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determined not to do, namely to inject technicians and capital in large quantities, in order to develop the country in real terms without making a sparse and over-exploited population bear the burden of an archaic system of pillage. The French government recoiled from the gravity of the diagnosis. In the national interest, the ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to publish the final report, ‘Conceived in a spirit of absolute sincerity, but also of implacable severity’. The document was never published. The result was limited to a few administrative reforms, but the Congolese crisis was not resolved. For this to happen, the monopoly of the concessions had to end: most of the companies disappeared during the 1914–18 war, but some of them survived until 1935.50

In 1905, in this poor country, the development of which would have required enormous prior investment (plantations, forestry enterprises and mineral prospection), the twin obstacles of lack of capital and under-population had not been overcome. Not only the adversaries of the concessionary régime, but also many of those working in the Congo, knew that this was so. Their reports tirelessly denounced this failure. If they were not granted credits, or equipment, or personnel, they would be obliged either to resign or to impose themselves by force. The government also was aware of the facts. However, it persisted in its course to the absolute limit, for reasons such as the conquest of Chad and parliament’s refusal of credits, which went far beyond the Congolese problem, since they were matters of general French policy.

B. King Leopold’s Congo, 1886–1908

in Europe

The fact that the title of this chapter bears the name of a European monarch is fully significant. The Congo was a political entity brought into being on African soil completely by the will of one man, and that man – who never visited his dominion – governed it from his residence in Europe in a completely autocratic way.

The Congo Independent State (Etat indépendant du Congo), under the personal government of King Leopold, lasted from

50 The Compagnie Forestière Sangha-Oubangui kept the monopoly of rubber until that date.
1885 to 1908. In 1908, it was annexed by Belgium and became a Belgian colony, the ‘Belgian Congo’. Well before 1908, however, the term ‘Belgian Congo’ was very often used by foreign writers. This can readily be understood when one considers the way in which the Independent State appeared to them. The sovereign of the state, they thought, was the King of the Belgians, who was, as everyone knew, ardently devoted to Belgian interests. The central services of the state were located in Brussels, and all its officials were Belgian. As for the Congo itself – in the administration, in the army, and in the courts – the essential role was played by Belgians, particularly by officers of the Belgian army assigned to African service. Even the religious missions – at any rate those of the Catholics, which were most favoured by the state – almost all had a markedly Belgian character. How, in such circumstances, could contemporaries have failed to come to speak naturally of a ‘Belgian Congo’? Nevertheless, the usage was quite improper. It was contrary both to the situation in law and – what is much more important – to the situation in fact. In law, before 1908, Belgium and the Congo were two absolutely distinct states without any common organ; their sole link rested on the fact that they had the same sovereign. But Leopold II distinguished very clearly between his role as sovereign of the Congo and that as king of the Belgians. In Belgium he was a constitutional monarch and played with perfectly good grace the game of constitutional monarchy in the English fashion. He submitted the texts of his speeches to his ministers beforehand, in accordance with the rules. But the same ministers could only learn by reading the newspapers that the Congo had leased the Upper Nile or concluded a treaty with Portugal: the government of the Congo was something in which they had no say. Belgium had no part in it.

The Congo Independent State was not merely an absolute monarchy in which the sovereign held all powers; it was a state that was in a way fused with its sovereign. Sovereignty was invested in the person of the king, who considered the state his private property. Leopold II called himself the ‘proprietor’ of the Congo. In his will, which was made public in 1890, he bequeathed to Belgium his ‘sovereign rights’ over the Congo, just as if he were bequeathing a house or a piece of real property. A jurist

51 Leopold’s will, it should be noted, never came into effect, because the Congo was annexed by Belgium while the king was still alive. He died in 1909, a year after the annexation.
said at the time – and the remark was made in all seriousness – that to find a precedent for such a situation one had to go back in Europe to the time of the Merovingian kings. This does not mean that Leopold was a relic of the past. He was on the contrary quite modern. His spirit was that of a great captain of business. At the price of incessant labour, and at his own expense, he had built up his enterprise; what else could he be than the master of the enterprise? The master he was, not only theoretically, but also in practice. He never delegated power, he exercised it personally. All the great decisions were his. When his advisers did not agree with him, they had to quit. In the daily work, in his office in Brussels, he concerned himself even with details. As a capitalist and as a manager his main concerns were to make his enterprise profitable, and to expand.

Curiously enough, Leopold tried to expand even before the enterprise became self-supporting. In the first years of existence of the Congo State, when only a tiny part of the territory of the state was occupied, Leopold tried to extend his frontiers in all directions. In 1888–9, the points he sought to attain were the upper Zambezi, Lake Nyasa (Malawi), Lake Victoria and the upper Nile. Time was pressing, he explained to his most intimate collaborator, for ‘after next year there will be nothing more to acquire in Africa’. An elaborate policy was devised with these expansionist ends in view. The push toward the east, for instance, would depend on the alliance with the ‘Arabs’; it was hoped to obtain their support in order to extend the influence of the state to Lake Victoria. This vast scheme soon encountered obstacles from almost every direction. The expeditions projected towards the upper Zambezi came to nothing. No agreement was reached with the Arabs; on the contrary, it became necessary to engage in war with them. In the direction of the upper Nile, however, the push persisted until the very end of the Congo Independent State; it was a great chapter in the history of Leopold’s imperialism in Africa. This ‘enormous voracity’, as Stanley had described it, can be best explained by the driving impulse which was also at the root of the creation of the Congo; Leopold was a firm, and one might almost say a religious, believer in the economic profits of colonial exploitation. Hence the simple idea: the more the better. Unlike most other imperialists – with the exception of Cecil Rhodes, who resembled him – Leopold was never guided
either in Africa or anywhere else in the world (for his imperialistic efforts literally spanned the globe) by former entanglements which became enticements to act. He acted from scratch, with only an idea to guide him.

In the Congo, however, profit seemed at first very elusive. During the first ten years of its existence, the young state needed help for its very survival. From 1885 to 1895 its normal revenue remained extremely limited; it could cover only a small part of its expenditure. In 1887–8, receipts still represented only a tenth of the expenses. The king had to cover the deficit from his privy purse. But, although he had a huge fortune, he could not bear the burden. In 1888 he was helped by the yield of a lottery loan, issued in Belgium for the benefit of the Congo, which brought in several millions. This proved still insufficient; in 1890 he had to turn to Belgium itself. When the Belgian parliament had given him the authorisation, which was required by the constitution, to become the sovereign of the Congo State, Leopold had privately promised never to ask for any financial help from Belgium. The Congo, he announced, would be self-supporting. This was certainly a sincere promise. It shows how deliberately and even absurdly sanguine Leopold was about the economic prospects of his colony. Five years later, Belgium had to save him from bankruptcy. The Belgian government agreed to grant the Congo a loan of 25 million francs, spread out over ten years. But given the expansion of the Congo State’s expenditure, this gave the king only a temporary respite. In 1895, to avoid a total collapse, a supplementary Belgian loan of nearly 7 million francs was added. The year 1895 marked the turn of the tide. Leopold was saved by a combination of his own deliberate policy, the régime domanial, which he had introduced a few years earlier, and a kind of miracle — the miracle of wild rubber.

The régime domanial dated from 1891–2. It bore the personal stamp of the king. The logic of the system was implacable. The state had been declared proprietor of all vacant land, which would henceforth constitute its domain. Vacant land, it was decreed, consisted of all the land which was neither occupied nor being exploited by the natives. It happened that almost everywhere in the country the two most remunerative wild products, ivory and wild rubber, came from lands decreed vacant and so might be regarded as products of the state’s domain, to be collected by the
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state alone. As a consequence of this system, a trader might not buy ivory or wild rubber from the Africans without becoming a receiver of stolen goods — stolen, in effect, from the state. Private commerce was stopped in that way by what amounted to a state monopoly. The state authorities protested that there was no monopoly at all. Everywhere, they said, exchange remained entirely unimpeded. But as the state had laid hands on virtually the only marketable products, a contemporary critic was right when he humorously observed that it had in effect made a law with two articles: ‘Article 1, Trade is entirely free; Article 2, There is nothing to buy or to sell.’ Leopold imposed this policy against the advice of his best and most faithful collaborators, who were horrified by this violation of the most solemn engagements of a state which was born under the aegis of free trade. The king swept away all objections. He was preoccupied only with financial results.

When Leopold established his régime, his hopes rested mainly on ivory. The wealth of the country in rubber was not yet suspected. But the harvests of rubber increased within a very short period. In 1890 the Congo exported only 100 metric tons of rubber; in 1896, exports reached 1,300 metric tons: in 1898, 2,000 metric tons; and in 1901, 6,000 metric tons. This last figure corresponded approximately to a tenth of the world production of rubber.

The state itself, because of the domanial régime, was the principal beneficiary of this manna from heaven (not the only one, for it had been compelled to make a compromise with some trading companies and to abandon to them the exploitation of the domanial products in some parts of the Congo). Financially speaking, the change was a momentous one. In 1890 the state took from its domain around 150,000 francs; in 1901 the domanial products — with rubber rating first — brought it more than 18 million francs. From that time on, the financial difficulties of the Congo were ended. Indeed, thanks to the domanial resources, and thanks also to the proceeds of loans — for now that its credit was solid, it could raise loans without difficulty — the Congo soon began to have budgetary surpluses. In a developing country, these were badly needed for public investments. Instead the king used the greater part for the advantage of Belgium. Again, this was the result of a personal creed: Leopold saw the direct enrichment of
the metropolitan country as the cardinal advantage to be gained from the well-planned exploitation of an overseas possession. As he had the soul of a builder-king, it was to a policy of public works, urban improvement and grand monumental constructions that the Congo funds were systematically applied. The sovereign of the Congo paid for the construction of the Arcade du Cinquantenaire in Brussels, for the building of the Tervuren Museum, for enlargements to the castle of Laeken, for public works at Ostend. After 1901 the transfer of funds from the Congo to Belgium even took on an institutional form, with the establishment of the Fondation de la Couronne (which was first called Domaine de la Couronne). Its mechanism was simple: the Foundation was granted domain lands of enormous extent — around 250,000 sq. m, or more than a tenth of the total area of the state. The products collected from these lands (mainly, of course, wild rubber) brought in a very high annual income. The king, moreover, gave the foundation part of the yield from the state loans. It was these substantial resources that the foundation applied to the programme assigned to it, which had as its almost exclusive object the carrying out of great public works in the metropolitan country. Urban developments were planned that would completely change the face of Brussels. In that way, the king said, the Congo would take its ‘just share in the embellishment of our country’. These words ‘just share’ show that Leopold was profoundly convinced of the rightness of his policy. In his eyes, a nation that endowed a new country with its civilisation, its labour, its capital, had the right to ‘legitimate compensation’. This is what Belgium had done for the Congo; it was only fair that the Congo, in compensation, should participate in the ‘embellishment’ of Belgium.

All the principles of the Congo policy were decided by the king. But in the implementation of these policies, the administration of the state often played its own game. This was particularly true of the domanial régime. Leopold’s will was that the state should extract the maximum profit from its domain. But he was not very much concerned with the way this aim was reached. The system of outright exploitation of the native population which gave, as the figures of production show, such extraordinary results, was mainly devised by the administration, both in Brussels and in Africa. Leopold limited himself to noting that the yield was
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satisfactory. However when the first accusers rose up to denounce abuses in the treatment of the Africans, the king was deeply moved. From 1896 to 1900, as his private letters reveal, he passed through several periods of agony. ‘We are condemned by civilized opinion’, he wrote in September 1896. ‘If there are abuses in the Congo, we must make them stop.’ ‘It is necessary to put down the horrible abuses,’ he repeated in January 1899. ‘These horrors must end or I will retire from the Congo. I will not allow myself to be spattered with blood and mud.’

On the occasion of each of these crises of anger and disgust, the king reiterated strict orders: cruelty to the natives should be severely punished. The Congo administration just waited for the storm to pass. It had elaborated a system and stuck to it. Altering the system might weaken it. The lessening of pressure on the Africans would naturally bring about a reduction of revenue; and the administration was well aware that, if this occurred, it would have more than royal anger to face. In other words, the administration distinguished between the king’s permanent and fundamental desire – to increase the output of the domain – and his occasional crises of conscience. It modelled its action on what was permanent and fundamental. All those linked with the régime, therefore, and desirous of exculpating themselves, tried to convince Leopold II that the accusations against the Congo were unjust or exaggerated and were made in great measure out of ill will. The attitude of Leopold, who, unconsciously no doubt, was ready to be convinced, thus came to undergo profound modification; instead of being affected by the attacks, he began soon to react more and more violently against them. Whereas the king almost always dominated his entourage, it may be said that in this case he allowed himself to be dominated by it.

Negotiations with the private sector always remained in the hands of the king personally. He was interested by business as much as by government. These negotiations took three main forms. First, the king had to attract Belgian and foreign capitalists to the Congo for enterprises which called for heavy capital investment. His task in that respect, especially in the beginning, was extremely difficult. It would have been made much easier if the main Belgian financial company, the Société Générale, had been willing to invest. But the Société Générale kept aloof; it had no confidence in the Congo. Only in 1906, with the foundation
of the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga, did it enter the field. From then on, it would lose no time in coming to the top. Finding capital for the Congo Railway Company, which was constituted in 1889 to build the line from Matadi to Leopoldville (Kinshasa), was in some ways as much of an epic as the building of the line itself. The key to the success was that the Belgian state accepted to invest in the company for a large part of the capital. Secondly, the king had to meet the opposition of the trading companies, which protested against the establishment of the domanial régime. The conflict ended in 1892 with a compromise: some parts of the Congo, and especially the Kasai, remained open to a real free trade, i.e. to the trade in the so-called ‘domanial products’. But by far the greater part of the country was closed under a state monopoly. The companies which were hurt by the domanial régime were practically all of them Belgian companies. In their conflict with the Congo State, they called for the support of the Belgian government. This was one of the cases which led to an exchange between two administrations both situated in Brussels – the Congo and the Belgian administrations. Thirdly, the king had to cope with the problem of Katanga. This was the only region of the Congo where foreign capitalists, with Robert Williams at their head, wanted on their own initiative to develop mining activities. Long and intricate negotiations finally led to a British–Belgian combination, the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga, with the Société Générale as the main Belgian participant.

The fate of the Congo was for long years in the hands of one man. But in spite of the fact that the Congo State was a totally independent state, that fate was actually also in many ways in the hands of Belgium. It was Belgium which helped the Congo State to come into being and to survive. It was Belgium which decided that its life had to end. Belgian help, without which Leopold could not have succeeded, involved the country’s name and reputation, its men and money. The first factor was the most subtle of all, but perhaps the most important. All the doors which opened for King Leopold in international circles opened because he was the sovereign of a small but respected country. Otherwise he would have been treated for what he was – an incredible gambler, launching into the most hazardous ventures. But being the king of the Belgians, and having the grand manners of a king, he was taken most seriously. Next, Belgians went to the Congo in all
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dings of capacities but many of them were actually lent to the Congo by Belgium. The Belgian government allowed officers to serve the Congo State while retaining their pay and rank in the Belgian army. Between 1879 and 1908, six hundred Belgian officers were recruited for the Force Publique and for the administration of the state. In 1894–5, one Belgian regiment had no fewer than twelve of its officers serving in the Congo. In 1901, the total number of Belgian officers in the Congo was ninety-five. Moreover there were 278 non-commissioned officers, who did not draw their pay in the Belgian army. Thirty per cent of the Belgian officers – 179 out of 600 – died either in Africa or on the boat bringing them back to Belgium.

Finally Belgian money was vital for the king. The authorisation to issue a lottery loan in 1888, the subscription of Belgium to the capital of the Congo Railway Company in 1889, the two loans of the Belgian state in 1890 and 1895, these were all shots of adrenalin which kept the Independent State alive. But after 1895, the financial help of Belgium would certainly not have continued: the Congo, if it had asked for more, would have been pronounced a desperate case. The miracle of wild rubber occurred just at the right time.

The end of the Congo State, i.e. the annexation of the Congo to Belgium, was the result of a decision, not of the king but of Belgium itself. The story of the annexation begins in 1890. The counterpart of the 1890 loan was that Belgium was given the right to annex the Congo, if it decided to do so, in 1901. At this date it would have a free choice. This prospect generally pleased the parliament and the country; no undertaking was entered into, but after a decade one would be able to judge whether the Congo was worth while or not. Public opinion would certainly have been less happy if it had known in what dire financial straits the Congo was. But one of the characteristics of a state where the sovereign was everything was that it did not bother to publish either budgets or accounts. A few years later, however, the naked truth appeared. At the beginning of 1895 the Belgian public learnt that the Congo was nearly bankrupt. The remedy which both the king and the Belgian government adopted was immediate annexation. A treaty of annexation was signed in February 1895. To come into effect it needed the approval of the Parliament. But that approval never came. A violent campaign was waged against the annexation by
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the Socialists, many Liberals and even some Catholics. The opponents had a wonderful case: 'We were promised that we would be free to choose in 1901,' they said, 'We are now asked to take an immediate decision and the only reason for that change is that the Congo State is doomed.' The government felt that they would never have a majority for the treaty. They resorted to another measure: a new loan to the Congo State. The abandonment of the annexation treaty was approved and even encouraged by the king, because the news of better and better rubber harvests, which came in precisely during that period, gave him confidence in the future.

That confidence, as we know, was fully justified. In 1901, when the 1890 convention could normally bear its effects, annexation was proposed only by a handful of members of parliament. That proposal was strongly opposed by the king. Now that the Congo had become profitable and its resources allowed him to realise his dreams, he was not ready to resign his absolute power. Belgian public opinion did not support a change in the Congo régime: the fact that the king no longer asked for Belgian help, the ordinary citizen thought, showed that he had finally succeeded; there was no reason to deprive the Congo of such a successful sovereign. The annexation proposal misfired.

The idea of annexation revived only five years later as a result of the campaign against the Congo abuses. Belgian public opinion at first had received the British denunciations of the abuses with great hostility. The main cause of that reaction was undoubtedly the recollection of the recent Boer war. On the South African question the Belgians had almost deliriously espoused the cause of the valiant little Boers. After their attack upon the Boers, to rob Belgium of its riches, the British were turning their attention to the Congo; was it not obvious that they were doing so in the same spirit of greed? 'The story of the Transvaal is beginning all over again. These are preparations and excuses for a new annexation,' claimed the press. The great liberal leader, Paul Janson, was expressing a widely held opinion when, in a speech to the Chamber in July 1903, he said: 'I cannot admit that the Congo State should be particularly suspect. Above all I cannot associate myself with a campaign whose last words seem to be "Ôte-toi de là que je m’y mette"' E. D. Morel, the head of the Congo Reform Association, was particularly maligned by the
Belgian press. He was described as the instrument of a gang of ‘Liverpool merchants’ with sinister aims. The Belgian public believed in the ‘Liverpool merchants’ with the same simple faith as the opponents of Dreyfus in France who believed they were fighting a ‘syndicate’. The counter-attack against the British accusations was led by the Congo State itself. Money flowed to many journalist and newspapers to encourage them in their denunciations of Morel. Plenty of articles on the themes of British greed and the ‘Liverpool merchants’ were furnished to the press by a specialised office of the Congo State in Brussels. The counter-attack extended to foreign countries. It signally failed in Britain, where only a handful of impoverished Irishmen could be bribed. But in America it met with remarkable success. America was important because Morel himself had established a branch of his association there, which received the help of some American missionary organisations. Leopold’s counter-attack, waged by a Congo lobby, did not disregard religious arguments; a Catholic country, the defenders of the king said, was being treacherously attacked by Protestants.

The counter-attack was especially needed after the publication in 1904 of the devastating report of the British consul, Roger Casement. Leopold then sent to the Congo a commission of enquiry of three members (a Belgian, a Swiss and an Italian) which, he thought, would refute Casement’s allegations. This tends to show that the king did not realise the actual situation. The publication of the commission’s report at the end of 1905 was a turning point. On the whole, the commissioners, whose moral stature could not be questioned, confirmed Casement’s findings. The report did not make a very big impression on the public because, contrary to Casement’s report, it was not a tale of horrors; the horrors were only described in general terms. But in Belgian governing circles, and among all those who could understand a report, the document led to a dramatic reversal of opinion; the Congo system of exploitation appeared as a fundamentally vicious one. One doubted whether the Congo State would be able to reform itself. Reform, it seemed, could come only from Belgium. This meant annexation.

The year 1906 was a year of verbal struggle between the growing number of those who opted for annexation, and Leopold, who resisted the idea. The king however suddenly capitulated in
December 1906. This was the direct result of a débâcle which had taken place in the United States. One of Leopold's paid agents had passed to the enemy for mercenary reasons and was beginning to publish his correspondence with the king, a most damaging series of documents indeed. This led to the collapse of the counter-attack in America and the victory of Morel's friends; it also seemed probable that the American government would support the British government in its efforts to initiate international measures, such as the convening of an international conference, to suppress the Congo abuses. The international status of the Congo State was therefore seriously in danger; the king resigned himself to the Belgian solution.

However, instead of the quick decisions that might have been expected, nearly two years were to pass before the annexation was effected. The main stumbling block proved to be the Fondation de la Couronne. The foundation was the dearest to his heart of all Leopold's creations. With the foundation, he was sure that his policy of embellishing his country with the resources of the Congo would continue even after the annexation. The programme of great public works which had been laid down for the directors of the foundation, who formed a quite independent body, was sufficiently important to last for decades. To this patriotic dream, Leopold stuck with the utmost tenacity. The foundation, however, met with strong opposition, not only from the Socialists and a great number of Liberals, but even from among the Catholic majority. The use of Congo resources in favour of Belgium was criticised. But the main objection, which made the foundation intolerable, was that it would function under Belgian rule as an independent institution owning a tenth of the territory of the future colony, as a 'state within the state'. Such a restriction upon the sovereignty of Belgium could not be admitted. Parliament, in that respect, was so adamant that, after long and strenuous efforts, the king had to give in; in March 1908, the Fondation de la Couronne was suppressed.

Leopold also had to give in as regards the future institutions of the colony. The law organising these institutions was discussed before the annexation, and the king tried to influence it in order to retain as much as possible of his personal power in the colony. But if a majority in parliament had decided to annex the Congo because the abuses of Leopold's régime could no longer be
tolerated, it was also determined not to let the king have any authority which could hamper the reforms. The final version of what was to be called the Chartes coloniales reduced the king to a role in the colony which was similar to his role in Belgium: that of a purely constitutional monarch. So the way was opened to annexation and reforms.

The annexation took place on 15 November 1908. In June 1913, the Congo Reform Association was dissolved; Belgian reforms, abolishing the domanial régime and the exploitation of the Africans, had proved so effective that Morel, a severe judge, saw no reason for maintaining a special watch on the Congo.

**Occupation and Administration of the State**

When Stanley landed at Banana in 1879 most societies in the vast area of central Africa were no longer isolated one from the other. A network of long-distance trading routes stretched from coast to coast providing an overall spatial organisation for this part of the world, and European commodities were penetrating almost anywhere. One system linked the coast to Stanley (Malebo) Pool, another reached from there along the main river to the vicinity of Basoko and branched out along many affluents, while a third (the Luso-African sphere) tied Luanda and Benguela to points in the Kasai and Katanga (Shaba). From the Indian Ocean, Swahili speakers had reached as far as Katanga and the falls near Stanleyville (Kisangani) on the upper Congo. From the Nile came the jallâba, or Nubians, based on Khartoum, who raided as far south as the middle reaches of the Uele. And all these networks were expanding. Europeans had travelled along all of the major routes.

Stanley’s first task was to link the lower Congo to the Pool, by building a road to carry a steamer and to launch it on the upper river, and by establishing posts. The first was founded at Vivi before 1880, and the En Avant was launched on the Pool on 3 December 1881 in the roadstead of the nascent Leopoldville (Kinshasa) post. By April 1882 Stanley was able to enter the trading sphere of the upper Congo, and posts were founded as far as Nouvelle Anvers (Makanza) by November 1882, and then at the Stanley Falls near the headquarters of Indian Ocean traders.
‘The map which appears here in the printed edition has been removed for ease of use and now appears as an additional resource on the chapter overview page’.
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by the end of 1883. Three years later these traders forced the state to abandon this outpost.

Meanwhile, expeditions of King Leopold’s front organisation, the African International Association, left the Zanzibar coast and settled at Karema (1879) on the eastern side, and then at Mpala (1883) on the western side of Lake Tanganyika. This first round of expansion was completed when Hermann von Wissmann, who had founded the association’s station at Luluabourg (Kananga) in 1884, arriving there from Luanda and helped by Luso-Africans, linked the area to the Pool by paddling down the Kasai. The same year Luebo was established on the Lulua and the Luso-African sphere was linked to that of the main river.

This early expansion did not cause major fighting, because the Africans believed the Europeans to be traders. The new posts were welcomed by the local populations as a means to bypass the traditional middlemen. And in the first years this proved to be correct, both along the main river — where the Congo State and France were vying one with the other for the allegiance of the people, so that prices were cheap for plentiful imported goods — and in Kasai, where the state was competing with the overland trade from Luanda. No prosperity came to the Lower Congo. Here it was only by dint of showing superior power that a connection could be made between Vivi, Manianga and the Pool. This had been done with very few soldiers, all recruited from other parts of Africa. The force was not sufficient to prevent the loss of the Falls on the upper Congo river to the East Coast traders, so that by 1887 Tippu Tip, the leading merchant in this sector, was created vali (governor) and a resident could return to the Stanley Falls, though on sufferance.

The army, the force publique, was organised from 1886 to 1888, when a decree established its basic organisation. It still numbered less than 2,000 men, of whom 875 were concentrated at Boma, the new capital, and only 111 Congolese had been recruited for it. This mercenary force was too expensive, and by 1891 forced recruitment by districts was begun, while in 1900 the term of service was raised from five to seven years. No formal provisions were ever laid down for the use of irregular levies, and yet the major military campaigns involved the presence of large numbers of such troops, especially among the Azande in Uele and the
'Batetela' between the Sankuru and the Lomami. The regular forces grew from 1,487 in 1889 to a peak of 19,028 in 1898, and had fallen to about 13,000 by 1908. One military camp was to be established in each district. More important were the base camps, the number of which varied at different times. The most important ones were at Eambi Luku near Boma, and Irebu and Lisala, both in Lingala-speaking territory. In time Lingala became the language of the army and thus acquired the growing influence it still enjoys in Zaire. During the whole period there was always a shortage of troops because, until at least 1906, so many were earmarked for the proposed occupation of the Nile regions. But the distinct features of the force publique were mostly acquired during the 'Arab campaign' led by Baron Dhanis.

The expansion of territory began again after 1889. Two fortified posts at Basoko and at Lusambo provided the bases, since the Emin Pasha relief expedition of 1887–9 had not created any new posts. In 1892 occurred the inevitable showdown with the Indian Ocean traders, and the war ended in January 1894, when they had been routed. The fighting had been massive, because both sides enlisted the aid of thousands of irregulars. An estimate of 70,000 dead on the Swahili-Arab side is probably exaggerated, while figures for Congo State losses are not available. At all events, tens of thousands died during this campaign. Meanwhile, progress in the north ran into repeated difficulties, so that state forces under Colonel L. N. Chaltin only reoccupied the Uele preparatory to a push to the Nile. This expedition began in 1897. Chaltin defeated the Mahdist forces and took the Lado enclave, while Dhanis, who was to have joined him, suffered utter defeat at the hands of his own troops.

After 1899 no similar major military operations took place. Expansion in the south from the Kasai began with a set of expeditions to Katanga, but for lack of personnel only a token force remained in Katanga to show the flag until renewed expansion could take place here in 1903. State forces penetrated into Kivu only from about 1900 onwards. Indeed, by 1908 resistance in Kivu had prevented the occupation of large stretches of the hinterland, while the Portuguese flag of the Luso-Africans was still fluttering between the Loange and the Kasai. A full history of the territorial expansion in terms of posts founded,
taxes in labour or produce levied, and populations subdued, has still to be written.

After 1885 the occupation met with resistance of different types, just as penetration was helped by the assistance of African allies. Primary resistance occurred especially in Uele, south Kivu, Kwango (Yaka), Kasai (Kaniok) and north Katanga (Kasongo Niembo) districts. In most of these areas pre-colonial states, such as the Zande chiefdoms, the Yaka kingdom or a portion of the Luba kingdom, were involved. In others, such as among the Mamvu, Lugbara or Lendu, chieftain societies resisted with great success. In 1908 some Zande chiefdoms, some Lendu, the Shi states and Kasongo Niembo were still holding out. A second form of resistance was put up by traders of the pre-existing networks. Thus the Luso-Africans did not accept the authority of the new Congo State, while the Chokwe in Kwango and Kasai found allies among the Kasai Luba (Lulua) of Kalamba after 1895, and in Katanga traders coalesced with forces of Kasongo Niembo and army mutineers. By 1908 the Katanga resistance was overcome, but the Chokwe still remained in the field.

Meanwhile other local powers collaborated with the Congo State, in whom they saw an ally. This happened first in Kasai with the Zappo Zap, and later with Lumpungu (Songye) and Ngongo Leteta (Tetela), who abandoned their Swahili-Arab allies in 1892. Even after Ngongo’s execution in 1893, other Tetela leaders still helped the penetration of the Congo State in the Upper Tshuapa. In Katanga the son of Msiri, king of the Yeke rallied to the state, even though his father had been killed by one of the expeditions of 1891. His subjects, the Sanga, had risen both against him and the state, and had been supported by the Luso-Africans. Similar patterns of alliances were common among the Zande and Mangbetu in the Uele district.

Yet another form of resistance became common after 1891. It was revolt against taxation, in labour or in commodities, imposed by the state or its concessionary companies. The rebellion of the porters in Manianga (1893), and those against labour requisition among the Ababua (1895, 1900–3, 1906), differed little from those of the Budja, who had resisted penetration in 1891, and then fought the rubber tax imposed by the Anversoise Company from 1898 to 1901, or those of various Mongo groups in the territories of the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company (ABIR) from 1893.
onwards, or against those of other groups further south, on the royal domain. By 1905 the Budja had submitted, but it was 1908 before the Mongo in the ABIR country surrendered, while — along the Lokenye especially — primary resistance, and then resistance to the collection of rubber, continued until well after 1908. Taxation also was the main cause for insurrection in parts of the Kasai, notably among the Kuba in 1904. And even where populations had been subdued, rubber collectors, agents or traders could occasionally still be murdered. The first case dates from Tshumbiri in 1889, and as late as 1907 there were still such incidents in the rubber collecting areas of Kasai.

The last form of outward resistance was by flight. Flight on a massive scale took place in the equatorial forest from about 1895 to 1905 and in all directions. People hid in the forest, moved on further when occupation forces came too near, and stopped only when hemmed in from all sides. Substantial numbers crossed the borders, especially to Angola and, before 1900, even to the French Congo. This form of resistance was barely subsiding by 1908.

The most spectacular upheavals came with the mutiny of portions of the force publique. A first mutiny at Luluabourg in 1895 was caused by ill treatment. At first the soldiers swept aside all opposition. Later, after some inconclusive fighting, and lacking any unified leadership, they drifted to Katanga, where they joined the Luso-Africans, until their surrender in 1908 after a prolonged campaign. The second mutiny broke out among the largest force the army had fielded: the Dhanis column which was marching towards the Nile. Hardship again was the main reason for the revolt at Dirfi in early 1897. This time the rebels defeated the loyalist forces and, their numbers swollen to about 3,000 men, turned southwards. One of their columns was defeated on the Lindi in 1898, but their fortunes revived. They occupied the key position of Kabambare only to be defeated on New Year’s Eve in 1898. Nevertheless, remnants of their forces held the field until part of them surrendered to the Germans at Usambura in 1900, a portion surrendered near the Luama in 1901 and some may have rejoined the Luluabourg mutineers in Katanga. A third, brief mutiny occurred at the fort of Boma in 1900 and did not lead to prolonged fighting. The conquest of the Congo had been anything but pacific in the end.

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Black and white held conflicting opinions about each other. To the whites, the Africans were lazy, cruel children. To the blacks of the Lower Congo and as far as the Kasai, the whites were persons returned from the dead, from the land across the water or under the sea, whence their wealth and power came. Everywhere European technical superiority and wealth was attributed to special, supernatural power; Europeans were sorcerers or magicians. Theirs was an ill-gotten knowledge and wealth. Their prestige was ambivalent. Even the ‘good’ white man derived his power from some unethical unknown. In practice the Congolese never accepted European superiority. After resistance was broken they still did not accept the new order. When, early in 1908, a river steamer, called the Ville de Bruges, overturned near Lisala, all the whites aboard save one were killed by the fishermen attracted to the plunder. At the subsequent trial, one of the latter was reported to have chosen between saving the whites and gaining ‘great wealth’ or killing them. He did the latter, because that was what he saw as his primary objective. The Mangbetu met the first state column with shouts: ‘Turks, Arabs, Whites, men of Semio (Zande), all liars, thieves and dogs!’ After years of colonial rule a headman in Mayombe, asked why his village now ‘fled the catechist’, replied that all whites were bad: they had brought sleeping sickness; they asked for the children to make them pray; and now there were only graves (1908/1909). Already in 1883 the traders on the river had asked: ‘Our customs may seem bad to you, but leave us alone. Stay in your country as we stay in ours,’ and, after the last revolt in 1908, the Budja queried: ‘The rubber is finished. You have no more to do here. Won’t you go away now?’ Belgium was taking over the Congo State in 1908, and at Boma whites were explaining that a general insurrection was unlikely, not because the Africans did not desire a rebellion, but because they were not unified enough to rebel. Even now the period of the Congo Independent State is remembered in the Equateur Province as ‘the wars’, and the whiteman as ‘the destroyer of the country’. The mass of the population finally submitted, but never forgot.

The implantation of government began with the erection of a district headquarters. Land was acquired, in the early years by negotiation, later often by occupation. Then labour had to be
found to build houses, warehouses and offices and to tend gardens or fields. In most posts the yield was not sufficient to feed the personnel of the post. After 1891 the necessary labour and food was by compulsory work in lieu of taxes. Before that date, services had to be paid for and obtained through the co-operation of neighbouring local chiefs. Income up to then consisted mostly of commercial profits or on occasion the spoils of war. Stanley soon found out that it was not sufficient to support an administrative post. The fortunes of such posts fluctuated according to the personality of the European in charge, and it was not until about 1886 that some stability developed in even the most important of them, as more personnel became available. In the early years the prosperity of the administration depended on the relations between the administrator and the local African authorities, including the balance of physical power. As more soldiers became available, and the law on taxation gave more latitude, force was more and more applied. Still, until the end of the period, newly founded posts simply could not withstand determined local hostility. Furthermore, the first year or two in the life of a post was often vital, since it set the pattern and the reputations by which the state officials and the local populations were to live for a long time.

The administrative structure of the Congo State took shape after its recognition in 1885. The capital was transferred to Boma, where the central administration resided. It consisted of the governor-general, who could legislate in urgent matters but almost always waited for orders from Brussels, and the directors of the four basic services as well as the commander of the force publique. The territory was divided into districts, numbering between twelve and fifteen at different times. Districts in turn were sub-divided into posts, of which there were 183 by 1900. The grass roots organisation was provided by the 1891 decree on chiefs. These were appointed by the administration as an area came under occupation. By 1906 they numbered 440, administering about one million people. Even at this date the bulk of the population was still not integrated into the system, and the number of chiefs remained manageable. Each district had its own budget. This gave it a fair degree of decentralisation, especially in the Upper Congo. The district commissioners also had a free hand to settle political affairs, found posts, subdue populations, appoint chiefs and use
the local military detachment for these ends. Their budgetary autonomy implied, though, that they should generate revenues. Before 1891 they traded; later they levied taxes in kind and by corvée.

Chiefs were auxiliary agents of the state. They did not need to have any traditional legitimacy, and many veterans from the army or from service in the administration were rewarded with such a post. In many instances, however, a legitimate chief was sought and recognised, if only because of the perceived ease of administration which resulted. Still, it was not until 1906 that legislation prescribed the nomination of persons with hereditary rights. This was still very vague and still allowed larger chiefdoms to be broken up into smaller chieftaincies, while traditional chiefs could still, as among the Pende, have straw men appointed, when they did not want to serve themselves. Any ambitious person still could make a claim, if he was as much as a clan head, and be given ‘the medal’. In effect, then, local rule in the district was and remained direct, with rare exceptions.

The Department of Justice, founded in 1886, provided for courts in the Lower Congo, a single court of appeal at Boma and a superior council or supreme court in Brussels. The latter elaborated the Codes of 1886, 1888 and 1895. Upstream of Leopoldville military law prevailed until May 1897. The commissioners, all officers, administered justice. Even later there was but a slow change in the de facto system, and in 1905 these officers were still the judges of most ‘territorial tribunals’, although the Department of Justice had expanded from nine members in 1904 to fifty-three in 1906, and magistrates began to be encountered in the Upper Congo. Only two jails were built: one at Boma for the most serious offenders and one at Stanleyville, although rudimentary detention centres existed in all districts.

The department was headed by a director of Justice and a procureur d’état, subordinate to the governor-general. Its autonomy vis-à-vis the administration was only relative, and even such freedom of action as existed was limited to areas where magistrates were found, that is, until 1905, mostly to the Lower Congo. During the first years the department did bring the arbitrary meting out of ‘justice’ by the Boma settlers or by state agents in the Lower Congo under control. It never interfered with African law and local courts save to ban ‘barbarous customs’, such as the
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poison ordeal, and later by limiting the severity of the sentences such courts could pass. During most of the period, however, each European handled the 'palavers' he created, or which were brought to him, as he saw fit. In the later years of the period, however, tensions rose rapidly between the administrators and the increased number of magistrates who tried to impose the notion of and the respect for law, while also attempting to force the administrators to defer serious cases to the regular courts. This expansion of the role of the magistrature was closely linked to the attempts to counteract charges about lawlessness and atrocities in the Congo. By 1908 the magistrature had succeeded in making its presence felt throughout the State, but was still far from controlling even the administered areas. Throughout its existence this Department of Justice had to struggle for recognition and expansion in the teeth of the indifference and accusations of incompetence raised by both local administrators and critics of the State.

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At first the growth of the Congo State was accompanied by the development of traditional commercial companies. By 1891–2 the government had imposed a régime actually limiting free trade to the Lower Congo and, after 1902, to the Kasai. Elsewhere trade was its own monopoly or that of the concessionary companies to which it had leased certain areas. Meanwhile, the necessity of establishing an infrastructure of communications, and later the lure of gold, saw the foundation of other companies as of 1889 and 1891. In short, the state destroyed the previous economic organisation of the Congo basin, primarily the trading networks which have been mentioned but also much of the agricultural and artisanal production. Its policy was founded on the gathering of rubber and ivory by forced labour. The resulting situation led to the reforms of 1906 and the annexation by Belgium in 1908, not long before the substantial revenues the system had produced were about to vanish with the collapse of the rubber price on the world market, and the growing scarcity of ivory and rubber alike. Meanwhile this policy had furnished the means to establish the state and to create its minimal infrastructure.

The first Belgian house came to join a number of companies already operating along the estuary of the Congo river by 1885.
All these companies vied with one another to buy the profitable ivory from African traders, and also bought palm oil, palm kernels, groundnuts and small quantities of other goods such as timber. By 1883 the aggregate value of the trade approximated to that of the Niger delta, and was growing as the agents of the companies followed the penetration into the interior. At the end of 1886 there were 132 stations. However, it was not until the end of 1888 that a major Belgian company, the Société Anonyme Belge du Haut Congo (SAB) — a subsidiary of the new Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l’Industrie (CCCI) — entered into the arena. Along with a Dutch Company, the AHV, it soon became dominant in the Upper Congo. Major competition from the established African trade collapsed after 1887—90 and the commercial activities of state officials hindered them to a lesser degree. The regulations of 1891 and 1892 were a severe blow to their expansion. Still they did survive.

The commercial station (‘factory’) both bought and sold. The warehouse, where it stocked European imports and ivory or other commodities for export, was its nerve centre. The company agent, often working on commission, attempted to make the best profit both on buying and selling, and his African counterparts tried to do the same. The African traders wanted to bar agents from dealing directly with producers, near or far, and to prevent them from learning which commodities were prized inland, because these items — such as beads, cowries or brass rods — were used as a form of currency or standard of values. The basis of valuable trade was the exchange of ivory for fabrics, guns and gunpowder. Since the last two products could not be sold or at least not openly, the African trader even in the Lower Congo did manage to compete for years with the companies; because he could provide these items from Angola, ivory was reserved for him rather than for the companies. As the companies penetrated further up the river and launched steamers, the advantages of the African middlemen were eroded, so that on the main river the whole trade in ivory had fallen into European hands by 1890. The African traders, forced out, became sailors on the new ships, still trading on the side in many local commodities destined to be carried for relatively short distances. The canoe trade did not completely die out but came to be restricted also to shorter distances and more local goods. The river people escaped most
of the brunt of forced labour because of their mobility, the closeness of the border, their qualities as seamen and, around Bolobo, because of mission protection. The traditional trading system survived much longer upstream of Luebo, where the companies could not use ships. The competition with the Luso-African trade in southern Kwango, Kasai and Katanga only began to favour the Compagnie du Kasai after 1903.

As explained in the previous section, the Congo State claimed ownership of the vacant lands. A strict interpretation of the implications was not given before the secret decree of 12 December 1891 was signed. Vacant land was thereafter held to include all natural products such as ivory or rubber. The collection of these products was to be done by Africans in lieu of paying tax. Implementation of this decree was violently opposed by the commercial companies, so that the Lower Congo was exempt from the system, as was the Kasai until 1902. To collect the rubber and ivory, the government leased two large areas, one in the Mongala basin and one comprising the Lopori-Maringa basin to two new companies: the Anversoise and ABIR. While not transferring sovereign rights to the companies, it gave them the right to collect taxes and keep their own militia. To the south of this area, in the regions of the Lokenye and Lake Ntombo Njale (Lake Leopold II), the state exploited the Domaine de la Couronne (Crown domain) itself. Later, as the territory under Congo State control expanded, the system was introduced into new areas. Rubber was even collected in Katanga on the Lomami in 1902 and later. But the bulk of the exports came from the areas cited and from the Aruwimi district.

The fiscal rules had been laid down by law in December 1892, and during the same year commissions began to be paid to state agents according to their 'production', a system later imitated by the commercial companies, ABIR and Anversoise. Since the amount of tax to be paid in labour had not been fixed, the decrees gave the agents a means to exploit the populations at will. Only in 1903 was the limit of forty hours a month decreed, but the appreciation of the time it took to produce a kilogram of rubber was left to the judgement of the agents, and only nominal payment was to be issued for such forced labour.

Atrocities resulted. In the Equateur district a high pitch of violence erupted in 1893, even before concessionnaire firms
operated there. Whereas force had been used before, and even the burning of villages, the new régime attempted to occupy all the villages by settling African auxiliaries, the 'sentries' or *capitas*, in every single one of them. Resistance was forcibly broken, and the populations reacted again and again by insurrection, guerrilla warfare, submission, renewed warfare, and flight. There was not enough time to plant crops, so food shortages became usual and, while people were hiding in the forests, the absence of all amenities favoured the spread of disease. Many died, many others were killed by the sentries. If the atrocities were certainly worst in the Equateur district, the system led to abuses elsewhere as well. Thus in Kasai the pressure exerted by the Compagnie du Kasai brought similar reactions. As late as 1907–8 there were 285 *capitas* in its sector X (Luebo and the Kuba) or one for every two villages. Food was scarce, because not nearly enough time was available for agriculture.

Isolated missionary protests began as the system was put into operation, but no reforms were made. Only after Casement’s consular report (1903) became known, and the Congo Reform Association had been founded, did the government set up its own commission of enquiry. Its report substantiated the essential charges, and reforming decrees were issued in 1906, but their enforcement was slow. Meanwhile, after 1904, both ABIR and the Anversoise lost their rights to exploitation but continued to draw income from rubber exports originating in their concessions. By then, at least in the case of the ABIR, the accessible sites for rubber collection were almost exhausted.

A railway to the Pool was the indispensable condition for opening up the Congo river basin, and soon after its foundation the Congo State attempted to attract capital to found a company. Finally a subsidiary of the CCCI was formed, and work began in April 1890. The company received land grants as an incentive. The task proved extremely arduous, because of the topography near Matadi and because all labour had to be imported. All the available local men were engaged in porterage, which itself became so onerous that it led to an insurrection in 1893–4. Working conditions were bad and mortality was high. A railway militia soon had to be created to maintain discipline among workers terrified by the mortality and discouraged by the extremely slow rate of progress.
In four years only 26 miles were built, and at its worst the rate of mortality and desertion ran up to 17 per cent in 75 days at the end of 1891 and the beginning of 1892. The death-toll was given in the end as 1,800 Africans and 132 Europeans, but the labour force comprised about 2,000 Africans and 170 Europeans at any given time. As the work progressed beyond the first thirty miles, the major problems had been overcome and the mortality figures diminished. Once one half of the line had been completed, more local labour became available, but the core remained foreign: Kru, Sierra Leonians and, towards the end, Senegalese rail-laying crews. By March 1898 the job was done.

This railway allowed the launching of five 100-ton steamers on the upper river and the transportation thereby of the equipment needed for further lines of rail. The next company, the Compagnie des Chemins de Fer du Congo aux Grands Lacs Africains (CFL) was formed in 1902 and was granted 4 million hectares in concessions, which eventually were mostly converted to mining concessions. The CFL was originally intended to build a railroad to the Nile. With the failure of Leopold’s schemes there, it was instructed to link the Stanley Falls with Katanga and Tanganyika. A first section from Stanleyville to Ponthierville (U bundu) was built at a rather slow rate between 1903 and 1906, and by 1908 work was under way on the next section from Kindu to Kongolo. Labour was recruited in the country, different districts being required to provide a set amount of labour and often using press-gang methods to round up the men. Over the first three years, and for the first section, the mortality was 3.3 per cent annually, much lower than the two-digit figures of the Matadi railroad. The logistics were also much improved. By the time that the first section was completed, a core crew had been trained. Conditions improved so much that by 1907 labour problems eased and forcible recruitment ceased, while the line of rail progressed faster than before.

A third company which was to build a railroad from Katanga to Leopoldville was also founded in 1902, then replaced in 1906 by the Société du Chemin de Fer du Bas Congo au Katanga (BCK), which did not start with its construction project until after 1908. When Belgium took over, several human porterage routes still existed. The main ones ran from Buta to Rejaf on the Congo–Nile route, from Kasongo to Albertville (Kalemie) and Baraka, and...
from Lusambo to Dilolo. Most of the traffic for Katanga already used the Zambezi route and later the railway through Rhodesia.

Katanga was believed to be rich in gold, and a rush was feared. So a Compagnie du Katanga, founded in 1891, was to occupy the area and stop all British attempts to take it over. The company received one-third of the land in ownership and held a 99-year lease on the mineral rights in this area; on the other two-thirds they held preferential mineral exploration rights for twenty years. The company sent out expeditions, one of which identified rich copper deposits. Then in 1899 Robert Williams, heading the Tanganyika Concessions Ltd (TCL), a company founded to exploit gold, requested to pursue his search into Katanga from Northern Rhodesia. The Compagnie du Katanga and the Congo State then formed the Comité Spécial du Katanga, the CSK, to administer the whole of Katanga and to hire Williams’s company for prospecting. The CSK had its own police force, and its representative dealt directly with Brussels, bypassing the administration at Boma for many matters. In 1906 the mining company, Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK), was created by the Compagnie du Katanga, the CSK and the TCL. The first exploratory trenches were opened in 1903, and by 1906 a pilot plant near Kolwezi processed copper for a while, the main mines then being for gold and tin. By 1908 the prospecting work had been completed, the railhead from South Africa was close to the border and Upper Katanga was on the verge of a profound transformation.

Meanwhile, gold had been found in 1903 in the north-east, near Kilo. The government decided to exploit this itself, and began immediate production from the alluvions. The production was still small in 1903, averaging 15–20 kg a month, but it climbed, reaching 311 kg by 1908. During these years only a small labour force was employed in the exploitation itself, but porterage, the building of a compound at Kilo and the supply of food for the labour force was already producing a drain on the local populations, many of which, such as the Lugbara, Lese and Lendu, were still unadministered.

In 1906 the Forminière was created and given the mineral rights on lease for ninety-nine years over one half of the Congo, the rest having already been granted to the UMHK, the BCK and the CFL, excluding only the Kilo–Moto gold-bearing deposits. The
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Forminière was to prosper later on, when diamonds were discovered in its concessions.

The Congo State was anxious to promote agriculture, but its economic policies in effect prevented this. Indeed, even the existing exports of groundnuts and palm oil from the Lower Congo declined in value until about 1900. Still, the state was anxious to introduce cash crops. It recommended the planting of trial plots on all stations, and founded the experimental botanical gardens at Eala in 1900. It sent out several important agronomic expeditions, while the Jesuit mission at Kisantu began planting its botanical gardens in 1898. The state was interested in highly priced products such as rubber, cocoa, coffee, cotton and tobacco. Only in Mayombe did some private plantations succeed with cacao, coffee and palm products. And even here most of the income stemmed from palm oil, which did not come from the plantations themselves. The tax law of 1891 envisaged that tax should be paid as required in foodstuffs to different posts. This was especially the case at Leopoldville and Kisantu in the Lower Congo, where cassava in the form of chikwangue was imposed. This, together with the development of a system of mission farms, resulted in a growth of production by 1908. From the last years of the Congo State onwards, the area of Madimba easily met the food requirements of the Pool and the railroad. It was then beginning to develop as the only real area growing food as a cash crop for export. The same did not happen in the areas where the Arabs had introduced thriving plantations of rice, coffee and cotton. Rice was still available in excess of needs at Isangi (opposite the later agricultural research station of Yangambi) and at Kasongo and Stanleyville, but after 1900 the surplus fast diminished, in part because of recruitment for the CFL railroad construction, in part because of growing needs for portage (Kasongo), and in part because of the requisitioning of rubber. Here as elsewhere the state’s policy contributed to a lowering of output.

As has been stressed before, the Congo State developed as a result of its income from ivory at first, and from rubber after 1896. Rubber then represented 43 per cent of the value of exports, its share rising quickly to 80 per cent or more after 1900; the total value of exports also increased dramatically. The gatherers of rubber, the workers on the railway and even the Pygmies hunting
elephants thus paid for the creation of a state on the European pattern and in addition for the dividends and other bonuses which found their way to Europe. At the same time the sources for African prosperity from trade, artisanal production and even agriculture had been destroyed or were in disarray. More and more the populations were forced into an agriculture of subsistence in the literal sense of the term.

Up till 1908 the Congo State in effect still refused to introduce money, even at Leopoldville. This would have had two unfavourable results: it would have allowed Africans to pay their taxes in cash and thus gradually have eliminated the forced labour on which so much rested. It would also have allowed them to break the direct bond between selling their produce and buying imports, especially where they had access to competitive trade, as in the Lower Congo or along the main river. The introduction of money would have allowed a partial revival of regional and long-distance trade. All of this did happen when money was introduced. But apart from a small area around the Equateur station in 1893, and for a short while around Boma, money was still in 1908 regularly used only in Katanga, where the president of the CSK had had to beg for its introduction, in part because the TCL paid their labour in currency and in part because the miners, like the sailors in Leopoldville, accumulated too many goods which they could not exchange (or only at ruinous rates) or carry home (because of their bulk) when their contracts ran out. Since the monetary policy not only favoured the state but the traders as well, all put up resistance to its introduction, except in northern Katanga. An effect was the retardation in the unification of the market in the country and consequently the lack of genuine economic development rather than growth.

On the whole, the Congo State had built up only the most elementary infrastructure and plundered the most easily accessible natural resources. In the final analysis the economic dynamics of such a system were not very different from those of the Luso-African or Zanzibar trade. Slave raiding had merely been replaced by forced labour.
European penetration was justified by ‘its civilising mission’. In practice this ideology amounted to the justification of Christian missions by all other Europeans. At first the activity of all denominations was encouraged by the state, and their advance was quickened by apostolic zeal, especially from the millenarian groups, and the rivalry between Catholics and Protestants in general. But after about 1891 Protestant advances were discouraged by officials, while from 1906 onwards the Catholics obtained a highly favourable status. The Christian mission teaching constituted a frontal assault on the convictions, rituals and ethics of the Africans. Supposedly, agents of the Congo State were concerned only with the eradication of ‘barbarous customs’ such as human sacrifice, poison ordeals or the slave trade. The missions were to transform these cultures. Islam, which had enjoyed a modest spread in the east, was to be thwarted after the Swahili-Arab wars by both state and missions. But, just as the occupation of the country met with spirited opposition, so the spread of the Gospel also met determined resistance from the traditional African religions.

The earliest missions were Protestant. In 1878 the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) was at Underhill near Matadi, and moved to Leopoldville when the station was founded. It then founded stations at Lukolela, Upoto, Monsembe and finally, in 1896, at Yakusu. The Livingstone Inland Mission was in the Lower Congo until 1884, when they handed their stations over to the American Baptists and Swedish missionaries. By 1884 they also had a station at Coquilhatville (Mbandaka). In later years some felt that the pace of advance of the BMS was too slow, and founded the Congo Balolo Mission, which went to the Lulonga in 1887. Along the Kasai, a precursor arrived at Luluaburg in 1885, but died in 1888. Here durable activity started with the arrival of the American Presbyterian Christian Mission (APCM) and the foundation of their station at Luebo in 1891. Meanwhile the Plymouth Brethren (Garenganze Evangelical Mission) had founded a post at Msiri’s capital in 1886, but spread out only after 1893.

On the Catholic side, the earliest arrivals were the French Holy
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Ghost Fathers at Banana and Boma in 1880, and the White Fathers on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, where they took over Mpala in 1885. King Leopold was worried by the presence of French mission orders and, after long negotiations, persuaded the Scheut Fathers to take over the main responsibility. The Vatican then created the Apostolic Vicariate of the Congo in 1888 covering the whole country, save for the eastern borders, which remained in the hands of the White Fathers, who now recruited Belgians for their posts. Their most significant later foundation was Old Kasongo (Tongoni), from where, after 1903, they specifically went to fight Islam. The Scheut Fathers founded a major mission station at Nouvelle Anvers in 1889, one at Luluabourou in Kasai in 1891 and one at Kangu in Mayumbe in 1898. From these nuclei they expanded throughout these areas. The Jesuits took the area between the Inkisi and the Kwilu, making their headquarters at Kisantu (1893). To mention only the main other orders, the Fathers of the Sacred Heart were established at Stanleyville in 1897 and the Premonstratensians along the Uele by 1899.

Unlike the Catholics, the Protestants had no overall plan of occupation. In practice the denominations did not compete with one another, so that the effect in the end was quite similar to the Catholic expansion. By 1908 there was still no mission penetration in Kivu. Elsewhere, both Catholics and Protestants were present, save in Katanga, which had only Protestant stations, and in the east beyond the Falls, which had only Catholic stations. State intervention had affected the situation from the mid-1890s, when it seriously curtailed Protestant expansion because of the criticisms the missionaries voiced against official policies. This forced the state in the end to rely on Catholics for its support, a situation which played a role in the conclusion of a Concordat in May 1906, by which Catholic missions were to receive favoured treatment in the granting of land and the building of schools.

By 1908 the results on paper showed the Catholics to hold 52 stations and about 670 posts, occupied by 268 priests or brothers and 125 nuns. They had roughly 125,000 converts. The Protestants, with 40 mission stations and a personnel of 211, had perhaps 70,000 converts. The number of Christians was still small, ranging from 2 to 3 per cent of the population, but the impact of their religious, ethical and educational views affected the whole population of the country with the exception of Kivu, parts of
Katanga and of Orientale Province. Even where no missionaries were found, news of their faith had spread. Thus at Beni the first missionaries found a small congregation led by a Ugandan catechist. The portrait of the poet François Coppée had been mistaken for that of the Pope.

The doctrinal differences between Protestants and Catholics, which mattered so much in European eyes, were not perceived so strongly by the local populations, who were more impressed by the personal antagonism by which it was so often accompanied. Nor did differences in training, background and mode of missionary expansion make much of an impact. Whether persons in outposts were called evangelists or catechists did not affect the rate of expansion nor even its manner. Only the chapel farms of the Jesuits were really different here.

Often the first to rally around a new station were children and liberated slaves. This was especially true for the Catholic stations, which attempted, unlike Free Churchmen, to build up a new community first and convert within it, rather than to gain a personal acceptance of the Christian faith by individuals first and form communities only later, although in several cases, such as at Luanza (Plymouth Brethren), at Bolobo (BMS) or at Luebo (APCM), people flocked of their own accord to settle around the mission. Still, Catholic missions started often with a larger community. Luluabourg had 300 freed slaves for a start, and the Premonstratensians started with 1,600 'abandoned' children at Ibembo and Amadi. After the initial years, these differences in size lessened, as many people sought protection at the mission stations from government soldiers or from raiders. And the tactics used by both confessions to make their first converts were rather similar. They aimed to raise 'liberated' children in the Christian faith, and to convert local chiefs, hoping that the rest of the population would then follow.

The first converts to be baptised were often personal servants and helpers of the missionaries. Conversions at first were very slow. Yakusu, founded in 1896, had its first three baptisms only in June 1902. But then, late in 1903, a flood of applicants arrived. This may bear some relation to the recruitment drive for the CFL railroad construction, which had begun then. In this case, however, a great demand for schools and teachers was observed, and this may also explain the rush to the Christian faith. Still, in
many other cases a very slow start was followed by a temporary boom for conversions. It seems as if the local people looked upon Christianity as another traditional religious movement. Received sceptically at first, the movement then snowballed in the way any local religious movement would do. This certainly seems to have been the case at Mbanza Manteka in the Lower Congo, where the Kongo came to see their missionary as a ngunza, a prophet. The other major pattern was a steady growth among those who had sought protection at a station, without any religious revival aspect. In these cases conversions implied choosing sides.

Converts, by accepting baptism, identified with the European order. This could be hard on them, as they might be ostracised, denied marriage partners or be accused of corrupting the traditional order and ethics. Often they left their original villages and tried to settle near the mission. Some Christians, especially teachers, were well received even in their own communities. They could help the village in its dealings with Europeans. But the first converts almost invariably became evangelists or catechists dependent on and protected by the mission. Their help was indispensable to the success of the mission. They had to teach the language to the foreign missionary, interpret the Gospel in that language and thereby transform it into a message understandable to members of their own culture. On the other hand they attempted to explain their culture to the foreign missionary. Invariably they also started the outstations. Great as their impact on the spread of Christianity has been, it remains little studied.

Three general patterns of expansion could be followed. Christians could start an official outpost and remain in a group in a Christian village; individuals could return to their home villages and live there while remaining converts and acting as catechists or evangelists; and young Christians could be grouped in settlements nearby other villages, but subtracted from the authority of the chiefs or elders. This latter device was systematised by the Jesuits in 1895, who called the system chapel farms (fermes chapelles) and recruited so-called ‘orphans’ for this purpose. By 1902 some 250 chapel farms had been established, and the number was to grow to over 400. Protests resulted. The state-appointed chiefs complained that the settlements did not obey them, paid no taxes in kind or in labour and ‘annoyed’ practitioners of the traditional religion. The chapel farms began to look as if they were
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states within the state. Moreover, too many children were taken, sometimes forcibly, from their homes to the missions. The complaints found an echo in the report of the Commission of Enquiry of 1904, which led to a hot debate about the propriety of chapel farms, which was to last until 1914. Other Catholic missions, such as the White Fathers or those of Scheut, also built Christian villages but not as close to other settlements and they relied much less on converting only children. The main effect of the chapel farms was the spreading of a new style of practical life on a large scale. The emergence of a thriving cassava plantation area in the Madimba region may be linked to this, but the connection has been insufficiently explored.

Too little is known about the spread of Islam during the years after the wars with the Swahili-Arabs to allow any generalisation. All that is known is that sizeable numbers of Africans had become Muslims by 1894 in the Kasongo-Nyangwe area and around Stanleyville. The further fortunes of Islam and especially the acceptance of the Qâdirîyya in these communities remains to be studied.

Religious movements existed in central Africa before the colonial period. Some were attempts to reorganise the central rituals of a religion, attempts triggered by revelations made in dreams to prophets. A movement began when a prophet was followed. Often a new movement required the destruction of personal or even collective charms which protected against misfortune, and movements were collective: a whole settlement had to accept it to be effective. In the Lower Congo kiyoka (the burning), of 1872, was an early case. The lubuku movement of Mwamba Mputu in Kasai started some time before 1865 and continued to gather adherents until 1895. The mani association of the Zande may have started before the turn of the century and butwa, among the Shila and Luba, antedated the colonial period as well. Still other cases can be cited.

The turmoil accompanying the colonial occupation may have favoured the flowering of such movements, although, so far, we lack records about them, perhaps because to contemporary observers many of them may have appeared as ‘traditional religion’. This was not the case with the Lugbara yakan water cult, the importance of which in this period only appears from the ethnographic record of the 1950s, even though Rembe brought
it to the area about 1890. The cult, while a general religious movement, was closely related also to Lugbara resistance against penetration. It already had the famous feature that 'bullets could be turned into water'. But it was not just a collective war charm, it implied a general reordering of Lugbara society.

A similar movement along the lower Lomami in 1892, and one directed against the Arabs may also have been more than just a war charm. The tonga tonga movement, appearing on the Sankuru and in Kuba country by 1904, outlasted the rebellion, even though its core feature was a charm to turn bullets into water, and it was still active in 1908. It had been a general religious movement of which the war magic was just a part. Other movements remain to be retrieved from archives and the collective memory of the populations involved.

A further novel manifestation of traditional religions is recorded in missionary accounts as ill-will or plotting by ‘sorcerers’. Often traditional rituals were performed with greater ostentation than before, acquiring symbolic value as a form of spiritual resistance. The traditional Lilwa initiation ceremonies among the Lokele in 1900 and 1902 was an at least temporarily successful attempt to counter the influence of the Baptist mission over the young. Renewed activities of butwa in eastern Katanga, and initiation rituals in parts of the Lower Congo, may have been due to similar reactions. In areas where the population was decimated, dispersed or under tight control as a result of the rubber system, religious movements could not develop, nor could the traditional rituals be held. Only where a certain measure of initiative remained with the population could traditional religion be used as a form of protest. And in areas where no missionary activity had penetrated, such religions were not yet under attack. It seems probable that further evidence will document a strong reaction of African traditional religions against the missionary attack as well as the early existence of religious movements inspired by prophets.

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE CONGO STATE

The society emerging from the Congo State was dominated by a new set of vertical cleavages. The top group was formed by the European caste. Then followed the elites, which comprised the following subsets: non-Congolese African agents, Congolese...

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agents or allies of the Europeans, the legitimate chiefs and patriarchs, and the former commercial élite. All of these groups intermarried, but they were far from being fused into a single class. Most of the population ranked below them. The bottom group comprised the slaves, for slavery had not yet been abolished; it also encompassed many of the libérés until they passed into the élite of European auxiliaries. The new society had in effect encapsulated all the more local social groups, promoted interaction between them and began to give rise to horizontal regional sets based on the novel phenomenon of ethnicity. In this whole system, the Europeans formed the reference group for part of the élite, and that part of the élite in turn was the reference group for large numbers of the population. The European labels for ethnic groups were adopted without much question, and this identification of horizontal groups was crucial in creating the ‘tribes’.

The whites in the Congo State belonged to many nationalities, especially Belgian, British, Scandinavian, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch and American. Many other nationalities were represented by small numbers. At the onset the Belgians were a minority, but by 1908 they had become a bare majority. All Catholic mission personnel, a few Englishmen excepted, were Belgian, while all Protestant mission personnel, with a single exception, were non-Belgian. More and more Belgians were employed in government service, partly because recruitment at a relatively cheap cost from the ranks of the Belgian army was possible. By 1908 there were 1,700 Belgians out of 3,000 whites. The number of government agents reached 1,500 by 1906 and constituted slightly under 50 per cent of the population. Missionaries accounted for some 20 per cent and commercial agents for the remainder. Most state agents in territorial service were still military men. Few Europeans, with the exception of the magistrates, physicians, engineers, Catholic priests and some Protestant ministers, had university training. And although on the whole the educational level was rather low, few whites stemmed from blue-collar families and even fewer were employed in manual labour. Most among them belonged to the middle classes, and were still in their twenties when they arrived. Turnover ran apparently at a very high rate. The shifting of careers occurred frequently, with state agents being later employed by companies more than the reverse.
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But in very many cases, especially at the beginning of the period, Europeans did not often stay for the full length of their terms of contract. For most years mortality rates were over 6 per cent (18 per cent for a typical term) and repatriation for reasons of health was probably higher. An estimate of a 40 per cent loss over the typical three-year contract period for medical reasons is not exaggerated. And this does not include those who broke their contracts for other reasons. With the partial exception of the mission stations, the turnover of personnel, especially in the interior, was high enough to threaten the continuity of local political and economic policies.

Why did whites go to the Congo? It was widely believed that middle-class drop-outs formed the bulk of candidates, except for the missionaries. Debts, women, rebelliousness are most often cited, in ditties of the period. There were other reasons. The dullness of Belgian garrisons bred a spirit of adventure. This was often mixed with a desire for glory, advancement and honours. Except for company agents, the desire for financial gain was not marked, as salaries were low. And then there were the missionary vocations, another form of the spirit of adventure, often born in spiritual garrisons or, especially among Free Churchmen, revealed as a sense of personal destiny. Conrad's *The heart of darkness* paints a portrait that only partially corresponds to the change in behaviour and personality structure that affected lonely agents, and in the interior almost all of them were lonely. His picture is overdrawn. Still, both callousness and a deep sense of mission, developed to levels not reached in Europe, and recurrent illness left its mark on behaviour. A study of the psychological effects of loneliness and disease among the colonisers is as urgently needed as is one dealing with their detailed socio-cultural backgrounds.

The earliest Africans brought to the Congo from outside were Stanley's Zanzibari. In 1883 these were joined by Hausa soldiers from Nigeria. They already found Krumen (Liberians) on the coast, and later numbers of West Africans from Sierra Leone, Ghana, the Lagos area and Senegal joined them. Recruitment for the Matadi railway brought some Jamaicans, some Chinese, labourers from Senegal and Mali; and the army recruited small numbers of Xhosa, Ethiopians, Somali, Egyptians and Dahomians. Most of these left the country, once their terms were
completed, but some, especially Senegalese, Liberians, Sierra Leonians and Hausa remained as skilled blue-collar labour or as traders. A few Zanzibari settled in the ‘arabized’ communities in the eastern half of the country. Some of the immigrants married in the country and settled; the best known case is the Badjoko family, founded by the son of ‘the chief of the Bangala’, a renowned sergeant in the army, who married a Senegalese girl. In 1933 we still found a Brazilian Indian mestizo, married to a local African and running a small plantation started before the turn of the century. In the long run the immigrants did not play a major role in Congo. In the short run some among them rose to responsible posts, such as acting officer in the army during campaigns or the equivalent of the later territorial administrators. In the end, the opportunities open to this category of persons were not greater than those open to local collaborators with similar skills.

The new local élites achieved their positions as auxiliaries of the Europeans, and even more as literate auxiliaries. Most had acquired their skills in the country, but a few reached Europe and returned with a solid education. By 1908 one of them, Lusambo, was in charge of the railway station at Leopoldville, the hub for all traffic to the upper Congo. Others had sadder experiences, as resident European sentiment ran higher, as the years progressed, against the ‘semi-civilised’ and ‘the mission-boys’. Of those who had been trained in Europe, most returned to Africa and some landed in jail. Local education was left to the missions. In the first years the population did not appreciate it, but later, when people began to realise that literacy was a passport to advancement, especially in remote districts, missions were urged to build schools or send teachers. Thus in far away Yakusu the Lokele had challenged the Baptist mission as late as 1902, but in 1903–4 a vast movement swept that portion of the Congo river, begging for teachers and crying out for alphabet cards.

The two existing state schools at Nouvelle Anvers and Boma were run by Scheutists. Children ‘adopted’ by the state were sent there and trained in military fashion for jobs in the army or in the administration. Other schools just taught the three Rs, that is to say, a programme equivalent to the first two elementary grades in Europe. Persevering pupils did learn to read and write. Besides these schools some training was given in the base army
camps and ‘on the job’ in the railroad construction camps. The
villages settled by veterans often benefited from such training and
enjoyed a higher standard of living than the ‘traditional’
settlements nearby, and were envied by them. Apart from
anything else, they were exempt from taxes. More advanced
schooling was created in 1906, when vocational schools were set
up at Boma, Leopoldville and Stanleyville, and then in 1908, when
the school for nurses at Boma opened its doors. So the statistics
of ‘students’ do not tell much. It was only in 1907 that each
Catholic mission order was asked to establish a training school
for teachers, as well as for office workers needed by the state and
the companies; this was a result of the 1906 Concordat.
By 1908 there were probably upwards of 30,000 literate
Congolese, but very few with more than just bare literacy. They
worked for the Europeans at low-skilled operations. The most
responsible blue-collar occupation was that of river pilot. Skills
such as riveter or mason were typical. The usual white-collar jobs
were those of clerks, foremen, warehousemen or mailmen. But
the companies hired capitas able to keep accounts, and the schools
needed teachers. These people mixed with the remnants of the
older commercial élite, which in part had become European
auxiliaries. But they remained aloof and often antagonistic to the
legitimate chiefs. The ‘modern’ élite was spread everywhere, but
took its cues from life in the towns: Boma, Matadi, Leopoldville.
The towns remained small. By early 1914 Leopoldville numbered
only 12,000–13,000 inhabitants. Between 1895 and 1904 various
centres were proclaimed by decree to be urban areas, and in 1892
a decree providing for the registration of educated Africans was
enacted. The Congo State thus recognised the existence and some
of the aspirations of this élite of auxiliaries, more than the later
Belgian Congo would. All in all, the members of this group
enjoyed little financial independence, because trade was limited to
such a small area, and all other opportunities were linked to roles
subordinate to Europeans.

The African élite groups suffered from epidemics, but probably
not nearly as much as the general population, which also had to
cope with food shortage. No hard demographic data are extant,
and the population estimates, which range from 27 million to 12
million, in early years are completely unreliable. At first smallpox
was the great killer. It had been present in the Lower Congo for
two centuries at least, and was reported in Katanga before colonisation. Elsewhere it was more recent. A steamer unwittingly carried the disease to Kasai in 1893, where it spread like wildfire. But, so far, there are no reliable data about the frequencies of such epidemics, their morbidity or their mortality. Nor is much known about the epidemic spread of other diseases such as jiggers and some venereal disease. The latter affected reproduction rates and affected the demography perhaps as much as, or even more than, the smallpox losses. The whole subject needs research. Indeed we do not even have a comprehensive list of all the diseases involved in these epidemics. The government created a vaccine centre for smallpox at Boma in 1893, and by 1906 no single epidemic of the affliction was reported in the country. Sleeping sickness may have been endemic in Lower Congo and certainly was so at the Ubangi–Congo confluent. The first reported case came from Leopoldville in 1885, shortly after a physician had settled there. But the epidemic dates only from 1899. From that year onwards it spread to Stanleyville and then across to Lake Tanganyika and beyond. The advance elsewhere was slower. Still by 1908 almost the whole country was affected. Only parts of northern Katanga and of the northern Orientale Province remained immune. All descriptions stress a terrifying mortality, and from data of the 1920s it can be estimated at some 80 per cent of the population in the worst stricken areas. This was the ‘black death’ of the Congo. It must have affected the life-style of every single community in the stricken areas. In 1906 the government registered serious alarm. Sanitary brigades, and a research laboratory at Leopoldville, were created to stop the disease, but by 1908 no lasting successes had been achieved.

In general the health services were poor. From two physicians in 1888, the number rose only to thirty by 1908. Apart from the Lower Congo, hospitals were inadequate. The Commissions of Hygiene set up to fight malaria, in 1892 (Lower Congo) and 1899 (all districts), were ineffective because of incompetence and quarrels over rank. Malaria had always been there and did not upset the population as much as the epidemics. The second major factor in unsettling the rural populations was food shortage, even famine in rubber exploiting areas. This was an effect of the tax system, which lasted beyond the end of the period. By 1908 a few peoples still remained unaffected by the expansion of the new
state; most had submitted and found their way of life profoundly altered. In most places the population was forced back into a bare subsistence agriculture, almost no time being left for the pursuit of customary crafts, so that certain skills (such as metal mining and smelting, the preparation of lye for soap, etc.) were lost. Only in the most remote areas was regional trade still flourishing. Genuine development was arrested, indeed reversed. Often the taxes in kind did not correspond to the pre-existing regional specialisations, but consisted of foodstuffs, and thus along the Congo river, for instance, the whole regional division of labour was largely disrupted, except for the production of pottery and fish.

The country as a whole formed a new economic unit in which populations were assigned production items and goals, while the products of their own specialisations largely came to be replaced by imports, as often as not of inferior quality. This was true for mass products, such as hoes, most textiles, and in part salt, as well as for luxury goods. And given the narrow base on which the export economy of the country rested (in 1908, 90.9 per cent of exports by value were still ivory, rubber and copal), the intricate spatial systems of complementary production were lost.

Major change also occurred in social organisation. Mission action stressed the nuclear family, at the expense not only of the polygynous family but also of the larger kinship structures which lost many of their functions, even though they did survive. Existing patterns of solidarity were seriously hurt by the stress on individuality, whether it was in saving one’s soul or making a living. While this may have benefited a few in the emerging élite, it hurt the mass of the population. The foundation on which solidarity rested was eroded, as collaboration in production and exchange, judicial rights, property rights over land and defence were all more or less curtailed, once sovereignty was lost. Village leadership was still flexible and still expressed itself in palavers, but medalled chiefs, whether imposed or legitimate representatives, became agents of the government and were no longer bound by customary checks. Meanwhile, the need first to resist and later to organise against oppression led some acephalous groups to co-operate in larger numbers than ever before. In Equateur province different groups rallied together in the area of Boende to prevent the penetration of the state, and the Budja...
fielded up to 5,000 spearmen during their insurrection, although their ‘customary’ structure may never have provided for collaboration on this scale. Such coalitions did not survive the conquest, but they helped, as a subsidiary factor, to establish ethnicity.

The awareness of encapsulation within the state, and the labels attached by the Europeans to different regions, helped to formulate an inchoate sense of tribalism. Once the European labels were accepted, ethnicity was under way. Examples of ‘new’ tribes were the Lulua, the Suku, the Bangala. Rare were the labels which did not give rise to a permanent ethnic group, for example, the Likwangula, although even this term came to designate a quasi-tribe – the villages of veterans. Tribalism was to be greatly fostered by the restrictions on free travel and the linking of every individual to a ‘customary chief’, which was decreed after 1910 and rigidly enforced in the 1920s. This was to lead to the emergence of strong ethnic groups.

Ethics and patterns of cognition were much less affected by the European impact, especially by the missionary impact, than is often thought. The fundamental constellations of world-views remained unaffected or altered only very slowly. Converts reinterpreted Christianity into the old categories, and traditional religious movements retained almost all of them. But Europeans and their lore added to the available range of symbolic representations and to the phenomena to be explained. Changes in the arts, even the visual arts, have not yet been sufficiently explored. Clearly the demand was altered, new products (dyes, for example) became available, new scenes were depicted (porterage, missionaries, etc.) but most artists lost their patrons. Hitherto the continuity of socio-cultural patterns has been over-emphasised in the social, political economic and artistic spheres, while change was over-estimated in the religious sphere, but such a generalisation cannot be substantiated without intensive studies, which are still lacking.

CONCLUSION

The Congo State was unique, in that it constituted a colony without a metropolis, or a state whose capital lay outside it. Contemporary observers rightly sensed that the years from 1890 to 1892 constituted a fundamental turning point, because the
system of exploitation which was to keep the state solvent, was then developed. Because of its inherent abuses and economic limitations, the system began to break down by 1906, but it would not be until 1919–21 that the transitional régime gave way to the main structures of the Belgian Congo. The years 1890–92 constitute a more significant turning point than the date of the foundation of the Congo State, or Stanley's arrival in 1879, as the earlier years still can be seen as an extension of the nineteenth-century dynamics of the European commercial penetration. The structural realisation of European hegemony on the ground was only beginning to be effected between 1890 and 1892. The legacy was to be the constitution of a contemporary state: Zaïre.