Enlightened Developments? Inter-imperial Organizations and the Issue of Colonial Education in Africa (1945–1957)

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PROCLAIMING AN “ENLIGHTENED” COLONIALISM

From the mid-1940s onward, the prime colonial powers initiated mutual contacts for the purpose of reflecting on the main challenges to their continued colonial projects in Africa. In some cases, like Anglo-French relations, there proceeded a long genealogy of debates on the

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advantages and limits of bilateral and multilateral cooperation centered on the administration of colonial territories. The aim was to surpass the constraints and disagreements dictated by the war, especially regarding competition for human and material resources on the African continent. From concerns rooted in how to achieve a “common policy” that would be instrumental in raising the “natives” standard of living to proposals for establishing “direct contact” on a variety of technical subjects, there were numerous initiatives which made 1945 the moment to resume collaboration started in the previous decade. The number of topics under discussion was considerable, and they were gradually organized around a unifying idea of “development” in the colonial context: sanitary and medical research, labor and agricultural issues and, further, aspects concerning colonial education. As a result of these conversations, arguments in favor of establishing an *entente néo-coloniale* were wielded. These arguments persisted over the following decade, growing more frequent and important, and paved the way for a series of common political initiatives for colonial powers, some more public than others and some more effective than others.¹

The old tradition of inter-imperial cooperation—exhibited within organizations like the International Colonial Institute (ICI) since 1894 and in the corridors of inter-war international organizations, notably the League of Nations (LoN), its specialized agencies, and its commissions—was renewed and took on new vigor in the post-war period. To sum up, legislation and general policy guidelines on the management of territories, resources, and colonial populations was gathered and shared, always citing science and technical—not predominantly political—concerns as their inspiration. These practices were given continuity² and the focus moved onto advancing the production of information with a common and de facto comparable matrix, employing similar methodologies and purposes. Deployment on these fronts took place in innumerable epistemic communities: experts grew in influence and were no longer limited

¹John Kent, *The Internationalisation of Colonialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 152–153 and 156; Anne Deighton, “Entente Neo-Coloniale?: Ernest Bevin and the Proposals for an Anglo–French Third World Power, 1945–1949,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 4 (2006): 835–852.

²The ICI’s statutes declared that it was imperative to avoid political discussions in order not to affect its collaborative purpose. The same would happen in its successor, the International Institute of Differing Civilizations (INCIDI).

essentially to those who had made a career in the colonial context or had experience in the administration of colonial matters. The menu of themes studied, around which collaboration and the transfer of expert knowledge took place, extended. What did not change was a willingness to influence the way colonial affairs were discussed, both domestically and externally.

In the first case, that of the ICI, the comparison of colonial legislation had predominated, partly due to the intervention of experts on emerging international colonial law, who followed and tried to condition the dynamics of the internationalization of colonial issues, then undergoing intensification. From work and labor migration to the problem of land and property regimes, via irrigation, alcohol, and opium trafficking and issues of infrastructure development, the ICI sparked a number of debates and fueled a number of publications. The *International Colonial Library* compiled minutes and recommendations of the collective meetings and some reports by experts appointed for this purpose, circulating them internationally. On receiving inside information directly from the colonial ministries of the member states, it sent it back out in another, synthetic and comparable way.³ The issue of education was one of the topics addressed and merited its own special session, held in Paris in May 1931.⁴

In the second case, the LoN's "forcefield" attracted various projects for internationalizing colonial issues, from work to nutrition and education, the latter especially in the mandates committee. Efforts toward international normative regulation of these issues, based on attempts to gain a thorough knowledge of how they were dealt with in the colonies and on the advancement of common parameters, were significant,

³Ulrike Lindner, "New Forms of Knowledge Exchange Between Imperial Powers: The Development of the Institut Colonial International (ICI) Since the End of the Nineteenth Century," and Florian Wagner, "Private Colonialism and International Co-operation in Europe, 1870–1914," both in *Imperial Co-operation and Transfer, 1870–1930: Empires and Encounters*, ed. by Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 57–78 and 79–103; Benoit Daviron, "Mobilizing Labour in African Agriculture: The Role of the International Colonial Institute in the Elaboration of a Standard of Colonial Administration, 1895–1930," *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 479–501.

⁴Institut Colonial International, *L'Enseignement aux indigènes: rapports préliminaires. XXI^e session de l'Institut colonial international, Paris, 5–8 mai 1931* (Bruxelles: Établissements généraux d'imprimerie, 1931).

though their effects were nonetheless much less obvious. The LoN and its specialized agencies also attracted a very considerable set of imperial and colonial interests that sought to curtail the reach and direction of this internationalization, in particular through collaborative strategies which were more or less official. The case of forced labor in the colonial context is a good example of this.⁵

After World War II, the practices of collecting and comparing information on the most pressing colonial issues continued but took on a new dimension and direction. In May 1946, a first conference was held that made the conclusions of the Anglo-French meetings of November 1945 materialize: a conference on veterinary medicine, held in Dakar, followed by another in November in Accra, focusing on medical and sanitary issues. Both recognized the need to emphasize means of cooperation, be it via the exchange of information or the joint use of facilities. That same year, Belgium was also included in technical cooperation projects, and it was decided that a Portuguese observer should join the discussions. Meanwhile, further consideration was given to addressing the problem of including South Africa; this caused great apprehension for many, due to the political resonance which it entailed.⁶

From the outset, the aim was to *regularly* discuss a number of topics, some of them mentioned above, from the point of view of the opportunities they presented for collaboration. Avoiding discussion of the merits of each partner in each of these topics was seen as fundamental, as the Belgian ambassador in London reported to his superior in Brussels in May 1946. These topics together constituted “development,” a central factor for the purpose of encouraging cooperation and information exchange between partners. At the end of 1946, apropos of a bilateral meeting between the French and Belgians, the issue of “indigenous affairs” was highlighted as a clear priority. On the one hand, there was “indigenous policy,” which referred to issues such as the formation of administrative authorities, the “fight against religious sects,” and

⁵Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, “A League of Empires: Imperial Political Imagination and Interwar Internationalisms,” in *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World*, ed. by Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and José Pedro Monteiro (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 87–126.

⁶Kent, *The Internationalisation of Colonialism*, 200–201.

management of the issue of *évolués* or the detribalized; on the other hand arose the issue of “indigenous education,” from primary education to the “opportunities for creating higher education.” Another central topic, that of agriculture, saw educational aspects resumed, including, for example, a French–Belgian exchange of trainee agricultural technicians, who were to rotate through each country’s scientific institutions, both in the metropole and the colonies. Revealingly, the “organization of indigenous welfare” was included as an aim under the topic of agriculture.⁷

From 1947 on, several occasions arose for bipartite, tripartite, and later quadripartite, “conversations.” They focused not only on trying to outline a framework of understanding regarding policy-making or expert knowledge exchange and mobility of experts; but also acted as laboratories for common strategies to be adopted in international fora, notably within United Nations (UN) committees or specialized agencies, from the International Labour Organization (ILO) to UNESCO (see Chapter 3 by Brooke Durham in this book).⁸ The “conversations” and the myriad of meetings and conferences that took place with remarkable constancy from the late 1940s were also opportunities for preparing alternative development projects within the colonial context; these touched on various issues, from “rural welfare” to nutrition, from housing to medical–sanitary issues, or forestry and soils. At the very first tripartite meeting, for example, the problem of a common position on the UN’s way of dealing with (or the way in which it appeared to want to address) the issue of “dependent territories” was taken very seriously. In addition to the splintering of “conversations,” numerous regular meetings on technical cooperation were held, from the aforementioned on medical and health matters to others on education, nutrition, and work. The French and the Belgians, especially, saw these as important tools for demonstrating, particularly at the international level, that their imperial arrays were places of social, technical, and scientific progress, combining

⁷Belgian Embassy, London, to Paul-Henri Spaak, Belgian minister of Foreign Affairs, 27.5.1946; Gorlia, Directorate-General of the Ministry of the Colonies to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 13.12.1946, in Archives Diplomatiques, Brussels [AD, Brussels], 18729/I.

⁸For the ILO, see Daniel R. Maul, *Human Rights, Development, and Decolonization* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); José Pedro Monteiro, *Portugal e a Questão do Trabalho Forçado* (Lisbon: Edições 70, 2018). For the UNESCO, see Damiano Matasci, “Une ‘UNESCO africaine’? Le ministère de la France d’Outre-mer, la coopération éducative intercoloniale et la défense de l’Empire, 1947–1957,” *Monde(s)* 13, no. 1 (2018): 195–214.

experience on the ground, dictated by history and capable of informed intervention. So important was it, they saw in these meetings a way of minimizing what they presaged as a trend toward an increased UN intrusion into colonial issues. The Belgian authorities, in particular, celebrated the meeting planned for Paris, as this would enable a “common approach” to be established, “as was desirable,” one which would be able to obstruct the UN’s request for information under Article 73 (e) of the Charter drawn up in San Francisco (1945), a very sensitive issue at the time. At the same meeting in Paris, twelve conferences were scheduled up to 1950, many in an African context, with two objectives: on the one hand, to involve local administration and society, maintaining political discourse on integration or decentralization; on the other, to demonstrate a capacity for local intervention that was beyond the reach of international organizations.⁹

The new (geo)political circumstances and the direct and indirect effects of the global conflict had brought about a new appreciation and understanding of the motivations, methods, and purposes of the colonial enterprise that should guide metropolitan and colonial authorities. These challenges constrained the rejuvenation of post-war European societies and the reconstruction of imperial projects in different ways, both politically and economically, with the emergence of programs like Truman’s Point IV, and also from a symbolic point of view as well as in terms of reputation (for the British case, see Chapter 10 by Hélène Charton).¹⁰ The public projection and proclamation of an “enlightened neo-colonialism,” supported by an “imperialism of knowledge,” were notable in this process.¹¹ From development and welfare plans to the

⁹Godding, Directorate-General of the Ministry of the Colonies to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 13.4.1947, in AD, Brussels, 18729/I; Kent, *The Internationalisation of Colonialism*, 163, 201–202. For the Belgian context, see Guy Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo, 1885–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 138–140.

¹⁰Frederick Cooper, “Reconstructing Empire in British and French Africa,” and Nicholas J. White, “Reconstructing Europe through Rejuvenating Empire: The British, French and Dutch Experiences Compared,” in *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945–1949*, ed. by Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch, and David Feldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 196–210 and 211–236.

¹¹Marc Michel, “La coopération intercoloniale en Afrique noire, 1942–1950: un neo-colonialisme éclairé?” *Relations Internationales* 34 (1983): 155–171; Frederick Cooper, “Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans, and the Development Concept,” in *International Development and the Social Sciences*, ed. by Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 64–92, at 64.

redefinition of legal and constitutional frameworks, via new *indigenous policies*, there were various moments where imperial policies were significantly redirected. This was in part marked by a dynamic of collaboration, to varying degrees and levels, and had distinct consequences.¹² Thus, this dynamic also affected the *ends* of the European colonial empires, significantly affecting their various historical paths.¹³ Much of this was crucial to the shaping of the various forms of “repressive developmentalism” that mapped the disintegration of European colonial empires.¹⁴

This chapter explores some of these issues and problems and focuses on how an international, inter-imperial organization created in 1950—the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara (CCTA)—addressed the problem of education in the colonial context. By reconstructing the way in which the educational question was addressed within the institution after 1947, this text focuses on a particular moment, namely the occasion of the 1957 Inter-African Conference on Industrial, Commercial, and Agricultural Education, held in Luanda (Angola), which grew out of the conference held in Tananarive (Madagascar) in November 1954.

EDUCATION: “MORAL CHARACTER,” THE POLITICAL PROBLEM

In June 1947, as we have seen, a Franco-Anglo-Belgian conference took place. According to reports, there was no “divergence” of views on any matter. Recognition of the opportunity and the (certainly political) usefulness for in-depth and permanent inter-imperial technical cooperation

¹²For a seminal overview, see Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For the question of development in Africa, see Joseph M. Hodge, Gerald Hodl, and Martina Kopf (eds.), *Developing Africa. Concepts and Practices in Twentieth-Century Colonialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

¹³Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and Its Impact* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); Martin Thomas, Bob Moore, and Larry Butler, *Crises of Empire* (London: Hodder Education, 2008); Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and António Costa Pinto (eds.), *The Ends of European Colonial Empires* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015).

¹⁴Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, “Repressive developmentalisms: idioms, repertoires, trajectories in late colonialism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ed. by Andrew Thompson and Martin Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017 online; 2018 print). See also Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds.), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

was unanimous and was extended into the field, although with caution. It was thus agreed that cooperation in Africa should merely be suggested and recommended, not imposed. Portugal's right to inclusion was also discussed at the meeting and was delayed only by the indecision of the British. As previously mentioned, the challenges placed by the UN were duly discussed, and a prudent position was sketched out which attempted to avoid politicizing the debates in the committee which had labored over compliance with Article 73. The relations to be established with specialized UN agencies were given special consideration, the aim being to mitigate any potential intrusion into colonial affairs. For example, the idea was put forward that whenever its specialized agencies wanted to establish a regional bureau in Africa, on a variety of topics, colonial entente should anticipate and propose proprietary structures for this purpose. The objective therefore became focused on creating institutional spaces centered on the main issues affecting the African continent and led by the existing colonial powers and their experts.¹⁵

On the question of education, a meeting of "experts" took the first step on a long path of sharing perspectives and strategies for action on the issue. In keeping with the aims that governed the colonial axis, the meeting was held before the Mexico UNESCO Conference, in November and December 1947. As Colonial Office representative Hilton Poynton stated, "the union of the African powers is mostly necessary after UNESCO started to deal with the question of mass education in Africa." Albert Charton (Directeur de l'Enseignement et de la Jeunesse at ministère de la France d'outre-mer, from 1946) underlined the "great interest in confronting and balancing the ideas regarding UNESCO's work," stating that the "pilot experiences" sponsored by this body that were being announced for Haiti could be extended to Africa. One of the most active representatives at the meeting, Charton reflected at length on the central importance of "education for the masses" for promoting better economic, "political," cultural, and "hygiene" conditions in the colonial context. Without it, the ambitions for development would be most unlikely to come about and projects aimed at

¹⁵"Rapport—Conférence africaine anglo-franco-belge tenue à Paris du 20 au 24 mai 1947," 2.7.1947, AD, Brussels, 18729/I.

domesticating undesirable tendencies in the internationalization of issues of “non-autonomous” territories would be less effective.¹⁶

In accordance with these concerns, one of the conclusions of the meeting was that the problems of education should be examined in light of the general policy of “fundamental education,” which the governments present were committed to implementing. This policy, considered as having “moral character,” implied a program composed of three essential elements. First, extending school education to a universal primary education system. Second, a campaign for adult education. Third, there were a number of measures designed to stimulate the “*désir d’un niveau de vie plus élevé dans les domaines tels que la santé, le logement, l’agriculture, l’artisanat, l’art et la musique.*” Success was held to be dependent on the development of female education, as well as vocational education and arts and crafts. It required appreciable economic development, as it required the education of a large number of specialized and semi-skilled artisans and technicians. In this sense, undertaking studies on the problem of technical education was seen to be fundamental, both from an economic and pedagogical point of view. Participants of the three governments present also concluded that the closest possible collaboration should be established as a matter of urgency, encouraging an exchange of educational materials, information, surveys, experiences, points of view, and teaching staff. Just as important as consensus on the general guidelines to follow was the question of how to begin to contribute to political reorientation at the grass-roots level in each colony. David Rees-Williams, British Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, was clear in this regard: “fully recognise the difficulties of any common policy in educational matters,” given the diversity of colonial contexts and dynamics it was crucial that the chance for greater standardization be studied by the respective authorities, both in the metropole and the colonies. By any means, it was crucial to ensure “close discussion” between those involved and also “the full and regular exchange of information and ideas.” And that was, indeed, what occurred.¹⁷

¹⁶Report on Paris’ tripartite conversations (20–24 May 1947) to the head of office of the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 5.6.1947, AD, Brussels, 18729/I. Memo for the Belgian Secretary General of the Colonies, 24.6.1947, in Archives Africaines, Brussels [AA, Brussels], AE (3105).

¹⁷CCTA, “Conférence Franco-Anglo-Belge de Juin 1947,” in *Enseignement. Conférence Interafricaine et Conférences Régionales* (London: CCTA, 1954), 33; Dispatch by Rees-Williams, 25.2.1948, in AA, Brussels, AE (3105).

Following decisions taken at a tripartite conference held in London at the beginning of January of that year, in which relations with UNESCO were once again discussed, the heads of French, Belgian, and British education services met in Paris in March 1949. On the agenda was a reassessment of the conclusions reached in 1947 and an examination of the UN resolutions on the *Educational Advancement in Trust Territories* (Resolution A/RES/225(III)), passed in 1948. The aim was to make cooperation in this field “a reality,” which was increasingly urgent in light of the “numerous pressures made by international organizations about the spreading of education in trusteeship territories, and, in a general way, in the non-self-governing territories,” as the French representative stated. UNESCO was invited, but only for the last day. The conclusions of the meeting were considered “confidential” and the final report, expressing a “common” position, was “sweetened” for UNESCO and the UN Trusteeship Council. As previously stated, the various suggestions made to UNESCO aimed to promote the colonial powers’ experts and institutions, for example, in the area of “pedagogical research.” The option of setting up a university in the territories under colonial guardianship, a process sponsored by UNESCO, was considered “inopportune” and a “utopian and dangerous project,” according to an assessment published in a report of the Colonial Office by the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies. A survey was also carried out on the need for teaching material (primary, secondary, and technical) in overseas territories. More importantly, Regional Conferences on education in West and East Africa were suggested and supported by local political authorities.¹⁸

One year later, in 1950, the newly convened CCTA met in Accra (Gold Coast) for the Regional Conference on Education. Top of the agenda was to examine the conclusions of the 1947 conference, and to revisit the conclusions again in 1957. The following year, organized by the East African High Commission and the General Government of the Belgian Congo, Nairobi (Kenya) hosted a second Regional Conference on Education, that only delegates from the British and Belgian colonies

¹⁸Ministry of Overseas France to the Belgian Ministry of the Colonies, 16.2.1949, 7.3.1949, 18.3.1949; Colonial Office to the Belgian Ministry of the Colonies, 29.12.1949; all in AA, Brussels, AE (3105).

attended.¹⁹ One of the main recommendations of the conference was the need to insist upon, to colonial ministries in Brussels, Lisbon, London, and Paris, a conference on education for Central, West, and East Africa as well as the exchange of information on debates and resolutions taken at regional conferences and the dissemination of information to other territories. On the other hand, it was accepted that combating illiteracy could not be done in isolation but should be made part of a campaign designed to promote the general objectives of education, such as improving social and health conditions, or soil conservation. This would be further strengthened in the conclusions and recommendations of the Inter-African Conference on Rural Welfare, organized by the CCTA in Lourenço Marques in 1953.

“Basic education” campaigns, including those with the aim of eradicating illiteracy, would target adults especially, distinct from child illiteracy. The programs and administration of each education campaign were to take local conditions and the respective political and technical authorities into account.²⁰ Consideration had to be given to the possible assistance provided by UNESCO in promoting education in Africa. Lloyd Hughes, who was sent as an observer to Nairobi from that institution’s Department of Education, proposed that UNESCO could provide support via technical assistance for economic development. This would be a special project to create a network of regional centers for basic education or the creation of a pedagogical documentation center, among other aspects. However, in spite of the opportunities for institutional collaboration offered by UNESCO, colonial representatives believed that no resolution could be tabled without careful consideration of the issue, especially its implications.²¹ As the Belgian consul general in Nairobi, W. Stevens, wrote, “the clearest thing to remember from this first contact is, it seems, that the field for a cooperation in this matter is very large, but everything is yet to be organized. UNESCO’s intervention will contribute a lot, it is believed, to the success of this cooperation.” Another aspect which Stevens emphasized was the agreement among those

¹⁹CCTA, *Education: Inter-African and Regional Conferences—Tananarive 1954, Accra 1950, Nairobi 1951* (London: CCTA, 1954).

²⁰CCTA, *Conférence Inter-africaine sur le Bien-Être rural. Première Session. Lourenço Marques—Septembre 1953* (Lisbon: Secretariado da Conferência Inter-Africana do Bem-estar rural, 1953).

²¹“CCTA, *Education: inter-african and regional conferences*,” CCTA [1954], 39–42.

present that education designed for the indigenous population should be essentially directed toward the learning of manual crafts and less particularly academic teaching. This observation indicates the overwhelming tendency in colonial administrations and among colonial experts toward providing practical education for indigenous populations.²²

CREATING THE CONDITIONS: OLD PRINCIPLES, NEW DRIVE, NEW CHALLENGES

Two years after Nairobi, during the 8th session of the CCTA in Lisbon, the colonial powers arranged two new conferences on education, continuing the inter-imperial cooperative goals that had begun in the late 1940s. Initially the conferences were to follow the regional model used in Accra and Nairobi, but it was then decided to organize themed meetings. The first meeting would discuss issues related to primary education and the next would focus on technical and agricultural education. In the case of agricultural education, the forthcoming conference was to take into account the conclusions and recommendations arising from the Lourenço Marques Conference on Rural Welfare.²³ The first inter-African conference was announced for Tananarive in 1954. At the preparatory meeting in Paris (December 1953) the option was raised of inviting Liberia to send one observer to each conference, and any specialized institutions which were interested in attending. Thus, UNESCO could be invited to the conference on primary education, and the ILO to the

²²W. Stevens to the Belgian Ministry of the Colonies, 21.8.1950, in AA, Brussels, AE (3105).

²³Among other issues, the Committee III—Social Services and the organization of the community, had discussed “educational facilities” (social and moral training, primary and post-school teaching, vocational training) and adult education (fundamental education, social centers), where it was assumed that the school should give an important contribution to rural welfare, “teaching to students to be more useful to the community, both in economic and social spheres.” The CCTA stated that universal primary education (“instruction primaire,” in French; and “ensino rudimentar,” in Portuguese) was the “first goal” in the African territories south of the Sahara. It recommended to the participants at the Conference on education scheduled for 1954 the establishment of a link between school and the community in development programs. CCTA, *Conférence Inter-africaine sur le Bien-Être rural*, 123–125.

conference on technical education.²⁴ The question of inviting specialized agencies raised serious doubts at the heart of CCTA governments from the outset. For example, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs shared the concern of the Minister of the Colonies on the issue, arguing that any interference in African affairs from those bodies should be avoided.²⁵

UNESCO was invited to Tananarive; the head of the Department of Education, Lionel Elvin, stated that having an observer from the agency present at the conference had a number of advantages, since he could “open the door to the important development of our action” in non-autonomous territories. The instructions given to the observer, André Lestage (who had been an inspector of education in Madagascar in the 1930s), stated that this was an “excellent occasion” for closer collaboration with the CCTA. Lestage’s report on the conference was, however, extremely critical of the organization and proceedings of the meeting and showed his disappointment with the poor technical quality of the information presented. He went so far as to conclude that no advantage could be seen for UNESCO’s participation in the next conference (at that time planned for 1955), or at least not under the same conditions granted to the agency by the organizers. Lestage warned that the aim of the CCTA, “not the only one, but the most important,” was to gather all kinds of activities related to education, science, culture, and technology—UNESCO’s domains—intending to “keep its monopoly in Africa south of the Sahara.” He foresaw enormous difficulties in realizing the idea, declared in the UNESCO 1955/1956 program, of preparation taking place in 1956 for a conference to be held in 1958 on a free and compulsory education for Africa.²⁶ He added that he would not be surprised if the Tananarive conference was cited for “‘showing’ the uselessness of our project.” Within UNESCO, it was clearly apparent that the imperial governments sought to use the CCTA and its agencies to block

²⁴Document CCTA (53) 60—“Proces-Verbal de la Reunion Preliminaire aux Conférences de la CCTA sur l’enseignement, Paris, 1–2 Décembre 1953,” in Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (Lisbon) [AHD-MNE], 2P/A17/M45, Pasta [...] Conferências regionais sobre o Ensino.

²⁵N.º Aff.Col./588, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (4 Section, 1st Directorate of the Directorate General of Politics) to the minister of the Colonies, 1.2.1954, in AA, Brussels, AE (3105). Enseignement I. 5. Conférence Paris décembre 1953.

²⁶UNESCO, “UNESCO. Proposed Programme and Budget for 1955 and 1956. Education. (C) Regional Conference on Free and Compulsory Education” (Paris: UNESCO, 1954).

any attempt by specialized international agencies to intervene in African territories. They were right, as we have seen.²⁷

The Tananarive Inter-African Conference on Education began on November 8, 1954, with the main objective being to “lead to the exchange of reciprocal and confident information” among technicians on issues regarding first-grade teaching. The aim was to study the practical means to achieve this, as well as to reflect on issues related to the principle of organizing education in each territory, avoiding discussion of “purely doctrinal” matters. Each participant would present the solutions which had been found in their country in answer to questions related to primary education, teacher training, and adapting educational methodologies to local circumstances. Unlike other meetings, the Tananarive conference drew no conclusions nor did it make recommendations, and it issued only one final vote; this expressed the wish that the contacts that had been initiated should be continued via an exchange of documentation and visits, and that the upcoming conferences on education should confirm “the spirit” of international cooperation exhibited at the meeting.²⁸

But the spirit of cooperation to which the delegates appealed was not echoed among the British, although they had been one of the main drivers of the formation of the CCTA and the concentration of inter-imperial cooperation. The British delegation sent to the tenth session of the CCTA in Paris in early 1955 was under instruction to propose that the second part of the conference on education (originally scheduled for 1955) should be postponed “sine die” and that the other participants should know that there was no option of a British territory hosting it. The United Kingdom had not been in favor of holding the conference and had only accepted it under pressure from the French and so as not to block the goodwill of the other members of the CCTA, since the

²⁷Elvin (Director of UNESCO’s Department of Education) to UNESCO’s Assistant Director General, 9.8.1954; Jean Thomas (UNESCO’s acting Director General) to Lestage, 6.10.1954; Lestage to the Director General of UNESCO, 15.12.1954, in UNESCO Archive—62 A81/01 (6-13) CTCASS “-66” Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa—South of the Sahara. Part IIa—from 1/1/1950 up to 30/XII/1955.

²⁸Document CCTA (54) 102—“Lettre de Fournier, inspecteur général adjoint e secretário-geral da Conferência aux fonctionnaires de liaison,” 30.7.1954, in AHD-MNE, 2P/A17/M45, Pasta [...] *Conferências regionais sobre o Ensino. CCTA, Education: inter-african and regional conferences* (London: CCTA, 1954).

committee's decisions were taken unanimously. Since the Conference on African Education held in Cambridge (September 1952), the Colonial Office had taken the position that new conferences on education would have no "useful purpose" at that time, and would only disrupt the work of people who should be busy implementing an educational policy that had been agreed upon by and for all British territories. In the instructions sent to the head of the British delegation to Tananarive, John Attenborough, the Colonial Office had stated that the United Kingdom's "basic policy document" was the report that resulted from the proceedings of the Cambridge conference.²⁹ Thus, the British were inclined to resist new CCTA proposals for conferences devoted to general aspects of education, but were prepared to consider specialized conferences in areas such as technical or vocational/professional education.³⁰

After months of discussing the possibility of establishing cooperation mechanisms between the CCTA and UNESCO, the governments of the CCTA met in London in late 1955 in a working group to continue cooperation on educational matters. Upon analysis of the topics of the proposals for future conferences presented by each delegation, the group recommended a conference focusing on technical and agricultural education, which had already been planned at the 1953 meeting. The Portuguese government offered to host the meeting in 1957.³¹

During the meeting of the working group, it was decided that a panel of liaison officers in the field of education should be set up. This was a possible conciliation between the members of CCTA and the Portuguese proposal to set up an inter-African committee for education, similarly to other existing committees (such as the Inter-African Bureau for Soils and

²⁹The Cambridge *Conference on African Education* was sponsored by the Nuffield Foundation and the Colonial Office, which promoted field trips for educationalists to Africa, where they studied the existing colonial systems of education. The conference's final report *African Education* was organized by W. E. F. Ward, *African Education* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953). In this regard, see Alan Peshkin, "Educational Reform in Colonial and Independent Africa," *African Affairs* 64, no. 256 (1965): 210–216; R. J. Harvey (Colonial Office) to John Attenborough, 20.10.1954, in National Archives (Kew), CO 859.628 Regional CCTA Conference on Education (1954–1956).

³⁰"Brief for the United Kingdom delegation. CCTA Tenth Session. Education. Paris, 1955," in National Archives (Kew), CO 859.628 Regional CCTA Conference on Education (1954–1956).

³¹Document CCTA/CSA (55) 203—"Working Party on Regional Co-operation in the Field of Education," in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M152.

the Inter-African Labour Institute). But while the Belgians and French supported the Portuguese suggestion, the remaining governments were clearly reluctant for various reasons. The South African delegation, while supporting the proposal, believed that it would not “take root” and therefore suggested expanding the functions of the CCTA Committee for Social Sciences to include educational issues. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland felt that the creation of such a body was premature and inappropriate and had only one political meaning: “fear of UNESCO.” It suggested instead that a panel of liaison officers be established which would maintain contact between the different national commissions (to be created by each member state) and the CCTA. The main resistance to the Portuguese idea came from the British, who reiterated their opposition (the proposal had already been presented at the special meeting of the CCTA in July³²), taking the position that the results of the committee would be null and void, and that it would be yet another organism that produced “theoretical papers that nobody would read.” What was important was to establish greater contact between technicians, to carry out more visits, and to convene more conferences, and they requested that the list of upcoming conferences be reviewed. One of the Portuguese delegates, Franco Nogueira, stated that the British delegation had shown “absolute intransigence, even treating the Portuguese proposal with a certain irony.” The British and Portuguese did, however, agree on a final solution along the lines of the proposal of the federal government. Franco Nogueira accepted that this solution was “insufficient,” but “the risk of nothing being done,” resulting in “inconvenient consequences regarding UNESCO,” would be much worse. The proposed education committee had a political purpose and a cause: to block UNESCO.³³ The Belgian point of view was that while the British did not want to “hurt” UNESCO, the French supported the Portuguese proposal with the aim to “roll out or contain” the organization.³⁴

³²Document CCTA/CSA (55) 114—“Liaison Permanent dans le Domaine de l’Enseignement. Memorandum reçu du Gouvernement Portugais,” 29.6.1955, in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M152.

³³Report by the Portuguese representative at the Working Party (London, 1955) to the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M152.

³⁴“Note de Mission. Groupe de Travail sur la coopération régionale dans le domaine de l’enseignement. Londres 12 au 14.12.1955,” in AA, Brussels, AE (3105). Enseignement I. 8. Groupe de Travail Lisbonne 1956.

The panel of liaison officers in the field of education would be responsible for organizing and encouraging contact and exchange of information on education between African territories. Each government would appoint officials at governmental and local levels who would function as intermediaries for those at the level of colonial government. The main objective was to develop collaboration at a regional level. Staff could also be invited to assist in the technical preparation of the CCTA's inter-African and regional teaching conferences.³⁵ In order to reconcile their efforts, the first meeting of liaison officers was scheduled for Lisbon in June 1956, the same time the preparatory meeting for the second inter-African conference was held in Luanda.

The focus of one of the first debates to emerge at the Lisbon meeting concerned the terms of the theme proposed for the conference and their meanings: "technical education and agricultural education." The Belgian delegation drew attention to the fact that, in its view, industrial and agricultural training came under the common name of technical education, so the aim of the conference could not be technical education and agricultural education. The South Africans questioned whether agricultural training could be included in technical training. The British suggested that the committee of experts define the terms "technical education" and "agricultural education" and that it would be more appropriate to replace "technical education" with "commercial and industrial training," which the Secretary General of the CCTA supported. The French proposed two distinct sets of meetings: one for industrial and commercial training and another for agricultural education.³⁶ The discussion of the scope of the conference was symptomatic of the complexity and diversity of the theme of education within the CCTA. The definition of one term gave rise to additional explanations that came from the different systems of education that existed in each country of the commission. For example, when the Belgians proposed that the theme of the conference should be "industrial and agricultural education at primary and secondary level," the representative of the Federation questioned where secondary school ended, and the South

³⁵ Document CCTA/CSA (55) 203—"Working Party on Regional Co-operation in the Field of Education."

³⁶ Document CCTA/CSA (56) 103—"Report on the Preliminary Meeting of Experts for the Inter-African Conference on Education, Lisbon, from 4th June 1956. Record of Proceedings No. 1," in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M152.

African delegation stated that all institutions counted as secondary education institutions if they were not operating at university level.³⁷

In the end, it was decided that the aim of the meeting would be to study industrial, commercial, and agricultural education in schools up to, but not including, university level, with a view to practical cooperation on the problems emerging in the different countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The program of the forthcoming conference included a set of general topics for discussion in a plenary session that included the general aspects of industrial, commercial, and agricultural training in relation to social conditions; adapting industrial, commercial, and agricultural training to the needs of rural, industrial, and urban communities; or the general problem of vocational training. For each of the themes of the conference (industrial, commercial, and agricultural), specialized committees would be established: Committee I—industrial training; Committee II—commercial training; and Committee III—agricultural training.³⁸

In addition to potential invitations to the Inter-African Labour Institute and other CCTA organizations (such as the Inter-African Bureau on Rural Welfare and the Inter-African Bureau for Soils and Rural Economy-BIS), the option of inviting the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), the ILO, and UNESCO was pondered, as they would be interested in the conference themes from a technical point of view.³⁹ However, on the eve of the meeting, the Portuguese organization clarified that UNESCO should only be present in the role of an observer, not only because it was impossible to change the conference program, increasing the number of participants, but also because it was preferable “to limit their interference in Africa.” This was the line consistently held, as we have seen.⁴⁰

³⁷“Preliminary Meeting of Experts for the Inter-African Conference on Education, Lisbon, from 4th June 1956. Record of Proceedings No. 1,” in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M152.

³⁸Document CCTA/CSA (56) 103—“Report on the Preliminary Meeting of Experts [...],” in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M152.

³⁹Later on, FAO would inform that it would not be possible to send an observer since the conference at Luanda would be held at the same time of FAO’s conference. “Nota da CCTA, 20 de Junho de 1957,” in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M157.

⁴⁰Henrique Queiroz, Director General of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to João de Lucena, charge d’affaires at Portugal’s embassy in London, 22.8.1957, in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M157.

NEW DATA FOR A NEW POLICY

In preparation for the conference, the preliminary meeting commissioned the cadre of education officers to organize a prior exchange of information on the conference subjects. It was based on a questionnaire, including a detailed description of the current structure and objectives of education and industrial, commercial, and agricultural training, while at the same time highlighting the main difficulties encountered in the field of education. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first asked for a set of issues related to the general aspects of education in each territory, adapting education to rural needs and a description of systems for vocational guidance. The second part was divided into four points. The first presented general and common questions about the three types of education, from administrative organization to the relationship between industry, trade, and agriculture with different types of education, and—an important topic for colonial administrations—the language of instruction. The remaining three points focused on the different areas of education to be discussed at the conference. There was a need to gather new data on all these issues to enhance the possibility of setting a new policy for cooperation and also a common framework for education policies in an African context.

Between 1956 and 1957, the questionnaire sent by governments to the African territories was answered and returned to the metropolises, forwarded to the General Secretariat of the CCTA, and sent on to the other members. To a greater or lesser extent, the documentation submitted presents an important insight into the state of the colonial educational scenario in the mid-1950s, although whether the data presented in each report corresponds to the actual situation of education is questionable. However, the questionnaire did not aim simply to gather statistical data. The questions posed requested a description of the rationale, objectives, and education systems in place. It was not enough just to indicate only the number of schools, pupils, or graduates. In order to draw up the final report of each committee to be presented for discussion, a presentation of the different educational systems and their methods of delivery was required. Thus, answers to the questionnaire allow an understanding of how the colonial authorities looked at the problem of education in Africa, even though the questionnaire targeted a well-defined area of education. Each of the British, French, and Belgian colonies

sent individual replies, while the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, South Africa, and Portugal sent joint reports from their territories.⁴¹

As a means of complementing the information provided by the questionnaires, spokespeople from each commission made trips to different African territories. This experience received praise from the steering committee of the conference; in its view, it was a “useful basis for discussion,” and one of its conclusions was a recommendation that the practice should continue, fostering one of the initial ideas of the cooperation strategies that had been established from the moment of the first tripartite meetings of the 1940s: an exchange of expertise as a means of bringing together forms of knowledge, training, and delivery. Before the conference, the participants visited the Léopoldville pilot-center for vocational guidance. As part of the meeting, some work was done outside Luanda, as the program included visits to see agropastoral activity in Huíla, the Tchivinguiro Agricultural School, and the settlement at Cela. These visits were not only intended to publicize local progress in education, with their projection of an image of a colonial society in “development” and modernization⁴²; they also sought to exemplify and encourage the exchange of experiences among experts in order to contribute to the discussion of commissions and to the establishment of common strategies to be shared by members of the CCTA.⁴³

In order to make this exchange of knowledge more thorough, it was recommended by the conference that experts travel before the conferences, that documentation and staff be exchanged, and that there be mutual assistance of experts on education and work. Examples of the work and intense activity generated by the Inter-African Labour Institute and various inter-African labor conferences were given, as well as research on “rural welfare” in order to underline the importance of collaborating with experts from other fields. On the other hand, the panel of liaison officials was to implement the recommendations collaboratively

⁴¹Document CCTA/CSA (56) 103. Annex: “Questionnaire. Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Education.”

⁴²For the Portuguese case, see Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and António Costa Pinto, “A Modernizing Empire? Politics, Culture and Economy in Portuguese Late Colonialism,” in *The Ends of European Colonial Empires*, ed. by Jerónimo and Pinto, 51–80.

⁴³CCTA, *Conferência Interafricana do Ensino. 2.^a sessão. Programa e Informações* (Luanda: CCTA, 1957), 19.

as a joint secretariat of the CCTA and the Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara (CSA), and while it did not have all the functions of an autonomous committee, it could work toward establishing mechanisms for cooperation between CCTA governments; information could be collected, analyzed, and produced, to be circulated among experts and, if possible, have an influence on the policy decision-making process.⁴⁴

At the end of the conference, the work still to be done was unclear, and some of the plans put forward raised innumerable doubts. The lack of qualified staff or the idea that there was no human mass that could meet the expectations of the strategies outlined were just two of the reasons for reservations. A few months later, at the 13th session in Brussels (May 1958), CCTA officials declared themselves satisfied with the outcome of the conference, stating that proposals should be put forward to implement its recommendations.⁴⁵

As on other occasions, the results of the Luanda conference focused mainly on recommendations that emphasized the exchange of information and experience between CCTA members and their experts, without seriously engaging in defining a common strategy which could be practiced in each territory. Luanda, however, proved a tremendous improvement over previous conferences, notably that of Tananarive, in which “recommendations” were not even made. Preparations for the 1957 meeting were made with great care. The preparatory meeting drew up an extensive questionnaire on the state of education at the time, to cater for the general requests for educational data prior to the conferences. The information collected would be analyzed by spokespeople appointed by different governments, who were also able to travel to Africa to add *in loco* observations to the documentation submitted. To a certain extent, the preparatory process for the conference, which culminated in a pedagogical and publicity visit to the Leopoldville pilot-center for vocational guidance, as a means of furthering the extension of its model to other

⁴⁴CCTA, “Comissão Geral. Recomendações,” in *Ensino. Conferência Interafricana. 2.^a sessão* (Luanda: CCTA, 1957).

⁴⁵CCTA/CSA (55) 203—“Working Party on Regional Co-operation in the Field of Education.”

territories, was to substantiate the suggestions made in the years leading up to the meeting in Luanda: visits, information exchanges, preparation of reports, and discussion among experts.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

This text shows how the study of the evolution of educational programs in late colonialism in Africa, which were important for the overall developmentalist strategies tentatively enacted by European empire-states in the period, must not ignore the key role played by instances and modalities of inter-imperial cooperation that had their highest institutional expression with the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara.⁴⁷ The main colonial powers strove to find means of exchanging and producing information, sharing and transferring knowledge, and training and mobilizing technicians and experts in various areas, in both the metropolises and colonial worlds. They organized numerous “conversations,” meetings, and conferences for this purpose. They did so bilaterally and multilaterally, at an international and regional level, always striving to establish a developmental alternative to the nascent programs of the UN and its specialized agencies. One of the main results of CCTA cooperation in educational matters was the systematic and, in a way, successful blockade of UNESCO’s attempts to enter sub-Saharan African space, or to establish any form of effective collaboration with the CCTA in the field of education. UNESCO never held the conference planned for 1958 on free and compulsory education and postponed the course on technical and vocational education which had been recommended at the 9th General Conference (New Delhi, 1956). This was also scheduled for 1958, not only due to the postponement

⁴⁶The impact of these processes in the elaboration of educational policies in colonial contexts is yet to be properly studied. Nevertheless, among other aspects, the dynamics of knowledge production on those issues and of self-scrutiny of existing policies were certainly relevant.

⁴⁷For a study that explores the connection between imperial projects and education in Africa, from a comparative point of view, see Peter Kallaway and Rebecca Swartz (eds.), *Empire and Education in Africa* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016). See also Joyce Goodman, Gary McCulloch, and William Richardson (eds.), “Empires at Home and Empires Overseas: Postcolonial and Transnational Perspectives on Social Change in the History of Education,” *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 6 (2010): 695–706; Barnita Bagchi, Eckhardt Fuchs, and Kate Rousmaniere (eds.), *Connecting Histories of Education* (New York/London: Berghahn Books, 2014).

of the conference on the same theme in the Arab countries, but also because of the CCTA conference in Luanda.⁴⁸

In May 1961, UNESCO organized the Addis Ababa Conference of African States on the development of education, making a definitive mark in the area of education in Africa, at a time when the map of the continent was undergoing reformulation with the process of decolonization and reordering of the CCTA.⁴⁹ CCTA member governments exposed and discussed their differences, seeking an understanding around colonial policies. The case of education in colonial contexts is an excellent example of these dynamics, the effects of which are largely still to be determined. This work addresses the attempts to establish and intensify efforts toward cooperation in education, from the end of the Second World War to the late 1950s and at the same time signals the key moments of these efforts—from the bilateral meetings of 1945 to the remarkable Inter-African Conference on Education of 1957—and the crucial topics and problems that characterized them. It shows how and why the CCTA was a fundamental piece in the historical evolution of educational dynamics and policies in the colonial context.

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⁴⁸ CCTA/CSA Circular 327, 9.10.1957, in AHD-MNE—2P/A62/M157.

⁴⁹ See United Nations, *Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa: Addis Ababa, 15–25 May 1961: Final Report* (Paris: UNESCO, 1961).

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