

## 1. Why a 'History in Questions'?

At first sight, European colonialism is definitively a thing of the past: in 2023, globally, only a handful of small 'overseas territories' were still controlled (or rather administrated?) by a European country. The vast colonial empires collapsed quite rapidly between 1945 and 1975. Yet the shock wave of colonialism is still tangible. It not only left indelible marks on the former colonies, but also continues to haunt the minds of the former colonizers. In Europe nowadays, many people hold an extremely negative view of colonial rule. Critics primarily focus on the many crimes of the white oppressor throughout the world. Other voices protest against this 'public atonement'. They believe Western self-criticism is wrong and even dangerous. In their view, it discards colonialism's 'positive aspects' and could ultimately even lead to the self-destruction of 'Western civilization'. Moreover, a small, but all the more vocal white supremacist movement goes as far as to proclaim that the 'white race' is 'destined' to rule the world. The colonial past therefore continues to be an ideological issue, and is (once again) about to become a political one. The debate rages in many European countries, and Belgium is no exception. This book, with all due humility, tries to shed light on this issue by bringing to the fore some insights from academic studies into Belgian colonial history.

### **Motivation: The Continuing Debate about the Belgian Colonial Past**

During the Second World War, Belgium sought to enhance its image vis-à-vis the other Allied powers. For this reason, the country emphasized the alleged enormous 'benefactions' it implemented in the Congo, which it represented as a true 'model colony':

50 years ago, the population of the Congo was estimated at 30 million, since then the population has fallen to 10 million. Slavery, intestinal wars, and sleeping sickness had made terrible ravages among the native population before the Belgians were able to complete the organization of their colony. The mortality

rate had reached appalling proportions and one wonders what would have been the fate of the black races of Central Africa without the intervention of Europeans. The pacific conquest of the country by Belgium thus had this first and fortunate result in stopping a decay that was threatening to become permanent.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Belgian Government at the time, the 'black races' in the Congo thus owed their survival to the 'peaceful conquest' of their vast territory by the Belgians, whose humanitarian action allegedly had put an end to the dramatic population decline estimated here to be as much as twenty million people... Oddly enough, such figures are still being mentioned today, but from a radically different perspective:

King Leopold II, a genocidal murdering savage beast, colonized Congo/Zaire [and] slaughtered 15 million Africans. [...] The genocidal events which took place under King Leopold II reign [*sic*] is [*sic*] considered one of the most heinous acts of murderous savagery known to man. The barbaric slaughter and mutilation of the innocent people of the Congo, was so [*sic*] to strip the country of its natural resources in order to build up Belgium.<sup>2</sup>

This quotation obviously does not come from academic sources, but that is hardly relevant here. The blog referred to above expresses a widespread opinion that can be found in countless books, newspaper articles and films. Leopold II's rule in the Congo is depicted as one of the biggest crimes in history. We only need to think of the shock caused by *King Leopold's Ghost*,<sup>3</sup> written by Adam Hochschild at the end of the twentieth century, to which we will return later. This American author estimates Leopold II's rule to be responsible for some ten million casualties. These two diametrically opposed interpretations – the Congo as a model colony or as killing fields – lead to two conclusions.

Firstly, these two contrasting images of the Congo go back a long way. The apologetic text we quoted first was written at the beginning of the 1940s, but follows an extensive tradition of propaganda stretching back to the end of the nineteenth century when Leopold personally set up press campaigns to defend 'his' colony against the criticism it had to endure. On the flip side, the cry of indignation we just cited in fact perpetuates a long tradition of accusations against Leopoldian rule. The earliest examples date from the period immediately following the creation of the Congo Free State in 1885. This 'image war' is therefore as old as the colonization of Central Africa itself.

Secondly, right from the outset, the clash of these two viewpoints has also occurred far beyond the Belgian borders. The first text was published in New York by the Belgian Government's propaganda bureau; the second is from African American circles. Indeed, the fiercest criticism of the crimes perpetrated in the Congo has largely emanated from the Anglosphere, especially the United States. The polemic surrounding Belgium's colonial past is therefore not merely a Belgian or Congolese-Belgian concern. Few aspects of Belgian national history enjoy such global 'fame'...

Over the years, completely contradictory, but seldom verified statements about the colonization of this huge African country have been uttered in different countries. A 'verification process' is therefore essential. This book attempts to chart, as accurately as possible, the actions and experiences of both those who colonized and those who were colonized. In addition to having academic significance, this objective also has a social and political dimension: as we have just seen, the debate about the colonial past reaches far beyond the narrow circle of specialists.

Colonial propaganda of the time still reverberates in many people's minds. This is largely due to the influence of school textbooks, the content of which continues to make itself felt decades on; comics (e.g. *Tintin in the Congo* – renamed *Tintin in Africa* – is still being read); feature films that present a stereotypical image of Africa; the former 'Congo Museum' in Tervuren, in particular before the recent renovation (but according to some, afterwards as well); and so on. The positive image of colonization is still thriving in an (ageing) section of the population: octogenarians who witnessed the last years of the Belgian Congo in situ. Many sincerely believe that they brought progress to the heart of Africa – and some of them did indeed play a role that could be considered 'humanitarian'. They react with great indignation when their actions are equated with Leopold II's malpractices, which are sometimes labelled 'genocide'. To this day, these former colonials, as well as their relatives, friends and sympathizers, are still producing and disseminating publications and opinion pieces that accentuate the 'positive aspects' of Belgian colonization and minimize (or gloss over) the 'negative' ones.<sup>4</sup> Persons who have never been to the Congo, but who are loyal to the dynasty and the country, share the same opinion.

Alongside these traditional pro-colonial networks, an entirely different movement has recently emerged. In August 2018, at the Pukkelpop music festival near Hasselt, a group of young people sang *Handjes kappen, de Congo is van ons* ('Chop their hands off, the Congo is ours').<sup>5</sup> Was it just a stupid joke uttered by tipsy festival goers? This seems unlikely. Somewhat later, a group of Flemish

right-wing students asserted that ‘the Congo was better off as a colony’ and lamented that ‘the white man is always being blamed.’<sup>6</sup> Memes with the same message circulate online, albeit less subtly articulated. These recent developments are only the tip of the iceberg, because they express a wider societal evolution: the return of the far right, accompanied, as ever, by violence and abhorrent racism. Beyond organized extreme-right movements, we also witness the rise of ‘identitary’ sentiments and behaviors opposing the so-called ‘multi-culturalist’ environment. According to many observers, they stem from a loss of cultural reference points and the fear of being cast aside. In this new social context, the notion of ‘identity’ often acquires a ‘racial’ dimension, something which itself is partly rooted in colonial past.

A heterogeneous coalition of people and associations fiercely opposes the advocates of colonialism. They want to eradicate the many legacies of imperial rule once and for all. Their main targets are monuments and other testimonies of the colonial past in public space. They also long to ‘decolonize the mind’ and to eradicate old racist prejudices that often mould, albeit more or less unconsciously, the thoughts and actions of many of their fellow-citizens. The Congolese diaspora in Belgium and other countries, as is true with all expatriate African communities, inevitably questions the colonial past – a matter of primary concern for them. From this position, some members of this community have thrown themselves into decolonial activism with all their heart and soul. Their actions have political repercussions: the Belgian colonial past and its many legacies are discussed at several different levels of power, from local councils to the Federal Parliament and international organizations such as the United Nations. This aspect is discussed in more detail at the end of this book (see Chapter 28).

In short, sixty years after the collapse of the European overseas empires, colonialism is still a subject of debate in Belgium and elsewhere. But this debate is seldom conducted with in-depth knowledge. Decades of propaganda and counterpropaganda have generated plenty of poor, incomplete or non-informed opinions. So, let us return to the facts, as evidenced by recent scholarly research.

### **Objective and Method: Communicating the Insights of Academic Research**

The colonial past has long been neglected by Belgian historians. Between the 1960s and the early 1990s, few of them had abandoned the apologetic approach. Two figures, however, were outliers. First

and foremost, Jean Stengers from the Free University of Brussels (ULB), who patiently analyzed Leopold II's intricate colonial policy, chiefly from a political and diplomatic viewpoint.<sup>7</sup> Jean-Luc Vellut, from the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL), then broadened the analysis. Having taught at the incipient Congolese universities for many years before returning to Belgium in 1976, he investigated nearly every aspect of colonial history, and still does so. He focuses on life in the Congo itself, while Stengers was mainly interested in the Belgian dimension. Vellut, in other words, is the true trailblazer of modern colonial historiography in Belgium.<sup>8</sup> This field of expertise was pretty much absent from university curriculums, leaving secondary school teachers insufficiently prepared to teach this specific subject. In other countries, especially the United States and the United Kingdom, the history of the colonial Congo generated much more attention in academia. And last but not least, from the end of the 1970s, a first generation of Congolese historians published works of great value about the history of their country.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, long before the end of the twentieth century historiography had built up a broad basic knowledge about the colonial Congo which was eroding the prevailing cliché of colonization as a great 'civilizing' project. The harsh colonial reality, characterized by violence, exploitation and racism, was brought to light... in academic circles.

Paradoxically however, these insights reached the public via different channels. From 1985, this new vision on colonial reality was disseminated by people who were not professional historians. Three people played a prominent role: former diplomat Jules Marchal, who published his first books under the pseudonym A.M. Delathuy,<sup>10</sup> anthropologist Daniel Vangroenweghe, then a secondary school teacher,<sup>11</sup> and finally the author Adam Hochschild, whom we mentioned earlier. While carrying out research of his own, the latter largely drew on Marchal's and Vangroenweghe's works. Thanks to his literary talent, Hochschild succeeded in focusing international attention (once more) on the horrors of 'red rubber', i.e. the systemic exploitation of the Congolese people who, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, were forced to extract this valuable commodity from the wild rubber tree. In 1999, almost simultaneously with Hochschild's book, Belgian sociologist Ludo De Witte published a resounding work on the murder of the Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba in 1961, incriminating the Belgian Government.<sup>12</sup> Public attention was therefore primarily focused on two bloody episodes from Congolese history. Alas, what occurred in between both events largely remained shrouded in mist.

These books stirred up interest in the colonial past amongst a wide public. The old, pro-colonial certainties, in Belgium and abroad, were shattered. Yet the iconoclastic character of these publications also generated new polemics. The methodology of these titles was not always flawless – some blamed the authors, especially Marchal, for providing too little context or for being too anecdotal. Moreover, these works created new simplifications. Their readers were indignant about colonial crimes, and rightly so, but were often poorly informed. Every sense of nuance was lost; some even included Leopold II in the ‘club of mass murderers’, with Stalin and Hitler. The term ‘genocide’ has since commonly been used to label the massacres in the Leopoldian Congo. This polemic context revitalized the counter-offensive of those who defended the ‘Belgian colonial achievements.’ At the beginning of the twenty-first century, both camps were entrenched in irreconcilable positions.

Beyond this memorial debate, which has its own logic and legitimacy, historical research has its own role to play, not to provide definitive answers to all the hotly debated questions, but to debunk persistent myths and manifest mistakes.

Over the past twenty years, a new generation of historians has followed up the work of the trailblazers and made significant contributions to a fuller understanding of the Belgian Congolese colonial past. Their voices deserve to be heard as well; that is the purpose of this book. It has the – perhaps overconfident – ambition to be a link, or even a conveyer belt, between the world of academic research and the wider public seeking reliable information about the Belgian colonial past. The existence of such a public is proven by the enormous success of David Van Reybrouck’s *Congo. A History*, published almost fifteen years ago.<sup>13</sup> This work, with undeniable literary qualities, presents itself in essence as an essay melding the author’s personal findings during his travels in the Congo with a wider historical perspective that harks back to the works of numerous historians. Our book, however, has a different intention. It pays tribute to the principle ‘from producer to consumer, without intermediaries’: the concept of ‘short chain’, the forte of the new, sustainable economy, can also be applied to the world of academic research...

We therefore gathered a team of authors from a diversity of backgrounds: in addition to Belgian historians (both Flemish and Francophones, quite an exceptional feat!), this volume also features colleagues from the United States, Germany and of course the Congo itself. Most authors hail from the former colonizing country and the three members of the editorial committee are Belgian historians. This imbalance is also, to an extent, the product of history:

we would be poor historians if we did not acknowledge this fact of the situation. The former colonial relationships created dynamics in the field of expertise and knowledge production of which this book is also the fruit. Fortunately, history is not a contest in which the nationality of the researcher dictates to which camps he or she belongs. But while historical research is based on shared methods and techniques, it is also the result of a plurality of sensitivities and approaches. The texts presented in this book do not therefore dovetail with any particular 'camp', school or trend; the authors truly form a representative sampling of historical research into the colonial Congo. They obviously enjoyed complete scientific freedom, and this might explain any possible differences in interpretation the attentive reader will detect here and there. Indeed, historical research does not lead to immutable 'truths', contrary to what non-specialists usually assume. Researchers constantly weigh the clues at their disposal; they are in constant dialogue with their colleagues and always look at the past from different perspectives. Historiography is by nature a dynamic process.

We therefore invite the reader to enter the historian's 'workshop'. From a formal point of view, a handbook or chronological report seemed unappealing. Unravelling the fabric of the past means, first, laying bare the threads with which it has been woven. This then enables a reconstruction of the ways in which they are entwined. We therefore opted for a thematic approach: each chapter covers a specific topic, one of the many 'threads' in this historical fabric. The texts have deliberately been kept short – a challenge for the authors, forcing them to go right to the core of the matter. Each chapter contains cross-references to other parts of the book; this will allow the reader to connect the different topics.

Historical research basically means asking questions. Historians obviously cannot put the past 'on the rack' in order to get answers to their questions, as the inquisitors did, forcing their victims to make coerced false confessions. Anyone who silences or violates the available sources for ideological or political reasons in order to obtain a 'desirable' response is not engaged in historiography, but in propaganda. Researchers only manage to unmute their sources by unrelentingly interrogating the past. We therefore purposely asked the authors to begin their text with a few clearly formulated questions and to also formulate the title of each chapter as a question. This will hopefully help the general reader resolve his queries – even if historians' answers are often more complex than a simple yes or no.

Historical research is not only fostered by continuously asking questions; it is also based on the intensive and critical study of the

written, oral or visual testimonies that have been passed down to us. All the chapters in this book synthesize long and meticulous analyses of primary sources. The latter are not mentioned in detail to avoid making this already voluminous book overly lengthy. However, we do list the relevant publications in the bibliography at the end of each chapter. These works, in turn, refer to the primary sources. The footnotes, kept to a minimum, only mention the origin of quotes and quantitative data.

### **Content: Which Questions, and Which Answers?**

To fully grasp the Belgian colonial past, we must, first of all, get rid of the polemical fixation on the Congo Free State, and more specifically on the character and personal actions of Leopold II. Depicting the 'greedy and cruel king' as a devil does not advance any research... To avoid any misunderstanding: Leopold's rule is undoubtedly a key episode of Congolese history. We do not wish to minimize the importance of the massacres perpetrated during the 'red rubber' era; they are obviously not just a footnote in history. It is important however, to place these dramatic aspects into the wider context of the occupation, exploitation and transformation of the Congolese territory, first by representatives of the Congo Free State, then by the Belgian colonial authorities. The thematic breakdown of this book reflects this approach. Most chapters scrutinize the entire colonial era, from the beginning in 1885 up until the end in 1960. This enables the reader to perceive, at a single glance, the profound changes that took place during this period. The Congo of 1955 differed radically from that of, for instance, 1895. However, certain essential traits of the colonial system persisted during the entire seventy-five years of colonial rule.

A first persistent trait was violence. The 'peaceful conquest' mentioned at the beginning of this introduction existed only in the minds of the Belgian colonial propagandists, and of the people who internalized this false image. The armed subjugation of the indigenous population and the implementation of forced labor were long and bloody processes. Of course, this fundamental conclusion inevitably comes with all kinds of provisos. Africans also took part in the violent operations led by Europeans. The latter copied, at least partially and for some time, the violent methods prevailing in this far from peaceful region.<sup>14</sup> The violence of war and subjugation was gradually replaced by a system of 'law enforcement' and repression that was based on routine policing and was less explicitly brutal. But these considerations do not alter the central conclusion: the



colonization of the Congo was fundamentally based on violent conquest followed by one society's forced subjugation of another.

A second persistent trait was racism. In the Belgian Congo, people were treated differently depending on the color of their skin. Black people, who were considered inherently inferior to white people, were denied rights possessed by Belgian citizens. They not only underwent all manner of discrimination but were also treated in a way which would be considered inhuman in the 'motherland'. The Central African communities obviously had customs, traditions, cultures and knowledge which differed greatly from those of the conquerors. This enormous chasm 'legitimized' and reinforced the white feelings of superiority. A black person could thus be requisitioned for all kinds of tasks; he or she could be sent to a faraway region against his or her will; and as Lumumba remarked in his famous speech of 30 June 1960, black people were often beaten up and insulted and were always addressed to in the informal *tu* form by white people, while black people had to address their white counterparts with the deferential *vous*. It goes without saying that relations between white and black people could also be permeated with mutual respect, appreciation, solidarity, friendship and even love, but this does not alter the fact that the Belgian Congo, like every other colonial society, was structurally racist. At the time, racism and 'race' were obviously perceived differently than today, but the fact that this perception of the world and of mankind was globally considered 'normal', is of course revealing of the nature of the colonial system itself.

A third persistent trait was the crucial importance of economic factors. It would obviously be too simplistic to reduce colonialism to one single dimension. Political, diplomatic, religious and cultural interests all played a part in the making and functioning of the colonial system. But the insatiable hunger for profit – which was then coyly camouflaged by terms such as 'civilizing mission', 'progress' and 'development' – was most definitely a central aspect of the Belgian presence in Central Africa. Nevertheless, economic policy also went through fundamental changes over the years. The ultra-violent exploitation of the early years gradually made way for more controlled and complex activities. From the 1920s onwards, and especially after the Second World War, the race for profit required massive investments and huge infrastructure. To increase productivity, more care had to be devoted to 'human capital', i.e. the black worker.

A fourth persistent trait was the ambition to reshape the 'native' population and the colonized society. From the outset, the colonial project harbored transformative ambitions. The notion of progress, which had been anchored strongly in European society since the

end of the eighteenth century, discovered an enormous territory in the colonies for letting rip its 'pursuit of improvement'. This aspiration concerned both material and immaterial aspects of society. The goal was not only to 'improve' people's living conditions, but also the way they acted and thought, through evangelization, education, teaching new languages, creating new identities, etc. And yet these ambitious projects were not bereft of ambiguity. How could anyone reconcile violence and discrimination with the pursuit of human improvement? Could the extreme racist vision, which regarded non-white people as a subspecies of humanity, be reconciled with the wish to 'elevate' black (or yellow, or brown) fellow human beings to the 'level of their white counterparts'? Did the colonizer always undertake his campaigns to promote progress and civilization without thinking of his own profit? And finally: where was the boundary between pretext and genuine conviction?

These four elements do not constitute a complete list of constants in the colonial system. Yet they do give us a better insight into the themes this book covers. These themes are grouped into four major parts. The first one investigates some important stages in Belgian Congolese history. We will start by examining the essential characteristics of the period in which the colony was set up, in the form of the Congo Free State. This is followed by the period of the two world wars, and finally decolonization and its effects. The second part focuses on social and economic aspects. The implementation of colonial capitalism and the ensuing large-scale infrastructures generated sweeping demographic and social changes, especially in living and working conditions. The third part deals with the governance of colonial society. We will not focus on mere institutional aspects – the political and administrative apparatus of the colony has already been chronicled extensively in other works – but on the relationship between white and black. We will reflect on policies related to gender, race, ethnicity and language, as well as on forms of repression and resistance. In the fourth part of the book, we will explore the so-called 'civilizing mission'. This term encompasses a series of cultural and social activities introduced by the Belgians in the Congo: religious missions, health care, education, scientific research and the conservation of 'indigenous art' and 'wild' nature. Did all those 'accomplishments', spearheads of colonial propaganda, also have a dark side?

The book concludes with a photographic essay and with two chapters mirroring each other and discussing the views of the colonial past of, respectively, the Belgians and the Congolese. These considerations somehow bridge historical research and current discussions about the Belgian Congo. Does this book contain the

final words concerning our topic? Of course not: many legitimate questions about the shared Belgian and Congolese past still await answers. But our goal will have been achieved when our clarifications, in turn, trigger new interrogations.

We would like to thank all our authors, especially for the trouble they have taken to be succinct and for the timely delivery of their work. We are also especially grateful to Harold Polis, who took the initiative for the original Dutch edition of this book. It owes much to his criticism and active support; his suggestions during editorial meetings were invaluable.

## Notes

- 1 *Belgian Congo at War*, Belgian Information Center, New York, s.a., p. 20 (this book was published during the Second World War).
- 2 [https://www.bichee.com/cgi-sys/suspendedpage.cgi?link1=read-blog&id=170\\_weneed-dark-skin-superheroes-for-black-women.html](https://www.bichee.com/cgi-sys/suspendedpage.cgi?link1=read-blog&id=170_weneed-dark-skin-superheroes-for-black-women.html) (consulted on 4 October 2023).
- 3 Hochschild, Adam, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1998.
- 4 Some examples: UROME/KBUOL, *La colonisation belge. Une grande aventure*, Éditions Gérard Blanchart, s.l., 2004; de Maere d'Aertrycke, André, e.a., *Le Congo au temps des Belges. L'histoire manipulée. Les controverses réfutées 1885-1960*, Masoin, Brussels, 2011; De Weerd, Guido, *L'État indépendant du Congo. À la recherche de la vérité historique*, Éditions Dynamédia, Brussels, 2015; André-Bernard Ergo's books published by L'Harmattan, etc.
- 5 <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2018/08/20/unia-krijgt-melding-over-racistisch-gezang-op-pukkelpop/> (consulted on 5 November 2019).
- 6 This refers to a letter to the editor which appeared in *Veto*, KU Leuven's student newspaper, signed by Maxim Goris, the chair of the right-wing Catholic and pro-Flemish student society KVHV: <http://www.veto.be/artikel/kvhv-voorzitter-congo-was-beter-af-als-kolonie> (consulted on 25 December 2019). See also: [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20180826\\_03684074](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20180826_03684074) (consulted on 5 November 2019). The person in question is also a member of the extreme right-wing youth association *Schild en Vrienden* ('Shield and Friends'), which not only cultivates a fundamental racism, but is also preparing for the armed struggle 'to defend the white race'...
- 7 Stengers, Jean, *Congo. Mythes et réalités. 100 ans d'histoire*, Éditions Duculot, Paris-Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989 (a collection of some of his most important articles; second edition: Racine, Brussels, 2005). The complete list of his publications about colonial history can be found in Duvosquel,

Jean-Marie, et al., eds., *Belgique/Europe/Afrique. Deux siècles d'histoire contemporaine. Méthode et réflexions. Recueil d'articles de Jean Stengers*, Le Livre Timperman, Brussels, 2005, p. 33 and 38-42.

- 8 A volume with some of his most important publications has recently appeared: Vellut, Jean-Luc, *Congo. Ambitions et désenchantements 1880-1960*, Karthala, Paris, 2017 (including a complete bibliography of his works, p. 495-503; second edition in 2021, with index).
- 9 An overview of these historical works can be found in Vanthemsche, Guy, 'The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo', in Lévai, Csaba, ed., *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press, Pisa, 2006, p. 89-119 (can be downloaded via <https://vub.academia.edu/GuyVanthemsche>).
- 10 Delathuy, A.M., *E.D. Morel tegen Leopold II en de Kongostaat*, Epo, Berchem, 1985. Following this work, the same author published a series of titles about other dramatic aspects of the colonial Congo's history. The books by Guy De Boeck were likewise extremely critical about the colonization. See for example De Boeck, Guy, *Les héritiers de Léopold II ou l'anticolonialisme impossible*, Dialogue des Peuples, s.l., 2008, 3 vol.
- 11 Vangroenweghe, Daniel, *Rood rubber. Leopold II en zijn Kongo*, Elsevier, Brussels, 1985. The publication by Daniel Vangroenweghe of the famous Casement Report about the horrors of the Leopoldian regime (see Chapter 2), took place in 1985, in the academic series led by Jean-Luc Vellut (who also wrote an elaborate introduction for it). This publication did not receive the public response it deserved (série *Enquêtes et documents d'histoire africaine*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1985, vol. 6). This shows that the academic world was well and truly aware of this tragedy.
- 12 De Witte, Ludo, *De moord op Lumumba*, Van Halewyck, Kessel-Lo, 1999.
- 13 Van Reybrouck, David, *Congo. Een geschiedenis*, De Bezige Bij, Amsterdam, 2010 (English translation: *Congo. The Epic History of a People*, Fourth Estate, London, 2014).
- 14 See Macola, Giacomo, *Una storia violenta. Potere e conflitti nel bacino del Congo (XVIII-XXI secolo)*, Viella, Roma, 2021.