemment ce pays de prêcher la démocratie et l’égalité du bout des lèvres et de ne pas la pratiquer chez lui.” [From the point of view of foreign policy, the United States will draw advantages from this measure. It will deny enemy propaganda which frequently accuses this country of preaching democracy and equality but not practising it at home].⁴⁹⁴ In effect, one of the Belgian arguments in defending colonialism to the USA had been disabled.

Regardless, the Belgian diplomatic and colonial publicity machine continued, without showing much let up. The Governor General Pétilion, speaking in 1956, did his best to provide a rationale why independence could not be considered a realistic proposition when he remarked there “is no real democracy without two basic elements: first, a population capable of knowing wisely what it wants... second, elites capable of governing”.⁴⁹⁵

Reassuring American audiences that there was no appetite for independence among Congo’s Africans characterises some of the on-going diplomatic work by Belgium’s diplomatic corps in the USA. Speaking at a foreign policy conference in July 1955 at Colgate University, Belgian Ambassador, Baron Silvercruys said “En ce qui concerne la situation au Congo Belge [...] il n’y avait pas de problème de nationalisme.” [Concerning the situation in the Belgian Congo [...] there is not a problem of nationalism].⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹² *Sabena Revue*, Vol. 3 (1958), p.36

⁴⁹³ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (3240) 1393 Foreign Affairs II - Communiqué from the Chargés d’affaires in Washington to the Belgian Foreign Minister, 19 July 1954

⁴⁹⁴ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (3240) 1393 Foreign Affairs II - Communiqué from the Chargés d’affaires in Washington to the Belgian Foreign Minister, 19 July 1954

⁴⁹⁵ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.313

⁴⁹⁶ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (3240) 1393 Foreign Affairs II – Speech by Belgian Ambassador Baron Silvercruys at a conference on foreign policy held from 11-15 July 1955 at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York State

The extent to which the Belgians invested diplomatic energy in resisting pressure from the USA government and American public opinion was subject to British Foreign Office scrutiny which provides a helpful third party assessment. In a dispatch dated 31 August 1956 the British Consul General begins “The current Belgian sensitiveness to any outside criticism of their colonial policy, and particularly to American criticism, has again been demonstrated”.⁴⁹⁷ It goes on to report that a ‘negro journalist’ for the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Carl Rowan, filed a report following a visit with a party of American press correspondents who visited the Congo as guests of Sabena airlines. The Consul General goes on to report that while Mr Rowan made “the customary tribute to the social and economic progress achieved in the Congo [...] There is fear that political progress is not sufficient to avoid the menace of political and social upheavals”.⁴⁹⁸

Further in the dispatch the Consul General reports the Belgian news agencies’ “irritation” at Mr Rowan’s remarks. *L’Avenir Coloniale* carried a sarcastic headline entitled “They have come, seen everything and (obviously) understood nothing”.⁴⁹⁹ The diplomat reports that another colonial newspaper *Le Courrier d’Afrique* “devotes a lengthy editorial to the subject, is hotly indignant at this constant American mixture of truths and prejudices which defy analysis”.⁵⁰⁰ He goes on to report “what strikes us most is the persistence shown in the American press of a disparaging prejudice, a routine pessimism which ignores all the reasons for the hopes which we have here; the innocent pharisaism, which refuses to a small country the congratulations, which have not always been deserved by the big countries performing the same task”.⁵⁰¹

The observations carried by the British diplomat warrant comment. First, Rowan was participating on an organised media trip, the motivation of which was presumably to secure positive media coverage about the Belgian Congo. These were reasonably sophisticated tactics being deployed by the colonial authorities (on this occasion by means of Sabena which would have provided separation from Ministry of the Colonies). Second, having been prompted to write an article for publication, Rowan’s comments did not seem unusually harsh, rather he merely makes comment about the potential for disquiet – which indeed he predicted with accuracy. Third, the colonial newspapers reporting the comments were, as we have seen, not independent, rather subject to some censorship. Fourth, regardless of the issue of press freedom, the remarks betray an astonishing level of sensitivity and

⁴⁹⁷ National Archives FO371/118795 - A dispatch dated 31 August 1956 from the British Consul General in Leopoldville to the Foreign Office

⁴⁹⁸ National Archives FO371/118795 - A dispatch dated 31 August 1956 from the British Consul General in Leopoldville to the Foreign Office

⁴⁹⁹ National Archives FO371/118795 - A dispatch dated 31 August 1956 from the British Consul General in Leopoldville to the Foreign Office

⁵⁰⁰ National Archives FO371/118795 - A dispatch dated 31 August 1956 from the British Consul General in Leopoldville to the Foreign Office

⁵⁰¹ National Archives FO371/118795 - A dispatch dated 31 August 1956 from the British Consul General in Leopoldville to the Foreign Office

apparent injustice felt on behalf of the Belgians for lack of recognition of their contribution in developing the country. It also suggested a naivety that by flying a journalist to visit the Belgian Congo, there would follow without question praiseworthy articles with few if any level of criticism.

This attends to Young's observation "of the relative lack of objective debate" about the future of the Belgian Congo, and no tradition of critical appraisal of its colonial effort from its scholarly community.⁵⁰² Against this backdrop, it seems apparent that Belgian colonial propaganda sought to defend colonialism's achievements and continue to fight a rear guard battle, which was increasingly out of time with the French and British colonial strategies as well as American expectations.

5.5 Propaganda by means of tourism

Tourism marketing was deployed by a network of offices and attends to Light's hypothesis that tourism promotion is an important means for countries to project their cultural and political identity to the wider world.⁵⁰³ By 1956, it seems the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* had 13 representative offices on three continents.⁵⁰⁴ In the case of the USA, representation was provided by Sabena through its head office in New York office and other offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit and Dallas.⁵⁰⁵ This was a sophisticated and significant investment. It is probable that some of the non-USA offices may have doubled as part of Belgium's diplomatic presence in the world.

Indeed, the question of the staffing of such offices was raised with the Director of the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* during his journey through the Congo in 1955. He reported "Quelques personnes ont également exprimé le vue que l'Office acquière plus d'indépendance dans le choix de ses représentants à l'Etranger, principalement aux Etats-Unis." [Some people have also expressed the view that the Tourist Bureau gains more independence in the choice of its representatives abroad, principally in the United States].⁵⁰⁶ While it is not clear who had raised the issue and why, there appears to be a question about whether such offices were truly representing and promoting tourism in the Congo (including hoteliers and others operating in the colony) or indeed whether they were real at all. Were they simply Sabena offices charged with

⁵⁰² Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), pp.20-22

⁵⁰³ Light, D., Chapter 1: Tourism, Identity and Popular Culture in *The Dracula Dilemma: Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania* (2012), p.13

⁵⁰⁴ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.661

⁵⁰⁵ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.661

⁵⁰⁶ MFAB Office colonial A4 (512) E.0. - Report dated 29 September 1955 of the journey to the Belgian Congo by M de Meyer in July 1955

holding some tourist literature, or merely a window in the Belgian embassy displaying tourism posters? And if the service was more than a window in an embassy, it is probably fair to assume that diplomats were providing tourism advice and information. This would support the case that there was a crossover between diplomacy and tourist promotion. It is certainly the case there was an active Belgian Government Information Centre in New York, which had published a range of materials relating to colonialism by 1956. Such publications were often government papers or official speeches that had been packaged into informational documents.⁵⁰⁷

The trade arm of the Washington Embassy was equally well equipped, disseminating a monthly English language publication entitled the *Belgian Trade Review*. The publication appears to have run from 1947 until 1954.⁵⁰⁸ Focusing on trade promotion, it included articles about economic endeavours and progress in the Belgian colonies, primarily the Congo. It also was used as a means to reinforce positive publicity or counteract negative publicity. Its March 1952 publication includes a robust rebuttal to Bertram Russell's recently published book *New Hopes for a Changing World*. In an article entitled "Philosophy or Lunacy",⁵⁰⁹ the Belgian Government Information Officer Jan Albert Goris froths indignantly at Russell's very brief assessment that King Leopold II contributed to disadvantaging the development of black Africans by encouraging European colonialism across the continent.⁵¹⁰ Demonstrating further evidence of Belgian sensitivities towards their rule and reputation in Africa, Goris accuses Russell of writing "nonsense and slander".⁵¹¹ "The atrocities in the Congo belong to the realm of political slander", he argues and then seeks to discredit historical criticism by saying "everybody knows that the two principal accusers of the King Leopold regime died as traitors and were completely disgraced at the end of their life" (a reference to the diplomat Roger Casement and journalist E.D. Morel, both of whom led the campaign in Edwardian Britain to end Leopold's hold over the Congo).⁵¹²

Vanthemscche has explained that the Belgian political, economic and cultural elites developed an outright Leopoldian cult after Leopold's death in 1909, "[...] even if politicians, business leaders, clerics and other opinion leaders were perfectly aware of the 'dark' sides of his personality and actions".⁵¹³ "[Russell] succeeds in compressing into those eleven lines more falsehoods, idiocies and insinuations than Hitler did in the bulky volume of *Mein Kampf*", concludes Goris. This intervention is evidence of the Leopoldian cult in action. Goris' defence of his country's colonial legacy is a far

⁵⁰⁷ *Belgium's Policy in the Belgian Congo* (1956), p.45 – inside back cover

⁵⁰⁸ Library catalogue, Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Brussels

⁵⁰⁹ *Belgian Trade Review*, March (1952), p.6

⁵¹⁰ *Belgian Trade Review*, March (1952), p.6

⁵¹¹ *Belgian Trade Review*, March (1952), p.6

⁵¹² *Belgian Trade Review*, March (1952), p.6

⁵¹³ Vanthemscche, G., *The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo, Europe and the World*, in *European Historiography* ed. by Lévai, C. (2006), p.92

cry from the purpose of the publication of fostering trade, however, it demonstrates a vigilance to defending the reputation of Belgium and its mission in the Congo. Indeed as the Belgian Government's dedicated public relations (PR) man in the USA, Goris' very position speaks to the resources deployed to trumpet the Belgium's colonialist mission and rebut criticism.

Reports of positive newspaper coverage were also reported in the *Belgian Trade Review*. Editions from June and November 1952 edition carried articles about positive coverage reported in the *New York Times*, *Readers' Digest* and *Fortune*.⁵¹⁴ This third party endorsement seems to have been particularly valuable. We know from British Foreign Office archives that the Belgian authorities hosted media tours for journalists and that the Belgians were often indignant at anything other than praiseworthy coverage.⁵¹⁵ This strategy of media engagement appears to have been a staple of the Belgian colonial public relations machine and three significant articles in the period of June to November 1952 suggests that there had been a recent tour of the colony for American journalists.⁵¹⁶

Prospective American businessmen to the Belgian Congo were to be reassured by the paternal productivity guaranteed by the colonial authorities in an article entitled "Growing Pains of an African City" in a 1951 edition of the *Belgian Trade Review*.⁵¹⁷ Penned by the Belgium's PR man-at-large, Goris wrote "If the civilized man, of whatever colour he may be, is discriminating in his diet, he is certainly more interested in the quality than in the quantity of what he drinks [...] Sometimes the Congo authorities feel that the people of Léopoldville are too bibulous. In all probability the Congolese imbibed too freely before he even caught sight of the white man: he had his own potent liquids. But if he wants to belong to civilized society he can't go on a spree that gives him a week-long hangover. He must be presentable at 9.A.M. next morning. To help him acquire these civilized habits the Government has prohibited the sale of wines and hard liquor to the Congolese".⁵¹⁸ This has echoes of Freed's paradigm that period guidebooks reminded the reader to uphold moral values consistent with the interests of the colony and the native.⁵¹⁹

Another example of Belgian paternalism is reported by an American tourist travelling through the Belgian Congo in 1954. "I vividly remember that it [Stanleyville] had a curfew for Africans, who lived in villages on the other side of the Congo and were required to be back by sundown. We

⁵¹⁴ Congo Life Described, *Belgian Trade Review*, June (1952), p.17; Booming Congo gets praise from Fortune magazine, *Belgian Trade Review*, November (1952), p.15

⁵¹⁵ National Archives FO371/118795 - A dispatch dated 31 August 1956 from the British Consul General in Leopoldville to the Foreign Office

⁵¹⁶ Congo Life Described, *Belgian Trade Review*, June (1952), p.17; Booming Congo gets praise from Fortune magazine, *Belgian Trade Review*, November (1952), p.15

⁵¹⁷ *Belgian Trade Review*, March (1951), p.6

⁵¹⁸ *Belgian Trade Review*, March (1951), p.6

⁵¹⁹ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.8

watched from our hotel as Stanley's city was emptied of blacks in the last half-hour of daylight".⁵²⁰ In the September 1951 edition of the *Belgian Trade Review*, an article appeared entitled "Progress in the Congo". It reads "Only a short while ago, in fact within the lifetime of many readers, the Congo was a primitive territory [...] The only semblance of civilisation was to be found along the coasts where traders gathered in ramshackle settlements".⁵²¹ In a familiar refrain of government propaganda celebrating colonial successes it reads "Today, a traveller in the Congo would pass miles of flourishing plantations that grow palm trees, coffee, groundnuts, fruit, etc. He could not avoid seeing numerous mines that give employment to thousands of workers [...] It is clear, therefore, that the Congo is an important factor in the economic well-being of the world".⁵²² Not only is there evidence that it mounted a diplomatic and commercial offensive, it is apparent that pro-colonial propaganda increasingly characterised the Belgian Congo's tourist proposition and marketing material.

Writing in 1953, Moeller de Laddersous summed up the essence for tourism in the Belgian Congo as "Le tourisme, c'est la mise en œuvre de tous les moyens que les progrès de notre civilisation mettent à notre disposition pour satisfaire un instinct primordial de l'homme: celui de l'évasion, cet instinct qui mène les voyageurs aux confins jadis mystérieux de la sylvie tropicale, où la vie et la nature s'affrontent dans leurs aspects les plus primitifs" [Tourism is about implementing all the means that progress of our civilisation provides, to satisfy a primordial instinct in man: an instinct to escape, that leads travellers to the boundaries of the formerly mysterious tropical jungle, where life and nature compete in their most primitive aspects].⁵²³

To convey the Belgians achievements as fully as possible in tourism promotional literature, imagery played a very important role. Morgan and Pritchard have argued that imagery in tourism makes a number of contributions.⁵²⁴ First, images communicate messages about particular places and products; second they can help redefine and reposition a place or product; third, images help counter-negative and enhance perceptions; and, lastly, they can target particular markets and audiences.⁵²⁵

Dunn has observed that Henry Morton Stanley's colourful account of travelling in Africa in the late nineteenth century has vividly framed the perceptions and representations of tourism in the continent ever since.⁵²⁶ As a result, the representation of authentic, primitive Africa has dominated the

⁵²⁰ Zinsser, W., Across Colonial Africa, *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 104, No. 4 (1996), p.659

⁵²¹ *Belgian Trade Review*, September (1951), p.5

⁵²² *Belgian Trade Review*, September (1951), p.5

⁵²³ Le Tourisme au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi, *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge*, Vol. 3 (1952), p.473

⁵²⁴ Morgan, N. and Pritchard, A., *Tourism Promotion and Power: Creating Images, Creating Identities* (1998), p.3

⁵²⁵ Morgan, N. and Pritchard, A., *Tourism Promotion and Power: Creating Images, Creating Identities* (1998), p.3

⁵²⁶ Dunn, K., Fear of a Black Planet: Anarchy, Anxieties and Postcolonial Travel to Africa, *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 25, No. 3 (2004), p.486

marketing strategies and imagery deployed by the tourism industry.⁵²⁷ D’Hauteserre has observed that landscapes of the colonised world have been overlaid by the broad geopolitics of Western superiority. The choices, she argues, about how that is depicted are not haphazard, but rather a conscious act.⁵²⁸ One example is the advertising poster campaign Belgium conducted to encourage visitors to the colony. Early post-War posters largely emulated the focus of pre-war posters, with the primary tourist draw being Congo’s nature.

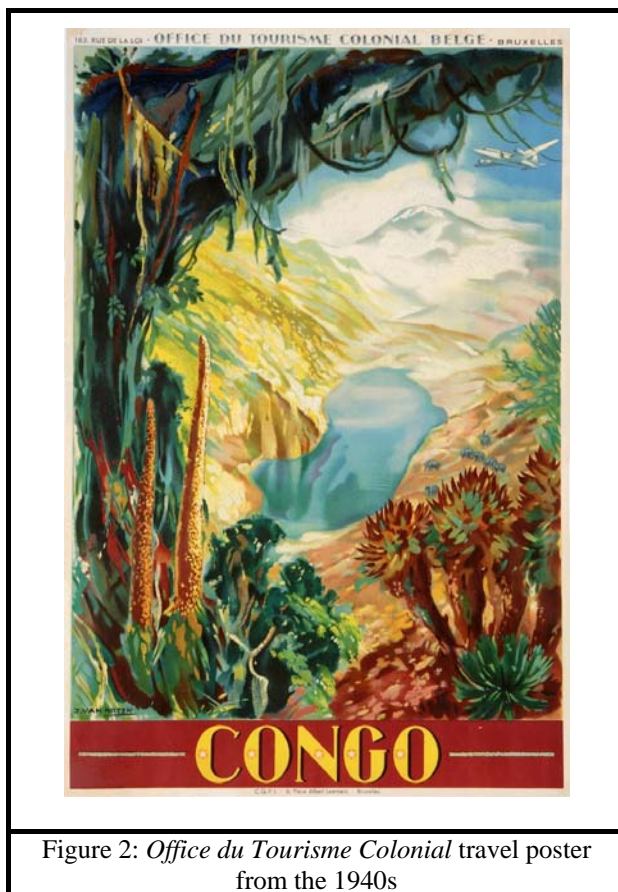


Figure 2: *Office du Tourisme Colonial* travel poster from the 1940s

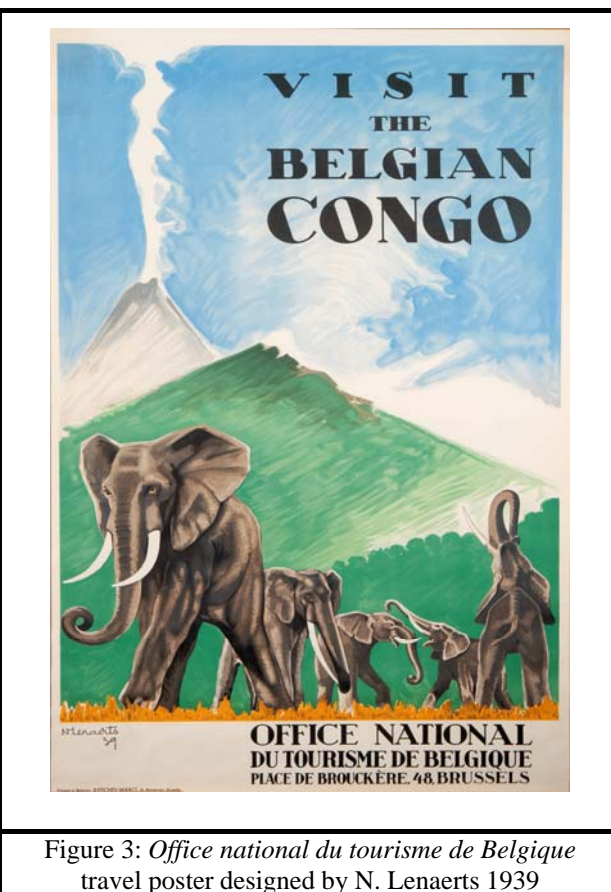


Figure 3: *Office national du tourisme de Belgique* travel poster designed by N. Lenaerts 1939

A poster from 1940s (see figure 2) captures a view emerging from a dark jungle setting across to a lake in the mid-ground where elephants graze close and mountains are in the background. An aeroplane in the Sabena livery flies overhead bringing tourists to the colony.⁵²⁹ This draws on the same themes of wildlife of a 1939 poster designed by N. Lenaerts and published by the predecessor to the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*, the *Office National du Tourisme de Belgique* which had a colonial section (see figure 3). Elephants grazing in front of mountain pastures and an active volcano suggests

⁵²⁷ Dunn, K., Fear of a Black Planet: Anarchy, Anxieties and Postcolonial Travel to Africa, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2004), p.488

⁵²⁸ d’Hauteserre, A., Chapter 19: Postcolonialism, Colonialism, And Tourism, in *A Companion to Tourism* ed. by Lew, A., Hall, C. & Williams, A., (2008), p.237

⁵²⁹ Designed by Jean Van Noten, and published by the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*, early 1950s. Source: Affiches G. Marci, Brussels

this is set in the Albert National Park.⁵³⁰ A poster also designed by Jean Van Noten and published after 1956 (see figure 4) uses imagery to convey a much more colourful and dynamic destination and suggests an evolution in the presentation of the colony to prospective tourist audiences.⁵³¹



Figure 4: Travel poster designed by Jean Van Noten and published after 1956

No narrative is provided and the only text states the “Belgian Congo” and the Brussels and New York addresses of the Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. The images convey a European man and woman on sun loungers relaxing as they look at a map of the Belgian Congo. A sky-rise building in the background conveys modernity and progress, which the Europeans have brought to the colony. To the right, three Congolese African women carry vessels on their heads depicting traditional practices which stand in contrast to the European created skyscraper. One of the African women is topless with her breasts revealed reinforcing both the exotic but also the ‘primitive’

⁵³⁰ Designed by N. Lenaerts, and published by the *Office National du Tourisme de Belgique*, 1939. Source: Affiches G. Marci, Brussels

⁵³¹ Designed by Jean Van Noten, and published by the Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Rwanda-Burundi, 1956. Source: DVP

in contrast to the European woman in a one piece swim suit. Lastly wildebeest are leaping in the foreground, again emphasising the exotic and the natural wonders of the colony.

Another set of materials produced for dissemination from 1955 was, initially, a tri-annual, tri-lingual publication called *Echo du Tourisme / Reise Echo*. In a magazine format brimming with photos, its first edition explained in an editorial the dual aims of the publication “Firstly to bring readers, at regular intervals, practical information which would otherwise necessitate a great deal of research; and secondly to give professional men that data they need to enable them to take full advantage of the amazing touring possibilities in the Belgian Congo”.⁵³² In the 11 publications reviewed from 1955 until 1958, *Echo du Tourisme* offers an easy and accessible read to those who are considering or actively planning a trip to the colony. A publication calibrated in three languages – French, Flemish and English – it appears largely skewed to the USA market, with American cultural references featuring through most editions.



Figure 5: Examples of front covers for the *Echo du Tourisme* series

At the meeting of representatives of the tourism sector in Bukavu in July 1955, the Director of the Office for Tourism for the Belgian Congo explained that, despite operating on a limited budget of BEF3,000,000, there would be an intensification of efforts to market tourism to the colony.⁵³³ He explained that *Echo du Tourisme* would have a print run of 30,000 per publication, three times per year. There are some notable recurring themes in the *Echo du Tourisme* series with pastiche images of wildlife and Africans in traditional dress adorning most front covers (see figure 5).

They were dynamic publications that stressed the opportunity for exotic adventure and, as Freed identifies about the development of travel publicity in general, reflects a conscious shift in the target

⁵³² *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 1 (1955), p.1

⁵³³ MFAB Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Minutes of meeting of industry representatives from Bukavu with the Director of the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* on 22 July 1955

constituency from resident colonial officials to wider international audiences. Some explanation for their emergence can be found in de Meyer's report on a journey undertaken around the Belgian Congo following ICAT V, which had taken place that month. On the topic of marketing, his conclusion was "Nous devons pouvoir présenter des images de qualités, vivantes, conçues dans un esprit commercial, compétitif. Tout cela est très différent de la simple information ou de la documentation à usage didactique. Pratiquement jusqu'à ce jour les services officiels qualifiés ne nous ont rien offert qui réponde à ces qualités essentielles pour nous, malgré que nos desiderata fussent connus de ceux-ci." [We need to present quality images, vivid, designed in a commercial, competitive spirit. All this is very different from mere information or documentation for educational use. Until now the qualified official services have offered nothing that meets these essential requirements, despite the fact that our wishes have been known to them].⁵³⁴

The trope of the unsophisticated native features in many. Specifically, of the touristic attributes of the colony identified by the Tourism Office is the diminutive Pygmies. In at least three editions, features are run about the Pygmies or "Le petit peuple de la jungle" [the little people of the jungle] who make for a "unique attraction and an unforgettable experience".⁵³⁵ In the first edition of *Echo du Tourisme*, the height of the Pygmies and the Watutsi "who are over 7 feet" is presented as a draw to the Belgian Congo in the same sentence as shooting elephant.⁵³⁶ It continues to reinforce the image of the Congolese as an extension of the wildlife and as a curiosity to observe, not necessarily as a people that could be afforded responsibility of a nation.

In the third edition, printed later in 1955, that message is conveyed even more starkly in an article about vacationing in the Belgian Congo at Christmas. It included, as part of a proposed excursion, visiting the Pygmies. The narrative is accompanied by distasteful pictures of semi-clad Pygmies and European tourist with them.⁵³⁷ In the seventh edition published in 1957, these Congolese people are described as "primitive people with simple pleasures; smiling and trustful".⁵³⁸ For "simple pleasures", read unsophisticated; for "smiling", read 'docile'; for "trustful", read dependent.

Even as late as 1957 when Ghana was granted its independence, Belgian Government-managed colonial tourism branding continued to characterise the Congolese as primeval, naïve and incapable of managing the country, thereby reinforcing the message of the benefits of European rule. Vanthemsche shares the analysis, arguing that "After the Second World War, the image of the 'happy

⁵³⁴ MFAB Office colonial A4 (512) E.0. - Report dated 29 September 1955 of the journey to the Belgian Congo by M de Meyer in July 1955

⁵³⁵ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 7 (1957), p.22

⁵³⁶ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 1 (1955), p.6

⁵³⁷ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 3 (1955), p.3

⁵³⁸ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 7 (1957), p.22

Congolese’ would influence both the international positioning and the internal colonial policy of Belgium”.⁵³⁹ It also supported Stengers view that as late as the 1950s, the Belgians remained convinced that his “political dominance corresponded to an overwhelming intellectual superiority”.⁵⁴⁰

Another trope, fulfilling this maxim, is that of the ‘modern Congo’. The infrastructure and, particularly, the aviation links external to the colony and domestic within, were all subjects of articles. At the end of one such article in a 1956 edition, which praises an annual increase of 19 per cent in Sabena’s passenger numbers on domestic flights in Congo, the question is posed “Where are the days of canoes and caravans?”.⁵⁴¹

More subtly an article in a 1956 edition entitled “Shopping in Belgian Africa” looks at the evolution of shopping since the arrival of Europeans in the colony (see figures 6 & 7).⁵⁴² Images of Congolese selling and buying foodstuffs on roadsides or in a rudimentary shop is juxtaposed with an image of the Europeans shopping in a well-stocked supermarket with attentive Congolese pushing their shopping



Figure 6: *Echo du Tourisme, Vol. 6 (1956)*

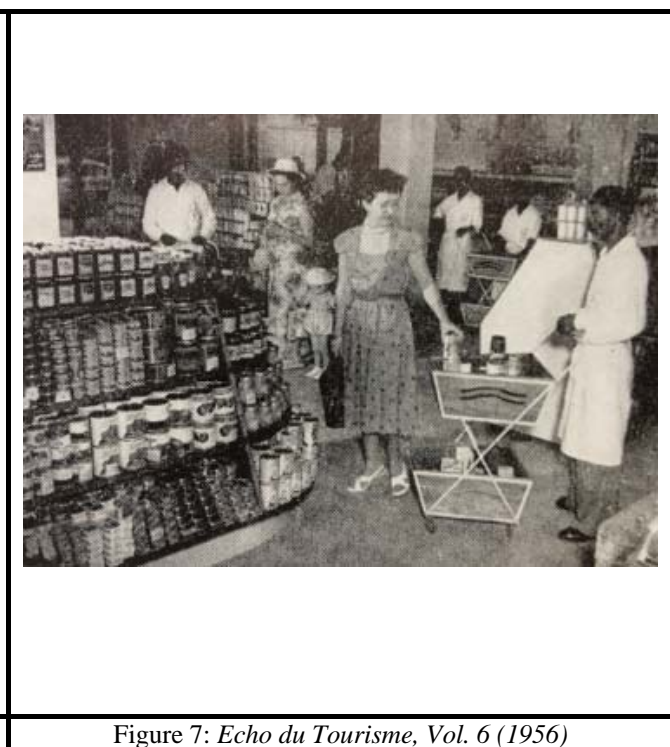


Figure 7: *Echo du Tourisme, Vol. 6 (1956)*

carts (see figure 7). The accompanying article ends with “Belgian Africa, in the heart of the Dark Continent, a land both sophisticated and primitive, offers you the pleasures of an unusual shopping expedition where supermarkets and department stores rub shoulders with the picturesque native

⁵³⁹ Vanthemscche, G., *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980* (2012), p.108

⁵⁴⁰ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W. (1977), p.311

⁵⁴¹ *Echo du Tourisme, Vol. 5 (1956)*, p.21

⁵⁴² *Echo du Tourisme, Vol. 6 (1956)* pp.6-8

trading stores of the pioneer days”.⁵⁴³ The article implies the Europeans are the sophisticated race enjoying modern consumerist conveniences such as the supermarket; the Congolese are the primitive race anchored in their traditional, rudimentary commercial practices.⁵⁴⁴ D’Hauteserre reminds us that tourist representations draw heavily upon cultural memories and associations produced elsewhere

even though the destination is layered with indigenous cultural inscriptions.⁵⁴⁵ In this context, the photographs and imagery depicting shopping is a reminder of the convenience of modern shopping at home, and the transfer of such progress afforded by the Belgians to the Congo. The cultural layering is provided by the Congolese shop assistants and the contrasting photographs of Congolese shopping on the street.

A third trope is the positive reinforcement of the colonial mission provided by third parties. Such endorsement appears to speak vividly to the ‘sensitivities’ spelt out in the British Consul General’s dispatch in 1956.⁵⁴⁶ Recognition of Belgium’s colonial accomplishments was craved. Visits to the Belgian Congo by notables were reported in *Echo du Tourisme*, such as Adlai Stevenson, Leader of the American Democrats, in April 1955, and the Minister at the Swedish Embassy in Washington, Mr de Reuterskiöld who was reported to have been “full of praise for the progress achieved in the Belgian Congo in the field of native welfare; contrary to the usual state of things in underdeveloped countries, the Congo peoples appear happy and healthy”.⁵⁴⁷

Clearly tourist promotional material was being produced in line with Belgian colonial orthodoxy. It carried static, clichéd images of the Congolese – largely unchanged from the beginning of the colonial era - which, at the very most, was accompanied by an emphasis on Belgian economic achievements and modernism.⁵⁴⁸ As Page reminds us, tourism – and therefore its marketing – relies on stereotypical images, reducing complex societies to clichés and commodifying cultures.⁵⁴⁹ This was Belgian statecraft using ‘soft’ diplomacy to promote a vision of Africa as both “playground and demonstration ground” for European achievements and superiority, right up until the eve of de-colonisation.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴³ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 6 (1956) pp.6-8

⁵⁴⁴ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 6 (1956) pp.6-8

⁵⁴⁵ d’Hauteserre, A., Chapter 19: Postcolonialism, Colonialism and Tourism, in *A Companion to Tourism* ed. by Lew, A., Hall, C. & Williams, A., (2008), p.237

⁵⁴⁶ National Archives FO371/118795

⁵⁴⁷ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 2 (1955), pp.4-7

⁵⁴⁸ Vanthemsche, G., *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980* (2012), p.71

⁵⁴⁹ Page, M., (ed) *Colonialism: An International Social, Cultural and Political Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 2 (2003), p.589

⁵⁵⁰ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* Vol. 12, No. 2, (2011), p.14

5.6 The role of the national airline

As an entirely state owned enterprise Sabena was in step with Government's development of tourism in the Belgian Congo. In 1935 Sabena began providing a regular air connection to Leopoldville, thereby establishing an important logistical link between the metropolitan and its colony.⁵⁵¹ Sabena also developed a network of air services across the colony providing a critical component of the colony's infrastructure. This took on increased importance after the Second World War given the development in aircraft technology, the expansion of air traffic infrastructure as part of the *Plan Décennal* and the scale of the Belgian Congo.⁵⁵² The airline had a keen interest to drive traffic and sought to promote tourism, in so doing providing a range of publicity materials such as advertisements and "Africa-Tours" marketing brochures.



Figure 8: Sabena poster (circa 1955).

⁵⁵¹ Royal Archives: Archives relating to King Baudouin's Visit to the Belgian Congo Vol. 1

⁵⁵² *Sabena Revue*, No. 3 (1958), p.18

An advertisement, possibly from the early to mid-1950s (given the aircraft depicted), promotes the airline's route from Belgium to the Belgian Congo and onwards to South Africa (see figure 8).⁵⁵³ The poster draws on the same tropes characterising official tourist material highlighted before. A Congolese dances in traditional costume. The Congolese presents a smiling, somewhat naïve depiction as an in-bound Sabena aircraft carrying (Western) travellers above prepares for its descent.



Figure 9: Advertisement in National Geographic (1952)

The trope of the Congolese bound by tradition while the traveller is bound by sophistication reinforces the colonializing/colonised relationship characterising the official narrative of the time. A 1952 Sabena advertisement which was placed in the American edition of *National Geographic* also plays

⁵⁵³ Courtesy of the Aviation Archive at the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History, Brussels

on the exotic, enticing the traveller to take “A really different vacation to the Belgian Congo – strange animals, primitive people, breath-taking scenery” (see figure 9).⁵⁵⁴



Figure 10: Sabena marketing brochure for touring holidays in 1959 in the Belgian Congo (1958)

An image of a Congolese dancing enthusiastically and with vigour reinforces the advertisement central messaging of wonderment, curiosity and ‘other worldliness’. The language conveys an image of an exotic colony. The use of the word ‘primitive’ – often deployed in the official government publicity material including tourism – implies that the Congolese are inferior to the colonising Europeans. It gives an insight into how the national carrier was also in step with Colonial tourism promotion and drew on the same representations. This content continued until the late 1950s in Sabena material advertising touring holidays to the Belgian Congo and South Africa, primarily to American markets. A 1958 marketing brochure advertising holidays during January 1959 plays on the same tropes as Van Noten’s tourism advertisements produced for the Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi (see figure 10).⁵⁵⁵ A photograph of a traditional warrior display is juxtaposed against a stylised European depiction of travel to the colony. An aircraft in the Sabena

⁵⁵⁴ Produced by Sabena World Airlines, published by *National Geographic* 1952

⁵⁵⁵ Aviation Archive at the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History, Brussels

livery stands on the tarmac providing a backdrop of sophistication for the display of its entirely European passengers. They are adorned in white safari attire contrasting with the black Congolese wearing colourful, traditional African clothes. The Europeans observe the Congolese going about their business, carrying items on their heads and shopping on the street.

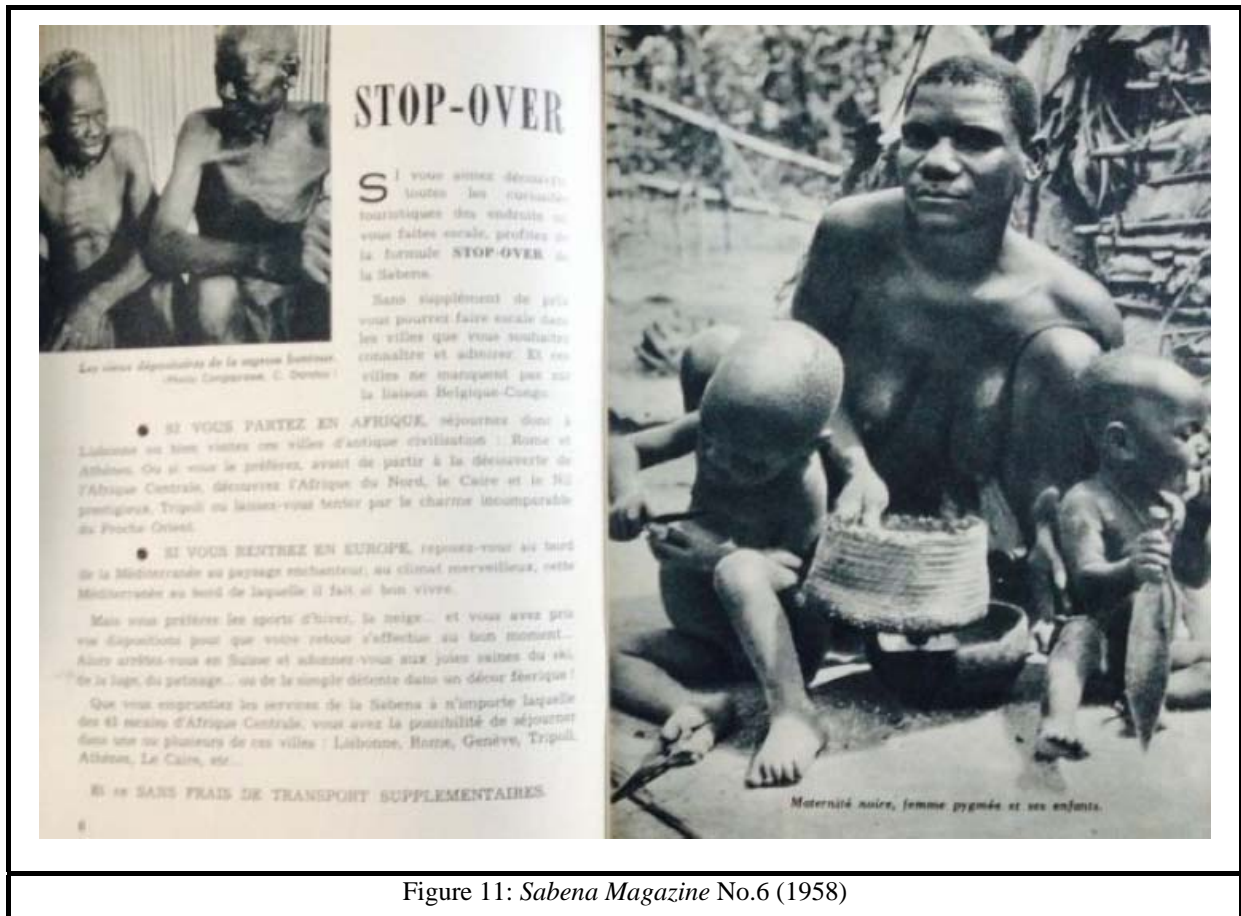


Figure 11: *Sabena Magazine* No.6 (1958)

The scene is framed by the head of a Congolese woman above, looking down. A searchlight from the ground shows up her mystery and exoticism. This is overlaid with blunt narrative.

In a 1958 edition of the *Sabena Magazine* dedicated to the Belgian Congo, the editorial explains that after growing familiarity over the years, the colonialists' knowledge of the Belgian Congo "evokes sympathy".⁵⁵⁶ There is a hint of pity conveyed, confirmed by a series of photographs in subsequent pages showing Congolese Africans looking vulnerable. On pages 8 & 9, there are two photographs highlighting the vulnerable in society; the elderly and the young (see figure 11).⁵⁵⁷ The picture of the Bantu elders shows them semi-clad and wizened.⁵⁵⁸ The photograph opposite is of a naked mother

⁵⁵⁶ *Sabena Magazine*, No. 6 (1958), p.1

⁵⁵⁷ *Sabena Magazine*, No. 6 (1958), pp.8 & 9

⁵⁵⁸ *Sabena Magazine*, No. 6 (1958), p.8

with her two children on the floor.⁵⁵⁹ One child eats; the other uses a sharp knife. The mother looks sober and, at best, diffident. The caption reads: “Black motherhood: a pygmy woman and her children”. The reader is encouraged to sympathise with her predicament. This scene of modesty, then contrasts with pages 10 & 11 which lead with an article entitled “Congo Today” (see figure 12).⁵⁶⁰ Europeans descend from a recently arrived Sabena aircraft donning pith helmets.⁵⁶¹ The European is framed in the context of the *Plan Décennal* providing for the social and economic development of the Belgian Congo. Another picture shows contemporary Leopoldville with a range of modern buildings demonstrating the progress and advancement.⁵⁶² The accompanying article talks about this being a land of very old and new; primitive natural beauty alongside a young civilisation. Civilisation, it suggests, arrived with the coloniser.



Figure 12: Sabena Magazine No.6 (1958)

Another image reinforcing the contrast between the colonial and colonised relationship is in a photograph accompanying an article about hunting in the Belgian Congo (see figure 13).⁵⁶³ The European huntsman in sunglasses and casually dressed has his sight firmly set on game in the

⁵⁵⁹ Sabena Magazine, No. 6 (1958), p.9

⁵⁶⁰ Sabena Magazine, No. 6 (1958), pp.10-11

⁵⁶¹ Sabena Magazine, No. 6 (1958), p.10

⁵⁶² Sabena Magazine, No. 6 (1958), p.11

⁵⁶³ vander Elst, C., Safari, Sabena Revue, Vol. 3 (1958), p.110

distance. His crew of elaborately clad Congolese boatmen paddle to secure the tourist the best shot possible. The European conveys an image of modern machismo, clearly in charge and directing the efforts of the African. Even tourism carried a message of paternalist responsibility.



Figure 13: *Sabena Revue*, Vol. 3 (1958)

In the same publication the lead article reads: “The development of Africa is the work of the White Man; but it could not have been achieved without the help of local labour... The staunchly realistic Belgians soon appraised the native’s age, as they would have done if dealing with a child. They did not act in accordance with laid down principles; they acted with an eye upon the results to come. And thus, the black man was given the rank of assistant within the hierarchy. Taken in hand, encouraged toward technical training, but kept back within certain limits, the native certainly had no reason for complaint: in comparison with the fate of his ancestors or even with that of his grand-parents, how

great was the progress in the life of an Elizabethville miner or in that of a workman in Leopoldville”.⁵⁶⁴

In complete synchronicity with the tourist publication *Echo du Tourisme*,⁵⁶⁵ the language conveys the paternalism with which the Belgian government viewed its colonial responsibilities. The Congolese are viewed as infantile, lacking a capability to provide for themselves or for the interests of their country. Africans were, it seems, needed as an industrial and administrative workforce, but not one suitable for governing.⁵⁶⁶ It supports Moffat’s view that technologically advanced Westerners were perceived and represented as superior, while those in Africa were regarded as primitive and, therefore, subordinate.⁵⁶⁷

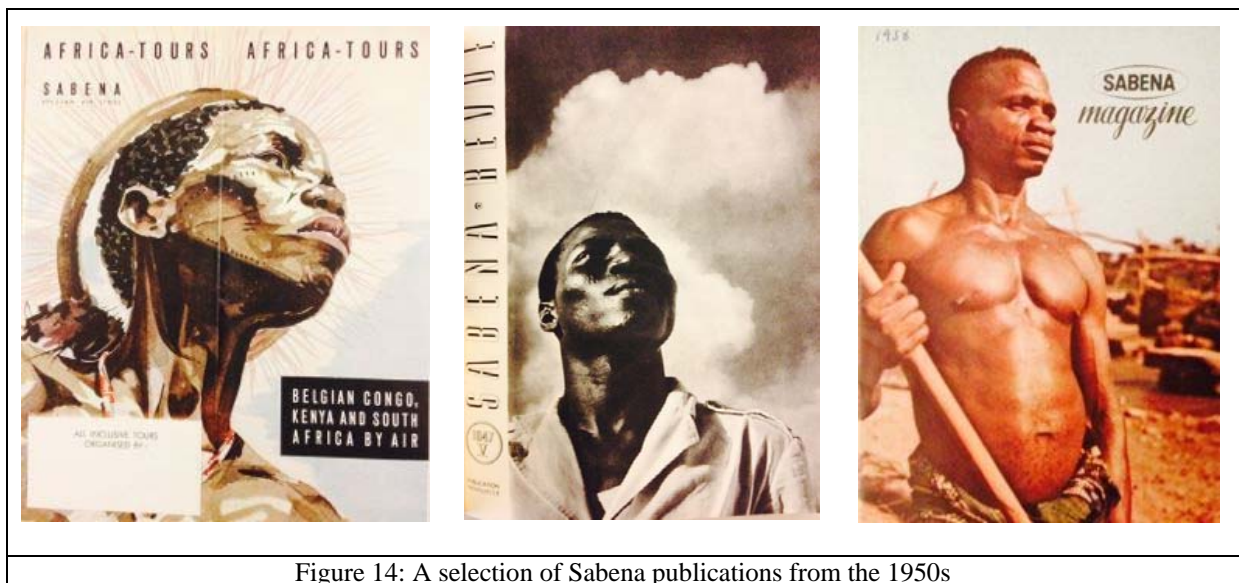


Figure 14: A selection of Sabena publications from the 1950s

Sabena presented the Belgian Congo in concert with the official line set by the Government. Marketing material to sell the colony – and seats on flights to it – equally used the language of racialism and by 1958 became more explicit in presenting the case for colonialism. Sabena was, after all, another state owned-enterprise. Its board comprised key individuals who would have ensured Government messaging was aligned with that of the airline.

Alfred Moeller de Laddersous who served as the Honorary President of the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* from 1948 to 1958 also served as a board director of Sabena over the same period. In the last five years on the board, he was vice-president of the airline. Equally,

⁵⁶⁴ *Sabena Revue*, Vol. 3 (1958), p.36

⁵⁶⁵ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 7 (1957), p.22

⁵⁶⁶ von Albertini, R., *Decolonization: The Administration and Future of the Colonies, 1919-1960* (1982), p.503

⁵⁶⁷ Moffat, R., *Perspectives on Africa in Travel Writing: Representations of Ethiopia, Kenya, Republic of Congo and South Africa, 1930–2000*, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow (2010), p.53

Marcel van den Abeele, the most senior civil servant at the Ministry of the Colonies from 1948 until 1961 also served on the board of Sabena during those years, as well as being present on the board of the different incarnations of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* in the post-War years.⁵⁶⁸ Sabena was, like other airlines of the day, an instrument of the Government and another vehicle for pushing out national propaganda.⁵⁶⁹

5.7 Vicarious tourism – The royal visit

Not only were diplomatic and media energies fielded, so too was the new King Baudouin who assumed the throne in 1951 and was soon to be dubbed by the then Belgian Ambassador to the USA « “notre Souverain des Public Relations” [our sovereign of Public Relations].⁵⁷⁰ Baxendale has explained that all tourism is in part a constructed experience, and royal tourism is very far from being an exception.⁵⁷¹ Long makes the case that, in recent history, royalty generally and conspicuously travel a lot. Royal tours, whether official state occasions or at leisure, also attract considerable attention both at home and abroad.⁵⁷² Therefore, it is worth making some comment on the role of King Baudouin and the coverage of his royal visits which afforded, to some audiences, the occasion for vicarious tourism. In relation to the Belgian Congo, this reached its height in 1955 when the monarch paid his first visit to the colony, which the Government deemed “a spectacular success”.⁵⁷³

We have already learnt in Chapter 2 that in planning the 1947 visit of the Prince Regent to the colony it was considered by the then Vice-Governor Pétillon an opportunity for both internal and external propaganda.⁵⁷⁴ Indeed, the *New York Times* reported the visit included “the need to publicise the Belgian Congo abroad and at home”.⁵⁷⁵ There is no reason to suppose that just eight years later, with the Government propaganda machine ever more energised, the same motivations would not underpinned King Baudouin’s visit.

⁵⁶⁸ Sabena Raad van Beheer 1948-1961, Aviation Archive, Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History, Brussels

⁵⁶⁹ Wigley, A., Tourism Development and the Foundation, *Development Dialogue*, No. 60, (2012), p.122

⁵⁷⁰ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (3240) 1393 Foreign Affairs II - Speech by Belgian Ambassador Baron Silvercruys at a conference on foreign policy held from 11-15 July at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York State

⁵⁷¹ Baxendale, J., Chapter 1: The Construction of the Past and the Origins of Royal Tourism in 19th Century Britain, in *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P., & Palmer, N., (2008), p.46

⁵⁷² Long, P., Introduction, *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P., & Palmer, N., (2008), p.1

⁵⁷³ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.48

⁵⁷⁴ Belgian Royal Archives: Archives relating to King Regent’s Visit to the Belgian Congo 15,

⁵⁷⁵ Boon, R., *Tot meerdere eer en glorie van de Prins-Regent, het (verscheurde) moederland en de Belgische koloniën: De Reise van Prins-Regent Karel naar Belgisch-Congo en Ruanda-Urundi 29 juni-12 augustus 1947*, Master thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (2011), p.203

The royal visit to the Congo took place from 15 May to 11 June 1955. Baudouin arrived accompanied by a phalanx of journalists.⁵⁷⁶ The Minister of the Colonies Auguste Buisseret contacted many media outlets to emphasise the importance of the visit. “It matters greatly that your firm integrate in its news programs – destined to Belgian and foreign publics – scenes taken on this occasion” he urged.⁵⁷⁷ Indeed, Stanard explains that there were considerable incentives provided, such as free travel and accommodation, to ensure that media outlets sent journalists and photographers to cover the visit.⁵⁷⁸

Buisseret promised from the outset that the visit would be “the occasion of a particular effort to draw the attention to [...] the Colony, to show to natives the interest that the authorities of the metropole have for them and to affirm Belgian authority and sovereignty over our territories of Africa”.⁵⁷⁹ This may have been the express intent of the Ministry of the Colonies, but it appears the Palace had hoped for a rather more low key approach. British Foreign Office papers reveal that the Palace sought to reduce the role of journalists and photographers to a minimum, “whereas the Ministry were anxious that the world press should be encouraged to feature the visit as prominently as possible”.⁵⁸⁰

The Royal Archives in Brussels show that the Ministry had put considerable care in to the press planning of the visit.⁵⁸¹ Their feedback was provided to Colonel Dinjeart at the Palace who was charged with putting together the final programme. The British papers suggested there followed an impasse between the Minister and the King, prompting a special meeting between the two to discuss it.⁵⁸² It appeared the Government prevailed in its wishes.

Meticulous attention was paid by the Ministry on the media dimension of the visit, which included ensuring the Palace’s programme emphasise the colonising legacy of Belgium in the Congo, including its achievements while showing sufficient awareness and interests in the indigenous communities. An example of that in practice relates to an early draft of the first day of the royal visit.⁵⁸³ The King was scheduled to lay flowers at monuments in Leopoldville commemorating the Fallen of the War, King Albert I and King Leopold II. Feedback from the Ministry’s propaganda department suggested that

⁵⁷⁶ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.315

⁵⁷⁷ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.224

⁵⁷⁸ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.225

⁵⁷⁹ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.224

⁵⁸⁰ National Archives FO371/108308 - Dispatch dated 8 December 1954 to the Foreign Office from the British Ambassador in Brussels

⁵⁸¹ Royal Archives: Archives relating to King Baudouin’s Visit to the Belgian Congo, Vol. 1

⁵⁸² National Archives FO371/108308 - Dispatch dated 8 December 1954 to the Foreign Office from the British Ambassador in Brussels

⁵⁸³ Royal Archives: Archives relating to King Baudouin’s Visit to the Belgian Congo, Vol. 1 – Letter from the Ministry of the Colonies press division to Colonel Dinjeart at the Royal Palace circa 1954.

the laying of the flowers should be re-ordered to begin with the founder of the colony Leopold II, then Albert I followed by the Fallen of the War.⁵⁸⁴ The emphasis on the hierarchy with the controversial Leopold II given prominence reveals a fascinating insight into the thinking and decision-making of those in charge of promoting colonial propaganda.

We have already seen that in 1952, following a visit to the USA, the former Minister of the Colonies Pierre Wigny was aghast at the “slander against Leopold II” and the constant churn of stories of the atrocities perpetrated under his watch.⁵⁸⁵ One response to that was to disarm Anglo-Saxon critics by playing down the Leopold II legacy. The contrast in this regard between the English and French editions of the *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo* is noteworthy. A full-page portrait of Leopold II, “Fondateur de l’Etat Indépendant du Congo” adorns the inside front page of the fourth (and final) edition in French published in 1958. That image does not appear anywhere in the second English language edition published two years’ earlier in 1956. This suggests some awareness of the toxicity of Leopold II to international audiences.

Equally, as late as autumn 1958, *Sabena Revue* ran an article in English providing a historical perspective on the Belgian Congo in which it states that “South Africa can not be understood unless one remembers Cecil Rhodes; Morocco, unless one recalls Lyautey. Likewise the Belgian Congo, to be grasped fully, requires the vision of Leopold II. It was he, who conceived the idea, he who diplomatically carved the dimensions and the boundaries of the fabulous gift which he was to present to his country”.⁵⁸⁶

According to Vanthemsche, the successors of Leopold II have always been concerned by his colonial legacy and this would give one reason as to why the Court had proposed the laying of flowers in the order that it did.⁵⁸⁷ However, no such concerns would cloud the thinking of the propagandists in Brussels.

The press advice from the Ministry also recommended that reference to the King’s planned attendance at church should be omitted from the official programme. Known to be a devout Catholic – and visiting a colony which had a strong missionary presence, it was suggested by a priest in the Congo that the King attends mass in a church attended by Africans. This, too, was dropped from the official

⁵⁸⁴ Royal Archives: Archives relating to King Baudouin’s Visit to the Belgian Congo, Vol. 1 – Letter from the Ministry of the Colonies press division to Colonel Dinjeart at the Royal Palace circa 1954.

⁵⁸⁵ Vanthemsche, G., *The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo, in Europe and the World in European Historiography* ed. by Lévai, C., (2006), p.116

⁵⁸⁶ *Sabena Revue*, No. 3 (1958), p.34

⁵⁸⁷ Vanthemsche, G., *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980* (2012), p.53

programme. Perhaps to the propagandists this would not convey a sufficiently modern or European portrayal of life in the Congo.

In relation to the 1947 visit of the British royal family to South Africa, Sapire makes the case that the tour itinerary was meticulously planned with an eye to international and domestic audiences⁵⁸⁸. Papers at the Royal Archives in Brussels show that was also the case in the planning of King Baudouin's visit. In Africa, the King was to undertake meetings and dinners with the Governors of the neighbouring colonies, namely North Rhodesia, Uganda and Kenya as well as representatives of French and Portuguese Africa. This would serve to reinforce relations between the colonial powers and to ensure the Belgians would remind them of the successes of Belgian colonialism when it was under attack from quarters further afield. Moreover the majority of tourism into the Belgian Congo came from the neighbouring colonies and coverage of the visit was assumed to have a positive effect on incoming economic activity – including tourism.⁵⁸⁹



Figure 15: King Baudouin's departure from Brussels airport
Sabena Revue, No.2 (1955), p.15



Figure 16: King Baudouin receives a floral tribute on his tour of the Belgian Congo
Sabena Revue, No.2 (1955), p.17

Lastly, Moeller de Laddersous, the former President of the Colonial Fund for Propaganda and President of the Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, was to play his part in the royal visit. In his capacity as a Sabena Vice-President, he attended the King's departure from

⁵⁸⁸ Sapire, H., African Loyalism and its Discontents: The Royal Tour of South Africa, 1947; *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 54, Issue 1 (2011), p.225

⁵⁸⁹ Royal Archives: Archives relating to King Baudouin's Visit to the Belgian Congo, Vol. 1

Brussels airport. The public relations opportunity for Sabena was also not lost on the airline. In a letter to the Palace from the Sabena press department, they set out some ideas to maximise publicity at the departure of the King from Brussels, clearly reflecting the airline's interest in the halo effect of transporting Baudouin. Recommending invitations be extended to international journalists from *Paris-match* and *Il Tempo* (an Italian publication), Sabena's press team intended to pitch stories which would focus on the visit, tying in with the thirtieth anniversary of the first flights to connect Belgium and Congo, and the twenty year anniversary of the first regular air route between the two.⁵⁹⁰

In addition to photos captured at each point of the royal visit, such as those in figures 15 and 16 for the *Sabena Review*, moving images of Baudouin's visit were played throughout the world by means of the Ministry of the Colonies stepping in to film the visit, with a view to providing the latest film footage each day to news and television firms.⁵⁹¹ "Each firm will receive a length [of film] much bigger than it will be able to use, in such manner that each news broadcast can be – in part at least – original".⁵⁹²

British Pathé film archives show the young monarch in white military dress uniform and dark glasses being greeted with unbridled joy by waving and cheering Congolese.⁵⁹³ He is seen inspecting an African military line-up of honour, the officers all European, the infantry Congolese. The King is then seen travelling in a convertible limousine to the delight of adoring Africans, many running alongside his vehicle. The footage is captured on film by a cameraman in a car driving in parallel and sometimes behind the King's limousine to ensure what Sapire describes as the trope of the "rapturous black response" was recorded for posterity.⁵⁹⁴ The camera pans to the occasional Leopoldville skyscraper building, with the King's cavalcade passing juxtaposed with the shots of energetic Africans waving his car on. In other shots, the King takes his place at a stadium to watch a display of Africans parading and undertaking some form of performance. The shots of the crowds around the King show an entirely European audience. The power relationship between is reinforced.

The spectacle of the African on display for the Europeans, as already seen in tourist marketing materials of the time, is conveyed in film footage of the royal visit dispatched around the world. In this regard, the tourist proposition is entirely consistent with the Belgian Congo brand presented by the colonial administration.

⁵⁹⁰ Royal Archives: Archives relating to King Baudouin's Visit to the Belgian Congo, Vol. 1

⁵⁹¹ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.225

⁵⁹² Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.225

⁵⁹³ British Pathé website - <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/king-baudouin-in-the-belgian-congo>

⁵⁹⁴ Sapire, H., African Loyalism and its Discontents: The Royal Tour of South Africa, 1947, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2011), p.219

By means of cinematography, the visit of the King provided domestic and international crowds with the dual vision of the colonial interpretation of the Congo; the ‘primitive’ and the ‘modern’. While it was not fashioned as tourist promotion, the royal visit no doubt will have served to energise marketing activities. Consistent with Long’s view that royal visits provide valuable content for publicity materials,⁵⁹⁵ *Echo du Tourisme* harnessed the visit in an article entitled “Royal Tourist” which reported that “The King of the Belgians has just made his joyous entry into the main cities of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. During his voyage he toured certain regions of the Kivu, and notably the Albert National Park”.⁵⁹⁶

Royal colonial visits provided an opportunity to showcase internationally the successes of Empire. Take the example of how the Singapore press covered the visit: “Baudouin’s visit to the Congo focuses attention once again on the remarkably successful colonising job the Belgians have done there”.⁵⁹⁷ Royalty can be a powerful conductor of positive public relations.

In isolation, the visit may seem tangential to the role of tourism, but monarchy can play a defining role in tourism destination branding and decision-making on where to holiday. The value of monarchy for tourism is the royal patronage of places, which can be claimed as unique in destination publicity.⁵⁹⁸ No one else could lay claim to the legacy of the ‘heart of darkness’ like the handsome young sovereign.

Moreover in terms of the Belgian Congo’s international engagement in tourism, 1955 was proving to be a significant year since it hosted ICAT V a month after the King’s departure, from 26 July until 4 August. This was the first time the colony hosted the congress since its first meeting in Costermansville in 1938. Images and reports of the King’s visit would have framed the debate to African tourism decision makers. At the same time, the propaganda machine’s new publication *Echo du Tourisme* had recently been launched, with the King’s visit providing good copy, especially to aspirational audiences craving the model for luxury African tourism.⁵⁹⁹ Colonial propaganda, monarchy and tourism were in complete alignment.

⁵⁹⁵ Long, P., Introduction, *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P. & Palmer, N. (2008), p.4

⁵⁹⁶ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 2 (1955), p.4

⁵⁹⁷ ‘King Baudouin gets the Congo treatment’, *Singapore Free Press*, 19 July 1955

⁵⁹⁸ Long, P., Introduction to *Royal Tourism: Excursions around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P. & Palmer, N. (2008), p.4

⁵⁹⁹ Long, P., Introduction to *Royal Tourism: Excursions around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P., & Palmer, N., (2008), p.13

5.8 Market and messaging segmentation

At the outset of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* established just after the Second World War, its recently appointed director Mr. J. Monteyne undertook a scoping study on the prospects for tourism in the Belgian Congo from 16 July to 9 September 1947. During that period he undertook to meet all the district governors, district commissioners, territorial administrators and those involved in business as well as hoteliers.⁶⁰⁰ He concluded that there were three different categories of potential visitors to the colony: First, the resident Europeans who, he remarked, typically stayed somewhere between 30 months and 5 years; second, Belgians who wished to visit the colonies; and third, visitors from abroad, primarily the USA, South Africa and East Africa who arrived generally in a group organised by travel agencies.⁶⁰¹ As I have argued in Chapter 4, I believe that a range of colonial messages were delivered to differing audiences.

Monteyne identified Europeans present in the Belgian Congo as the first category of potential tourists. As we have seen from Chapter 4 there was a significant level of post-War migration to the colonies in Africa, including the Belgian Congo. In July 1946 the Minister for the Colonies Robert Godding called for increased Belgian emigration to the Belgian Congo. He remarked on the drop in death rates for Europeans in the colony from 22 to 7 per 1000 during the two decades preceding the war which was evidence of both Belgian advances in endemic disease control and the Congo becoming a comfortable option for settlement.⁶⁰² Indeed, as we have seen already the call was heard and by independence the European population had at least doubled.⁶⁰³ The influx of Europeans into the eastern reaches of the Belgian Congo presented an opportunity for cross-border tourism into Uganda which the British colonial authorities were keen to seize upon.⁶⁰⁴

However, there is strong evidence that this was a transitory population. As both Merriam and Stanard observe, not many Belgians settled in the colony.⁶⁰⁵ Cartier reports in 1953 that government and private sector employees alike were hired on fixed term three-year contracts, which may account for this.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁰ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Report of a visit to the Belgian Congo from 16 July to 9 September 1947 and associated recommendations produced by the Director of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*

⁶⁰¹ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Report of a visit to the Belgian Congo from 16 July to 9 September 1947 and associated recommendations produced by the Director of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*

⁶⁰² Doody, R., Belgian Congo 1908-1960 timeline, www.theworldatwar70879yuku.com (2003)

⁶⁰³ Forbes Munroe, J., *Africa and the International Economy 1800-1960* (1976), p.185

⁶⁰⁴ National Archives CO822/137/9 – Draft Colonial Office memorandum on East African Tourist Industry circa early 1950

⁶⁰⁵ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.136; Merriam, A. *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.33

⁶⁰⁶ Cartier, R., *Paris Match*, No. 248, 19 December 1953, p.44

Despite Godding's call, Merriam argues that there was active discouragement of white settlement in the Belgian Congo in marked contrast to the policy adopted by the colonial administration in Kenya and wider East Africa. Ideologically driven, the Belgians insisted that "the land should not be alienated by Belgian or other white settlers".⁶⁰⁷ Arguably, it might have been the case that such a policy afforded the colonial administration a greater degree of control over the colony and thereby minimising contacts Africans would make with other nationals. It was a policy considered by the British to be 'anachronistic'.⁶⁰⁸ Moreover, Young reports that the Belgian Congo, unlike the French and Portuguese colonies, was mainly accessible to the middle and upper classes with corporate managerial personnel almost entirely recruited from these social milieu.⁶⁰⁹ Indeed, to work in the colonial civil service after the Second World War a university degree was theoretically required, meaning that only the religious missions drew any significant number of personnel from the humbler strata of Belgian society.⁶¹⁰

The result of this rigid policy was that few white settlers owned land in the Congo, with the exception of the Kivu area on the border of Uganda.⁶¹¹ Merriam explains that in general, those colonial technicians and officials who came as part of the post-War wave to deliver the *Plan Décennal's* social and economic development of the colony were discouraged from settling, and those who sought to move there permanently could not do so without posting a sizable financial bond, which was forfeited if they were successful in establishing themselves.⁶¹² The consequence was that while the majority of colonial Europeans settled into comfortable villas, lived a lifestyle more akin to 1950s suburban California, enjoying a high standard of living which afforded them the opportunity to pursue leisure pursuits – including occasional tourist activities – theirs was a wholly transitory existence and experience.⁶¹³

Notwithstanding the short to medium term nature of their residence in the colony, there were also those civil servants who, after twenty-three years of service in the Colonial Service – and when many were still at the peak of their vigour – would then find themselves in the private sector back in the Belgian Congo, affording them further sejours there to work. Equally, these colonists also saw an on-going colonial future for the Congo in which they sought a voice. By the late 1950s they were demanding political rights and participation in the country's government.⁶¹⁴

⁶⁰⁷ Merriam, A. *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.33

⁶⁰⁸ National Archives FO 371/125393 - A dispatch dated 1 February 1957 from the British Embassy in Brussels to the Foreign Secretary

⁶⁰⁹ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.20

⁶¹⁰ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.20

⁶¹¹ Merriam, A. *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.33

⁶¹² Merriam, A. *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.33

⁶¹³ Van Reybrouck, D., *Congo: Een Geschiedenis* (2010), p.220

⁶¹⁴ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.311

Tourism, therefore, was one leisure pursuit way for those who were coming to live in the colony for a limited period to maximise the experience. Colonial messaging to that audience would wish to provide reassurance that their decision to come to the colony was well placed, especially those whose long term career decisions, such as for colonial civil servants, was bound up with the state's long term colonial mission.

For prospective tourists from Belgium, there was also an important message conveyed about colonial success. Young has observed that claims of disinterest in their colonies among Belgians would be misleading. Indeed he states that “the Belgian public drew substantial vicarious satisfaction from the success image of the Congo and basked in the complacent glow of its own myths about imposing achievements in Africa”.⁶¹⁵

This is echoed by other scholars such as Etambala, Van Schuylenbergh and Stengers.⁶¹⁶ This appeared to reach a crescendo at the 1958 World Exhibition held in Brussels in which the Belgian hosts unveiled with immense satisfaction to both domestic audiences and the world alike its Congo pavilion in which African Congolese were included as ‘living figures’ on the stand.⁶¹⁷ Given that within two years Belgian's model colony would be abandoned chaotically and, as Stanard observes, Congo's independence was greeted by Belgians with “shock and unpreparedness”, it is difficult not to conclude that colonial propaganda to domestic audiences had successfully conveyed the concept of an everlasting colonial presence in Africa.⁶¹⁸

In short, it would appear Belgian national pride and honour were intimately bound with the perceived successes of its colonial mission and such messaging by means of tourism back into the metropolitan was beneficial to a country still looking to re-gain standing following defeat and occupation during the Second World War.⁶¹⁹

Finally, Monteyne proposed international audiences needed to be addressed, notably the USA, South Africa and East Africa. This required a more complicated and nuanced set of messages. It is noteworthy the extent to which Belgian colonial tourism was anchored in the international tourism network, and the extent to which it was presented to foreign audiences. Pre-war, the Belgian Congo administration had been instrumental in hosting and organising the first ICAT (or what became

⁶¹⁵ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.20

⁶¹⁶ Etambala, Z., *Die Teloorgang van een Modelkolonie: Belgisch-Congo 1958-60* (2008), p.106; Van Schuylenbergh, P., *Patrimoine d'Afrique centrale: Archives Films - Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, 1912-1960* (2010), p.10; Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.305

⁶¹⁷ Etambala, Z., *Die Teloorgang van een Modelkolonie: Belgisch-Congo 1958-60* (2008), p.105

⁶¹⁸ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.14

⁶¹⁹ Vanthemsche, G., *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980* (2012), p.110

dubbed ICAT I) in Costermansville in 1939, chaired by the Moeller de Laddersous, and it appears sent significant governmental delegations to subsequent meetings. At ICAT IV which took place in Lourenço Marques in Portuguese East Africa from 15-20 September 1952, the Belgian delegation was the most numerous from outside the Portuguese colony and South Africa, with seven delegates including the President of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* (Moeller de Laddersous), the President of the *Touring Club du Congo Belge*, and representatives of the national parks and the national airline, Sabena.⁶²⁰

In another sign of the role of Brussels and the metropolitan in the running of the Belgian colony, four of that delegation of seven were based in and had travelled from the Belgian capital for the conference. With Moeller de Laddersous and Monteyne, the Director of the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*, the Belgian colonial authorities were well represented and appeared to take the conference seriously. This is in marked contrast to other colonial powers. The British dispatched their Consul General to Lourenço Marques as ‘a matter of courtesy’.⁶²¹ This appeared to be entirely consistent with Colonial Office thinking which also declined to send an official observer to the previous ICAT held in the British colonial capital of Nairobi in 1949. Meanwhile, Dr da Camara de Saldanha of the Ministry of Overseas Territories in Lisbon, quipped privately to the British Consul General “that it was pleasant to attend an International Conference of so little importance”.⁶²²

The Belgian colonial administration appeared to disagree. Not only were they active participants in attending (and indeed hosting) ICAT gatherings, they were also present at the post-War conferences of the AIT, participating at their annual meetings. Writing in 1953 Moeller de Laddersous reports on the general assemblies he had attended on behalf of the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* since the end of the war.⁶²³

A revealing comment comes not from Belgian but from British sources, which may account for the perceived benefit that the Belgian colonial administration saw in tourism. Reporting back to his superiors in the Foreign Office in London following the ICAT meeting in Lourenço Marques, the Consul General makes the observation that “there is no doubt that the Portuguese have put the Conference to good account and many people from other parts of Africa and elsewhere left greatly

⁶²⁰ National Archives FO371/96700 - Final list of delegates and observers, International Congress of African Touring (ICAT IV), 15-20 September 1952

⁶²¹ National Archives FO371/96700 - Dispatch dated 30 September 1952 to the Foreign Office from the British Consul General to Mozambique

⁶²² National Archives FO371/96700 - Dispatch dated 30 September 1952 to the Foreign Office from the British Consul General to Mozambique

⁶²³ *Encyclopédie du Congo Belge*, Vol. 3 (1952), p.473

impressed with Portuguese administration and, in particular, with their native policy”.⁶²⁴ While we cannot attribute this to the Belgians, it demonstrates a clear prevailing view on how travel in Africa could provide opportunity to demonstrate the virtues of colonialism and convey opportunities to play that back to external audiences. In Belgian efforts to assuage international anti-colonial public opinion, notably in the United States, there is considerable evidence to demonstrate this strategy at work.

In 1947, the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* received a request for a USA tourist agency to bring up to 20,000 tourists to the Belgian Congo. The request was denied with the Director of the Office explaining, “There can be no question of opening the doors of the Congo to tourists”.⁶²⁵ He went on to clarify that it would be wrong to send tourists who have paid a great deal of money to fly to the colony “without finding the comforts they would have a right to expect”. In line with the observation that Belgian colonial society was highly controlled, it would appear that the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* wanted to ensure first that all “local possibilities and improvements to be made in order to be able to promote touristic enterprises”.⁶²⁶ However, this level of control in the management of tourism (and in denying tourists to enter into the colony) also left the impression that the colony had something to hide.

It is fair to observe that the Belgian Congo, like the rest of Africa in the immediate post-War years, was hampered in its efforts to build a tourism sector due to poor road infrastructure and hotel accommodation. As has been noted, this was a common issue in other parts of colonial Africa in the post-War years that sought to develop tourism.⁶²⁷ In his report on scoping prospects for the colony’s tourism sector in 1947, Monteyne concluded that it was essential to construct a chain of hotels which “must be spacious”.⁶²⁸

Marcel Faes, the Secretary General of the *Touring Club du Congo Belge* lamented in 1946, that there were few hotels with modern installations and equipment.⁶²⁹ In 1953 the deputy director of the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*, R. de Meyer, conceded that the development of tourism was hampered by “la pénurie d’hôtels et la médiocrité des services” [paucity of hotels and the

⁶²⁴ National Archives FO371/96700 - Dispatch dated 30 September 1952 to the Foreign Office from the British Consul General to Mozambique

⁶²⁵ Belgian Congo’s Attitude On Tourists Explained, *The Journal of Commerce* (US), 15 September 1947

⁶²⁶ Belgian Congo’s Attitude On Tourists Explained, *The Journal of Commerce* (US), 15 September 1947

⁶²⁷ National Archives CO822/137/9 - Proceedings of a conference entitled *Tourist Traffic in East Africa* held on the 23 September 1947 in Nairobi

⁶²⁸ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Report of a visit to the Belgian Congo from 16 July to 9 September 1947 and associated recommendations produced by the Director of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*

⁶²⁹ *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 18 (1946), p.10

mediocrity of services].⁶³⁰ Dembour explains that government rest houses, for the most part the principle form of accommodation in the colony, were basically huts, “perhaps slightly larger than a native one. Comfort was variable, but never more than rudimentary”.⁶³¹

In a recurring refrain, de Meyer wrote with more alacrity on the subject in an article in 1955 in *La Revue Coloniale Belge* entitled “La Stagnation de l’Industrie Hôtelière au Congo Belge” [The Stagnation of the Hotel Industry in the Belgian Congo] which provides a somewhat surprising level of criticism at the Ministry of the Colonies in not having made more progress in addressing the issue of limited hotel accommodation in the colony.⁶³² It was not just the issue of infrastructure, but also one of culture. At the meeting of representatives of the tourism sector in Bukavu in the Belgian Congo, the newly promoted Director of the Office for Tourism for the Belgian Congo Mr de Meyer reported his observations about the quality of hotel accommodation. He said that while he recognised an improvement in the quality of the hotels, “les hôteliers doivent donner l’impression aux clients qu’ils s’occupent d’eux” [hoteliers must give the impression to their clients that they care for them].⁶³³

This is not the only occasion that the Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, a function of the Colonial administration, is prepared to make overt criticism of the machinery of government. In 1955, a report carried in the Tourist Bureau’s *Echo du Tourisme* comments that “the *Conseil Supérieur du Tourisme*, an official organisation having its headquarters in Leopoldville, has not met for three years. The magazine remarks that in view of the efforts made in Belgium with the aim of promoting travel in the Congo, it would nevertheless be preferable that Government circles in the Colony itself should tend to work along the same lines”.⁶³⁴

The issue of few and low-grade hotels exercised those in Brussels who were charged with trying to promote tourism to international audiences. Moreover, the slow and grinding machinery of government appeared unable to respond adequately to the demands of tourism. This presents, then, a confusing picture as to the message that was being conveyed – particularly to international audiences – about the Belgian Congo as a tourist destination, since there seems to be a concerted effort at one level to publicise tourism, and at another there is clearly limited activity to keep up with apparent demand.

⁶³⁰ *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 177 (1953), p.157

⁶³¹ Dembour, B., *Recalling the Belgian Congo: Conversations and Introspection* (2000), p.32

⁶³² *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 222 (1955) p.13;

⁶³³ MFAB Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Minutes of meeting of industry representatives from Bukavu with the Director of the Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi on 22 July 1955

⁶³⁴ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 2 (1955), p.12

Arguably, this could be put down to the growing pains of this new sector. Trying to ensure adequate provision to meet demand is a recurring theme in official papers from the immediate post-War period. We are reminded of the British Cabinet paper minutes of 15 January 1948 which recount ministerial concern “if the conditions in British hotels were such that they [Americans] curtailed their stay, we should lose some of this dollar income [...] and, even more important, should seriously prejudice our prospects of earning dollar income from the tourist trade in subsequent years”.⁶³⁵

As an embryonic sector, judging the balance of demand against supply to enable sufficient progress in building tourism is necessary, and scope for a mismatch in development is entirely legitimate. Quite reasonably, it seems the then deputy director of tourism de Meyer wrote in late 1953 that there were three impediments to the development of tourism in the Belgian Congo: “Le coût élevé de la vie au Congo, la pénurie d’hôtels et la médiocrité des services qui, en général, y sont offerts, et enfin l’état de nos routes en général, déplorable en bien des endroits en saison des pluies.” [The elevated living costs in the Congo, the shortage of hotels and the mediocrity of services in general which they offer, and finally the state of our roads in general, deplorable in many places in the rainy season].⁶³⁶

However, in a colony where the state has far reaching control either by means of the apparatus of governing or through its extensive reach in the so-called private sector, this might seem surprising. In short, why was it that the international promotion of tourism became so out of step with the capacity to be able to provide for inbound tourists?

5.9 Barriers to tourism

Speaking in New York in 1951, the Consul General of Belgium, Jacques de Their reassured prospective visitors to the colony that “Le Congo n’est pas derrière un rideau de fer. Il est ouvert à tous les voyageurs, et nombreux sont les journalistes et les hommes d’affaires étrangers qui y sont allés et ont rendu hommage à l’œuvre civilisatrice qui y est accomplie.” [The Congo isn’t behind the Iron Curtain. It is open to all travellers, and many foreign journalists and businessmen went there and paid tribute to the civilising work accomplished there].⁶³⁷

While grand exclamations of openness and accessibility characterise the language of tourism promotion to the Belgian Congo, there are clear indications to suggest that tourists of all types wishing to visit the colony were actively hindered. For businessmen, there were challenges of access

⁶³⁵ National Archives CAB 128/12 - Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 January 1948 (including a discussion entitled ‘Foreign Travel Allowances and Basic Petrol Ration’)

⁶³⁶ *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 177 (1953), p.157

⁶³⁷ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 608.13592 – Speech by the Belgian Consul General at the opening of the Centre of African Studies at the French University of New York circa 1951

to market. Stanard has observed that despite the claims of “unlimited opportunity for economic growth” even during the boom of the 1950s, doing business in the colony was difficult.⁶³⁸ This was certainly the case for non-Belgians. Vanthemsche argues that Belgian authorities were always very reticent when foreign investors or businessmen attempted to invest in the Congo.⁶³⁹ Representations were made by the British Foreign Office in 1950 following a recent edict from Brussels that sought full enforcement of “cautionnement” [deposit] taxes being levied on businessmen (British and other nationalities) on entry to the Belgian Congo.⁶⁴⁰ As we will see, the culture of “cautionnement” prevailed in the Belgian Congo, although a letter from the British Consul General dated 15 June 1950 indicated that in the past, this had routinely not been enforced but that there had been a recent change of policy.⁶⁴¹ The Foreign Office feared this would make it prohibitive for British industry to conduct business in the colony.

One answer to why there was renewed political will to impose the levy on foreign business in the Congo comes from an article in the September 1951 edition of the *Belgian Trade Review*, a publication ostensibly geared up the American market. It reports the Vice-Governor of the colony, M de Thibault, expressing concern that Belgium’s share of the colony’s imports were “modest” at 38 per cent.⁶⁴² Thibault called for renewed effort to ensure Belgium takes “her proper place in Congo trade”.⁶⁴³ This would suggest that at the beginning of the decade, there was sufficient concern about Belgium losing out to foreign businesses, which in turn could lead to the Colonial administration creating legitimate barriers for non-Belgian business interests. There is no evidence that regulations were relaxed during the rest of that decade for foreign business to undertake commercial activities in the Belgian Congo.

We have already seen that there were significant barriers to entry to foreign businessmen wishing to undertake commercial activities in the Belgian Congo. Stanard reports that there was also a challenge for Belgian tourist agencies and tourists alike, as they too were hampered by strict regulations on travel to the colony.⁶⁴⁴ He goes on to argue that travel companies which would have

⁶³⁸ Stanard, M., Interwar Pro-Empire Propaganda and European Colonial Culture: Toward a Comparative Research Agenda, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 44, No. 27 (2009), p.41

⁶³⁹ Vanthemsche, G., *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980* (2012), p.109

⁶⁴⁰ National Archives FO371/80312 - Dispatch dated 15 June 1950 to the Foreign Office from the British Consul General in the Belgian Congo

⁶⁴¹ National Archives FO371/80312 - Dispatch dated 15 June 1950 to the Foreign Office from the British Consul General in the Belgian Congo

⁶⁴² Fair at Leopoldville points up Past Achievement, points towards Future Progress, *Belgian Trade Review*, September 1951, p.7

⁶⁴³ Fair at Leopoldville points up Past Achievement, points towards Future Progress, *Belgian Trade Review*, September 1951, p.7

⁶⁴⁴ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.62

benefitted from the tourist trade to central Africa had to fight against heavy regulations restricting Belgians from enjoying even brief stays in the Congo.⁶⁴⁵

One example is the fairly onerous requirements to visit. In his 1952 book *Un Mois au Congo* [*A Month in the Congo*] the journalist Georges Gevers comments: “C’est alors que commencèrent pour moi les interminables démarches. Partir pour la colonie belge n’est pas une sinécure. Il me fallait un visa, des piqûres, un certificat de bonne conduite... et tout... et tout.” [It was then that I began the never-ending steps. Going to the Belgian Congo is not easy. I needed to get a visa, shots, a certificate of good conduct... and so on... and so on].⁶⁴⁶

According to the *Guide du Voyageur au Congo Belge et Ruanda-Urundi* (French edition, 1958), it reports that a prospective Belgian tourist needs to be in possession of an identity card or valid passport, a certificate specifying length of stay (acquired from the Ministry of the Colonies), a certificate of good character and five photographs of the applicant.⁶⁴⁷ In the event that a Belgian national wished to spend more than six months in the colony, the individual would need to pay BEF50,000 (\$1,000 approx.) for the head of the family and for each child over 18 years, and BEF25,000 each (\$500 approx.) for a wife and a child between the ages of 14-18 years.⁶⁴⁸

In the French guide (but not in the English published two years before), it explains that for trips of less than six months, Belgian tourists are exempt from paying the deposit by means of a waiver which would cost BEF5,000 (\$100 approx.) per month of stay, not exceeding BEF20,000 (\$400 approx.). The same conditions applied for foreign visitors, although it was explained in the 1956 English language guide that the exemption of paying the deposit is “at the discretion of the officer delivering the visa”.⁶⁴⁹ Furthermore, for visitors from the neighbouring territories of Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia, visitor permits valid for one month were obtainable without a deposit at the border.

Regardless of whether visitors travelled to the Belgian Congo for a one-month holiday, or extended holidays, the arrangements for being able to enter the colony were considerably more challenging and expensive than in comparison to British East Africa. Indeed this principle of the deposit was cause for concern to the British Consul General to the Belgian Congo who, in a letter in 1957, viewed it as

⁶⁴⁵ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.19

⁶⁴⁶ Chevers, G., *Un Mois au Congo* (1952), p.1

⁶⁴⁷ Office de l’Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, *Guide du Voyageur au Congo Belge et Ruanda-Urundi* (1958), p.679

⁶⁴⁸ Office de l’Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, *Guide du Voyageur au Congo Belge et Ruanda-Urundi* (1958), p.679

⁶⁴⁹ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi* (1956), p.665

“excessively harsh in the case of natives of the African continent, and particularly of West Africa from which a large number of British subjects resident in the Congo are drawn”.⁶⁵⁰

However, I note Phyllis Martin’s observation reported by Stanard that this was not necessarily any more onerous than some other colonies.⁶⁵¹ Foreign office papers report that the system of “cautionnement” was widespread in French Equatorial Africa, but that “the regime in that territory is mild as compared with the powers which are vested in the authorities in the Belgian Congo”.⁶⁵² The legitimate question then arises, whether those unnamed other French territories were seeking to cultivate a tourism sector to the same extent as the authorities in the Belgian colony.

A third form of tourism was entirely precluded from travel to the Belgian Congo; that of exchange students. We have already seen that Fulbright scholarships were established and the USA actively sought to undertake “cultural diplomacy via educational exchange”.⁶⁵³ Belgium was no exception. The Fulbright Act Accord for the financing of cultural and educational exchange between Belgium (and Luxembourg) and the USA was signed on 8 October 1948 in Brussels. It resulted in the founding of the US Educational Foundation in Belgium, which was to be the principle vehicle to facilitate the educational exchanges.⁶⁵⁴

This had prompted a warning from the then Colonial Minister, Pierre Wigny, to the Minister of Education that since the Belgian Congo did not possess the number of comparable schools and higher education institutions, this presented challenges hosting exchanges in the colonies. This resolve appeared to stiffen as the years passed. Archive papers from the Belgian Foreign Ministry indicate that, following an amendment to the 1948 agreement in December 1952, the Foundation and Americans studying under the Fulbright programme were afforded the same fiscal advantages in the Belgian Congo as guaranteed in Belgium. It followed some considerable pressure by the USA to ensure the reach of the Foundation and the Fulbright programme extended to Belgium’s colonies. The agreement of 1952 suggests then that that Ministry of the Colonies had acquiesced to American pressure to allow educational exchanges with the Belgian Congo.⁶⁵⁵ This was not the case.

⁶⁵⁰ National Archives FO371 / 118805 - Letter dated 24 January 1957 to the Chief Secretary’s Office in Lagos, Nigeria from the British Consul General in the Belgian Congo

⁶⁵¹ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p. 19, footnote reference 76

⁶⁵² National Archives FO371 / 118805 - Letter dated 24 January 1957 to the Chief Secretary’s Office in Lagos, Nigeria from the British Consul General in the Belgian Congo

⁶⁵³ Bu, L., Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (1999), p.393

⁶⁵⁴ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 595 – Fulbright Act Accord for the financing of a cultural and educational programme between Belgium (and Luxembourg) and the USA, signed 8 October 1948 in Brussels

⁶⁵⁵ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 595 - Amendment to the Fulbright Act Accord of 1948 dated 16 December 1952

A terse set of exchanges followed between the Ministry of the Colonies and the Foreign Ministry, which had signed the agreement on behalf of the Belgian Government. The Ministry of the Colonies' concern seemed to be at its sharpest around "la présence éventuelle au Congo d'un nombre relativement important de noirs américains [...] sous les auspices de la Fondation; d'un nombre relativement important de cette catégorie de personnes motiverait des appréhensions." [the eventual presence in the Congo of a relatively significant number of black Americans [...] under the auspices of the Foundation; a relatively large number of people in this category prompts concerns].⁶⁵⁶

This was not to be the first time that concerns were to be expressed, and objections raised. On 20 March 1950, the Director General of the Ministry of the Colonies wrote to the Socialist Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak following receipt of a proposal for the creation of an American institute for the study of African problems, and the nomination of a Belgian ethnologist to take up a post at the University of Washington.⁶⁵⁷

His response was adamant and defiant. He envisaged a situation where American students would wish to travel to the colonies to study, which he viewed with considerable apprehension. "Young elements arriving in the Congo would have little precise theoretical understanding of Africa" he wrote. Instead, he advised that preferable and alternative arrangements be made to accommodate students at the Overseas University Institute in Antwerp. In relation to the second proposal, the civil servant advised that it would be better to appoint a Belgian ecclesiastical scholar who "could underline to his audience the enormous efforts deployed by the Belgians in Africa [...] without being influenced by the anti-colonial ideas on the other side of the Atlantic".⁶⁵⁸

Van den Abeele who, as Administrator General of the Ministry of the Colonies, became more emphatic as more news of African institutes being established in the USA was to reach the Ministry of the Colonies. Writing to the Foreign Minister again in December 1950, the senior civil servant responded to the request for his view about the establishment of the Africa Section of the New York based Institute of International Education, whose goal was to encourage African students to study in the USA.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁶ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 595 - Note on the Fulbright Act from the Ministry of the Colonies to the Foreign Office circa 1948

⁶⁵⁷ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 595 - Letter dated 20 March 1950 to the Foreign Minister from the Director General of the Ministry of the Colonies

⁶⁵⁸ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 595 - Letter dated 20 March 1950 to the Foreign Minister from the Director General of the Ministry of the Colonies

⁶⁵⁹ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 608.13592 - Letter dated 13 December 1950 to the Foreign Minister from the Director General of the Ministry of the Colonies

His response was blunt saying that a programme for African students to be educated in America did not correspond with the views of his department. He went on to explain that “les indigènes ne sont donc pas encouragés à se rendre en Belgique pour l’enseignement” [the natives are not encouraged to go to Belgium for education].⁶⁶⁰ In fact, by 1955 the number of Congolese who had undertaken some form of study in the metropolitan was less than 30.⁶⁶¹ This, of course, speaks to the tragedy of the Belgian catastrophic handling of decolonisation. At independence in 1960 there were only 16 Congolese university graduates in any field and among them not one lawyer, engineer or physician.⁶⁶² He concluded by advising the Foreign Minister that Belgium should not officially engage, arguing the Institute would be better to invest in promoting education in Africa.

As late as August 1958 there is yet further evidence of this policy when a letter from the Foreign Ministry to the Ministry of the Colonies informed them of the imminent arrival of Dr Gwendolyn Carter, the Professor of Government at Smith College of Northampton, Massachusetts who was regarded as a well-known Africa expert. The conclusion of this letter reads “Il me parait essentiel que le voyage du Dr Carter ne puisse conduire à l’invitation systématique d’indigènes aux Etats-Unis.” [It seems essential to me that Dr Carter’s journey does not lead to the systematic invitation of natives to the United States].⁶⁶³

The above provides evidence, therefore, not only of the Ministry of the Colonies’ resistance to allowing Congolese studying abroad, but also to inbound students and scholars into the colony seeking to participate in a two-way educational exchanges as foreseen by the American Fulbright programme. It should be added that some American students were allowed to visit the Belgian Congo as short-term tourists. The *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*’s first edition of *Echo du Tourisme* reported that 48 American undergraduates would visit the colony in 1955 accompanying Dr. Campbell, “Educational Counsellor to the President of the United States”. The implication clearly in the article is that this is a tourist visit, not an exchange programme.⁶⁶⁴

It could be argued that this was a failure of joined-up Government, with the Foreign Office on the one hand signing an agreement in good faith, while overlooking the fact that there were no suitable exchange institutions in its colonies. However, the evidence suggests that there was stiff resistance to the idea of educational exchange in the Ministry of the Colonies.

⁶⁶⁰ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 608.13592 - Letter dated 13 December 1950 to the Foreign Minister from the Director General of the Ministry of the Colonies

⁶⁶¹ Claeys-Bouaert, J., Les Colonial Students en Grand Bretagne, *Zaire: Revue Congolais*, July 1956, p.742

⁶⁶² Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.306

⁶⁶³ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (2940) 608.13592 - Letter dated 10 July 1958 to the Minister of the Colonies from the Foreign Ministry

⁶⁶⁴ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 1 (1955) p.2

So, if the Belgian colonial authorities were genuinely wedded to expanding the tourism sector, the question then follows how many tourists visited the Congo during the post-War colonial years? On the face of it there was a significant rise in the numbers of tourists. In 1951, it was reported that 2,608 travellers visited the Belgian Congo, of which 1,379 were “pure tourists” while 1,229 were businessmen.⁶⁶⁵ Of the total number, 1,216 were Belgian, 469 British, 248 Americans, 165 French and 131 South Africans. Of the British and French, it was supposed that fifty per cent of each were African residents living in neighbouring colonies. By 1954, the total figure had reached 9,500 (including both pure tourist and businessman), although no breakdown of that figure by nationality is available.⁶⁶⁶

By 1957 when, according to Stanard, travel to the Congo was easiest,⁶⁶⁷ 12,316 visitors were recorded generating an estimated \$140 million in revenues to the Congolese economy.⁶⁶⁸ Stanard considers this an underwhelming number.⁶⁶⁹ That total figure comprised 6,412 “pure tourists” and 3,756 businessmen.⁶⁷⁰

The residue is comprised of those undertaking tourism and business together, as well as those in transit. It is important to add that there appears to have been a shift in the reporting of tourist statistics between 1951 and 1957. That said, the statistics show a six-fold increase in total numbers of tourists over the six-year period from 1951 to 1957, suggesting a 100% annual increase per year. And among Monteyne’s target audience, there was also impressive growth in this period, with a fivefold increase of Britons arriving (Monteyne actually identified British East African residents), and a sevenfold increase of Americans (1,692 in total) and South Africans (882 in total).

Notwithstanding the challenges placed on tourists entering the colony, this indicates significantly increased numbers of visitors in a short period. Indeed by 1954 the tourist industry was identified as the twelfth biggest contributor to the Congolese economy.⁶⁷¹ However, these tourist numbers should be viewed in relation to other tourist trends in Africa. By the mid-1950s Kenya was attracting almost four times the number of visitors.⁶⁷² It is also important to note that this was the high watermark in

⁶⁶⁵ Le Tourisme au Congo belge et at Ruanda-Urundi, *Revue Coloniale Belge* No. 177 (1953), p.157

⁶⁶⁶ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi* (1956), p.775

⁶⁶⁷ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.19

⁶⁶⁸ Grünthal, A., Trends of Tourism in Southern Africa, *Revue de Tourisme*, No. 3 (1959), p.135

⁶⁶⁹ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.19

⁶⁷⁰ *Le Congo Belge*, édité par L’Office de l’Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi (1958), p.348

⁶⁷¹ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi* (1956), p.774

⁶⁷² Ouma, J. *Evolution of Tourism in East Africa* (1970), p.27

tourism in the Belgian Congo. From 1957 onwards, there was a marked slow down in the world economy, notably affecting the resources sector on which the colony's economy depended. Investment into the colony ceased in 1958 and was replaced by a net capital outflow of \$46million in 1959.⁶⁷³

We have identified hindrances of differing types, which would compound the businessman entering the colony to undertake business, the student looking to study in the colony and the casual vacationer. Such barriers seem at odds then with the highly active tourism promotional efforts we can see. Arguably, it could be that the Belgians sought to make the Congo a high-end tourist destination. It has already been seen that working classes in Belgium were discouraged from travelling to the colony. Hefty deposits for visiting would also suggest that, along with positioning the colony as a honeymoon destination and a place to shoot elephant.⁶⁷⁴ Long has also made the case that royal visits such as King Baudouin's in 1955 represented a model for the luxury end of the tourism industry and for other, aspirational tourists.⁶⁷⁵

However, we have seen that there was a problem with the paucity and mediocrity of hotels as openly discussed by the deputy director of the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* in 1953, and addressed again by the industry's own voice piece, *Echo du Tourisme*, in 1956 which foresaw a "serious crisis".⁶⁷⁶ Then, as today, high-end tourists paying high-end money expect high-end service. There is simply no evidence that marketing high-end tourism could be supported on the ground.

5.10 Open and shut

A reasonable conclusion, therefore, is that despite the sophisticated messaging and slick publicity, the Belgian colonial authorities had little appetite to open the doors and allow exponential numbers of tourists to visit the colony and expose the Congolese to outside influences, especially those carrying news of "the wind of change blowing through this continent".⁶⁷⁷

Belgian colonial rule was both highly controlling and, as Merriam, describes "sternly paternalistic".⁶⁷⁸ The Belgians had always sought to avoid contact between the Congolese populations and other

⁶⁷³ Davidson, B., Chapter 14: Zaire, Rwanda & Burundi, in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 8, 1940-75 ed. by Fage, J., Crowder, M., & Oliver, R., (1984), p.739

⁶⁷⁴ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 1 (1955), p.5-6

⁶⁷⁵ Long, P., Introduction, *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P., & Palmer, N. (2008), p.13

⁶⁷⁶ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 6 (1956), p.5

⁶⁷⁷ Speech by British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan to the Parliament of South Africa, 3 February 1960

⁶⁷⁸ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.32

foreign countries, including neighbouring colonies, essentially leaving the Congo to develop in seclusion.⁶⁷⁹ Such was the protective and layered coating of paternalism, says Merriam, that the Belgians genuinely believed that the Congo could remain impervious to any external influence.⁶⁸⁰ It relied on the flawed judgement that political ideas would not take hold where there was economic contentment.⁶⁸¹ The official Belgian colonial policy was predicated on notions that defied trends elsewhere in Africa. In his 1953 article, Cartier reflected the observations of many external commentators of the time when he wrote “les spécialistes des affaires d’indigènes doutent que les Belges parviennent longtemps à supprimer les aspirations noires vers une activité politique” [experts in indigenous affairs doubt that the Belgians in the long term can remove the black aspirations for political activism].⁶⁸² Indeed this was an observation of the colony shared by one of Belgium’s own diplomats, Fernand Vanlangenhove, in 1954.⁶⁸³

The policy of isolating the Congo in political, economic and social terms was implemented in a number of ways, and included the discouragement of European settlement in Congo with the result of minimising what contact the Congolese could make with other nationals, either European or African.⁶⁸⁴ That being the perceived wisdom among Belgian Congo scholars, why then would the colonial authorities have devised and actively promoted a policy which would have led to increased numbers of foreigners from Africa and dissident countries such as the USA to visit the colony? The suggestion is entirely countercultural to Belgian imperial thinking, and the staticity as viewed by the British,⁶⁸⁵ which characterised colonial policy before and after the Second World War.

The Belgians demonstrated a remarkable ability not to be affected by decolonisation in the world, and seemed largely impervious to the hostility to colonialism that was making itself felt on the international level. Criticisms of colonialism aroused much indignation in Brussels, but hardly intimidated them. Instead they felt they had to react energetically and defend their colonial accomplishment.⁶⁸⁶

Perhaps the most compelling evidence to demonstrate the manipulation of tourism promotion for political ends comes at the end of de Meyer’s 1955 article on the stagnation of the hotel industry in

⁶⁷⁹ Vanthemsche, G., *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980* (2012), p.110

⁶⁸⁰ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background to Conflict* (1961), p.33

⁶⁸¹ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background to Conflict* (1961), p.50

⁶⁸² Cartier, R., *Paris Match*, No. 248, 19 December (1953), p.44

⁶⁸³ Vanthemsche, G., *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980* (2012), p.110

⁶⁸⁴ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.136; Merriam, A. *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.33; Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.20

⁶⁸⁵ National Archives FO371/125394 - A dispatch dated 1 February 1957 from the British Embassy in Brussels to the Foreign Secretary

⁶⁸⁶ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60* ed. by Gifford, P. & Roger Louis, W., (1977), p.323

the Congo. The Director of the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* writes “La nécessité du tourisme n’est plus mise en doute à l’heure actuelle. Elle s’affirme chaque jour davantage, qui ce soit comme facteur économique ou comme facteur politique, en tant que moyen de faire connaître au monde ce que les Belges ont réalisé au Congo” [The need for tourism isn’t in doubt any more. Its advantages are affirmed each day, be they economic factors or political factors, as a means of allowing the world to know what the Belgians have achieved in the Congo].⁶⁸⁷

5.11 Conclusion

The promotion of tourism – be it in its forms of relaxation, business or study – to the Belgian Congo and its promotion, then, was a tool of colonial propaganda. It is clear through the post-War years that the Belgians did not wish to greatly open up the colony to external forces. The complex, bureaucratic government structures which governed the development of tourism demonstrated a level of control which was entirely in keeping with the way the Belgians managed every other aspect of their colonial wards. Indeed this goes some way to explain how the Belgians appeared incapable of understanding the accelerating pace of change, which as Peemans observes led them to become prisoners of their own ideology.⁶⁸⁸ (Incidentally, the Congolese were equally prisoners of that ideology).

What options did the Belgian colonial authorities have? It would have been highly suspicious to international audiences – especially to the superpowers – had the Belgians sought to introduce a closed-door policy to its colony. That clearly was not an option. In their gift, however, was to make it relatively difficult to visit the colony. All the government structures played their part to achieve that goal. And yet to counter any suggestions of unreasonable barriers to access, the Belgian authorities constructed a charade, a sharp piece of statecraft by seeking to use government-led tourism presentation as a means to manipulate domestic and international audiences into believing the Congo was a progressive society, open for business and accessible to tourists.

Government officials, accompanied by tourism industry representatives from Brussels and the Congo, attended international conferences in Africa and Europe demonstrating commitment to building the colonial tourism sector. Who could have doubted that commitment when the Minister of the Colonies himself sat on the council that had oversight of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*?

⁶⁸⁷ *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 222, (1955), p.17

⁶⁸⁸ Peemans, J., Imperial hangovers: Belgium - The Economics of Decolonisation, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol .15 (1980), p.270

That is not to say that those working in the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* and later the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* were not committed to their mission of promoting colonial tourism. We have seen that de Meyer, a key player in the Office during the 1950s wrote two articles in 1953 and 1955, both published in the mouthpiece of Belgian colonialism *Revue congo belge* about the problems of too few hotels and, at the same time, delivering veiled criticism of the slowness of authorities to meet the basic requirements of tourism in the colony.⁶⁸⁹ Two further articles appeared in the *Echo du Tourisme* carrying moot criticisms of the slow pace of progress in developing hotels and showing due commitment to building the tourism sector.⁶⁹⁰

Of course tourists did travel there, and in growing numbers. Yet, despite that relatively sharp growth, the absolute number of tourists in comparison to neighbouring colonies and countries in Africa was modest. In isolation, it would be conjecture to conclude this betrayed a lack of commitment or interest in fostering a meaningful tourism sector, but there is sufficient evidence to make the argument that tourism development was not motivated for economic reasons alone. Clearly, having access to the numbers of travellers who applied for permission to visit the colony (we only have numbers on those who entered) would be helpful. So, too, it would be advantageous to have a picture of those who applied and the grounds on which they were rejected.

It would be fraught with risk to claim definitively that the Belgian colonial authorities had no intention of creating a genuine tourist sector, opting instead to build the pretence of a tourist sector. Testing that hypothesis would require a great deal more information about tourism and propaganda policy development and decision-making in the Ministry of the Colonies, which was either not available, or has been withheld from review.

All that said, there is clear evidence that propaganda characterised Belgium's efforts to secure a more sympathetic hearing internationally in the post-War years. As Light observes, through its policies of tourism promotion a country can make a declaration about itself to external audiences and to raise its international profile and prestige. There is strong evidence to suggest this was the motivation for the Belgian colonial authorities.⁶⁹¹ In this context, therefore, Belgian colonial tourism should be seen primarily as another component in their propaganda armoury and its role in the economic and social development of the Belgian Congo was of secondary importance.

⁶⁸⁹ *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 177 (1953), p.157; *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 222, (1955), p.13

⁶⁹⁰ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 2 (1955), p.12; *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 6 (1956), p.5

⁶⁹¹ Light, D., Chapter 1: Tourism, Identity and Popular Culture in *The Dracula Dilemma: Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania* (2012), p.13

6 Content analysis: Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi

6.1 Introduction

On 10 October 1947, the *Conseil d'Administration* of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* met in Brussels. The two principal items on their agenda were the issue of hotel accommodation (and the question of whether a body should be established to address it); and the development of a publication on tourism in the Belgian Congo.⁶⁹² The discussion about the purpose and requirements of such a guidebook followed an earlier 8-week visit to the Belgian Congo from 16 July until 9 September 1947 undertaken by Mr J. Monteyne, the Director of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*.⁶⁹³ The visit served as a scoping exercise for developing tourism in the colony.

The minutes of the meeting point to two key decisions. The first, that any marketing material should be produced in three languages – French, Flemish and English.⁶⁹⁴ The second decision was an agreement to proceed with the development of a comprehensive guidebook on the Belgian Congo until such time that “un véritable Baedeker du Congo sera publié” [a veritable Baedeker of the Congo is published].⁶⁹⁵

Baedeker guides had gained an excellent reputation,⁶⁹⁶ and consequently it was to provide the benchmark for the first comprehensive guide to the Belgian Congo which would be published by the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*. This supports Freed's observation that Belgian Congo travel guidebooks stand out because of their connections to the colonial state, written either by colonial officials or with official endorsement.⁶⁹⁷ Unlike the Baedeker guide, however, this series of publications was likely to serve as an additional vehicle for official information.

⁶⁹² MFAB A4 (483) 205.848 - Minutes of a meeting of the *Conseil d'Administration* of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* dated 10 October 1947

⁶⁹³ MFAB A4 (483) 205.848 - Report of a visit to the Belgian Congo from 16 July to 9 September 1947 and associated recommendations produced by J Monteyne, Director of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*

⁶⁹⁴ MFAB A4 (483) 205.848 - Minutes of a meeting of the *Conseil d'Administration* of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* dated 10 October 1947

⁶⁹⁵ MFAB A4 (483) 205.848 - Minutes of a meeting of the *Conseil d'Administration* of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* dated 10 October 1947

⁶⁹⁶ Speake, J., *Literature of Travel and Exploration: A to F* (2003), p.59

⁶⁹⁷ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.4

This chapter will look at the 1956 English language version of the *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and the Ruanda-Urundi* published by the Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi (see figure 17). The purpose of looking at this publication is that the English language edition was probably designed for overseas audiences, primarily English-speaking tourists in North America, Britain and its Empire. The 1956 publication was the second and last English language edition before de-colonisation; a first edition in English was published in 1951.⁶⁹⁸ It is helpful to look at how the Belgian authorities sought to make representations about the Congo in the same year Britain had voted to begin the process of post-War African decolonisation.⁶⁹⁹ I shall discuss the representations of Africa as well as those of Belgium and its colonial responsibilities to the Congo. I will highlight how a pro-colonial discourse is woven into the fabric of the narrative and will argue that, in so doing, this guidebook served as an important vehicle to deliver colonial propaganda.

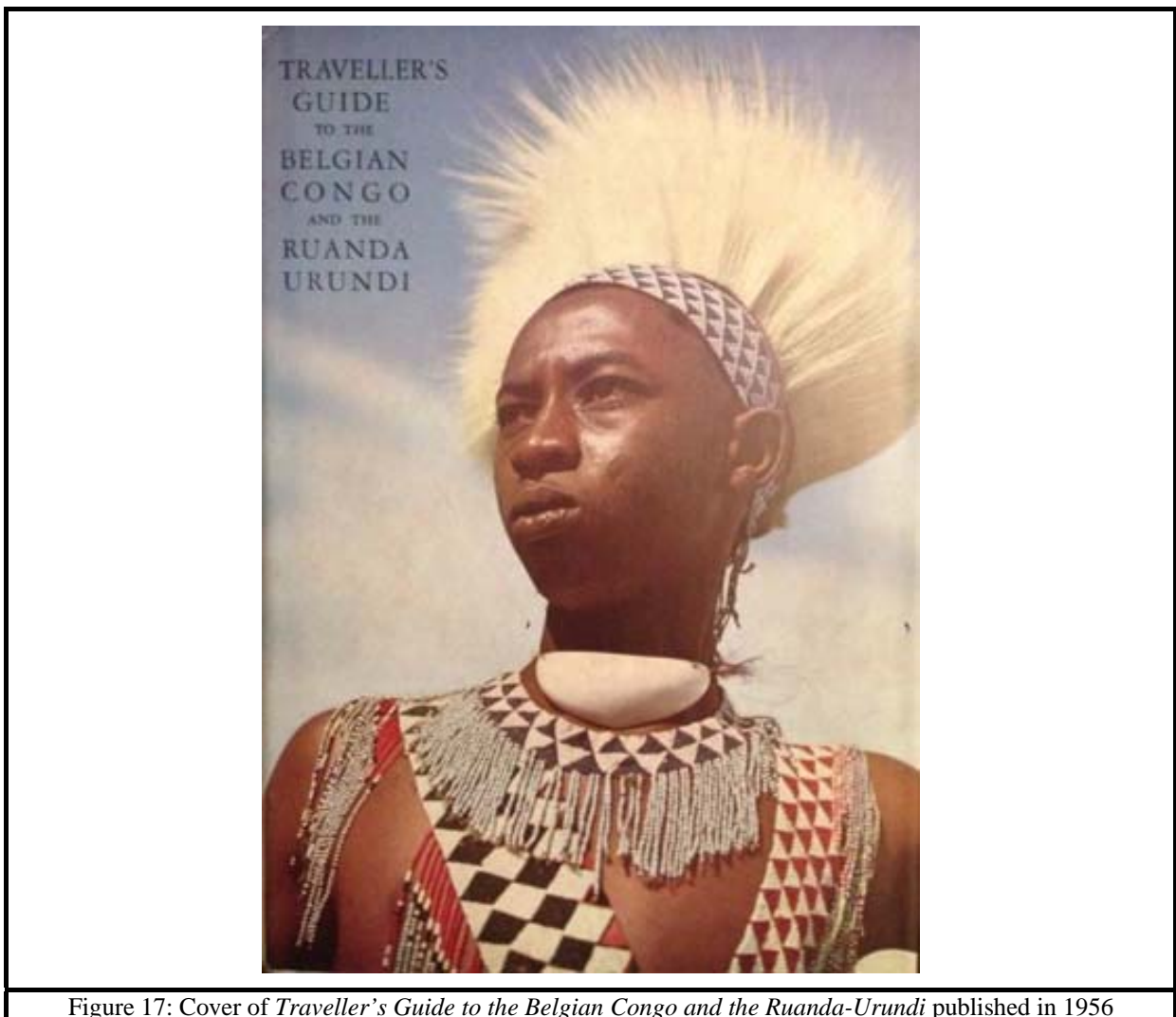


Figure 17: Cover of *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and the Ruanda-Urundi* published in 1956

⁶⁹⁸ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi., *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and the Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.vi

⁶⁹⁹ Cheesman, D., Butskell and the Empire: The House of Commons Prepares for the Scramble from Africa, 1946-56; *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2009), p.263

6.2 Colonialism on show

A number of authorities have written about the role of travel literature, including the guidebook. For example, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have pointed out that one of the most important vehicles of colonial representation has been the “plethora of travel writing by colonial travellers”.⁷⁰⁰ Moffat and Baxendale explain that tourism is a constructed experience,⁷⁰¹ and that travel writing is a fundamental component in cultural construction.⁷⁰² Guidebooks and other promotional campaigns, therefore, play a role in the construction and reinforcement of both identities and place meanings.⁷⁰³

As Costa reminds us, in the international marketplace of ideas, perceptions are a major currency and the ability to shape those perceptions directly reflects an actor’s power.⁷⁰⁴ This seems to be a truism in the case of Belgium in relation to its colonial mandate in the post-War years, and may go some way to explaining the colonial authorities’ investment in an 800-page English language guidebook to its African colonies.

The tourist guidebook is defined by Behdad as a discourse in which the statements and their speakers are dissociated from one another.⁷⁰⁵ This new genre in travel writing replaced the autobiographical tone of travel narratives with a publication packed with tips and suggestions addressed directly to the reader, who was presumed to be planning a trip to the region.⁷⁰⁶ Unlike travel literature, it is usually the publisher who takes responsibility for the production of the guide.⁷⁰⁷ This is the case for the *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi*.

Equally, Behdad reminds us that the tour guide encourages its readers to check, to confirm or deny the validity of the information it provides, because it is precisely this acknowledgement of the possibility of error that makes the tourist believe what the guidebook claims.⁷⁰⁸ This again is the case for the

⁷⁰⁰ Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H., *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (2005), p.207

⁷⁰¹ Baxendale, J., Chapter 1: The Construction of the Past and the Origins of Royal Tourism in 19th Century Britain, in *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* ed. by Long, P., & Palmer, N., (2008), p.46

⁷⁰² Moffat, R., *Perspectives on Africa in Travel Writing: Representations of Ethiopia, Kenya, Republic of Congo and South Africa, 1930–2000*, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow (2010), p.70

⁷⁰³ Rakic, T., Chapter 12: Narratives of National versus 'Universal' Belonging of the Athenian Acropolis in Travel Guidebooks, in *Narratives of Travel and Tourism* ed. by Tivers, J., & Rakic, T., (2012), p.152

⁷⁰⁴ Costa, R., The ‘Great Façade of Nationality’; Some Considerations on Portuguese Tourism and the Multiple Meanings of Estado Novo Portugal in Travel Literature, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2012), p.71

⁷⁰⁵ Behdad, A., *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (1999), p.40

⁷⁰⁶ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.1

⁷⁰⁷ Behdad, A., *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (1999), p.41

⁷⁰⁸ Behdad, A., *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (1999), p.45

Traveller's Guide which states in the preface that “we are fully aware of its imperfections, but we are relying on our readers to point out any errors which may have escaped our attention”.⁷⁰⁹

The supporting evidence to demonstrate the overtly pro-colonial messaging of the guidebooks comes from three distinct areas; the historical context of the Belgian Congo; the description of Congolese society and peoples; and the overview of the administrative and infrastructure considerations which inform the traveller in deciding where to visit and how.

It is also worth noting that the target audiences of the guidebook were defined as “the scientist, the sociologist, the technician, the economist, the businessman and the artist”.⁷¹⁰ So-called “professional” classes were identified by the Director of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* Mr. J. Monteyne as target audiences following his scoping mission to the Belgian Congo in the summer of 1947, drawn from one of three categories: Europeans resident in the Congo; Belgians who wished to visit the colonies; and visitors from the USA, South Africa and East Africa.⁷¹¹

As we have already seen, professional and upper classes were the only ones who could access jobs in the Belgian Congo.⁷¹² They were also the ones likely to have the means to spend a vacation in a far-flung location. Moreover, influencers in society are often drawn from such classes and were therefore helping to shape and inform public and political opinion.

6.3 Historical context

The first striking observation about the 1956 English edition of the guidebook is that, unlike the French (fourth) and Flemish (third) editions published 1958, there is no portrait of King Leopold on the inside front cover.⁷¹³ Both French and Flemish editions caption the portrait with “Leopold II: Founder of the Congo Free State”.

⁷⁰⁹ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and the Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.v

⁷¹⁰ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller's Guide to the Belgian Congo and the Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.v

⁷¹¹ MFAB, Office colonial A4 (483) 205.848 - Report of a visit to the Belgian Congo from 16 July to 9 September 1947 and associated recommendations produced by J Monteyne, Director of the *Office du Tourisme Colonial*

⁷¹² Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.20

⁷¹³ Office de l'Information et des Relations Publiques pour le Congo Belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, *Guide du voyageur au congo belge et ruanda-urundi* (1958), Voorlichtings en Documentatiecentrum van Belgisch Congo en van Ruanda-Urundi, *Belgisch-Congo en Ruanda-Urundi: Reisgids* (1958).

As already discussed, the lack of such a portrait likely reflects there was some sensitivity to the reputation of Leopold II among international audiences. Given the English language guidebook was destined to an international market, removing the portrait appears to have been a conscious decision. Hom explains that to tourists Empire was something to enjoy and that colonial tourism disavowed “the violent, insidious nature of imperialism, covering it over with a patina of leisure”.⁷¹⁴ The removal of the overt Leopold II legacy in the guidebook allowed the British or American tourist to enjoy the holiday to the Belgian colony without an overt reminder in their guidebook of the horrors historically associated with the Congo Free State.

The past, however, is not forgotten in the guidebook as it includes a 17 page “Historical Sketch” at the beginning. In recounting of history, the guidebook explains that the 1885 Treaty of Berlin allowed for the establishment of the Congo Free State, which would suppress the traffic in “negroes” and alcohol, and bear the obligation to “improve the moral and material conditions of the Natives”.⁷¹⁵ We learn on subsequent pages that the Belgian Antislavery Society was founded in 1888 and sent numerous expeditions into the Belgian Congo to bring an end to slavery there.⁷¹⁶ Advancement of the welfare of the Congolese was part of the colonial mission from the outset, the reader learns.

The handover of the Congo Free State from Leopold II to the Belgian government in 1908 is afforded no explanation. A summary of Leopold’s 23-year reign of the Congo concludes that “slavery had disappeared, cannibalism and human sacrifices restrained, the country had been occupied and pacified, order prevailed and administration and justice had been organised”.⁷¹⁷ There is no mention of the 1904 Casement report that shocked and horrified Britain with its reports of two decades of brutality, including the cutting off of hands and penises for failing to meet unsustainable rubber quotas.⁷¹⁸ Rajic’s paradigm of construction and reinforcement begins in this guidebook with the Belgian Congo’s benevolent colonial mission set in historical perspective.⁷¹⁹

In its review of more recent years, the guidebook reports that the *Plan Décennal* proves “to the world that Belgium is discharging her task of civilizing Central Africa with marked generosity, and that she

⁷¹⁴ Hom, S., Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), p.300

⁷¹⁵ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.11

⁷¹⁶ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.13

⁷¹⁷ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.15

⁷¹⁸ Hochschild, A., *King Leopold’s Ghost* (1999), p.203

⁷¹⁹ Rakic, T., Chapter 12: Narratives of National versus 'Universal' Belonging of the Athenian Acropolis in *Travel Guidebooks, Narratives of Travel and Tourism* ed. by Tivers, J., & Rakic, T. (2012), p.152

is determined to make these territories happy lands”.⁷²⁰ The language conveys the paternalism with which Merriam characterizes the Belgian colonial rule.⁷²¹

The only revelation that Belgian rule in the Congo has faced any challenge or criticism comes at the end of the historical overview in a paragraph about the end of the Second World War and the role of the UN in categorising the Belgian Congo as a ‘non-autonomous’ territory. “The task of Belgium became increasingly difficult and delicate.” the guidebook reports.⁷²² Consequently, sophistry characterises the recounting of history in the guidebook. It is already noted that former Colonial Minister Pierre Wigny was taken aback by the widespread awareness of Leopold II’s rule in the USA, associated as it was with “the cut hands and the red rubber”.⁷²³ It should be assumed that delivering a censored historical record was part of the overall messaging to international audiences, including prospective tourists.

6.4 Societal representations

In the section entitled “Ethnographic Sketch”, messaging of European superiority begins to be displayed. Freed explains that guidebooks reminded Europeans to uphold moral rectitude and encouraged them to act with a combination of paternalism and mistrust towards the Africans.⁷²⁴ This underlies some of the commentary about Congolese society.

The Pygmies are described as a race “of extreme interest to all travellers to the Congo”⁷²⁵ while the negroes are described as having very quick intelligence in his youth “but this facility quickly degenerates because of sexual excesses and the abuse of fermented beverages”.⁷²⁶ Paternalistic overtones underpinned by ecclesiastical morality convey to the tourist-reader a responsibility to uphold the imperialist mission during their travels.⁷²⁷ “The traveller must take care that his Negro

⁷²⁰ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.18

⁷²¹ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961), p.32

⁷²² Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.18

⁷²³ Vanthemsche, G., *The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo, Europe and the World in European Historiography* ed. by Lévai, C. (2006), p.116

⁷²⁴ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.8

⁷²⁵ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.24

⁷²⁶ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.28

⁷²⁷ Hom, S., Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), p.288

staff does not drink Native beer or liquor during the hours when their services will be needed” the guidebook advises.⁷²⁸

The guidebook goes on to explain that in the delivery of the colonial mission “missionaries always speak the language of the tribe in which they exercise their ministry, and civil servants who spend the whole of their career in one region are also interested in the study of local dialects”.⁷²⁹ This reinforces the earlier references to the commitment of the Belgian colonial mission.

Further, the issue of attire and nudity is addressed. The guidebook explains that complete nudity has become rare “except among certain tribes living as isolated family units off the beaten track and far from European centres. Where for reasons of health and progress, regrouping has produced large settlements, total nudism has given way to the wearing of a small apron of leaves, fibres or even cloth”.⁷³⁰ While no overt comment is provided, the implication is that colonialism has largely ended the practice of nudity and, moreover, helped to “structure” society in larger communities which have contributed to the advancement of society and the ending of nudism. In other words, a visit to the Belgian Congo will offer a glimpse into authentic Africa, albeit one civilized for mass tourism attuned to Western moral values and standards.⁷³¹

It is a comment equally made to the issue of polygamy, which is described as gradually dying out “under the influence of European thought”.⁷³² The work of missionaries is upheld as making the difference in “greatly hastening the progress of Native society by delivering its people from fear of the supernatural, by combatting the grip of the sorcerer, suppressing polygamy and many other immoral and nefarious customs”.⁷³³

The depiction of Congolese society supports Stengers’ observation that in the late 1950s Belgium remained convinced that its political dominance corresponded to an overwhelming intellectual superiority.⁷³⁴

⁷²⁸ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.29

⁷²⁹ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.36

⁷³⁰ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.39

⁷³¹ Hom, S., Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), p.288

⁷³² Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.46

⁷³³ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.52

⁷³⁴ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60*, ed. by Gifford, P., & Roger Louis, W.M. (1977), p.311

6.5 Administering the colony

The notion of superiority is then further reinforced by the chapter setting out the administrative organization of the colony. Four pages are dedicated to the education system. “Freedom of education is safeguarded in the Congo in the same way as in Belgium” before the reader understands there are two schooling systems; one for Europeans and one for Natives.⁷³⁵ Segregation reinforces the policy of trying to isolate the Congolese from external influences. “Many intermediate and trade schools for Natives can compete with some European institutions as far as their equipment is concerned” the traveller is told, reinforcing the development mission of the colonial authorities as set out under the *Plan Décennal*.⁷³⁶

A further three pages of the guidebook are given over to the healthcare system and the Native Welfare Fund set up in 1947 “to promote the material and moral development of rural Native society”.⁷³⁷ Entirely in keeping with the top down structure of the colonial administration, the reader learns that the “board of directors, the managing committee and the central administration of the Fund” are all located in Brussels.⁷³⁸ Belgium’s colonial mission is underlined by both a superiority and a paternalism that concluded Brussels-based civil servants knew best for the well-being of the Congolese.

This is reinforced further by an explanation about the economic activity in the colony and the role of the *Plan Décennal*, described as a “vast programme of works for the benefit of the public to be completed gradually over a period of ten years”.⁷³⁹ It goes on to describe that the purpose of the Plan is to take “special care of the well-being of the Native peoples, a task to which Belgium is committed”.⁷⁴⁰ Tourism appears to be part of the mission, then, in transforming a colonized country into a modern territory.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁵ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.125

⁷³⁶ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.127

⁷³⁷ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.131

⁷³⁸ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.131

⁷³⁹ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.93

⁷⁴⁰ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.94

⁷⁴¹ Hom, S., *Empires of Tourism: Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania 1911-1943*, *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), p.294

There then follows 600 pages of detailed breakdown of touring routes for travel primarily by car, but also by train and steamers across the Belgian Congo and Ruanda Burundi, as well as key facts and figures about society and the economy. It includes details about sights, hotel accommodation, restaurants, churches, schools, Sabena offices and general conveniences to be found in towns and cities. Butcher describes the detail as “wonderfully mundane”.⁷⁴² He goes on to say “the names and locations of scores of guest houses are listed, along with prices of meals and journey times between local towns [...] Maps show, in precise detail, the country’s road network spreading right across the rainforest and climbing over mountain ranges, and the book lists itineraries about turning left at Kilometre 348 or buying pottery from the natives”.⁷⁴³ It summarises the tome well.

6.6 Conclusion

The publication of this guidebook by an arm of Government, 800 pages long, in three languages, and its on-going revision in multiple editions over a period of just 10 years highlights a significant public investment. It also suggests that there was a view in the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* and its subsequent incarnations that the guidebook was serving a purpose and, notwithstanding its cost, proving successful. There were four editions of the French version, three editions of the Dutch and two editions of the English.⁷⁴⁴

By 1956, 15,000 editions of the French edition alone had been sold, suggesting the guidebook was viewed as an important channel of communication.⁷⁴⁵ Of course, knowing how many of the guidebooks were being purchased by tourists and how many by vicarious tourists, is almost irrelevant. The significant conclusion is that considerable resources went into the guidebook’s development, publication and distribution. Layered as it was in pro-colonial propaganda, the story of the guidebook tells us two important points.

First, the return on investment was considered worthwhile. The volume of books printed must evidence that conclusion. Second, (as Freed highlights in keeping with other such guidebooks from the 1950s),⁷⁴⁶ the *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi* shows no awareness of impending African independence, nor need to convey to international audiences the slightest progress towards political self-determination. It suggests that the primary role was to highlight the Belgian

⁷⁴² Butcher, T., *Blood River: A Journey to Africa’s Broken Heart* (2007), p.10

⁷⁴³ Butcher, T., *Blood River: A Journey to Africa’s Broken Heart* (2007), p.10

⁷⁴⁴ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi., *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo and the Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.vi

⁷⁴⁵ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi., *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo and the Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.vi

⁷⁴⁶ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.14

Congo as both playground and demonstration-ground for European achievements and superiority.⁷⁴⁷ Consequently the 1956 guidebook has a ring of defiance, boldly asserting the merits of colonialism while not being cowed by the many criticisms Belgium encountered in the USA and the wider attacks on colonialism which characterized the decade.⁷⁴⁸ The guidebook played its part, therefore, in the diplomatic war of words and providing further evidence of tourism's wider role as a delivery mechanism for pro-colonial propaganda.

⁷⁴⁷ Freed, L., Every European Becomes a Chief: Travel Guides to Colonial Equatorial Africa, 1900-1958, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), p.14

⁷⁴⁸ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60*, ed. by Gifford, P., & Roger Louis, W.M. (1977), p.323

7 Conclusion

“Little news of affairs in Belgium’s giant colony had been allowed to percolate to the outside world, and whatever came through was rather reassuring. It was generally thought that Belgian rule was beneficent and the Congolese people happy and contented. It was also believed, as Belgian official statements and propagandists tirelessly made out, that Belgium was following an enlightened policy of balanced development of raising the standards of living and education, of leading the country in an orderly way towards self-government”.⁷⁴⁹

Rajeshwar Dayal, Chief, United Nations operations in the Congo, 1960-1.

Dayal’s observation sums up the evidence provided by secondary source material and certain primary source materials about Belgium’s unremitting early post-War focus on the presentation of its colonial achievements, not only to domestic Belgian audiences but also to international audiences. Such efforts appear to be consistent with other colonial powers, at least in the initial years after 1945.

It is clear that other post-War colonial governments viewed it as beneficial to ensure, manage and deliver a continuum of pro-colonial communications with a view to convincing colonised and metropolitan audiences alike of the merits of their imperial missions. Such communications also served as an opportunity to highlight the threat in Africa of communist insurgents. Primary material found during the course of this research indicates this was certainly the case in Britain. Papers from the late 1940s reveal a conscious strategy being adopted to ensure pro-colonial propaganda complemented diplomatic efforts at the international level, especially in the USA.

Supporting this hypothesis, academics such as MacKenzie and Stanard have written with authority on the British and Belgian approaches (respectively) to the development and delivery of colonial propaganda. And in line with the British approach, Stanard has written that pro-empire propaganda was a basic part of the Belgian administration of the Congo, arguing that it successfully conveyed the concept of an everlasting colonial presence in Africa.⁷⁵⁰

In particular there was clearly great attention paid to American audiences. Washington DC was the capital of a nation both vehemently opposed to colonialism and increasingly spooked by the threat of communism. New York was the home to the fledgling UN, an important crucible for the Bandung

⁷⁴⁹ Dayal, R., *Mission for Hammarskjöld* (1976), p.1

⁷⁵⁰ Stanard, M., *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism* (2011), p.14

countries advocating the principle of self-determination. The positioning of a Belgian Government Information Officer in New York indicates the importance afforded to the presentation and flow of communications to the USA, and the UN. Information in the form of dedicated publications fostering trade and business, visits by politicians, speeches and bespoke trips for USA-based journalists and diplomats, all played their part in the presentation of the Belgian Congo to audiences in North America.

Equally, in so adopting this strategy, there appears to be evidence to suggest that, at the very least, it was recognised that tourism and its marketing contributed to the government's overall efforts. Endy has made the case that tourism and travel was exploited by the USA during the post-War years for its economic policy goals and for cultural propaganda purposes.⁷⁵¹ Equally, Light makes the case that by the 1960s the Soviet Union and its satellite states had all deployed similar strategies of using tourism and its promotion to demonstrate the achievements of socialism to external audiences.⁷⁵² It should come as no surprise then, that African tourism was similarly influenced by a range of policy goals, adjusted to the age of 'benevolent imperialism'.⁷⁵³

Belgium saw the benefits of developing a tourism sector in the Congo. But it had to be on their terms, and would follow the highly controlled pattern that governed other forms of activity in the colony. Certainly the Belgian policy of "prudent paternalism" permeated the tourist experience. Like other aspects of economic activity, the government enjoyed a high level of control in its development, and would have the final say on the actors involved, including deciding on the tourists who could visit and who could not.

It is the level to which this paternalist approach touched the tourist experience that may seem surprising. Advice given out to European and American visitors to discourage the Congolese from drinking or ensuring the curfew for natives is properly observed was an integrated part of the Belgian colonial tourist experience.

Equally, the authorities made sure that the progress and benefits of colonialism was always central to the tourist's reading and recommended activities and sightseeing. Given this level of control which coloured the tourist experience, logically, colonial policy therefore transcended not only tourism's practical delivery but also its positioning and promotion.

⁷⁵¹ Endy, C., *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (2004), p.4

⁷⁵² Light D., 'A Medium of Revolutionary Propaganda': The State and Tourism Policy in the Romanian People's Republic, 1947-1965, *Journal of Tourism History* Vol. 5, No. 2 (2013), p.200

⁷⁵³ James, L., *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (1998), p.516

That evidence is most apparent in the 1955 article by the Head of Tourism for the Belgian Congo in which he explains that colonial tourism – and its promotion – was guided in large part by showcasing to the world Belgium’s colonial achievements.⁷⁵⁴ The presence of 13 dedicated overseas representative offices – even if they were simply a shell office within the Sabena office or embassy – speaks to a commitment to convey the calibrated tourism promise, presented as it was in the framework of colonial achievements.

Moreover, there is strong institutional evidence to demonstrate tourism was considered primarily a public relations and marketing tool for the Ministry of the Colonies. From 1945 until 1955, there was a clear association between the marketing of the colony and the provision of tourism. The entities responsible for both were presided over by the same Chairman, Alfred Moeller de Laddersous. From 1956 onwards, that association was formally institutionalised with the Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi becoming the third directorate of the Information and Public Relations Bureau for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi.⁷⁵⁵

This integration indicates the politicised focus of colonial African tourism. Government support to the tourism sector was not anchored in a dedicated, stand-alone entity, nor one that sat within a department responsible for fostering economic or industrial development. It was anchored in the division of the Ministry of the Colonies responsible for public relations. In other words, tourism was not viewed by decision-makers primarily in the context of economic value, but rather as a marketing and propaganda activity. In observing the National Socialists’ approach to domestic leisure travel, Semmens makes the case that the regime ‘institutionalised’ it as an ideological matter.⁷⁵⁶ Similarly, post-War Belgian authorities institutionalised the promotion of colonial tourism as an ideological matter, and not merely as a way of diversifying economic activity in the Congo.

By 1956 African tourism was clearly about presenting a benign view of Belgian colonialism to the external world. It seems this was considered an important price to pay to ensure the colonial authorities were able to bask in the glow of positive publicity and the success associated with their modern colony. After all, the Belgian Government took great pride in the development of the Belgian Congo. To that end, the careful promotion and positioning of colonial tourism helped to fudge a series of different messages to a variety of completely different audiences. This ambiguity sought to mollify audiences with fundamentally different concerns – external critics, the Congolese, the settler community in the Congo, and domestic Belgian audiences.

⁷⁵⁴ *Revue Coloniale Belge*, No. 222, (1955), p.17

⁷⁵⁵ Tourist Bureau for the Belgian Congo & Ruanda-Urundi, *Traveller’s Guide to the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi* (1956), p.661

⁷⁵⁶ Semmens, K., Chapter 8: Travel in Merry Germany: Tourist culture in the Third Reich, in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* ed. by Walton, J., (2005), p.147

Further evidence is provided by the relative difficulties to enter and visit the colony. One foil to the criticism about the restrictions on entering the Belgian Congo was the promotion of a thriving and welcoming tourist scene in the Congo. In other words, domestic and international audiences were wilfully led to believe that the Belgian Congo was not only a progressive society, but also one very much open for business and tourists. Indeed, I believe that that was probably the view of those working in the *Office du Tourisme du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* itself. We have seen that criticism was levelled by the Director of the Office Mr de Meyer in a number of period publications expressing disappointment about the slow pace of change to the tourism potential, especially about the sufficient provision of hotel accommodation.⁷⁵⁷ Such criticisms would have been embarrassing to a colonial administration that prided itself on the level of control it delivered. The cultivation of a tourism prospectus was determined, therefore, at a much higher level within the Ministry of the Colonies.

Consequently, this begins to provide an indication that the Belgian Congo's approach to tourism development may have differed from other African colonies, as it was fashioned by a distinctly different political approach (and associated communications) which the Belgians adopted towards its colonial commitments. The remarkable aspect to consider is the degree to which Belgium rapidly became out of step with trends in British and French colonial Africa. In the same year as Belgium was ramping up its tourist promotion activities to the Congo, and integrating the *Office du Tourisme Colonial* within the colonial propaganda machine, Britain was debating – albeit briefly – and passing legislation to allow Ghana's independence.⁷⁵⁸

There has been considerable commentary about the chaotic breakdown of Belgian colonialism. The 1959 Leopoldville riots took the colonial authorities by surprise. As Stengers observes “the pax belgica was shattered”.⁷⁵⁹ Systemic failures such as investment in further education for the Congolese and a lack of planning in the transfer of responsibilities within political structures and the civil service, exacerbated by a hasty agreement to depart and an ill-judged speech by the King on the day of independence, speaks to Belgium's comprehensive lack of foresight. The fundamental assumption in the decolonisation process was that there was still plenty of time.⁷⁶⁰ It also speaks to a level of judgment completely out of step with reality.

⁷⁵⁷ *Echo du Tourisme*, Vol. 2 (1955), p.12; *Revue Coloniale Belge* No. 222, (1955) p.13;

⁷⁵⁸ Cheesman, D., Butskell and the Empire: The House of Commons Prepares for the Scramble from Africa, 1946-56; *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2009), p.259

⁷⁵⁹ Stengers, J., Chapter 12: Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo, in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonisation 1940-60*, ed. by Gifford, P., & Roger Louis, W.M. (1977), p.323

⁷⁶⁰ Young, C., *Politics in the Congo* (1965), p.36

Belgian colonial authorities' one-way transmission of propaganda, it seems, worked at one level; they persuaded themselves of their own success. In the context of Belgian rule of the Congo, Merriam asks the question "how long will it be before it is realized that communication is a two-way street and that life in the wider world demands responsibility as well as reasonable return for favours given?"⁷⁶¹

Propaganda characterised Belgium's efforts to secure a more sympathetic hearing internationally in the post-War years. In this context, therefore, Belgian colonial tourism and its marketing post-1945 should be seen primarily as another component in that propaganda armoury. Efforts to develop a meaningful and sustainable tourism sector were flimsy and politically undermined by the Ministry of the Colonies whose primary interest in promoting tourism in the Belgian Congo was to complement the metropolitan pro-colonial propaganda output.

⁷⁶¹ Merriam, A., *Congo: Background to Conflict* (1961), p.64

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