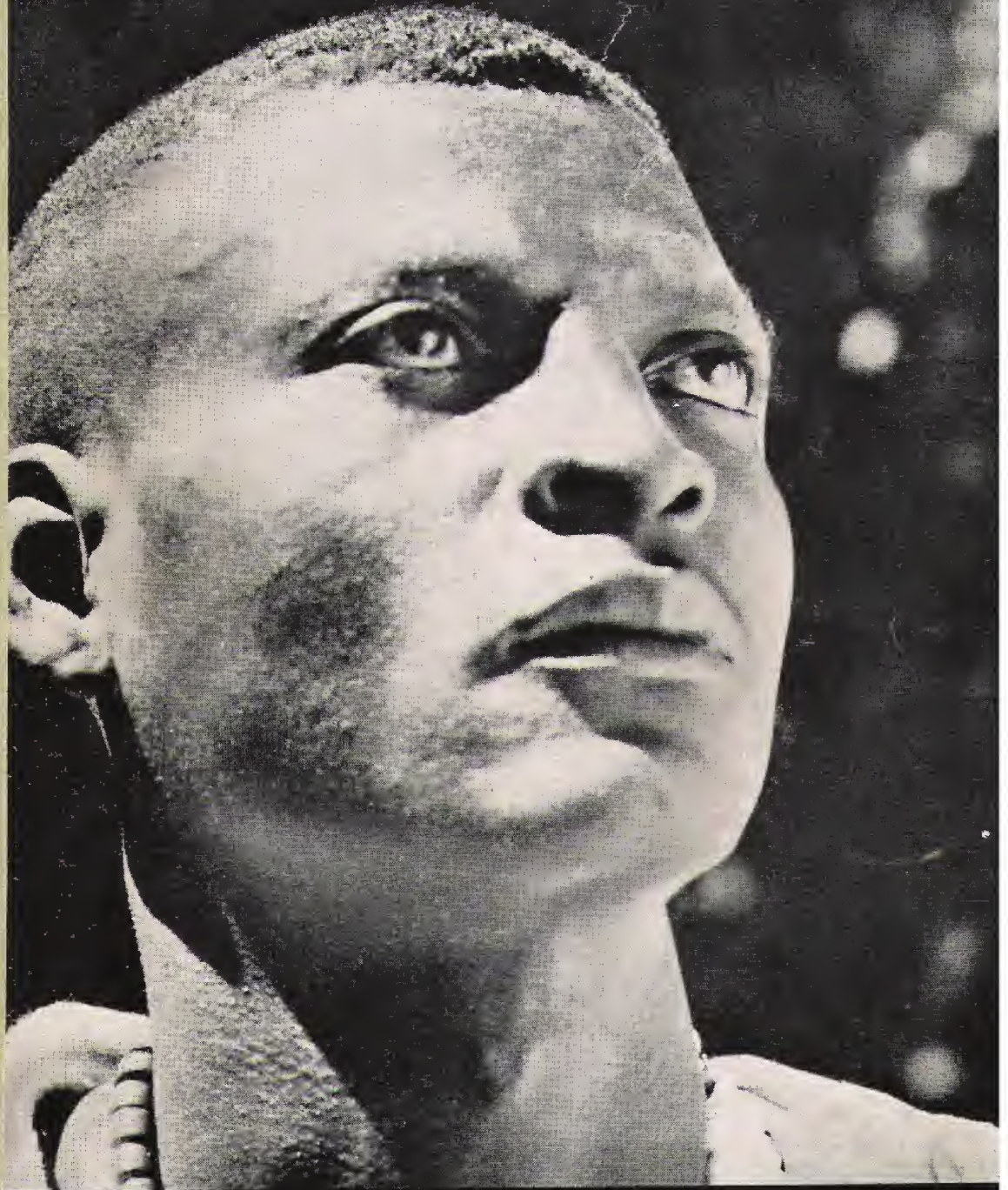


DEAN B. FILES LIBRARY
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY



7.5
4D

by

ALBERT DE VLEESCHAUWER

Art, Life and Science in Belgium
and the Belgian Congo.—II.

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

by

Albert De Vleeschauwer

MINISTER OF COLONIES

PUBLISHED BY THE
BELGIAN INFORMATION CENTER

630 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

1943

Albert de Vleeschauwer, Belgian Minister of Colonies, was born at Nederbrakel, Jan. 1, 1897. He was called to the Bar at Louvain in 1923. In 1929 he was appointed Professor of Commercial Law at Louvain University and of Economics at its Agricultural Institute.

He became a member of Parliament in 1923 and has been Minister of Colonies since May 1938. In that capacity he is a member of the Belgian Government in London. He visited the Belgian Congo in 1941 and 1942.

Photo on cover by André Cauvin

DT
1661
.V553

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

BEFORE the present war, some countries still believed in the idea of the expansion of the mother country, a belief which was responsible for the greater part of colonial enterprise.

This need for expansion, or desire for "vital space," was still characteristic of certain nations up to the eve of the present war. For them the popular way of procuring colonies still consisted in a recourse to arms by which a country was taken from its natural, if primitive, inhabitants or from a weaker colonial power. The procedure was responsible for the shameful war on Abyssinia. The idea, even now, is doubtless not completely dead. Where it survives, it is probably being discussed in secret and with a sense of shame, for the general opinion of the United Nations is that such a procedure can no longer be tolerated.

Opinions have changed, and now even the word "colony" has grown almost unbearable to some people. The word implies a dependence, a negation of human freedom and of human equality that is distasteful.

Facts, however, are still facts. The history of human evolution and progress has recorded a phase of colonization in non-European countries by overcivilized Europe. History has also shown that it takes time before a colonial enterprise can develop into a country of sufficient stature to stand by itself and take its place in what we choose to call the civilized world.

That mistakes were committed before such stature was attained is of course true but let it suffice here to say that it is of no avail to point out others' mistakes in order to hide graver faults elsewhere, made, perhaps, by oneself.

If the word "colony" is displeasing, the various tongues are adept enough to find a more agreeable term. But the fact remains that there are still regions in the world which are in the colonial stage of their evolution, and any termination of this stage would throw

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

the people of these regions back into the barbarism from whence they came, bringing about a disastrous regression in their steps toward civilization.

Let us, therefore, tolerate, for the time being, the use of the words "colony" and "colonization," remembering that were some alternative expression to be invented at this moment, the only result would be total confusion.

A colony is not—or rather, is no longer and can no longer be—a territory which its conquerors regard as their personal property, to be kept for their own, egoistic interests. A colony is still less a possession that other conquerors can covet and steal from its rightful guardian who has assumed responsibility for it.

To colonize is to bring civilization to primitive peoples who have hitherto been unable to emerge by their own means from the stage of barbarism in which they have stagnated for centuries. Colonization is a work, a great work in the service and interest of the primitive populations of which the colonizer has taken charge.

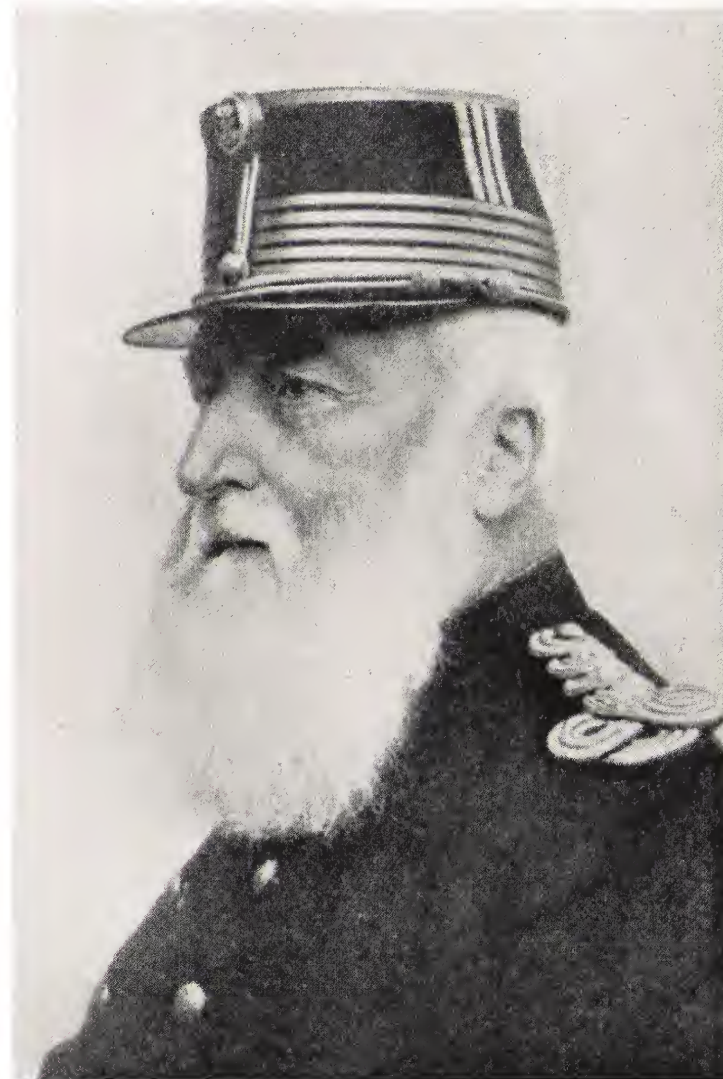
But why this particular colonizer and not another who would seek to displace him? This can be answered by the historic origin of the territory's occupation. This occupation should have been marked by activity beneficial to the native population, and only the positive or negative results of this activity can form a reasonable basis of judgment for those interested in the welfare of colonial peoples.

History of the Belgian Congo

Before discussing the work of the Belgian Colonial Administration it might be well to retrace briefly the history of the Central African occupation.

The Congo was only scientifically explored as recently as the 19th century. This, however, does not mean that up to then it was completely unknown to the outside world. In the 17th century, Capuchin missionaries from the Belgian provinces had already begun the religious conversion of part of the Congo population.

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY



LEOPOLD II, KING OF THE BELGIANS, FOUNDER OF THE BELGIAN CONGO



CONGOLESE MOTHER AND CHILD

If the trips of the great explorers of Central Africa during the second half of the 19th century did not particularly interest the great powers of the time, they did, however, arouse the enthusiasm of the King of the Belgians, Leopold II. A Geographical Conference was called in Brussels in 1876, and the *Association Internationale Africaine* and a Belgian National Committee of the *Association Internationale* were founded. The Belgian National Committee sent its first expedition to the east African coast, and from 1876 to 1884 a series of expeditions were organized, resulting in the establishment of the first of the posts which were to civilize the country.

The sensational arrival of Stanley at Boma in April 1877 resulted in an increased interest in African exploration. In November 1878, King Leopold formed the *Comité d'Etudes du Haut-Congo*, and in the following year a Belgian expedition under the command of Stanley penetrated into Central Africa by way of the west coast and founded the settlements of Vivi and Leopoldville. The expeditions led by Stanley or by his Belgian colleagues pushed along the upper river, linked Banana in the west to Stanley Falls in the east, Bangala in the north to Luluaburg in the south, and made the blue flag with the gold star of the *Association Internationale du Congo* known throughout the center of Africa.

The United States of America was the first country to recognize on the 10th of April, 1884, the flag of the *Association* as equal to that of a friendly government. On the 8th of November, 1884, Germany recognized the colors of the *Association* as those of a friendly state, and, on the 16th of December, 1884, the same recognition was granted by Her Britannic Majesty's Government. Recognition by the other powers followed rapidly, and on the 23rd of February, 1885, Colonel Strauch, president of the *Association*, was able to notify the Berlin Conference (which had begun its work on November 15, 1884) that all the powers (except one) represented at the conference had recognized the *Association Internationale du Congo* as a sovereign state. On August 1, 1885, and on following dates, Leopold II, King of the

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

Belgians, notified the powers that the possessions of the *Association* from that time forward would form the Independent State of the Congo and that, with the consent of the *Association*, he had taken the title of Sovereign of the Independent State of the Congo.

Two Aspects of Colonization

The head of the new African state realized from the beginning that the two main aspects of colonization were social and intellectual civilization and the development of natural wealth. The two should be inseparable. The development of natural wealth should pay for the growth of civilization. This precept was followed from the beginning.

The sovereign found himself charged with an immense territory, covered by dense forests and bush and crossed by a great river. His first task was to occupy and bring order and peace to the length and breadth of this vast land. Without loss of time the King began his great task.

Realizing that "to colonize is to transport," he began the construction, in 1890, of the railroad of the lower Congo to overcome the unnavigable rapids of the river. This railroad, 250 miles long, joined Matadi and Leopoldville and allowed the long navigable course of the upper river to find its outlet to the sea.

From 1890 also dated the foundation of the *Compagnie du Katanga* which was to give birth to the *Union Minière* and the copper industry.

It was also during 1890 that the Arab campaign began. It lasted four years, freeing millions of Negroes from slavery and ridding Africa of the slave trade.

At this time the new state had little or no resources, for the great powers had taken measures to prevent it from taxing exports. This would have been one of the most obvious ways for the new state to obtain revenue. To meet all the demands and costs, the King invested his entire fortune in the work—and, at a certain

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

period, he even sold his private belongings to that end. But even this proved inadequate, and he was forced to call in Belgian and foreign financiers to whom he accorded certain territorial concessions. Abuses resulted which were taken up and exaggerated by interested parties in order to discredit the King and his work. To this day, people still occasionally make the old allegations, without bothering to check their veracity. Belgium has openly stated her disapproval of all past abuses and were any to be committed today, immediate and severe punishment would follow. There are many dark annals in colonial history. But one should not forget the circumstances under which abuses occurred.

During this same period the work of civilization was being carried on by the state. Internal wars and intertribal strife were prohibited. The administration of justice was founded to protect both the person and the property of the native.

In 1908 Belgium itself took over the great work of colonial enterprise begun by its far-seeing King.

A new era began in the development of the Belgian Congo, but was soon interrupted by the Great War of 1914-18 in which the Belgian Congo distinguished itself by its victorious campaign in East Africa.

After the first World War the progress of colonization took on added impetus. It was at this time that the great powers awarded Belgium the mandate of a part of those territories which the Belgian Colonial Army had taken from the Germans in East Africa. This territory, Ruanda-Urundi, which has an area of some 32,000 square miles, has a population of some three and a half million people who possess a million head of cattle.

With a regime specially suited to the origin of the new territory, Belgium adapted her colonial principles to local conditions and put them into effect in Ruanda-Urundi.

Conscious of her responsibilities as a colonial power, Belgium has striven, and strives today, to ameliorate the lives and conditions of the native inhabitants by developing the moral, social and material well-being of both individuals and groups and organizing the great expanse of the country materially and economically.

Communications

An efficient system of communication is obviously the best means of reaching the native population in the most remote regions of the country, and is absolutely essential in exploiting new and untouched areas.

As stated before, the railway of the lower Congo was begun in 1890. This railway was completely rebuilt after the last war and is now a great and busy system of ultramodern communication, with a large number of bustling stations that have few equals in the most civilized countries of Europe or America.

This line has not remained the only one. At the moment the Belgian Congo has over 3,200 miles of railways which link the transport systems of the great waterways.

Moreover, some 50,000 miles of highway have been built throughout the Congo. One cannot stress too much the economic and social importance of such a system of communications which is expanded each year. The road develops the region, bringing in administration, medicine, religion, education and insuring supply. Under German control the Ruanda-Urundi, rich in population and cattle, was the frequent victim of famines which followed prolonged droughts. These famines claimed at that time over 25 per cent of the population.

The Germans had not been interested in building roads, and it had not been possible, therefore, to aid the distressed and famine-stricken areas. Since Belgium has had charge of the territory over 5,600 miles of roads have been built which are among the finest in Central Africa and which reach every part of the country. There have been, as in the past, periods of drought followed by crop failures, but the consequences are no longer fatal and help can arrive quickly to save the population from the specter of famine and the cattle from destruction.

Railways and roads link and complement the system of navigable waterways which run for 8,000 miles through the Belgian Congo. A fleet of about 1,400 boats and barges continually plies up and down the river. In April 1943, the traffic amounted to 15,170 tons per month up river and 20,566 tons down river.

Finally, the most rapid means of communication, the airplane, has been used to overcome the obstacle of great distance.

The Congo was among the first of the African colonies to use air transport for its lines of inner communication. At the present time these lines are impressive enough. They stretch over 5,400 miles and consist of 195 principal and auxiliary airfields. The lines are as well linked with the north as with the south, and planes from the Congo are responsible for the line from Cairo to Central Africa. Other planes link Leopoldville and the Cape of Good Hope. Besides this, a new trans-Atlantic service has been inaugurated between the United States and the Congo and linked up with the European line.

Hygiene

By a well-developed system of transport the colonizer can ensure the physical well-being of the native.

Hygiene which is so important for people in every part of the world is particularly so for those primitive populations in tropical climes which are still unaware of its application.

When the Belgians took over the Congo they found it riddled by such contagious or endemic diseases as sleeping sickness, dysentery, leprosy, malaria, smallpox, venereal disease, etc. Entire tribes were wiped out by plagues. There are certain regions, now prosperous, where formerly nine tenths of the natives died of disease. It was once thought that these regions would have to be abandoned, but the determination of the colonizers overcame the scourge, and the districts now boast healthy and happy populations. Even more tribes would have disappeared without the coming of the whites, for they were infected from the beginning and were themselves the cause of their own doom. Other tribes, however, kept themselves fairly well and quickly improved themselves under our control.

The Belgian Congo medical service today comprises:

- a) The work of over 4,000 missionaries who have organized dispensaries, hospitals and maternity centers for their charges.

- b) The medical services of the big companies which assure for their workers a standard of hygiene and medical attention unapproached in many civilized countries.
- c) The Foreami—*Fonds de la Reine Elisabeth d'assistance médicale aux Indigènes*—a state fund which the government subscribes for the safeguard of native health. The Foreami literally occupies entire regions and may stay there for years until conditions are judged to be completely satisfactory. The standard is then maintained by the regular health service.
- d) The Government Health Service is the most important of all various services and consists of 300 doctors and 150 health officers who administer eight huge hospitals, 36 ordinary hospitals and 383 dispensaries. In 1937 over 1,000,000 natives received treatment in these government institutions and only 6,000 deaths were recorded, or less than one per cent.

In 1939 just before the war an American doctor in Washington, who had been studying in Europe and had also visited the Congo, stated that he greatly esteemed the medical corps in Belgium but thought that the Congo medical corps was even better.

In 1926 yellow fever ravaged Matadi and many of the white settlers died. Today mosquito netting is no longer needed. A recent visitor to the School for young girls in Leopoldville was impressed by the fact that there were no mosquito nets in the dormitory, and this during the rainy season. When he remarked on it he was told that such measures were no longer necessary.

In close collaboration with neighboring countries, checks are made on all reported cases of yellow fever, the disastrous consequences of which are well known. Since the outbreak of war only one or two cases have been reported throughout the country, in spite of the great amount of travel that has been going on.

Outside of the possibility of a plague, it may be stated that contagious or endemic diseases are completely under control in the Belgian Congo. Leprosy alone remains to be conquered.

Modern science is fighting it with all the means at its disposal. The ravages of the disease are limited but they still exist, as they do in other countries.

Education

The work of civilization is obviously greatly dependent on the education of the native. This is an essential part of the colonizer's work. Everyone speaks of its importance, but it is often discussed without any knowledge of the subject.

When bringing education to a primitive people, one cannot begin by founding universities on the European style.

In the Belgian Congo where a start from scratch was made not so very long ago, the main concern is the establishment of primary education.

In more than 5,000 schools there are 1,000,000 pupils, and these are conservative figures in spite of the more impressive ones given by philanthropic organizations which are doing a valuable job. It is a useful and necessary, but still only a preparatory task.

This limited scholastic population nevertheless represents some 15 per cent of the total population of the Congo and the Ruanda-Urundi.

Of what value is this education? Practical results are of prime importance. Reading, writing, mathematics and general instruction are taught.

Beyond this, a fewer number of schools furnish secondary education, give instruction in technical subjects or train future teachers. For the most part, special emphasis is placed on professional training in modern agriculture and trade.

Three schools offer a curriculum equal to university standards for the most relatively advanced of the natives. There is the School of Astrida where a more general knowledge is taught, giving particular help to those interested in public administration, agriculture and veterinary medicine. There are schools for native medical assistants, known as Ami, at Leopoldville and at Kisantu. These call for five years of study, and those who graduate become

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

official assistants to the white doctors, rendering a great service in the hospitals and dispensaries and in the bush. They are always supervised by a white doctor.

To indicate the value of this education, a recent occurrence in one of the schools serves as an example. State doctors who came to test the pupils' knowledge took a recently-arrived hospital case as their subject. The five native students, questioned separately, all gave the same diagnosis. The state doctors judged them wrong and reported the result to the director of the school. Surprised, the director asked the doctors if *they* had not made a mistake. Taking them to the hospital they checked up. The five students had been correct.

There are other schools which, although of a lower standard than the Ami, still render valuable aid in preparing male nurses. The minor seminaries and the five major seminaries where Catholic missionaries instruct a future native clergy should also be mentioned. Here education consists of the complete Latin humanities, philosophy, and several years of theology. The results are admirable, and every year several highly-cultured priests swell the ranks of the missionaries. This is done without state aid.

The educational progress of the Congo is constant, and efforts at improvement are continually being made. It is generally admitted that in no other African colony is education as widespread.

Social Policy

Another aspect of native social work is the protection of the worker. Characteristic of the Belgian Congo is the contrast between a primitive country and population and an industrial concentration comparable to that of the most advanced countries. This industrial development, due to the mineral wealth of the Congo, nevertheless forms the basis of a social danger. The local labor, responsible for the manual work in mines and plants, is of a fragile nature. Before the arrival of the white man the native had little feeling of individuality. He lived with his family and tribe in primitive surroundings. The recruiting of labor for the

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY



THE BELGIAN CONGO CITIES ARE WELL LAID OUT AND COMPRISE WIDE AVENUES AND MODERN BUILDINGS



THIS SQUARE IN THE CONGO'S CAPITAL, LEOPOLDVILLE, RECALLS ANY SQUARE IN A MODERN CITY



THE FIRST RAILWAY IN THE BELGIAN CONGO WAS BUILT IN 1890.
TODAY THERE ARE 3,200 MILES OF RAILWAYS IN THE COLONY



OUTLYING NATIVE VILLAGES IN THE BELGIAN CONGO HAVE KEPT ALL
THEIR ANCIENT CHARM AND BEAUTY



THE BELGIAN CONGO HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE MOST MODERN OF
AFRICAN COLONIES. BUILDINGS LIKE THIS CONTRIBUTE TO THAT IMPRESSION



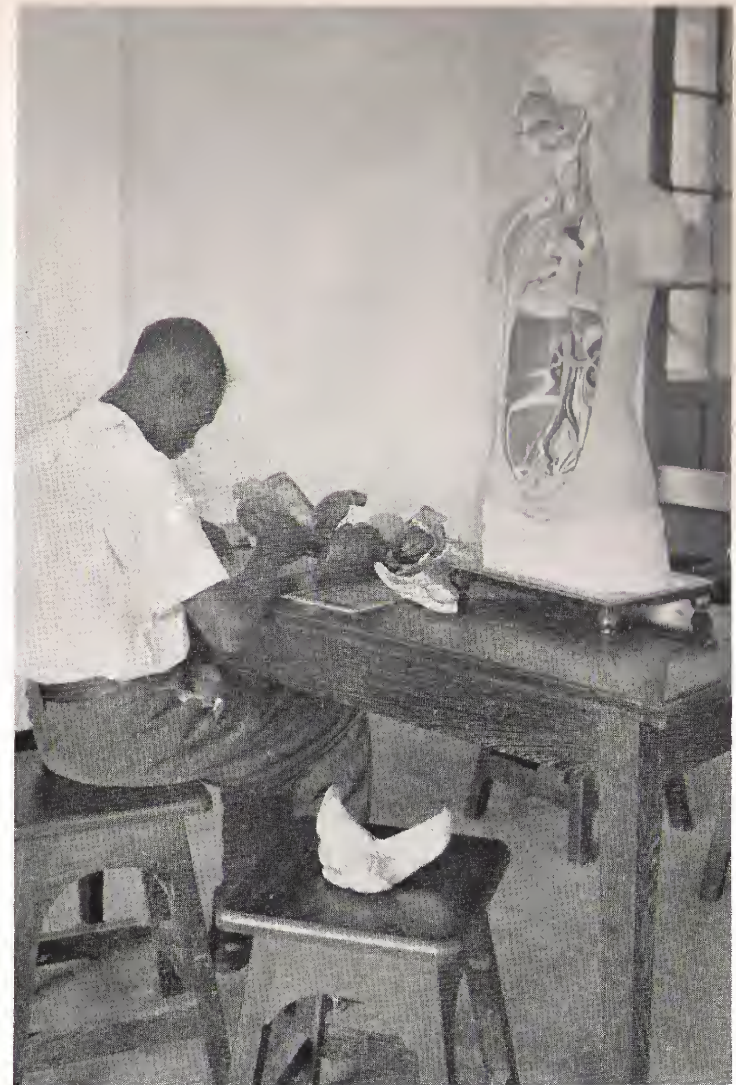
THE MOST UP TO DATE SCHOOL IN AFRICA IS AT LEOPOLDVILLE,
CAPITAL OF THE BELGIAN CONGO



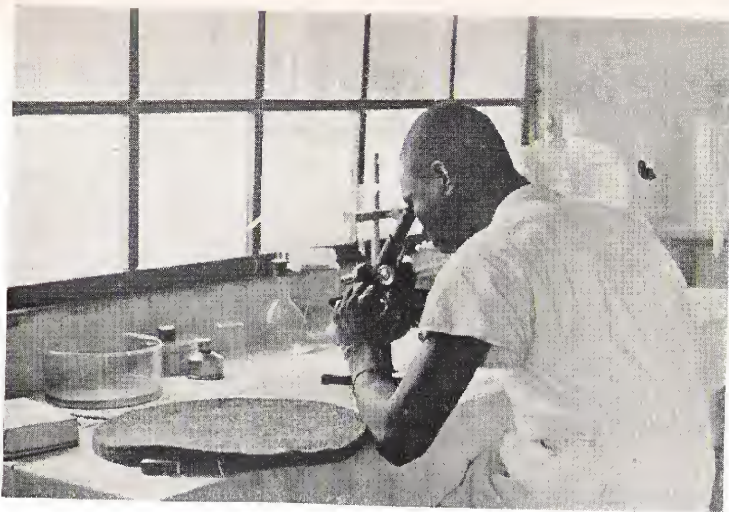
MANY CONGO HOUSES COULD SERVE AS MODELS OF COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE



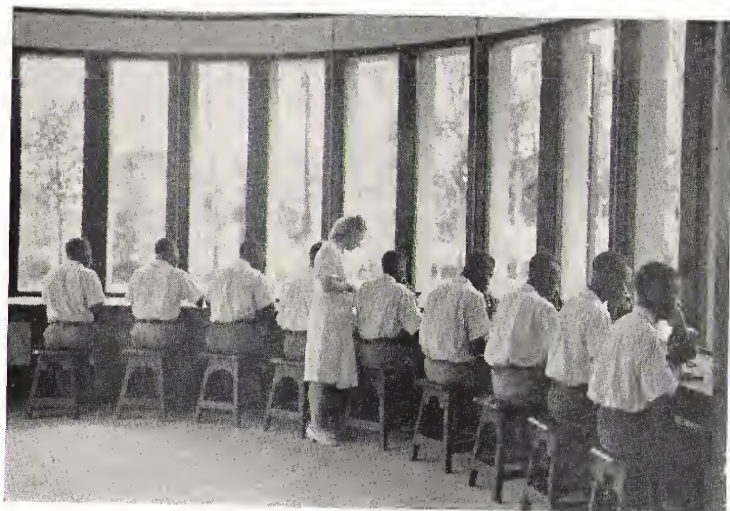
MODERN NATIVE VILLAGES HAVE BEEN BUILT IN INDUSTRIAL CENTERS



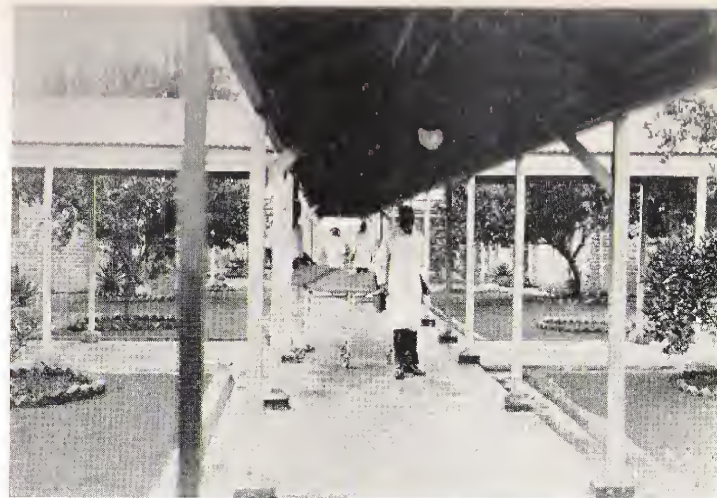
SPECIAL SCHOOLS TRAIN, IN FIVE YEARS, ABLE NATIVE MEDICAL ASSISTANTS



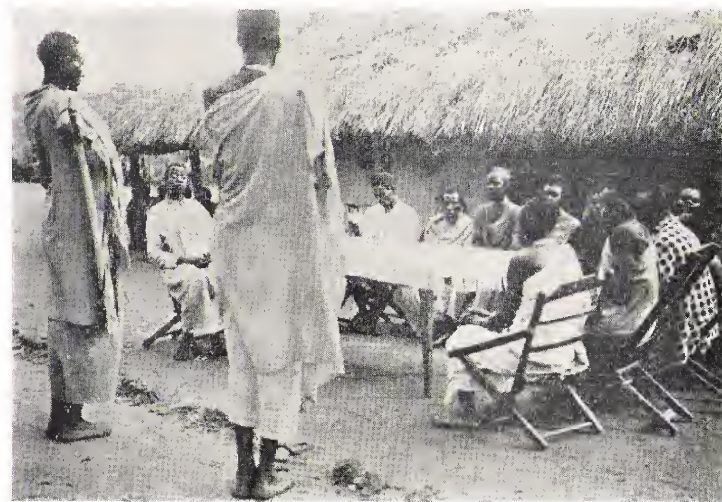
THE NATIVE MEDICAL STUDENT IS TAUGHT EVERY BRANCH OF THE PHYSICIAN'S SCIENCE



A NUMBER OF SCHOOLS TRAIN MALE NURSES

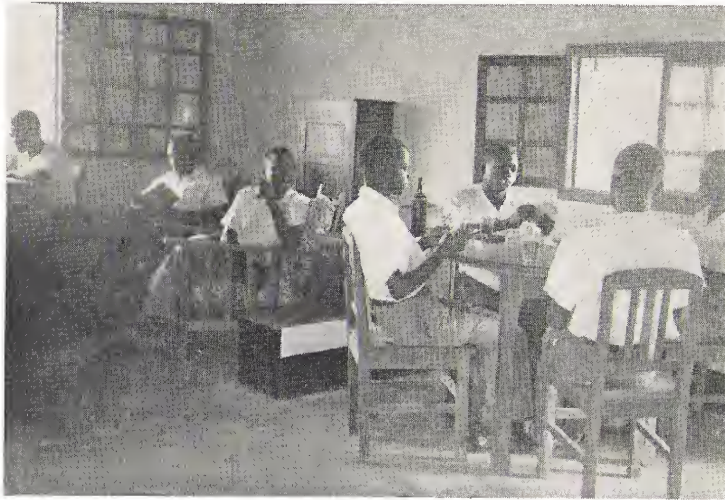


MEDICAL SERVICES ENSURE A HIGH STANDARD OF HYGIENE. HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES ARE ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT THE COLONY



THE NATIVES ADMINISTER THEIR OWN LAWS. JUSTICE IS METED OUT BY NATIVE TRIBUNALS ACCORDING TO THEIR TRIBAL LAW

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY



THE CONGO NATIVES HAVE THEIR OWN CLUBS IN THE LARGER CITIES AND ENJOY EVERY FORM OF RELAXATION



NATIVES ARE TAUGHT CRAFTS AS WELL AS HOUSEHOLD WORK IN LARGE AND WELL-EQUIPPED SCHOOLS

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

mines and industries threatened to break the ties of family and tribe. In such a case the native, placed in different surroundings, fed in a different way and out of his natural element, easily lost his resistance, sickened and died. The first period of the industrialization of the Congo was a difficult one.

Fortunately, a solution was found by intelligent men both in industry and in the government. At the *Union Minière*, for instance, Dr. Mottoule completely reorganized the system of treating labor with notable success. He inaugurated the practise of asking the families of workers to accompany them. He built modern native villages near the factories and allowed the families to grow their own food and eat after their own fashion. He also organized a hospital service which today costs millions of dollars and is a model of its type.

For its own part, the government created a commission to study the native problem and acted swiftly on the ensuing reports. It became forbidden to recruit more than ten per cent of the male inhabitants of a village for work in distant parts or more than 25 per cent for local work.

A decree issued in 1888, and since improved, regulates the pay, food, shelter and conditions of native labor.

For many years now all native workers have been protected by Belgian officials who constantly watch over their living standards and ensure their prosperity and well-being. These measures have had their effect, and the birth rate and population have increased.

A well-known colonial personality, who is not a Belgian and therefore requested that his name be withheld, stated that in his opinion the native labor of the Belgian Congo was better treated than the white worker in his own country.

Negley Farson in his book *Behind God's Back*, published in 1941, made a number of remarks and observations not always friendly and often contradictory about the Belgian Congo across which he traveled in 1939. On page 391 he declares: "It is all to the credit of the Belgians that they have taken this very primitive mass of Congo natives and are yearly, inevitably, giving them

better living conditions and a practical education. The scheme is sound."

Selwyn James in his book *South of the Congo*, published in New York in 1943, says on page 305 that: "The Belgian Congo's present and prewar years are blessed with an enlightened native policy. The black man here is the best-fed, the best-housed and best-educated in all the territories from the Cape to Cairo." And on page 313 he adds: "At the present time, I would say that the Congo native is the happiest in Africa."

A good deal might be said about certain statements made by these two authors, but their conclusions, just quoted, are all the more telling considering that they are based on fact alone.

Naturally, these two authors are quick to remark that it is not sentimentality or love for the natives that has inspired this policy. As James puts it, "it is what the Belgians like to call a practical colonial policy" (p. 313).

And Farson declares: "The natives, as a carefully-conserved supply of black labor, are being given the best housing and the best medical attention in Africa" (p. 381). He adds that, "taken all in all, there is more to be said in praise of this practical Belgian method of handling the Congo than there is to be said against it" (p. 381).

To these declarations it might be answered that the Belgians' intentions and their conception of their duty as colonizers were and are the intentions and conceptions of all the preceding Belgian Governments and of Belgium herself. If such a colonial policy has as its result the excellent quality of making the Congo natives the happiest in Africa, then it is a result of which its originators may well be proud.

Agricultural Policy

Having made clear the Belgian policy for the protection of the native worker, let us examine the agricultural policy and especially the policy of native farming, to avoid the accusation that labor is regarded only in terms of European exploitation. The casual

visitor who passes through the Congo and who has no colonial knowledge is likely to have little interest in this major problem. He will see neither the efforts, the results nor the clearly-defined plan.

When Belgium occupied the Congo she found an extremely primitive people which had not even reached the agrarian stage.

Like all other colonies, the Congo had to pass through the period of picking—that is to say, the collection of wild palmnuts and wild rubber, etc. This was a period of abuse, for such a method lends itself very easily to excess. This system, however, belongs to the past. Of course, the native still has the right to pick for himself and to sell fruit. Since the war the collection of wild rubber has been organized once more. The Congo is rich in rubber liana and plants, and the requirements of the Allies are urgent. No "red rubber" comes from these forests, and the natives work freely at this task. Forced production is not allowed, either by bonus or by any other method.

Not only were the Congo natives nonagrarian, but they did not even keep cattle except in the eastern districts near Ruanda-Urundi where herds are plentiful.

To establish a solid economic policy, especially in a new country, it is necessary to establish an agricultural plan as wide, varied and as productive as possible. The mining of minerals is only one phase of the development of the country and is perforce very local in character and limited in effect.

Agricultural economy can and must contain European plantations. This method has a double advantage; first it creates a center of production which is necessary for industrial products or export. Secondly it serves as a useful training center for the local inhabitants.

The present policy of native farming in the Congo owes its inception to the Duke of Brabant, now King Leopold III. The Prince made two voyages to the Congo and between them paid a long visit to the Dutch East Indies. Upon his return he reported

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

to the Belgian Senate on the results of his studies. He told in detail how he thought it advisable to create a native peasantry and gave his ideas on the subject. Due to his keen initiative there was created the Ineac, *Institut National des Etudes Agricoles du Congo*, of which he became the first president. It should be mentioned in passing that the Belgian sovereigns have always taken a deep interest in the work of colonization.

What Ineac has already done for the agricultural economy of the Congo is immeasurable. This institute is one of the most fertile fruits of colonial Belgium.

The policy of native agriculture is in full swing in the Congo. The natives in Ruanda-Urundi now produce coffee and efficiently manage their huge herds of cattle. They also raise cattle in Kivu, and here also is a superb plantation of cinchona trees (quinine bark) belonging to a local tribe. Both in the north and south of the Congo, which has the advantage of two seasons because of its equatorial position, the natives produce a large amount of cotton. In the plantation programs, begun before the war, it was foreseen that, next to the European plantations where they learned the culture of rubber trees, the natives would start their own plantations. The rubber tree yields only seven years after planting and the Congo natives would not undertake growing the trees on their own until they had seen the results for themselves.

The Belgians successfully introduced cattle into parts of the Congo where it had never been raised before. Now there are splendid herds in the lower Congo, in Kasai and Katanga. Great care must still be exercised; however it will not be long before the natives start this difficult operation for themselves after learning the proper methods of breeding and care.

There is also the task of teaching the natives in the mining districts and elsewhere to grow their own food, an idea which was completely new to them.

This, then, is the trend of Belgian policy, a policy which is of major importance in the civilization of the natives and for the future of the Congo.

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

Native Participation

The organization of public life, the participation of the native, first in his country's administration and later in his own government is without doubt the first duty of a colonizer. It is the framework necessary to the whole.

How Belgium organized its white administration in the Congo is perhaps of less interest than whether or not, as has been said and written recently, the natives in the Congo are participating in the administration and whether the Belgians are working toward the development of native self-government.

The fact is that the natives are associated with their own administration and with their own laws when they follow their customs of tribal life. And when they leave their ancestral homes to live a more individualistic life in new centers, they are given an appropriate form of self-administration.

Conforming to the conception that colonization must be made in the interest of the natives, the Belgians intend to pursue progressively the emancipation of their native people. By emancipation is meant the chance of conducting themselves independently of the mother country. But the Belgians believe that a durable autonomy must begin from the bottom, that is to say the education of the small cells of colonial territory. The natives have been accustomed to live with their tribes under the complete domination of their chiefs who had their own conception, shared by their subjects, of a sort of "jus fruendi, utendi et abutendi" of their people and possessions, beyond the meaning of the Latin expression as it is known to us.

Throughout the Congo these tribal organizations have been adapted as native administrative cells. Each cell has its chief who has had to be taught—and upon occasion is still being taught—that he exercises authority for the members of the tribe, that these members are not his property and that the possessions of the tribe and its taxes are quite apart from his own property. These were revolutionary ideas for the natives and especially so for ancient chiefs.

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

The chief has his own council. He and his counsellors are selected according to their own customs. In principle the white authority does not interfere except in unusual cases where custom could not be applied. The European authority inducts the chief in a solemn ceremony during which he is recognized by his people and receives his emblems of office.

The various tribes have their own levies which are used in the general interest of their territory. At one time a number of districts had a considerable excess of income, and it was decided to use this excess to aid the less fortunate tribes—the richer ones lending a hand to the poorer.

The natives also administer their own laws. Justice is meted out by native tribunals according to their tribal law. The designated judges cannot, however, apply customs which are contrary to public order; neither can they enforce customs which contravene legislature brought about in the interest of native welfare. Native tribunals can also sometimes sit on cases where the written law must be applied.

The rapid evolution of a new country like the Congo brings about situations completely strange to the old framework of the tribes. One sees natives of different origin mingling together in the industrial and commercial centers and missions. These gatherings have been organized under a separate form of "extra-custom centers," special native communities and towns where the state selects the chief, picks his council, and these administer the community not according to any one tribal custom but by common tribal principles. A white official assists them with his counsel. Under this system, Leopoldville has an extra-custom center of 50,000 natives, while Elisabethville has an equally important community. There are many more with smaller populations. Each day brings added proof of the success of the venture and gives great hope for the future.

In the Ruanda-Urundi this system has been developed to an even higher degree. The districts have a budget independent from that of the Belgian administration which controls them. With their own resources they can follow their own initiative, build markets,

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

workshops, hospitals, veterinary hospitals, etc. In 1941, they allotted to this use more than 8,000,000 francs.

In addition, tasks formerly done by a large number of Europeans, such as the collecting of taxes, draining of marshes, the fight against erosion, reforestation and the maintenance of the cotton and coffee plantations, are all carried out by native assistants. Here also, the administration and application of native law is in the hands of natives.

In the Ruanda-Urundi, all native chiefs are part of one hierarchy under the "Mutara (King) Rudahigwa." The Queen-Mother "Nyira Mavugo" has kept her power over all. She has her own council of ancients, as has the King, who is assisted by a white counsellor.

There are those who think that the Belgian Congo is not pushing forward quickly enough, that the government should attempt to Europeanize the chiefs with all speed so that they could rule after their own fashion which presumably would follow the principles of white civilization.

There is room for serious doubt on the question. There have been notable examples of the kind, and, in spite of the learning and backing given the natives, the results for them were far inferior to those of the Belgian Congo. There is a Flemish proverb which says "That which is destined to live long, grows slowly." To civilize a people takes much time. To civilize does not mean to Europeanize. To civilize the natives of Central Africa is to teach them to live like modern human beings, to provide them with a better material life and to open their intelligence to ideas which they may be able to grasp or which they may turn to suit their nature. To civilize a Negro is not to try to make him a white man; it is to help him become a good and fine Negro for himself and his brothers.

Open Door Policy

There is one last and important aspect of colonial policy, one which goes beyond the native and concerns the world.

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

Lord Lugard, that great colonial and co-spirit of the Lyauteys and the Van Vollenhovens who made Nigeria into a peaceful, prosperous and civilized territory in the twenty years from 1903 to 1923, expressed himself thus in his book, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*: "The colonial powers have their task as trustees on the one hand for the advancement of the subject races and on the other hand for the development of material resources for the benefit of mankind." This primordial "duty to promote the well-being (economic, social and political) of the native population of a colony" has been carried out in the Congo. "But," Lord Lugard continues, "there is another and second duty, which is that of promoting the well-being of the world at large and humanity in general (because the world at large and humanity in general must be regarded as a beneficiary of the trust), and of doing so by developing the resources of dependencies with a view to their full and free enjoyment by the general comity of mankind."

In agreement with Lord Lugard on the principle of "Indirect Rule Policy," the Belgian Government also agrees with him on what he calls the second duty of the colonizer, to make the natural resources of his territory available to the entire world.

This second duty is being executed by an "open-door policy" which has been defined as "the policy of the free development of the material resources of colonies for the common benefit." In other words, it is for the benefit of mankind that the material resources of colonial territories should be freely available to all, and that all should have access to the supplies they furnish and the markets they afford.

At the birth of the Independent State of the Congo, its representatives at the Berlin Conference in 1885 were asked to accept, and did accept, the open-door policy as well as other obligations such as the suppression of the slave trade, etc. From that time the policy of the open door, which can also be called commercial liberty, has never ceased in the Belgian Congo. It is the most liberal and the most generous policy, and the one that can most quickly bring about the harmonious development of a colonial country.

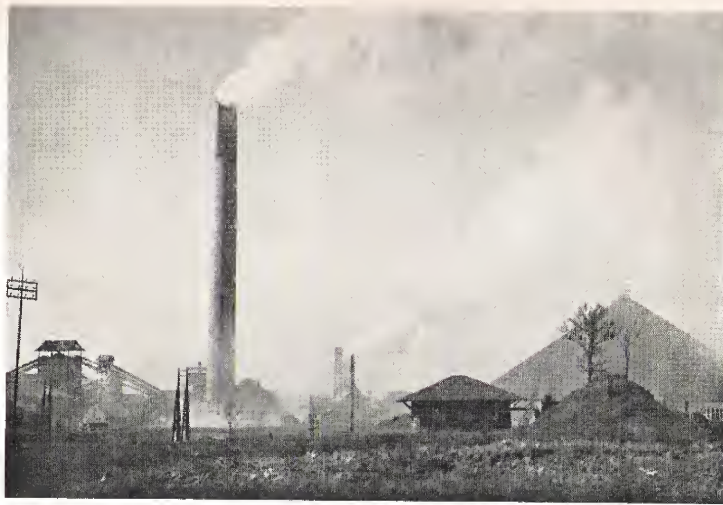
BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY



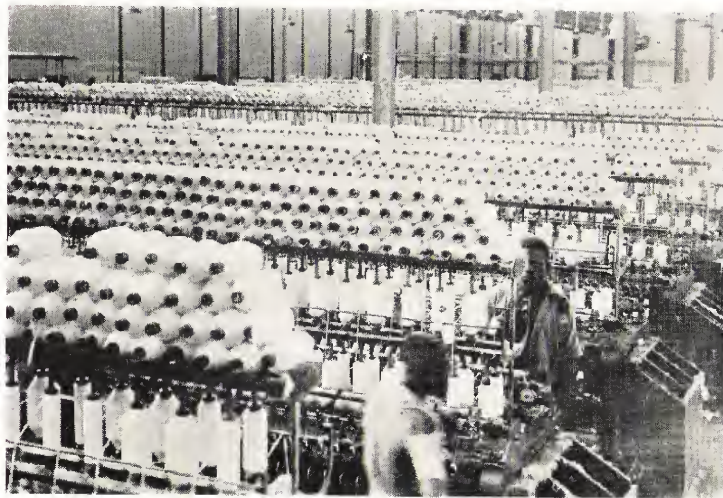
WHEN WAR BROKE OUT MANY CONGO NATIVES VOLUNTEERED FOR SERVICE IN THE COLONY'S ARMED FORCES, ENABLING THE FORMATION OF A STRONG AND HIGHLY EQUIPPED ARMY



THE BELGIANS SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCED CATTLE BREEDING INTO NEW DISTRICTS OF THE CONGO



LARGE INDUSTRIES HAVE SPRUNG UP IN THE COLONY TO TREAT ITS GREAT MINERAL AND VEGETABLE RESOURCES. ABOVE: A COPPER MINE



OTHER INDUSTRIES, SUCH AS PALM OIL MILLS, BREWERIES, CEMENT WORKS, CHEMICAL WORKS AND TEXTILE FACTORIES, ARE ACTIVE IN MANY CENTERS

Metropolitan Belgium is favored neither by a priority on the Congo's exports or imports nor with any privilege in its trade. This system has greatly profited the Congo and increased its development. And up to the present no better colonial economic theory has been found to replace it. The war obviously prevents its operation because of reasons that need no comment.

Cooperation with Private Enterprise

The internal economic policy of the Congo is not only concerned with native affairs but also with maintaining a proper relationship with the companies which exploit the resources of the territory. This relationship, which has been much criticized and often envied, is one of the main contributory factors to the Congo's rapid development.

Capital was required to extract the wealth of the Congo. Leopold II obtained this capital by granting large concessions—too large, some say, now that success has crowned the efforts of the colony.

Each time that a renewal of contract presented an opportunity to reduce territorial concessions this reduction was successfully achieved. Such a policy has been particularly applied to those concessions which have not been sufficiently developed within a specified time. There are tremendous sums of money invested in the Belgian Congo. The capital is mainly of Belgian origin; but there are also important British and American investments as well as several others. The Congo has been and is open to all sound initiative.

In return for concessions accorded, the Independent State of the Congo (and after it the Belgian Congo) took a share in the biggest colonial enterprises, that is to say in most of the mining companies and transport companies and also in a few stock-breeding enterprises. Thus the collective enterprise benefits the state to an important degree. If the Belgian Congo has, as some have remarked, a heavy public debt, it also possesses a substantial purse to offset the debt.

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

There has been some criticism of the system. It is said that the influence of the capitalist groups is too great, that four great companies dominate the Congo, etc. But the fact is that there are in the Congo not four companies but about 350. If the government has had a notable success in its policy of protecting the native worker, it is mainly because the big companies have created, in accordance with the government, and conforming to social legislation, social and medical set-ups which have done them honor and have been a boon to the black workers. Not only have fine villages been built for the workers' families in the copper, tin, diamond and gold mines as well as the rubber and palm oil plantations, but ultra-modern hospitals and maternity centers have been created by private enterprise which are open to the entire region, that is to say also to the people who are not company employees.

There may be objections that the companies act in their own interest. But is it not a fact that for human beings in general and especially in economic matters, interest is the prime motivator? And when interest or will is lacking, the state is on hand to assume its responsibilities and make the employer fulfill his obligations.

It may well be said that when the interest of capital merges with the general interest and the proper interest of the worker very valuable results can be achieved.

This is the formula followed in the Congo. The big companies cooperate with the state and the state with the companies in the general interest. But the state has and must have the last word.

Conclusion

At this moment the Congo is taking part with all its strength in the war effort of Belgium and the United Nations. The Africans are as interested as the Belgians—if not more so—in the final victory of liberty and right in the world. The Congolese would have little to expect from the followers of race ideology, and they know it.

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

The Congo's part in the war effort is wholehearted and without reserve.

Full praise is due those colonials both white and black who have shown such devotion and ardor. They have distinguished themselves on the military front by helping the British drive the Italians from Ethiopia and fervently hope to do so again elsewhere. They distinguish themselves daily on the production front under an exacting climate and exhausting living conditions.

Not much has been said of the future and yet it is of the future that all sensible people think and about which too many people, not always competent, talk.

Before working out any postwar plans, an examination should be made of some of the ideas which have recently been proposed.

One formula proposes the autonomy of colonial peoples in the shortest possible time. Reaffirming that colonization is carried out in the interest of the native population and must allow its progressive emancipation, it would nevertheless be dangerous to act against nature by upsetting an evolution which tends to bring the native from the stone age to the contemporary world. Experience shows that in general the Negroes of Central Africa are far from the political maturity necessary to permit them to take advantage of any proffered independence.

In many colonial countries, peace, justice and medical care are only assured because of the presence of a European authority. A white withdrawal from the Congo would be followed by complete anarchy, and the absence of an organized police force would be the signal for disorders. The role of colonizer carries a responsibility that cannot lightly be cast off.

How would one judge a guardian who, instead of assisting his charge in his personal life as well as in his legacy, would abandon him to his fate with no regard to the future of the child and his property.

A second plan recently advocated is the placement of colonies under an international administration.

BELGIAN COLONIAL POLICY

There is probably no advised colonial who could seek to divide the responsibility of creating a colony. When parents, who form a single unit, educate their child, their love and authority are one and are applied to the best interests of the child. When the father and mother are disunited, the child's upbringing suffers by consequence. The natives are children, something of children whom a parent loves and for whose well-being he strives. Condominium can hardly be a good influence for the native.

Finally, a third formula for the administration of colonies has been put forward, i.e., the establishment of regional colonial councils. It is easy to mention fields of action on which neighboring colonies could agree. In the fight against tropical diseases and against plagues which afflict a particular region, common measures are taken by the various countries concerned and are coordinated with the efforts of their neighbors. Similarly, where transport is concerned, it is natural that an understanding be reached to make communications better and more efficient. Beyond this, it is difficult to imagine any decisions of a wider nature that may exclude the mother country as well as the rest of the outside world.

The African colonies, generally speaking, do not have sufficient economic power or political authority to decide on their own status.

And if the regional *entente* should aspire to isolation from the rest of the world, it would constitute a retrogression from the ideal of healthy internationalism towards which the United Nations are moving.

LITERATURE ON BELGIUM TODAY

Issued or Distributed by

THE BELGIAN INFORMATION CENTER

The following documents on Belgium today may be obtained

on request from

THE BELGIAN INFORMATION CENTER

630 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

1. **TEN FACTS ABOUT BELGIUM**—A clear statement on Belgian affairs today.
2. **ESCAPE FROM BELGIUM**—The story of the escape of two young Belgian air officers who flew in a stolen sea plane to England.
3. **A NEW CODE FOR MAYORS**—A story of the heroic resistance of the Burgomaster of Brussels with a copy of his proclamation to the Brussels citizens.
4. **THEY RIDE THROUGH BELGIUM**—A comprehensive resumé of what the war did and still does to Belgium.
5. **KING LEOPOLD VINDICATED**—A testimony by Sir Roger Keyes, Liaison Officer to King Leopold III.
6. **THE BELGIAN CAMPAIGN IN ETHIOPIA**—The story of the Belgian Congo's contribution to early conquest of Ethiopia.
7. **FORTISSIMI SUNT BELGAE**—The battle of Belgium, May, 1940.
8. **THE BELGIAN GRAY BOOK**—Official account of what happened in Belgium 1939-1940. (Price \$2.00.)
9. **THE PRESIDENT KNOWS**—A message from President Roosevelt to the Belgian people.
10. **BELGIAN CONGO AT WAR**—What the Belgian Congo colony represents and its contribution to the war.
11. **BELGIUM UNVANQUISHED**—The story of Belgium, 1939-1942. (Price 50c.)
12. **WE SUFFER IN A THOUSAND WAYS**—A series of letters from occupied Belgium.
13. **BELGIAN AFRICA'S TOTAL WAR**—The Belgian colony's contribution in raw materials. (Price 25c.)
14. **THE WOMEN OF BELGIUM**—How they fight, suffer and hope.
15. **BELGIAN HUMOR UNDER THE GERMAN HEEL**—A series of underground cartoons.
16. **BELGIAN MUSIC**—by Charles Leirens. A history of Belgian music from the time it dominated Europe to the present day composers and groups.

PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

1. **NEWS FROM BELGIUM**—A free weekly Bulletin.
2. **BELGIUM**—A monthly magazine. (Subscription fee, \$3.50 a year.)