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**Congo, the Brutal History**

BBC <https://youtu.be/qx2Sj1fhSso>

1. What was the word that Europeans used to justify their imperialist rule in Africa?​
2. How did Leopold convince the West to let him take the Congo? ​
3. What is the lucrative natural resource that the Congo have?​
4. How did Leopold enforce his rule over the people of the Congo? What was the strategy that Leopold used to force the Congolese people to work for him?​
5. What are “human zoos”? ​
6. What was the long-term effects of Leopold’s rule over the Congo?
7. What are your reactions after watching this?

**Letter from King Leopold II of Belgium to Colonial Missionaries, 1883**

Reverends, Fathers and Dear Compatriots:

The task that is given to fulfill is very delicate and requires much tact. You will go certainly to evangelize, but your evangelization must inspire above all Belgium interests. Your principal objective in our mission in the Congo is never to teach the *niggers*\* to know God, this they know already. They speak and submit to a *Mungu*[[1]](#footnote-1), one *Nzambi*[[2]](#footnote-2), one *Nzakomba*[[3]](#footnote-3), and what else I don’t know. They know that to kill, to sleep with someone else’s wife, to lie and to insult is bad. Have courage to admit it; you are not going to teach them what they know already. Your essential role is to facilitate the task of administrators and industrials, which means you will go to interpret the gospel in the way it will be the best to protect your interests in that part of the world. For these things, you have to keep watch on disinteresting our savages from the richness that is plenty [in their underground. To avoid that, they get interested in it, and make you murderous] competition and dream one day to overthrow you.

Your knowledge of the gospel will allow you to find texts ordering, and encouraging your followers to love poverty, like “Happier are the poor because they will inherit the heaven” and, “It’s very difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.” You have to detach from them and make them disrespect everything which gives courage to affront us. I make reference to their Mystic System and their war fetish-warfare protection-which they pretend not to want to abandon, and you must do everything in your power to make it disappear.

Your action will be directed essentially to the younger ones, for they won’t revolt when the recommendation of the priest is contradictory to their parent’s teachings. The children have to learn to obey what the missionary recommends, who is the father of their soul. You must singularly insist on their total submission and obedience, avoid developing the spirit in the schools, teach students to read and not to reason. There, dear patriots, are some of the principles that you must apply. You will find many other books, which will be given to you at the end of this conference. Evangelize the niggers so that they stay forever in submission to the white colonialists, so they never revolt against the restraints they are undergoing. Recite every day-“Happy are those who are weeping because the kingdom of God is for them.”

Convert always the blacks by using the whip. Keep their women in nine months of submission to work freely for us. Force them to pay you in sign of recognition-goats, chicken or eggs-every time you visit their villages. And make sure that niggers never become rich. Sing every day that it’s impossible for the rich to enter heaven. Make them pay tax each week at Sunday mass. Use the money supposed for the poor, to build flourishing business centres. Institute a confessional system, which allows you to be good detectives denouncing any black that has a different consciousness contrary to that of the decision-maker. Teach the *niggers* to forget their heroes and to adore only ours. Never present a chair to a black that comes to visit you. Don’t give him more than one cigarette. Never invite him for dinner even if he gives you a chicken every time you arrive at his house.

1. Nzambi a Mpungu is the Kongo language name for high creator, Europeans refer to it as the Kongolese’ name for god. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See footnote 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See footnote 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)