

Wartime Schooling and Education Policy in the Second World War

Sarah Van Ruyskensvelde

Wartime Schooling and Education Policy in the Second World War

Catholic Education, Memory and the Government
in Occupied Belgium

palgrave
macmillan

Sarah Van Ruyskensvelde
University of Leuven
Kortrijk, Belgium

ISBN 978-1-137-52010-4 ISBN 978-1-137-52011-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-52011-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016942630

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Cover illustration: © Tim Gainey / Alamy Stock Photo

Cover design by Samantha Johnson

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book began as a doctoral dissertation, and it would never have been completed or even published if it had not been for the guidance of my supervisors, university colleagues and friends. I owe all of them much gratitude for having contributed to the improvement and completion of this study.

First, I have to thank my supervisors, Prof. Dr. Marc Depaepe of the Catholic University of Leuven and Prof. Dr. Marnix Beyen of the University of Antwerp for their encouragement and advice. I have always admired Marnix's expertise in the political and cultural history of World War II and his analytical insight. His feedback and advice have guided me in the process of writing a scientific historical study. The same holds true for 'my other supervisor', Prof. Dr. Marc Depaepe. Marc's expertise in the history of education has stimulated me to leave the path of political-institutional history, and explore the history of school culture, a field of study that I was completely unfamiliar with. His knowledge and experience were often overwhelming, but he proved to be one of my greatest supporters for finishing this dissertation.

I am also fortunate to have met so many talented researchers at the universities of Leuven and Antwerp, and many of them I consider friends more than colleagues. I would like to thank Pieter V., Pieter F., Bart, Evelyne and the entire Education, Culture and Society Research group for their continuous support during the final stages of my research. Also the members of the Research Group Political History of the University of Antwerp have contributed a great deal to this study with their invitations for debate and discussion. The KULAK Campus in Kortrijk provided the

resources and time to rework and publish my doctoral dissertation. I am also thankful to all of my talented colleagues at KULAK for creating a stimulating discussion environment.

During my research, I have explored different methodological and thematic fields. Unavoidably, I got in touch with many research institutions and archives that have supported this study and kindly granted me access to their collections. I wish to thank the librarians and archivists of the Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society in Brussels, the Documentation and Research Centre for Religion, Culture and Society in Leuven, as well as the different archives of the dioceses and school archives for their kind assistance in the search for relevant source material. I am appreciative of all the former pupils of the Jesuit secondary schools in particular for welcoming me, not only in their homes, but also in their memories of wartime schooling. Special thanks go to the V.A. family in Lokeren for sharing their memories of their beloved brother, husband or father, Juliaan.

I am grateful to James Andrew of Palgrave Macmillan for taking interest in my project and for supporting me along the way. Parts of this dissertation were published in several academic journals. The discussion about the German culture policy in Chap. 3 was originally published as ‘Education in Turmoil. Developments in Belgian Catholic Education in the Face of National Socialism, 1940s’, *War and Society* 33 (2014), nr. 1: 26–42. The discussion about the negotiation strategy of the Church was originally published as ‘Naar een nieuwe ‘onderwijsvrede’. De onderhandelingen tussen kardinaal Van Roey en de Duitse bezetter over de toekomst van het vrij katholiek onderwijs in België, 1942–1943’, *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* XL (2010), nr. 3–4: 603–643. Parts of Chap. 4 were published as ‘Through a pupil’s eyes ... A ‘chalk face’ study on ideological conflict in a Flemish school during World War II’, *History of Education Review* 43 (2014), nr. 1: 62–77. Lastly, parts of Chap. 5 about pupils’ and teachers’ memories of the war were originally published as ‘Remembering wartime schooling ... Catholic education, teacher memory and World War II in Belgium’, *Paedagogica Historica* 49 (2012), nr. 1: 149–159. I am grateful to these publishers for taking interest in my research and for allowing me to use these materials for this publication.

In the process of writing my dissertation and publishing the book, it was great to have so many friends to talk to, and possibly even better to always have someone that listened to me. I would like to thank ‘Freetje’, Evelien, Kristof, Maarten and Elke, to only name a few, true friends who

never got tired of listening to stories about the war. My family—and my parents, grandparents, and parents-in-law in particular—have supported and encouraged me in this publication process. Lastly, my husband, Wouter; my son, Ward; and daughter, Noor, were my greatest encouragement. This book is dedicated to them.

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 1 | Introduction: A Political History of Belgian Education during the Second World War | 1 |
| 2 | Between Pacification and Conflict: The History of Belgian Education and the Challenge of National Socialism | 23 |
| 3 | Towards a <i>Gleichschaltung</i> of Belgian Education: The German Education Policy and the Contacts between the Military Administration and the Belgian Roman Catholic Church | 49 |
| 4 | War in the Classroom: The Development of Catholic School Culture during the Second World War in Belgium | 77 |
| 5 | A School Trip Down Memory Lane: Teacher and Pupil Memories of the Second World War in Belgium | 131 |
| 6 | Catholic Schools during the Second World War: Victims of German Indoctrination? | 165 |

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Selected Bibliography | 181 |
| Publications | 189 |
| Index | 201 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|--|
| AAM | Archive of the Archdiocese of Mechelen |
| ABSE | Archivum Provinciae Belgicae Septentrionalis |
| ADB | Archive of the Diocese of Bruges |
| ADG | Archive of the Diocese of Ghent |
| ADL | Archive of the Diocese of Liège |
| ADN | Archive of the Diocese of Namur |
| ADT | Archive of the Diocese of Tournai |
| AHS | Adolf Hitler Schools |
| AKVS | Algemeen Katholiek Vlaams Studentenverbond |
| AMSM | Archives of the Minor Seminar of Mechelen |
| AMSR | Archives of the Minor Seminar of Roeselare |
| ANF | Archive Nationale de France |
| APBM | Archivum Provinciae Belgicae Meridionalis |
| ARA | Algemeen Rijksarchief |
| AVNJ | Algemeen Vlaams Nationaal Jeugdverbond |
| BDM | Bund Deutscher Mädels |
| BK | Bundesarchiv Koblenz |
| CEGESOMA | Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society |
| CIBI | Centre d'instruction des brancardiers-infirmiers |
| CRAB | Centres de Recrutement de l'Armée Belge |
| CRKLO | Centrale Raad voor het Katholiek Lager Onderwijs |
| CRKO | Centrale Raad voor het Katholiek Onderwijs |
| DeVlag | Deutsch-Vlämische Arbeitsgemeinschaft |
| DOB | Dietse Opvoedkundige Beweging |
| DSK | Dietsche Studenten Keurfront |
| HJ | Hitler Jugend |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| KADOC | Documentation and Research Centre for Religion, Culture and Society |
| KAJ | Katholieke Arbeidersjeugd |
| KK | Kreiskommandantur |
| KLV | Kinderlandverschickung |
| KSA | Katholieke Studenten Actie |
| NLB | Nationalsozialistische Lehrerbund |
| NSDAP | Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei |
| NSJV | Nationaalsocialistische Jeugd Vlaanderen |
| NSV | Nationaalsocialistische Volkswohlfart |
| NSVAP | Nationaal Socialistische Vlaamse Arbeiderspartij |
| OHK | Oberkommando des Heeres |
| OK | Orstkommandantur |
| OFK | Oberfeldkommantatur |
| SA | Sturmabteilung |
| Sipo-SD | Sicherheitspolizei – Sicherheitsdienst |
| SS | Schutzstaffel |
| UGHA/UTMI | Unie van Handen – en Geestesarbeiders/Union des Travailleurs Manuels et Intellectuels |
| Verdinaso | Verbond van Dietsche Nationaal Solidaristen |
| VOT | Vlaams Opvoedkundig Tijdschrift |
| VNV | Vlaams Nationaal Verbond |
| VVKS | Vlaams Verbond der Katholieke Scouts |