

Review

In the Heart of Darkness

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Memory of Congo: The Colonial Era

an exhibition at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium, February 4–October 9, 2005

La mémoire du Congo: Le temps colonial

catalog of the exhibition, in French or Dutch, edited by Jean-Luc Vellut et al
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La mémoire du Congo: Le temps colonial, catalog of the exhibition^[1]

1.

Recent decades have seen many battles over historical memory. The Turkish government—and, for that matter, our own—still refuses to speak of an Armenian genocide. Japan's schoolbooks still whitewash its troops' atrocities in World War II. And a curious conflict over memory is going on right now in Europe, where the battlefield is a Belgian museum.^[2]

The battle is over Belgium's past as a colonial power. For half a century it controlled the Congo, one thirteenth the land mass of the African continent. Before that the Congo was also linked to Belgium, as the private, personally owned property of the shrewd and ambitious King Leopold II. Belgians had been initially slow to colonize, but Leopold, who took his country's throne in 1865, thought differently. Openly exasperated with being king of such a small country, he hired the explorer Henry Morton Stanley to stake out for him the boundaries of a huge African territory. From 1885 to 1908, when it became the Belgian Congo, the colony was known as l'État Indépendant du Congo, or the Congo Free State. Leopold exercised absolute control, referring to himself as the state's "proprietor."

Fearful of tropical diseases, the King never visited his prized possession. Instead, while living in Brussels, on his yacht, or in several luxurious villas on the French Riviera, he made a huge fortune off the Congo, conservatively estimated as at least \$1.1 billion in today's dollars. In the early years, most of the money came from ivory. Joseph Conrad unforgettably depicted the ivory trade in *Heart of Darkness* in the severed heads of murdered African rebels Kurtz kept as trophies.

From the early 1890s on, the major source of Leopold's Congo wealth was rubber. The Congo's equatorial rain forest was rich in wild rubber vines, and the inventions of the inflatable bicycle tire and the automobile set off a worldwide rubber boom.

Troops from the King's private army came into village after village and held the women hostage in order to make the men go deep into the forest to gather their monthly quota of rubber. As demand for rubber soared, quotas rose. Men were forced to search for several weeks out of each month, sometimes having to walk for days to reach vines that were not tapped dry.

Many men were worked to death, while the women hostages were starved. Not surprisingly, the birth rate plummeted. Few able-bodied adults were left in the villages to harvest food, hunt, or fish. Famine spread. During two decades of widespread but unsuccessful rebellions more people died. Others fled the forced labor regime, but they had nowhere to go except to more remote parts of the forest, where there was little food or shelter. Years later, travelers would come upon their bones.

The greatest toll came as soldiers, as well as caravans of porters and large numbers of desperate refugees, moved throughout the country, bringing new diseases to people with no resistance to them. Many illnesses, particularly sleeping sickness, became far more lethal for people weakened by trauma and hunger. All these caused the death of millions. Once it became clear how much money the King was making, Leopold's hostage system was copied in the other rubber-rich territories nearby: French Equatorial Africa across the Congo River, the Cameroons, then owned by Germany, and northern Angola under the Portuguese. The results were equally catastrophic.

One of the ways the King spent his profits was to found a museum. Today the Royal Museum for Central Africa has one of the world's finest collections of African art and other materials (some of which toured the United States during 1997–1998), including 70,000 maps, 8,000 African musical instruments, six million insect specimens, 600,000 photographs, and tens of thousands of other human artifacts. However, until a few years ago, nothing on display gave any indication that millions of Congolese died unnatural deaths while these riches were being brought back to Europe. It was as if there were a huge museum of Jewish art and culture in Berlin that made no mention of the Holocaust.

The atrocities under Leopold's rule and the Belgian colonial regime that followed it (although, regrettably, not the similar carnage in neighboring colonies) were the target of a huge protest campaign, organized chiefly by a dedicated British journalist named Edmund Dene Morel. Early in the twentieth century, hundreds of mass meetings were held throughout Britain, the United States, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand demanding "Congo reform." Leopold's rubber system became the best-known human rights scandal of the era. Mark Twain wrote a pamphlet on the subject, *King Leopold's Soliloquy: A Defense of His Congo Rule* (1905), and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle a book, *The Crime of the Congo* (1909). But World War I, in which Belgium was a victim rather than an oppressor, pushed these events out of European and American public memory, and there they stayed. Statues of Leopold II still dot Belgian parks and squares today.

In 1998, I published a book about the King's rule over the Congo, *King Leopold's Ghost*, which was translated into Belgium's two main languages, French and Dutch. Although very little of what it described had not appeared in print in some form

before,^[3] the book was furiously denounced by Belgium's "old colonials," while the foreign ministry sent a confidential memo to Belgian diplomatic missions throughout the world suggesting how to answer embarrassing questions about Congolese history. (The advice: an active public relations effort would be futile; instead, change the subject to Belgium's work for peace in Africa today.)

In 1999, the myth of benign colonialism in the Congo received another blow when a Belgian writer, Ludo De Witte, published much new detail on his country's complicity in the death of Patrice Lumumba.^[4] Soon afterward, the movie director Raoul Peck incorporated some of these findings into his powerful film *Lumumba*. The first and last democratically chosen leader of his country, Lumumba became prime minister after the Congo won its independence in 1960. After a few months in office he was deposed, imprisoned, beaten, and killed by his political rivals, who were encouraged at every step by both the United States and Belgium. De Witte's book provoked a Belgian parliamentary inquiry and an official apology from the government. The United States, however, has never apologized, even though President Eisenhower gave his approval to the aim of assassinating Lumumba.

Discussion ignited by the two books and the movie raised the question of what should be done with the Royal Museum for Central Africa.^[5] The museum was under conflicting pressures: from the old colonials, from the many Belgians genuinely concerned about human rights, from government officials worried about the country's image, and, it was rumored, from the royal family.

In 2001 the government appointed a new director, who, in interviews with *The New York Times* and elsewhere, promised big changes. This year, with much fanfare, the museum has opened a major exhibit on the colonial period, accompanied by a catalog: a large-format book, lavishly illustrated with photographs from the museum's great research archive. Unlike the exhibit, which is temporary, the catalog seems intended to be a permanent contribution to the subject. It consists of some three dozen articles on various aspects of Congo history and culture. Many are by first-rate scholars, from Jan Vansina's essay on the earliest human inhabitants of the Congo basin to Wyatt MacGaffey's on colonial ethnography. But, as we shall see, in the selection of material, the book's editors have left a significant gap.

With rare exceptions,^[6] the exhibit has been praised. The Associated Press approvingly quoted the Belgian foreign minister, Karel De Gucht, who on opening night said, "That abuses were committed during the time of the Congo Free State is undeniable. The exhibition is unequivocally committed to showing them."^[7] "The museum," said *Le Monde*, "has done better than revisit a particularly stormy page in history.... The institution has pushed the public to join it in looking into the reality of colonialism."^[8] The exhibit "lifts the veil," declared a Belgian magazine.^[9] "Belgians are finally, and painfully, confronting a very different version of their colonial past," said the London *Times*.^[10] Other papers have expressed similar judgments, but there is much about the exhibition that they have ignored.

2.

To visit the Royal Museum for Central Africa is to step back in time. The museum lies in the ancient ducal borough of Tervuren, on the outskirts of Brussels, at the end of

a lovely trolley ride through a forest. Leopold II craved grandeur above all, and, like many of the buildings into which he poured the proceeds from his holdings in the Congo, this one was designed by his favorite architect, the Frenchman Charles Girault. Built in the style of a Louis XV château, it sits majestically on a rise, looking down across reflecting ponds and a large park. Inside, there are some twenty spacious galleries whose high ceilings dwarf the visitor. The entrance rotunda is ringed with gilded, bigger-than-life statues with titles like *Belgium Bringing Security to the Congo* (a white woman, with sword, flag, and two black children at her feet). Amid the sculptures, a small placard promises "A New Museum in 2010."

Perhaps a third of the museum's floor space is given over to its much-publicized exhibit devoted to the colonial era. At the entrance are two life-size photographs, both from the 1890s. One shows a white colonial official wearing a fez and "sitting comfortably," the caption tells us, on a tribal chief's carved wooden stool. The other shows an African chief, standing next to a European-style wooden chair, "proudly wearing the emblem of the new rule"—a white dress uniform, military cap with visor, and sword. The two men are each enjoying the accoutrements of the other's world. This theme—two peoples, cheerfully absorbing one another's way of life—runs through many other photographs and videos. We see Africans working in a bicycle factory; two white officials riding zebras; black customers and a clerk in a shop stacked with European goods; a smiling, sun-helmeted white official on a jungle trail; Congolese applauding a visiting Belgian king.

Similarly, the one-word titles of the exhibit's half-dozen sections are neutral-sounding terms like "Transactions" and "Encounters," which imply peaceful meetings between equals. But is taking a wife hostage to compel the husband into forced labor a "transaction"? Is the mass slaughter of rebels who resist an "encounter"? There is little suggestion that for several decades the most consequential white-black encounters in the Congo were at gunpoint. Though a deeply conservative man, Joseph Conrad after his Congo experience had no illusions: "The conquest of the earth," Marlow says in *Heart of Darkness*, "which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much."

There is no danger here of anyone's looking into it too much. But the sense of denial that infuses this exhibit is subtle not only in its suggestion of colonialism as a matter of cultural exchange among equals, but in its emphasis. The museum is not so unsophisticated, for instance, as to pretend that no bloodshed took place in the Congo, or that the territory was not the object of a major international human rights crusade. A few book covers and other items from this campaign are tucked away in a corner. But the exhibit's hundreds of photos include only four of the famous atrocity images that once appeared in newspapers all over the world, and these are only small reproductions, while more than a dozen other photographs are blown up to life size, almost all of them innocuous, such as several of Congolese musicians. The visitor comes away with the impression that, yes, there were occasional "abuses"—the word, implying an unfortunate departure from the norm, is used at least eight times in the exhibit's labels—but that the main experiences of colonial life for Africans were of studying in schools run by kindly, bearded missionaries, traveling on steamboats, working diligently in scientific laboratories, being cared for in clinics, and spending money on dance records and in cafés.

Colonialism's defenders always point out that Europeans left Africa with railroads, schools, newspapers, and hospitals, and that these were not there before. True enough. But much of human history is the story of conquests, and all kinds of useful things, from the wheel to the written word, were spread by conquerors. Neither we nor the Belgians would be using the Roman alphabet if the Romans had not conquered most of Europe. Although seldom pleasant to experience, such conquests are usually justified by the pretense that their primary purpose is to do good. People invade other peoples' territory claiming they are routing the barbarians, spreading Christianity, bearing the white man's burden, or, in the words of one governor general of the Congo, Pierre Ryckmans, that their purpose is *dominer pour servir*. Seldom, however, does anyone dominate anyone else only in order to serve them. The usual purpose of conquest, whether of the Romans who spread throughout Europe or of the Europeans who colonized Africa and the Americas, is to acquire something of value—land, the crops that grow on it, minerals, or other natural resources—and often to gain control of the labor to extract them. The Belgians did indeed build railroads and steamboats in the Congo, but mostly to ship ivory, rubber, copper, and other products to Europe. These aims determined where the railroads and steamboats ran.

The Belgians also built the rudiments of a good public health network—but they did so on a large scale only in the 1920s, when the system of forced labor had taken such a high toll that colonial officials were panicked that they might soon have no workforce left. Needing literate workers, they built what may have been colonial Africa's best network of primary schools. Higher education, however, was scant and came late, for the Belgians assumed that independence would only come in the distant future, and that even then they might still be running the Congo. (When mass pressure did bring independence in 1960, only three of some five thousand senior officials in the Congo's civil service were Congolese.) A fair assessment of colonialism, in a museum or anywhere else, should acknowledge the maternity clinics and school classrooms, and the people, often well intentioned and idealistic, who worked in them; but it should also take account of the purposes that shaped their distribution.

3.

Again and again, both the Royal Museum's exhibit and its catalog pass glancingly over the darker side of an aspect of the Congo's history, and then stress its benign side. The technique is effective, because it doesn't seem like denial at all. While giving the casual viewer the impression that difficult matters are dealt with, the aftertaste is upbeat. For example, a catalog article about the art of the Pende people is beautifully illustrated with color photographs of objects from the museum's collection, and the author briefly mentions that the fearsome, many-mouthed monsters of Pende masks may represent fear of brutal colonial agents and forced labor recruiters. But nowhere in the book or the exhibit do we hear any details about the great Pende rebellion of 1931, which was set off when white officials set out to conscript palm oil workers by seizing Pende women as hostages. The officials then raped some of the women, and the Pende rose in revolt. Hundreds of troops were called out. By the time it was over, 344 Pende had been killed, forty-five wounded, and 1,356 arrested. Of the latter, two were sentenced to death, forty-seven to be whipped, and thirty-nine to lengthy prison terms, nine of whom died in confinement.

When dealing with specific people, the exhibit and catalog are also evasive. The catalog gives us a half-page photograph from 1895 showing the state agent Captain Léon Rom with several of his African workers (see illustration on page 39). But neither book nor exhibit says anything more. Notorious for his brutality, Rom kept a gallows permanently erected next to his house. The very same year that this photograph was taken, a visiting British explorer noted that twenty-one severed heads of African rebels "have been used by Captain Rom as a decoration round a flower-bed in front of his house!"^[11] The resemblance to Mr. Kurtz and his skulls has caught many a scholar's eye ever since.^[12]

There are other parallels as well. Like Mr. Kurtz, Captain Rom had scientific pretensions: he collected butterflies. And like Kurtz, Rom was a painter and a writer. Indeed, his jaunty, arrogant little book *Le Nègre du Congo* covers the same topics as Kurtz presumably does in his report to the Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. No one will ever know for certain if Conrad met Rom, heard about him, or had him in mind when he created Mr. Kurtz, but the museum chose to avoid showing anything that might even raise the question. A pity, since while I was writing my book on the Congo a museum archivist told me that its vaults hold five of Rom's paintings and kindly made a copy of Rom's travel notebook for me, which, in an almost calligraphic hand, shows him to have been in Leopoldville at the beginning of August 1890, just when Conrad passed through on his way to begin working as a steamboat officer.

Another form of evasion is the museum's insistence that, while the "abuses" may have been regrettable, they were, as the catalog puts it, "in breach of the law." The exhibit, for instance, displays the text of an 1896 Congo regulation which mandates good treatment of the natives. But it does not show any text from the official *Manuel du Voyageur et du Résident au Congo*, which provides detailed instructions on taking hostages in order to force a village chief to obey your instructions—which usually meant supplying men for labor. (Léon Rom was on the editorial committee for that volume.) Nor does it show the printed forms sent to state officials at the time, specifically for recording the names and villages of hostages.

A defensive-sounding placard at this point in the exhibit acknowledges the "climate of brutality" of the Leopold years, but suggests that this stopped with the end of the King's personal rule. It claims that, despite the brutality, colonialism in the Congo constituted "a liberating progress...from the very beginning," and deplores the "extreme" writers who maintain otherwise. Here, the extremists go unnamed, but in the catalog an entire article, by Phillipe Marechal, chief of the museum's history section, denounces the author he considers the worst offender. I leave others to judge whether he is right that my picture of Leopold is "*un portrait caricatural*." I suspect readers may find odd Marechal's assertion that the King's regime could not have been so deadly because there were so few white people in the Congo, and they and their black soldiers were mostly armed only with single-shot rifles or muskets. These factors did not prevent huge death tolls in many other colonies, such as those caused by the conquistadors in Latin America.

The museum's numerous evasions and distortions have provoked a group of Belgian leftists to prepare a lively "alternative guidebook" to the exhibit, available free in French.^[13] Room by room, it discusses what is missing, quotes passages from histories and memoirs, and refers the reader to other sources. Sometimes it oversimplifies, implicitly blaming all of Africa's problems on colonialism. A sad truth

is that some of what cripples Africa, such as ethnic rivalries, the abysmal position of women, and the pervasive heritage of indigenous slavery, existed long before any Europeans arrived. Still, a visitor to the exhibit should take this provocative guidebook along to be re- minded of how much is not being shown.

Why has the museum been so evasive? Although there are some factors peculiar to Belgium—the old colonials, and the country's unusually conservative senior Africa scholars, some of whom helped to plan the exhibit— in the end, no nation anywhere likes to confront difficult or shameful parts of its past. The increased attention to slavery and Native Americans in our own schoolbooks came only after strong pressure from the social movements of the 1960s. There has been nothing comparable in Belgium, where the Congolese population is tiny and politically powerless. Moreover, few museums anywhere have dealt honestly with colonialism. Try to find an exhibit in the United States about our imperial ventures in the Philippines or Central America. The Royal Museum's mixed effort is better than none at all.

4.

On two matters, however, the exhibit and its catalog are particularly lacking. In the first case, their denial of the truth is of the old-fashioned, head-in-the-sand variety; in the second it involves outright misrepresentation.

As in most of early colonial Africa, the Congo's economy was based on compulsion. Forced laborers did not just tap rubber; they were the porters who carried the white men's supplies into the interior and carried the ivory out to the coast. They were— after being trained in special schools run by Catholic missionaries—the conscripts who made up King Leopold's private army.

The exhibit has a few photographs of porters carrying heavy loads, but a caption assures us that "the arrival of the railroad, then steamboat navigation, allowed the reduction of the human and economic costs of portage." This ignores the fact that for several decades steamboat crews were conscripted (depending on size, each boat required up to several dozen woodcutters to fuel its boilers), and that building the railroads involved some of the deadliest work of all. Even according to the understated official figures, some 1,800 Africans died in the 1890s during the building of the 241-mile line around the lower Congo River's great rapids. And, contrary to what is implied in the exhibit, forced labor in no way was eased in 1908, when the Congo passed from Leopold's personal rule to Belgium's. When the same railway line was widened and rebuilt between 1923 and 1932, the regime mobilized 68,000 forced laborers and members of their families, of whom 7,700 died. (This was colonial business as usual: a competing railway built at the same time in French Equatorial Africa cost 20,000 lives.) The practice of taking family members or chiefs as hostages continued more than two decades after Leopold's death.

According to one caption in the exhibit, regulations against forced labor were put into effect in the 1930s. This is nonsense. The late Jules Marchal, a retired Belgian diplomat who was the greatest historian of the colonial Congo, devoted three books to the forced labor system—in the mines, in railway building, and in palm oil production—in the period between 1910 and 1945 alone.^[14] His work on a fourth volume, about World War II, when the legal maximum for forced labor was increased to 120 days per man per year and the penalty for refusal was six months in prison,

came to a halt when the Belgian government cut off his access to the colonial archives.

Articles in the 271-page catalog are concerned with Congolese music, art, national parks, and the bus system of Léopoldville. There is a journal excerpt of a visit to the Congo by Belgium's Prince Albert. But not a single article—or a single display case in the museum—is devoted to the foundation of the territory's colonial economy—forced labor. Nowhere in either book or exhibit can you find the word "hostage."

The only subject touchier than forced labor in colonial African history is population decline. Like most other indigenous peoples who fell victim to rapid conquest, from Native Americans to Australian Aborigines, the Congolese suffered huge losses. As happened elsewhere, disease took a far greater toll than outright killing.

Accounts from the colonial period itself are deeply alarmist. "We run the risk of someday seeing our native population collapse and disappear," declared the permanent committee of the National Colonial Congress of Belgium in 1924, "so that we will find ourselves confronted with a kind of desert."^[15] Writing in 1920, R.P. Van Wing, a Jesuit missionary anthropologist, estimated that the particularly hard-hit Bakongo had lost 80 percent of their people.^[16]

Major Charles C. Liebrechts, a long-time high colonial official, estimated the same year that since the beginning of colonization, the territory's overall population had been cut in half. The official Commission Instituée pour la Protection des Indigènes made a similar reckoning in 1919.^[17] If these estimates of a 50 percent toll are correct, how many people would that be? In the early 1920s the first territory-wide census, when adjusted for undercounting, placed the colony's inhabitants at some ten million. If that figure is accurate and if it represents 50 percent of what the population had been when the first white colonizers began arriving in 1879, this would suggest a loss of some ten million people.

The exhibit deals with this question in a wall panel misleadingly headed "Genocide in the Congo?" This is a red herring, for no reputable historian of the Congo has made charges of genocide; a forced labor system, although it may be equally deadly, is different. Dismissing the high estimates of earlier times, the wall panel says that, by contrast,

Today a scientific consensus has been reached for the whole of Central Africa... The history of demographic decline in the period between 1875 and 1925/1930 [is] estimated at 20 percent.

Is it? Apart from people associated with the museum, most scholars would not agree. David Levering Lewis in his 1987 *The Race to Fashoda: European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa* set the figure at eight million, a loss of only slightly less than 50 percent. A Congolese historian writing in 1998, Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, a member of the exhibit's advisory committee, estimated the death toll at roughly 13 million,^[18] which would mean an even greater percentage loss. Daniel Vangroenweghe, a Belgian anthropologist, one of whose books is based on extensive fieldwork in the Congo,^[19] also believes that there was a loss of 50 percent, although he feels the first census set the population figure far too high.

The most authoritative voice belongs to the Belgian-born Jan Vansina, Vilas professor emeritus of history and anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, one of the most distinguished scholars in African studies, and the author of more than a dozen books on the peoples of the Congo basin. From "innumerable local sources from different areas: priests noticing their flocks were shrinking, oral traditions, genealogies, and much more,"^[20] he estimates that between 1880 and 1920 the population of the Congo was cut "by at least a half."^[21]

The museum placard claiming a "scientific consensus" for the much lower figure is strange for another reason: the sole text in the entire exhibit with a bibliography, it lists three books. Are these, then, the studies on which the consensus figure is based? A reader who consults the books will find that they do not support it. Of the population decline, one book listed says only, "A tenth? A quarter? A half? One cannot have any idea."^[22] A second estimates the drop at "30 percent to 50 percent."^[23] In the third, Léon de St. Moulin, author of many studies on Congo demography, concludes: "The population declined...by at least a third, possibly by half."^[24]

To claim a consensus for your position when none exists is to deceive. And to cite sources that in fact contradict what you say is not only deceptive but embarrassing. The Royal Museum for Central Africa has the collections, the space, the funding, and the archival resources to be one of the great specialized museums of the world. But without admitting to so much of its subject's history, it is a long way from that now.

Notes

^[1] A forty-four-page pamphlet of text and photos is available in English from the museum's Web site: www.congo2005.be/geheugen/brochureEN.pdf.

^[2] For another controversy over the presentation of history in a museum, see *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, edited by Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt (Metropolitan, 1996), on the attack against the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum when it tried to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

^[3] Above all in E.D. Morel's voluminous writings, but also in later works such as Neal Ascherson's *The King Incorporated: Leopold II in the Age of Trusts* (Doubleday, 1964).

^[4] English-language edition: *The Assassination of Lumumba* (Verso, 2001).

^[5] See the London *Guardian* article by Stephen Bates, "The Hidden Holocaust," May 13, 1999.

^[6] These came chiefly in Belgium's Dutch-language newspapers. These papers, compared to the country's press in French, tend to be more critical of the monarchy, of the idea of Belgium as a unitary state, and of institutions like the Royal Museum for Central Africa, which are seen as linked to both. The colonial-era exhibit is one of many special events this year being marketed to celebrate Belgium's 175th anniversary as a nation.

[7] Raf Casert, "Belgium's Haunted History in Congo Moves from Heroes to Horror," February 22, 2005.

[8] "La Belgique confrontée à la violence de son aventure coloniale au Congo," February 26, 2005.

[9] "Congo-Belgique: la fin de l'amnésie?" *Télé Moustique*, February 9, 2005. ¹

[10] Anthony Brown, "Dark Heart of Congo's Former Rulers Returns to Haunt Them," March 12, 2005.

[11] E.J. Glave, "Cruelty in the Congo Free State," *The Century Magazine*, September 1897, p. 706.

[12] See, for example, John Lester, "Captain Rom: Another Source for Kurtz?," *Conradiana*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1982), p. 112, and Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate All the Brutes* (New Press, 1996), p. 29.

[13] Tony Busselen, "Un autre regard sur Turveren—Guide alternatif de l'exposition," at [www.intal.be/fr/article.php? article Id=335&menuId=1](http://www.intal.be/fr/article.php?article%20Id=335&menuId=1).

[14] All are under the rubric *L'Histoire du Congo 1910–1945*. The first volume is available in English as *Forced Labor in the Gold and Copper Mines* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2003); the other two are *Travail forcé pour le rail* (Borgloon, Belgium: Éditions Paula Bellings, 2000) and *Travail forcé pour l'huile de palme de Lord Leverhulme* (Borgloon: Éditions Paula Bellings, 2001), forthcoming in English from Verso.

[15] André Hoornaert and O. Louwers, *La Question sociale au Congo: Rapport au Comité du Congrès Colonial National* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1924), p. 101.

[16] *Études Bakongo: Histoire et Sociologie* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1920), p. 115.

[17] *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, Vol. 13, No. 5 (May 15, 1920), pp. 657–662.

[18] *Histoire générale du Congo: De l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique* (Paris: Duculot, 1998), p. 344. Professor Ndaywel è Nziem informs me that further research for the next edition of his book has made him lower his estimate to ten million. But that would still imply a 50 percent loss of population.

[19] Daniel Vangroenweghe, *Du Sang sur les lianes* (Brussels: Hatier, 1986).

[20] Interview, September 1995, quoted in Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p. 233.

[21] Introduction to Vangroenweghe, *Du Sang sur les lianes*, p. 10.

[22] Gilles Sautter, *De l'Atlantique au fleuve Congo: Une géographie du sous-peuplement* (Paris/La Haye: Mouton, 1966), Vol. 2, p. 986.

[23] Bouda Etemad, *La Possession du monde: Poids et mesures de la colonization* (XVIII^e–XX^e siècles) (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2000), p. 132.

[24] "What Is Known of the Demographic History of Zaire Since 1885?" in *Demography from Scanty Evidence: Central Africa in the Colonial Era*, edited by Bruce Fetter (Lynne Rienner, 1990), p. 303.