

MARCEL YABILI



**Was King Leopold
Worth a Penny?**

Musée Familial Yabili

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Marcel YABILI

Was King Leopold Worth a Penny?

*Excerpt from the Book
Leopold II, the Genius and Builder King of Lumumba
(Volume V) AT THE COURT*

Musée Familial Yabili

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Law

- Code de la Zaïrianisation*, Éditions Mwanga Hebdo, 1975.
État de droit : Cour Constitutionnelle, PUL, 2012.
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The Greatest Fake News (EN), Musée Familial, 2021.
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MY job d'avant : grand reporter, Calures, 2023.
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175 millions ! en 2045, Musée Familial Yabili, 2018.
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Watoto, Musée Familial Yabili, 2021.
Kiwéle, concert de chants du cuivre, Musée Familial, 2024
100 fleurs Saint-Valentin 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

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*To Congolese historians, whose wonderful race
barely hatched,
is threatened with extinction!*

*With my thanks
To all those who welcomed this unexpected, long-lasting
and resolutely politically incorrect project.¹*

¹ There are no thanks for any sponsor. There are none!

Never think never!

Never! I would never have thought that I would have the desire or even the idea

or the time to do research or to express myself on the early years of the territorial and international entity arranged by Leopold Louis-Philippe Marie Victor of Saxe-Cobourg-Gotha, who became Leopold II, King of the Belgians and Sovereign of the Congo Free State (CFS).

I not only had good historical knowledge:

I had dedicated an entire year to reading only astonishing stories of the "heart of darkness."¹ I had the privilege of rereading a Congo that is neither virtual nor a fiction nor a collection of single images and numbers; I'm crossing it; I'm overseeing permanently its successive periods. I know these people who could be relatives or friends; I have their feelings.

But suddenly, my references collapsed. I was panicked! I was like a hiker whose compass was broken.

I had the sensation of the floor giving way under the feet of the passenger of an intercontinental flight, comfortably seated, but who suddenly realizes that he is at 10,000 meters high with the same emptiness below. My knowledge and my opinions were overwhelmed by uncertainties. The feeling was painful, revolting, and unacceptable.

One day, I exploded: "How? Has no one ever seen or shown simple realities of the past?" My anger struck like slaps to the face of a woman. She was a journalist with whom I shared a beer along a busy street in the old city for Blacks in Kamalondo, Lubumbashi, Congo. She could take the slaps. She was a high priestess of colonial violence and repentance. She had signed the preface to the reissue of *The Crime of the Belgian Congo* by Arthur Conan Doyle to revive the stinking wounds of the bearded monarch, the "forerunner of Hitler and Stalin."² But she was overwhelmed too.

What could I have told her that she didn't know already?

She reacted by ordering a new round of beer, accompanied by strongly spiced goat grills that refreshed our ideas as well as our views on the tables around us and the street that were bathing, like us, in joyful and noisy music. These people had nothing in common with their ancestors.

These battalions of miserable, humiliated, degraded, and abused guys at the price of blood, who are reduced to stinking balls thrown at Leopold II, as if they themselves were stinking balls! We should probably dissect the usual narratives and extract the substance. The crime of Congo was a violation of the Berlin Treaty of 1885 and of the right to protection and well-being of the populations. This always marked Congolese society.

It is a young woman who had been arrested and locked in a dungeon. She spent the night there, standing, in a toilet that the nostrils would not have tolerated at a thousand meters away. The next day, she was transferred to prison. I was told about it, and I got involved. "Whatever the grievances, don't arrest people; don't lock them up; don't traumatize them..." I said to a magistrate. He recommended me to the person in charge of the "feasibilities" of the files. Because it was compulsory to hand them the money for them to take care of the case. But once released, the young woman revealed that she had been violated in her intimacy by agents of the public prosecutor. She went requesting protection by the United Nations human rights office. This happened at the time when Congo itself was crying out for the violation of its borders and besieging the UN and the Westerners for its own protection. On their side, the Sahel countries (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) had broken with France because it had not provided them with protection against jihadists. Previously, in the 19th century, more than 400 Congolese nations had placed themselves under the protection of the banner of Leopold II.³

Immersion in the Congo recalibrates and rearranges perceptions and historical feelings, all imposed by narratives. But what had I told the journalist?

The map that had 'deflowered' me

Even I had already been shaken! Three years earlier! The Royal Museum for Central Africa, short-named Tervuren, had published the Geographic Maps of Africa.⁴

I had immediately acquired the book and its Dutch version for a friend. My interest also had a personal reason. The publication had been funded by a young Belgian billionaire who had grown up in my town. I had known his father, a great athlete and great cyclist, through mutual friends. But the sponsor had fallen from grace due to his business dealings; the museum expressed discomfort as gratitude for his kindness. Nevertheless, it is a beautiful book that contains a DVD of the digital maps of the continent from 1486 to 1921.

Usually, such publications are self-sufficient: after skimming them, they are put on the shelf in one's library.

Old maps are interesting because they are enriched over time by the reports of explorers.

Each discovery, for example, of rivers, was documented and recorded on the map, which thus reflects history. It is fascinating. I had come across the map on page 223, titled Sketch of Central Africa and the Congo Basin as it was delineated by the Berlin Conference, National Institute of Geography, Brussels, January 1, 1885.

The map shows the complete course of the Congo River, which rises from the southeast, widens and crosses the equator twice, and descends to the southwest to flow into the Atlantic. The map reproduces the explorations recorded on January 1st, 1885. The river is adorned with a few tributary ends, but the vastness of the Congo is bare; it is marked:

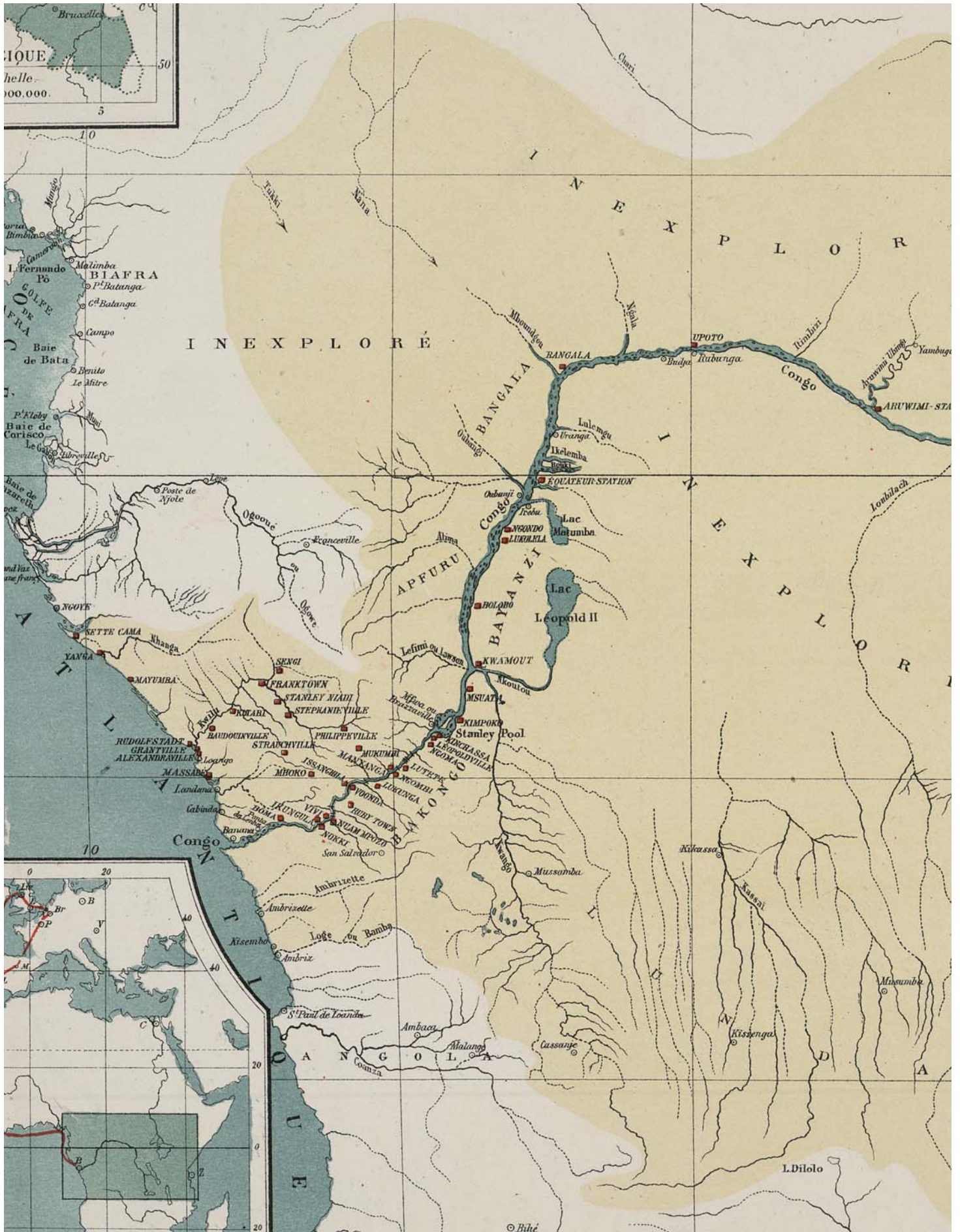
UNEXPLORED in the northwest of the Equator;

UNEXPLORED in the north of the Equator;

UNEXPLORED in the south of the Equator;

UNEXPLORED in the northeast.

Here is this map.



Henry Morton Stanley had crossed the continent, from 1874 to 1877, and traveled 11,000 kilometers in 999 days. He came back to explore some portions of the territory.⁵ In 1880, he declared that he had counted the Congolese population. According to him, there were 25 million inhabitants⁶.

Since the population of Stanley in 1880 is compared to that counted in 1920. The arithmetic difference of 10 to 15 million inhabitants would establish that populations have disappeared since the census of 1880. This arithmetic depopulation is the undeniable proof of the crime of the Congo. And Leopold II became the "forerunner of Hitler and Stalin."⁷ Both guilty of human slaughter.

I knew all of this.

But here it is! The map on page 223 had startled me.

How had Stanley counted the entire population in 1880, in a real and definitive manner, while the territory was still largely unexplored according to the map of January 1885? It was overwhelming. A great historical truth, universally accepted and exploited, was blown up by the sincerity of a simple, innocent map.

Was it an isolated case? Or a sign of negligence and incompetence of the narrators? Or their contempt for the truth? For the real existence of millions of people, reduced to statistics and used as disappeared in blood?

I was intrigued. The map only appeared in 2017, so it had not been examined by generations of narrators who have cast the bronze of the history of the Congo.

I doubted that these people could have perceived the date and the four mentions of "UNEXPLORED" on this map. Or that new knowledge would ever replace their beliefs.

Anyway, I was not angry. Even less so.

I had lost trust in the narratives.

I was deflowered...

The king of Lumumba

Shortly before our meeting, the journalist had discovered a bust of Leopold II in the main square of a Congolese city. She was in shock! She would have never thought it.

No one will believe her; so indoctrinated are the people.

Immersion in the real Congo also reveals that Patrice Lumumba, the irreducible anti-colonialist, had never condemned Leopold II but had praised him as a "brilliant king, king builder." Was he alone in his time? And in the Congo today?

It is without cowardice or complacency towards the colonial past that the Congolese have their own perceptions and feelings.

For example, Tintin is a hero of the current Congo.



Screenshots © All rights reserved to unidentified authors.

There is a university professor who pays tribute to Léopold II "for all his efforts and sacrifices made."⁸



© Emmanuel Banywesize Mukambilwa

This other university professor visited, without any complexes, the tomb of Leopold II in the Royal Crypt of Laeken, etc.

From the "magical" to the bulimic

Whatever the stories, reading books is magical!

Common descriptions provide particular perceptions to each reader. Everyone perceives their nuance of the same color or the intensity of a loving embrace.

And when it comes to the Congo, one must have lived there to feel what escapes many. Thus, the 'Lone Star Flag' has been the flag of all periods of the Congo because it reproduces the blue of the sky and the light of the stars⁹.

But Mobutu saw rather the forests and got a green banner.

Yvan had learned the benefits and the taste of reading from a German who had failed in his colonial childhood bush.

'You should read *The Wounded Tree* by Han Suyin,' he told me. The edition was out of print, and it was a used copy bought on eBay that revealed to me a fantastic story that I brought back in my saga on Chinese penetration in the Congo.¹⁰

'The Chinese writer talks about her family and the torments of mercantilist capitalism. And how Leopold II got involved. The monarch's idea was to acquire land concessions to build railways and, by doing so, obtain the right to exploit the land and the natural resources on both sides of the railway. Because laying tracks in China gave the right to colonies!

'But China was already solicited by Americans, English, French, and Germans. Leopold II had little influence with his 'small' Belgian crown. Fortunately, the Chinese were scalded by the Opium Wars and the abuses of the great capitalist countries. Leopold II exploited this resentment by betting, before the letter, on a preferential south- south relationship! His railway investment would not come from Europe or America but from a new continent: Africa, and from a new country: the Congo Free State! He sent to China a team composed notably of Baron de Vinck and Emile Francqui. The delegates received 'Congolese' passports.¹¹ In 1897, these white Africans were warmly welcomed in China.

"But the viceroy Li Hing Tchang did not hide his astonishment at a reception: "We thought that Congolese were Blacks!"

"The EIC bought plots in China, and a consortium of Belgian and Chinese financiers obtained the construction of the 1,200 km of railway between Beijing and Hankow. A route that crossed rich regions coveted by colonial powers. Engineer Jean Jadot completed the construction, including a 3,500-meter bridge over the Yellow River. Later, he came to build in the Congo the railway link between Bukama and Port-Francqui (Ilebo); the city of Likasi bore the name."

The most extraordinary thing in this story was King Leopold.

Using an African nationality in 1895 to win an international contract in the name of a third-worldism that was not even imaginable. He was extremely cunning, very elegant, and very refined; admiring English speakers would say "SMART!" or "magical!"

It was probably the first time that Congolese nationals were respected and considered internationally. With this "coup," the international status of the Congo Free State (CFS) does not deserve mockery from salons but pride from Africans. Indeed, at that time, the colonized had the nationality of their metropolises. And the continent had only three sovereign states: Ethiopia (800 BC), Liberia (1847), and the EIC (1885).

This had never been perceived. Nor told.

The giant of Africa, the giant of Asia, the story of a fight unknown, my saga of Chinese penetration in Congo, progressed a century, and the second book, China-Congo, chronicle of a chosen colonization.

The third volume dealt with a turning point in history: the Chinese, who had built railways, proposed to lay tracks in Congo! But in exchange for natural resources. They spoke of a "contract of the century"! Of leonine clauses, accusations of resource plundering, and natural and blood minerals.

Wasn't contemporary Congolese history with China the beginning again of *Blood on the Vines* by Daniel Vangroenweghe?

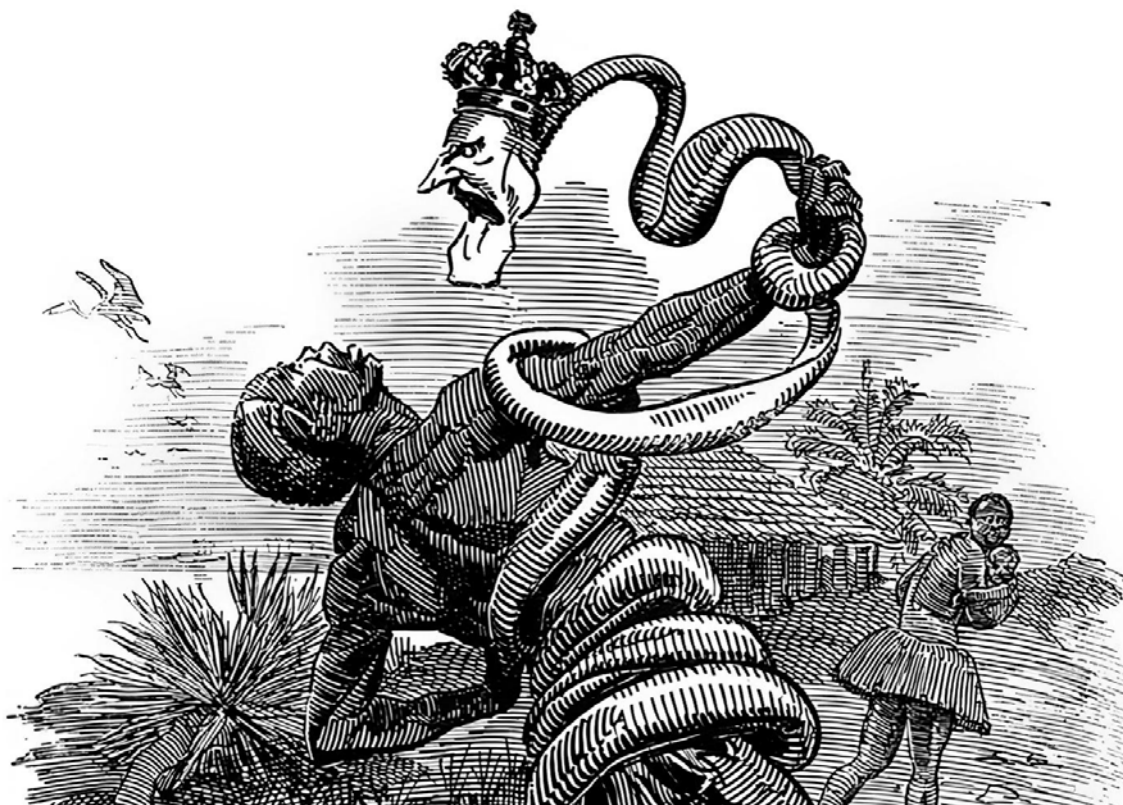
Of the plundering of natural resources?

Of King Leopold?

The world and undisputed king of rubber?

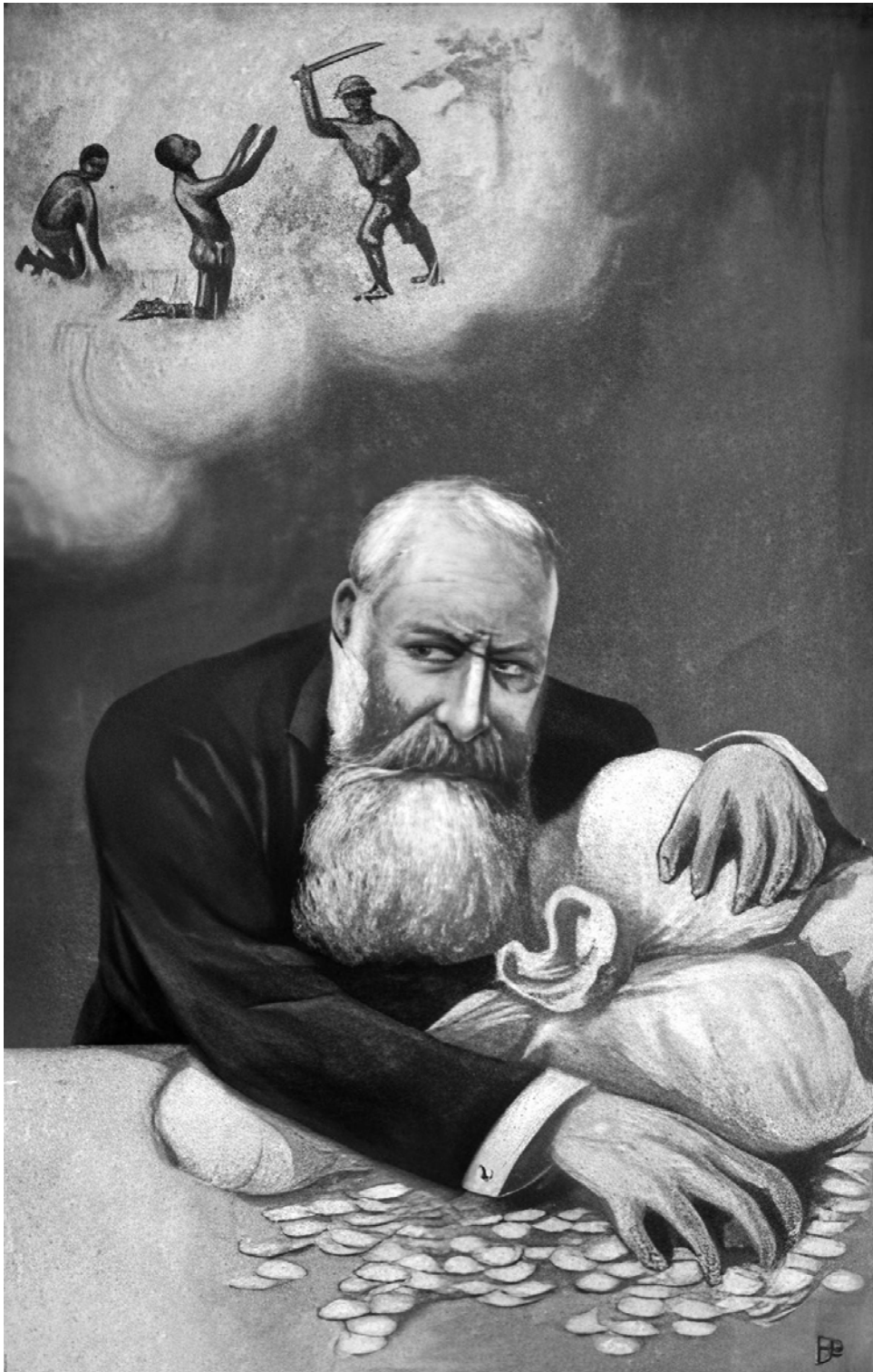
I could report this historical precedent in a few lines from popular stories and illustrations.

The British consul Roger Casement is the universal reference of this period. He spoke of a "rubber war." The Congo had several natural riches, including ivory, but it is marked by the voracity and rubber of the Belgian monarch, even in images.



In the Rubber Coils, the Congo "Free" State © Wikimedia Commons.

This has never been told



According to the accounts, rubber was extremely profitable. Leo II was depicted "throning over piles of human skulls, surrounded by bags of gold, the fruit of his plundering... pressuring his black subjects in a barbaric and cruel manner to satisfy his insatiable greed..." © Wikimedia Commons.

I could write, like anyone else with relevance, that *"Leopold II was a monarch who dreamed of greatness for the young kingdom of Belgium, but above all of making a fortune for himself. Unable to buy or conquer a colony by arms, he set up a brand new territory in the heart of Africa that he pompously named the Congo Free State (CFS). It was his "personal state," his "personal colony." He could do anything and take everything. Suddenly, the Congo Basin, which had been labeled as "terra ignota, or unknown land," revealed itself to be a gem, a bonanza: rubber. The intoxication of money always drives one mad. There were victims among the populations. There were also jealous countries and their supplements that fought Leopold II to try to take from him the beautiful Congolese¹². In a word, Leopold II was the world king of rubber. Etc. »*

However, this popular narrative was based on the romantic charge and emotionalism, a multitude of implausibilities, and a high rate of abuses. This format was not suitable for evoking or assessing similarities with the ongoing Chinese penetration in the Congo at the cost of millions of tons of minerals and the value of billions of US dollars. Thus, talking about the economic and financial past of the CFS now required economic data too. It was new.

The nature and value of rubber deserve clarification. The latex comes from the sap of tropical forest plants.

However, "pure rubber has several defects: it is very sticky when exposed to the sun, it melts at high temperatures, and it becomes hard and brittle at low temperatures, etc. Some discoveries had improved its uses between 1770 and 1835.¹³ In 1839, Charles Goodyear invented industrial vulcanization, a process that makes rubber more resistant to temperature fluctuations."¹⁴

Then, everything accelerated. In 1885, the CFS was created. The new state needed funding." *In 1887, Dunlop invented the tire; this revolutionized the mobility of the bicycle and the automobile. Global needs exploded.*

In the Congo, Leopold II had granted himself a monopoly on almost all activities and wealth. He organized the harvest of maximum... So that the Congo became the "rubber mine" of the world. The territory provided 33,000 kilos of rubber in 1895, 50,000 in 1896, 278,000 in 1897, 508,000 kilos in 1898... These absolutely enormous harvests had brought extraordinary profits to the private companies that Leopold II had created and of which he was the main shareholder. The kilo of rubber from the Congo was 60 times lower than the price in Belgium...¹⁵ In reality, the CFS was "the reign of joke."¹⁶ etc.

This new narrative is also romantic. It indicates the quantities of rubber in kilos to stretch the figures and give the sensation of a large volume of "stolen" resources or to suggest that rubber was a "precious" material measured in grams, as it had been done for gold and silver plundered in Mexico and the Andes.¹⁷

Let's be realistic and serious: did 33 tons in 1895, 50 tons in 1896, 278 tons in 1897 and 508 tons in 1898 deserve the attribution of the title of world rubber king?

It is also noted that the world title is awarded based on only 4 of the 23 years of the absolutist sovereign's reign, super rich and thief. Other narrators use the span of 6 years (1896 to 1901) to assert that rubber would represent 53 to 87% of exports.¹⁸ Etc.

These manipulations of restricted figures had aroused the curiosity and encouraged small research. And, surprisingly, the documentation existed, and it was abundant. One quickly discovers the poverty of popular narratives. Some consistent data on the CFS indicate that there had been 576,500 kilos of rubber (and not 33,000) in 1895, 1,317,300 (and not 50,000) in 1896, 1,662,400 (and not 278,000) in 1897 and 2,113,500 (and not 508,000) in 1898. The "plunder" was more significant...

Popular narratives could have awarded five crowns...

We also discover that the economic data all comes from the Official Bulletin of the CFS, which totaled 10,000 pages over 23 years (1885-1908). Therefore, the Congo was not managed as a personal piggy bank.

This had never been told.

| TOTAL RUBBER OF THE CFS | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Years | Total weight in Kilos | Total value in Congolese francs Fc |
| 1886 | 30.951 | 136,184 Fc |
| 1887 | 30.050 | 116,768 Fc |
| 1888 | 74.294 | 260,029 Fc |
| 1889 | 131.113 | 438,895 Fc |
| 1890 | 123.666 | 556,497 Fc |
| 1891 | 81.680 | 326,720 Fc |
| 1892 | 156.339 | 625,356 Fc |
| 1893 | 241.153 | 964,612 Fc |
| 1894 | 338.194 | 1,472,944 Fc |
| 1895 | 358.879 | 1,794,365 Fc |
| 1896 | 1.317.346 | 6,586,730 Fc |
| 1897 | 1.662.380 | 8,311,900 Fc |
| 1898 | 2.113.465 | 15,850,987 Fc |
| 1899 | 3.746.789 | 28,100,917 Fc |
| 1900 | 5.316.534 | 39,874,005 Fc |
| 1901 | 6.022.733 | 43,965,950 Fc |
| 1902 | 5.350.452 | 41,733,525 Fc |
| 1903 | 5.917.983 | 47,343,864 Fc |
| 1904 | 4.830.939 | 43,478,451 Fc |
| 1905 | 4.861.767 | 43,755,903 Fc |
| 1906 | 4.848.931 | 48,480,310 Fc |
| 1907 | 4.656.723 | 43,982,748 Fc |
| 1908 | 4.559.926 | 30,770,500 Fc |
| TOTALS 23 years | 56.772.287 | 448,928,160 Fc |

Here are the 23 years. This had not been shown before.

Then, these figures have never been contested or doubted by anyone.

This too had never been told.

And this is not trivial.

This means that any researcher, even clumsy, could and absolutely had to point them out. Ignoring or mistreating the quantities of rubber disqualifies the narrators and their work. Such falsifications are not only stupid; they mock people. It is a crime against the truth.

However, these figures total all the producers (traditional, private, and public) of rubber in the territory. The CFS recorded them scrupulously because it collected customs duties at the borders. This imposition was implemented from the beginning, in 1885.

EXPORT DUTIES

| MARCHANDISES : | TAUX DU DROIT par 100 kilog. FR. C. | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Arachides | 1 30 | } Pour les quantités inférieures à 100 kilog., le droit sera perçu proportionnellement aux taux ci-contre. |
| Café | 1 00 | |
| Caoutchouc | 20 00 | |
| Copal | 8 00 | |
| Huile de palme. | 2 50 | |
| Ivoire. | 50 00 | |
| Noix palmistes | 1 20 | |
| Sésame | 1 70 | |

Vu et approuvé pour être annexé à Notre décret en date de ce jour.

Donné à Bruxelles, le 15 décembre 1885.

LÉOPOLD.

Excerpt from the Official Bulletin of the CFS.

The CFS had just been created on the 1st of July, 1885. The taxation decision shows the concern to organize the new state. Because at the time, the freedom of trade was imposed by the Berlin Treaty and prevented from taxing imports. Except for exports.

The decision indicates that economic activities existed before the creation of the CFS.

Moreover, the mere fact that rubber was immediately taxed at 20 francs per kilo shows that the populations and private individuals were already exploiting this product by themselves. This local cultural and economic reality of rubber is not perceptible in popular narratives.

On the contrary, they have established a direct link between rubber, slavery, and King Leopold. This was also abundantly illustrated.



"Isn't this a dainty dish
To set before a king?"

From The Minneapolis Journal, June 11, 1906.

© *Wikimedia Commons.*

The Inaccurate Perception of E.D. Morel

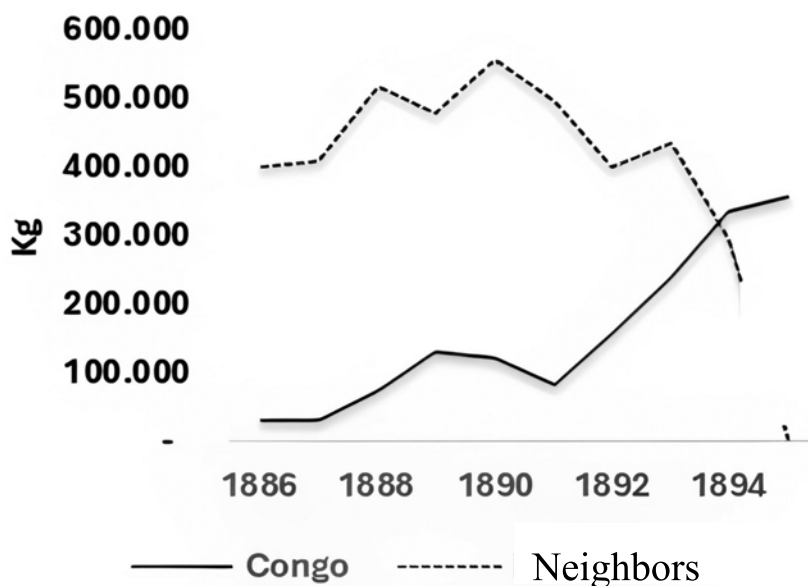
In 1890, the British Edmund Dene Morel was employed at the port of Antwerp by the shipping company Elder Dempster, which provided service to Boma, the seaport and capital of the EIC. The young accountant noticed that ships unloaded a lot of ivory and rubber and returned to Africa with weapons. He concluded that these weapons were used to harass and massacre the Congolese who supplied the precious rubber. Moreover, the material was worth seven times its production cost in Africa. That was revolting. Morel would become the CFS' irreconcilable opponent.

In 1904, he founded the *Congo Reform Association*¹⁹. His activism lasted nearly twenty years but was based on the same major denunciations he had published in 1904²⁰ and re-edited several times. Even the sensational photos of the suffering of Black people date from 1904. Thus, E.D. Morel is the reference for narrators of the Congo, but concerning the year 1904... Whether for the American Mark Twain²¹, the Englishman Arthur Conan Doyle²², or Jules Marchal²³ who directly documented Adam Hochschild²⁴. In other words, popular history is frozen in the anger of a young employee who did not have all the information from the 1890s operations and assembled the images and documents he produced in 1904.

For example, he was unaware that the weapons sent by ship were mainly used for anti-slavery campaigns ordered by the Brussels Act of 1890. Nor did he know that the Berlin Act of 1885 imposed freedom of trade "for all nations" in the Congo Basin. This obliged the CFS to transport goods, particularly from "neighboring countries," including Angola and Congo Brazzaville, via river and, later, railways²⁵. Etc. It turns out that until 1893, the volumes from neighboring countries were by far more significant²⁶. Thus, E.D. Morel had seen more Franco-Portuguese rubber than material originating from the CFS. He did not access these detailed and public statistics:

| RUBBER EXPORTED BY THE CONGO in tons | | | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------|------|-----------|-------------------|
| Year | Congo | Country neighbors | Year | Congo | Country neighbors |
| 1886 | 30.951 | 403.806 | 1892 | 156.339 | 404.060 |
| 1887 | 30.050 | 411.229 | 1893 | 241.153 | 438.176 |
| 1888 | 74.294 | 519.458 | 1894 | 338.194 | 295.320 |
| 1889 | 131.113 | 479.331 | 1895 | 358.879 | 4.773 |
| 1890 | 123.666 | 560.858 | 1896 | 1.317.346 | 175.773 |
| 1891 | 81.680 | 498.281 | 1897 | 1.662.380 | 122.998 |

A graph better expresses the predominance of the neighbors.



On their side, the ideological followers of E.D. Morel cannot ignore that the figures provided by the CFS have been confirmed by France. In particular, the *Brazza Report* states²⁷ that due to the Congolese ports of Boma and Matadi, "all the French products from the Congo basin are totally monopolized in favor of Belgium."

Morel's incomplete perceptions have distorted history.

Africa and the world also existed.

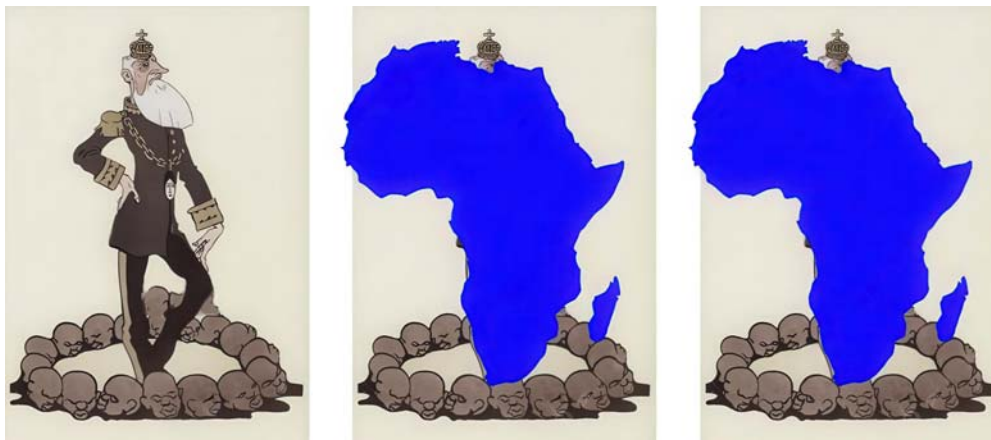
Can we forget it? Rubber is a product of the tropical forests. It was in demand by the global industry. And all the Congolese production was exported. We should seek the Congolese rank in the world. This had never been done.

Global data exists. You just have to look for them to find them; they document the 19th and 20th centuries²⁸.

One immediately discovers that Congo had neither the monopoly of the forests nor the product.

First of all, Congolese rubber represented about a third of African production²⁹.

| RUBBER from Africa in tons | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Year | Total Africa | Congo | % Congolese share |
| 1890 | 3.800 | 850 | 22,36% |
| 1895 | 4.000 | 1.600 | 40,00% |
| 1900 | 15.500 | 5.800 | 37,41% |
| 1902 | 12.300 | 6.200 | 50,40% |
| 1904 | 18.500 | 6.500 | 35,14% |
| 1906 | 19.500 | 6.000 | 30,76% |
| 1908 | 15.600 | 5.200 | 33,33% |
| General average | | | 35,63% |



*One rich oppressor in Congo for two rich oppressors in Africa
Photomontage by the author © Wikimedia Commons.*

How do E.D. Morel and his followers attribute to King Leopold the African crown of rubber and the entire balance sheet (assets and liabilities) of this exploitation without knowing or saying anything about the two beside rich and oppressors in the continent?

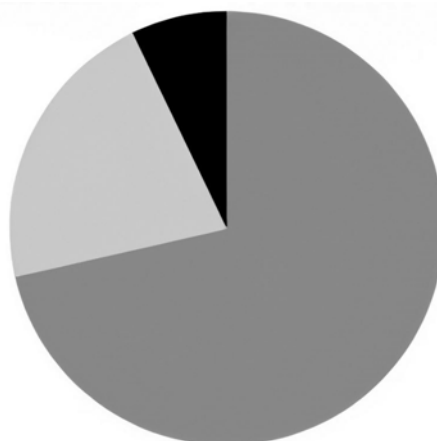
Moreover, rubber was more exploited outside of Africa. One can search and find statistics on global production. Here they are, for the first time.³⁰

World rubber and CFS' percentage

| Année | Amérique du Sud | Brésil | Afrique | Congo | % part Mondiale congolaise |
|-------|-----------------|--------|---------|-------|----------------------------|
| 1890 | 25.100 | 16.000 | 3.800 | 850 | 3,38% |
| 1895 | 26.500 | 21.200 | 4.000 | 1.600 | 6,04% |
| 1900 | 36.200 | 28.500 | 15.500 | 5.800 | 16,02% |
| 1902 | 41.100 | 30.100 | 12.300 | 6.200 | 15,09% |
| 1904 | 46.000 | 33.200 | 18.500 | 6.500 | 14,13% |
| 1906 | 46.200 | 38.500 | 19.500 | 6.000 | 12,99% |
| 1908 | 52.000 | 39.300 | 15.600 | 5.200 | 10,00% |
| | | | | | Moyenne 11,09% |

The figures vary according to the sources. But they confirm clearly and unequivocally that:

- 1° rubber was produced, 70%, in South America.
- 2° Africa (excluding Congo) provided about 20%.
- 3° the CFS represented about 10%.



Congo Africa World



© Wikimedia Commons.

Here is how the narrators represent King Leopold:
He is the undisputed global king of rubber...
He reigns over the massacre of populations.

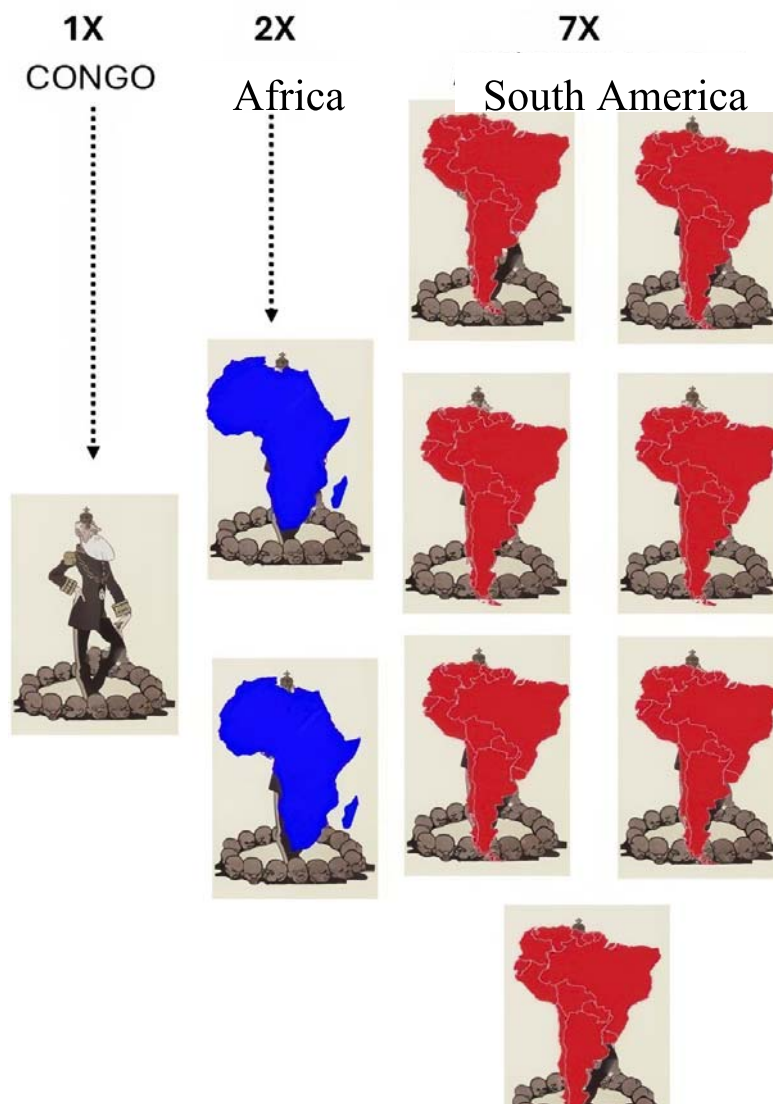


... but here is the same representation in accordance with the proportion of global rubber quantities (NB. 1 to 9). King Leopold looks a kinglet...

Indignation and anger

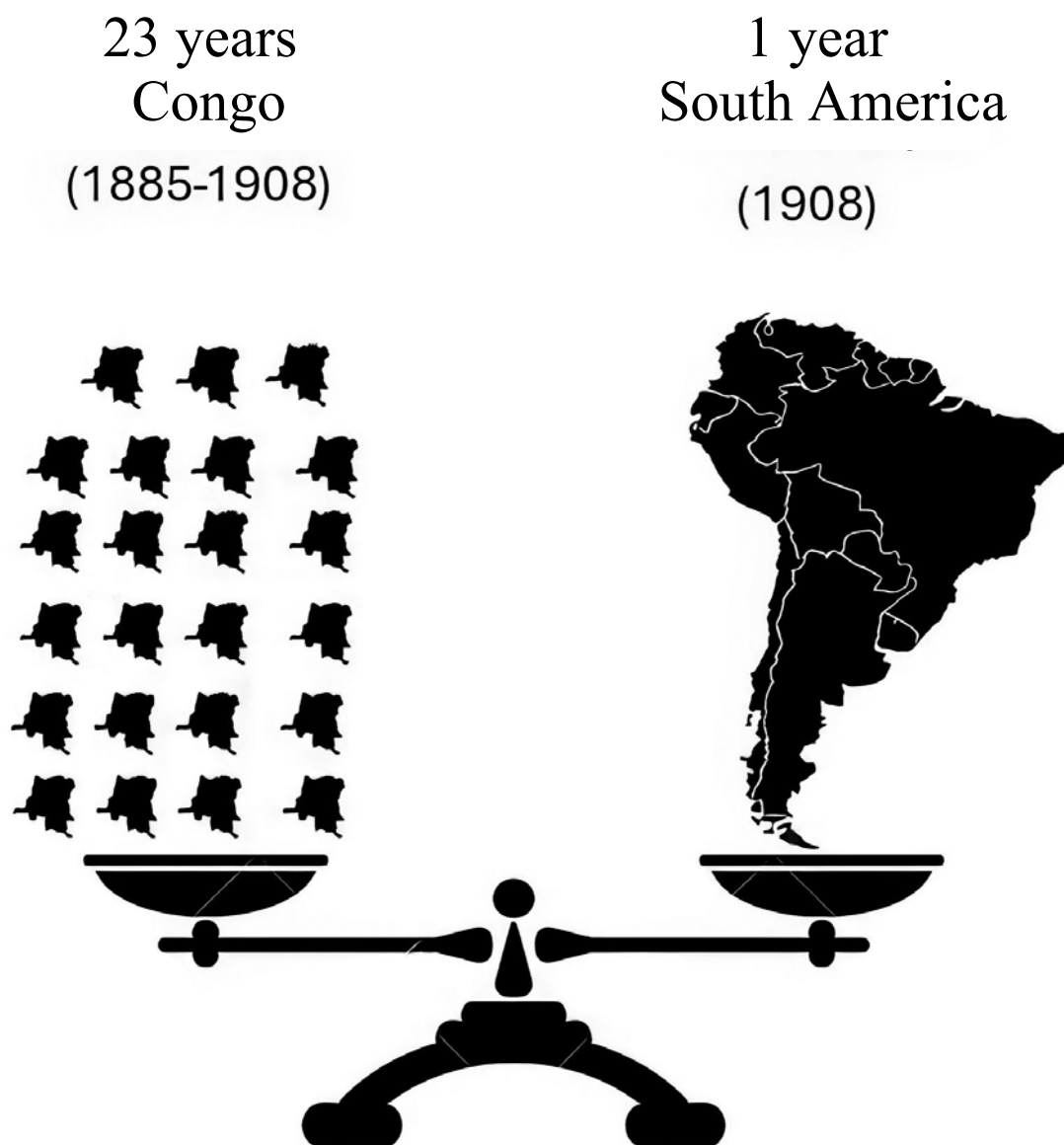
I had said to the journalist, "We are told that the King of rubber was Leopold. It is not said that Africa got two King Leopold! That America got seven King Leopold! What is the value of the stories about the Congo only with the omission of the nine other King Leopold"

Worldwide real percentage of rubber wealth



Photomontage by the author © Wikimedia Commons.

I had insisted, "There is something more blatant: the global statistics show that in 1908, South America had produced in that single year 52,000 tons; that was almost as much as the whole of King Leopold's production, as the CFS had put on the international market the 56,000 tons in 23 years, from 1885 to 1908."



Photomontage by the author © Wikimedia Commons.

I had added, "The narrators mock people!"

As the loud music in the fallen night drowned out our voices, I had raised my voice. I was outraged. Angry!

I shouted, "Was that the great bloody plunder of rubber?"

She pinched the foam of a new beer with her lips. Then she said to me, "Those who feed us with information haven't done all their work!"

And she concluded, "Why wouldn't you do it?"

I had never thought of that.

A pentalogy

Since then, my indignation and anger have transformed into passion for research and sharing coherent elements of the history of Congo.

To the point of dedicating 5 years and 5 books to it. A pentalogy.

I started with historical criticism. It uncovered a multitude of Fake news (T1, 2020), stacked and constant, that have forged a racist representation of Congolese people still victims of abuse and humiliation. This is shocking!

Then, I went through 135 years and + (T3, 2021), from Leopold II to today, passing through Lumumba, with the journeys of ordinary people. Real existences provide accounts of dignities. And the history of the country is coherent, understandable, and more truthful; it is calm and resilient.

I denounced A Fraud (T2, 2022), that of writing a Belgian history of Congo without its request or participation.

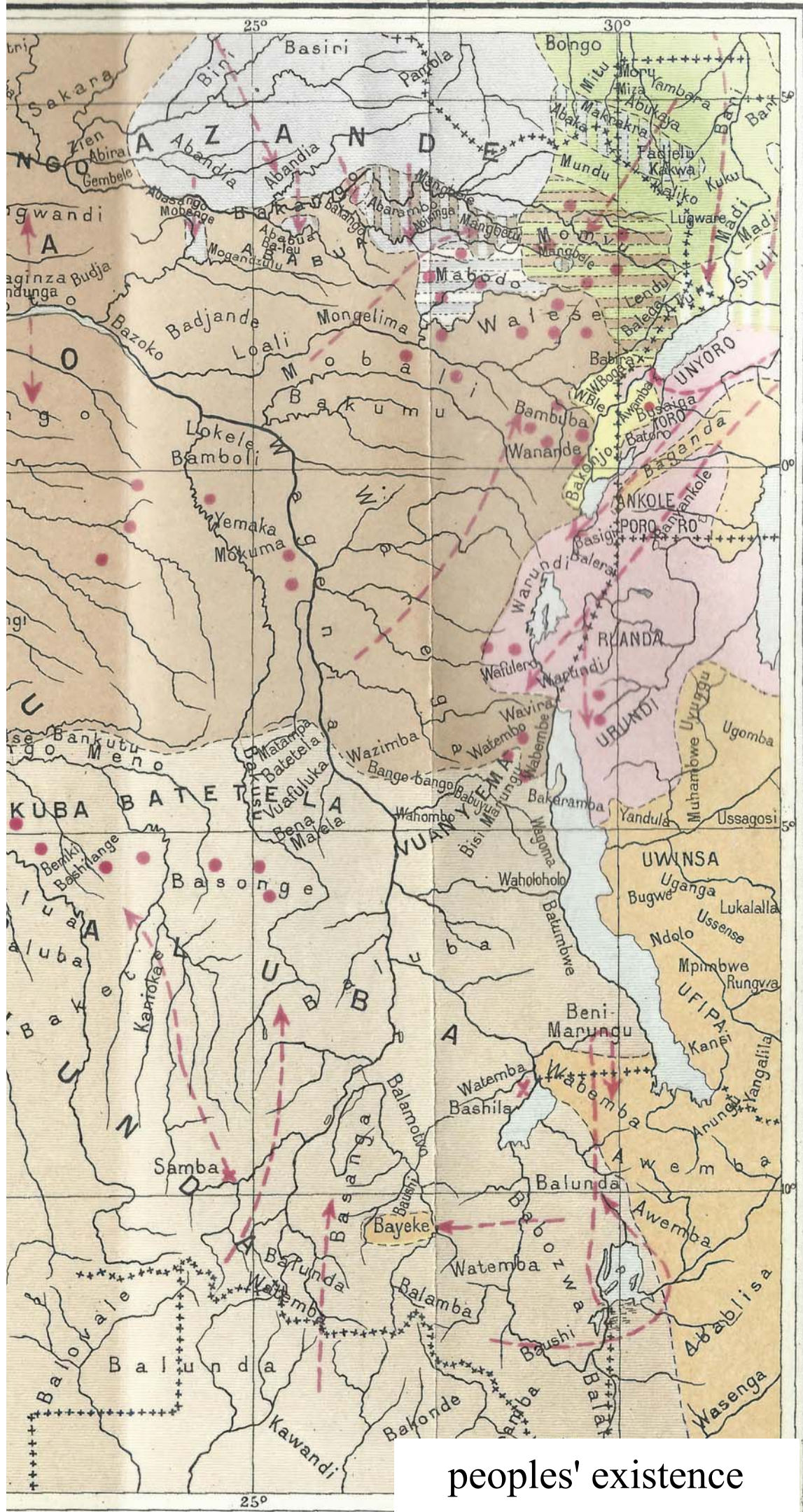
The White Paper (T4, 2023) gathered unpublished documents: maps, images, statistics, and facsimiles of organizational acts and management of Congo, year by year. This foundation of information and the dynamics of the construction of Congo can liberate and open minds.

Finally! "The numerous and repeated accusations, serious and unforgivable, against Leopold II can be brought to the Tribunal (T5), 2025. They will be examined from all angles in terms of culpabilities and responsibilities for "crimes in the State" and "state crimes" according to the criteria of current laws, including those of the International Criminal Court. Too bad or good!"³¹ 31

I have gathered and shared a lot of information. Always interesting. Known or incomplete or distorted, or unknown. Or even hidden.

This is the case of the book from which this map from 1907 is extracted.

(See the next two pages).



peoples' existence

I have wonderful friends. Useful. Yvan, him again (see p. 15), had brought me a rare work. So precious to him that he did not allow me, despite our great friendship, to keep it for only a few days. It was a 532-page book, published in 1908.

I had been seduced by the insertion of geographical maps (physical, ethnographic, political, and geological), carefully folded to fit between the pages of the bound book. Extraordinary thing, the maps were printed in color. With the luxury of four-color printing. In 1908. Even more extraordinary, these maps were detailed.

By comparing them to the layouts of January 1885 (see pp. 10 and 11), one discovered the penetration of the country in 23 years. The areas once marked "UNEXPLORED" were now covered with thousands of waterways, lines of curves of natural, economic, and geological resources, new cities, administrative boundaries, etc.

These geographical data write the history of the CFS. The ethnographic map (see the previous two pages) describes the populations that would have been halved after the Stanley census of 1880. For the first time, these populations are very real. They are not numbers from an arithmetic subtraction; they have names, connections, implantations, and multiple diversities³². They are all actors, victims, and witnesses of their effective existence and their arithmetic extinction; bearers of collective memories that bring or remove coherence from narratives.

The map is current. It confirms the presence on the ground in Congo of certain border ethnic groups and would put an end to pointless quarrels about their nationality of origin.

In short, this book is a treasure. Unmissable...

But it is completely ignored. It does not appear in any bibliography. No one cites this important and interesting book. They hide things, or they overlook them.

Is this acceptable?

How many sources and pieces of information are in this case? Again, I was indignant.

Angry. Often and too many times.

It is one minute to midnight.

Ultimately, the history of the Congo is a complacent script. It features a white king, greedy and nauseating: the Congo and the Congolese, sets and extras abused by colonialism.

A successful script, with remakes, that pays off! From the fame: money. It's a kind of Congolese rubber that the whole world comes to harvest.

"A new dramatized Hollywood version has been developed by American directors Ben Affleck and Martin Scorsese, in co-production with singer Harry Belafonte. The true story could still survive the twisted blow twisted by Adam Hochschild, author of *King Leopold's Ghosts*, a usurper of information who had conducted all his research in American libraries. But once Hollywood has exploited the script, the true history of the Congo will become impossible to tell. Before that happens, we must set the record straight and put an end to this form of imperialist plunder of the most malicious."³³

I myself had been outraged by Ben Affleck's project to "produce a cinematic human zoo where jets of blood in 3D would spray spectators whose hearts would bleed at the sound, in Dolby Stereo, of the groans of slaughtered beasts. This is old Hollywood, not that of *Black Panther*³⁴. Without regard for the dignity of the Congolese, unearthed like the humiliated, the degraded. It's shocking!"³⁵.

This script will be crystallized by Artificial Intelligence that cannot know the irreducible disproportion of 1 to 9 nor that Leopold was a global rubber kingpin.

Thus, it is one minute to midnight!

Do the stories of the past, our knowledge, our feelings, and our opinions remain the same if we calibrate King Leopold in fair global proportions?

Would we still have successful scripts and remakes?

In short, was King Leopold worth a penny³⁶?

That is the question !

¹ Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, known as Joseph Conrad, whose *Heart of Darkness*, 1899, is the most read and commented-on African novel.

² Adam Hochschild's, *King Leopold's Ghost*, Belfond, 1997, insults towards Leopold II.

³ Free treaties. Non-military expedition.

⁴ Wulf Bodenstern, *Geographic Maps*, MRAC co-published with Philippe De Moerloose, 2017

⁵ Stanley explored, in turn, Lakes Albert and Edward and the Congo River. from Nyangwe to Banana (1874-1877), then from Banana to the Stanley Falls (1879), Lake Leopold II and Lake Tumba (1882), and the Lulonga (1883), the Aruwimi, the Semliki, and the Ruwenzori (1887-1889).

⁶ The census was hazardous, done by 'guesswork.' Stanley himself indicated 42,608,000 inhabitants in 1880 in his book in English. Then 27,694,100 in the French translation of the same book, published the same year.

⁷ Adam Hochschild, *King*, op.cit.

⁸ Tshibangu Kalala, *The Democratic Republic of the Congo and its 11 international borders, geopolitics and international law*, Bruylant, 2023.

⁹ Or 'the light of civilization illuminating Black Africa.'

¹⁰ M. Yabili, *the Giant of Africa, the Giant of Asia*, L'Harmattan, 2012.

¹¹ Congolese nationality had been organized by the Decree of December 27, 1892. Passports as such did not yet exist; travelers received 'notes' or attestations.

¹² Paul Janson, whose main auditorium at the Free University of Brussels bears his name, said: 'I will never criticize Leopold's work (he was a member of the chamber) because those who criticize him, notably the British, only do so with the policy of 'get out of the way so I can get in'. In Erik de Toussaint of CADTM, *The Crimes of Colonial Belgium in Congo*. Dissertation work, 2020, <http://www.cadtm.org/Les-crimes-de-la-Belgique,2727>.

¹³ In 1770, an English chemist invented the first eraser to remove ink stains. In 1783, the French built a fabric of waterproof balloon made with rubber. In 1820, another English chemist improved the plasticity of rubber.

¹⁴ Romain Durand, *The History of Natural Rubber*, Ankore.co, 2021.

¹⁵ Erik de Toussaint of CADTM, *The Crimes of Colonial Belgium in Congo*. Dissertation work, 2020 <http://www.cadtm.org/Les-crimes-de-la-Belgique,2727>

¹⁶ Dr. Edoardo Baccari, *Il Congo*, Rivista Marittima, Rome, 1908 This Italian navy doctor traveled to the Congo in 1903-1904.

¹⁷ The Spaniards had plundered about 18,000 to 25,000 tons of silver and 100 to 200 tons of gold.

¹⁸ Isidore Ndaywel E Nziem, *History of Zaire, from ancient heritage to the contemporary age*, Duculot 1997.

¹⁹ Dissolved in 1912.

²⁰ *King Leopold's rule in Africa*, William Heinemann, London 1904; *Red Rubber, the story of the rubber slave trade flourishing on the Congo in the year of grace 1906*, London T. Fisher Unwin Adelphi Terrace, 1906. Renamed as *Red Rubber, the story of the Rubber Slave Trade which flourished on the Congo for twenty years, 1890-1910*. Between 1906 and 1910, the "slave trade flourishing" became the "slave trade that flourished."

²¹ Mark Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, Warren Co., Boston, 1905.

²² *The crime of the Congo*, 1909.

²³ Jules Marchal, *ED Mortel contre Léopold II, L'histoire du Congo, 1900-1910*, l'Harmattan, 1996 (2 volumes).

²⁴ Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold*, op. cit.

²⁵ According to Article 16 of the Berlin Treaty: "The roads, railways, or side canals, which may be established for the special purpose of supplementing the unnavigability or imperfections of the river route on certain sections of the Congo route, its tributaries, and other watercourses that are assimilated by Article 15, will be considered, in their capacity as means of communication, as dependencies of this river and will also be open to traffic from all nations."

²⁶ From Official Bulletin of the Congo and Brazza Report.

²⁷ *Le Rapport Brazza, Mission d'enquête au Congo : rapport et documents*, le passager clandestin, 2014.

²⁸ Jünger, *The rubber boom*, 1942 in *Rubber makes history: The conflict about the rubber monopoly* on https://www.k-online.com/en/Media_News/News/April_2014

²⁹ Jünger, *The rubber boom*, op.cit.

³⁰ Jünger, *The rubber boom*, op.cit.

³¹ Last paragraph of Volume IV, *The White Book*.

³² A.1. **Western Bantu** :

A.1.1. Bantu de la côte : a) Les Bakongo (Muserongo, Kakongo, Mayumbe, Basundi et Bakongo) et b) les Bateke (Bateke, Bambumu, Babuma, Batende, Babali et Banfumu).

A.1.2. **Forest Bantu** : 2.1 de la grande boucle du Congo et du bassin du Kasai : a) Les Bangala (Bayansi, Bakutu (*Wangata*), Baloi, Bandjo, Bangala, Bapoto (*ou Upoto : Bazoko*), Mobali (Maginza), Budja et Mondunga) ; b) Les Ababua (Ababua, Ba-Ieu, Balisi, Bengé, Mongingita, Mongandzulu, Bakango, Morisi, Mondungwali, Mondungima, Womeme, Monganga et Mobalia) ; c) Les Mongo ou

Balolo (Mongo, Maringa, Tumba, Badia ou Wadia, Bolia, Tolo ou Babai, Lesa (*Basatu et Dekese*) et Boleno ; d) Les Kundu (Bole, Busira, Kele, Imoma, Bolongo, Yangi, Elanga, Penge, Yembe et Bakonda) ; e) Les Balodi ; f) Les Banguli et g) Les Badinga. 2.2. Bantu des forêts du bassin de l'Ubangi : Les Bwaka, Gobu, Banziri, Bongo (Wate - *Sango, Abira, Zien, Gembele, Wagigi-Bongo*), Mongwandi, Bunduru et Banza. 2.3. Bantu des forêts du Lomami au lac Albert-Edouard (Wagenia, Lokele (*Turumbu, Topokes*), Bamboli, Yemaka, Mokuma, Bakumu, Warega, Bango-bango, Wazimba, Wabembe, Wavira, Wabuyu, Watembo, Loali, Mongelima, Mobali, Badjande, Mobendja et Moburu.

A.1.3. **Bantu of the savannas** a) Les Lunda (Lunda, Bayaka , Bambala, Bangongo, Bakwese, Bambundu et Bampende) ; b) Les Bakuba ; c) Les Batetela (Bena Malela, Batetela, Vuafulukaka, Bakusu, Matampa, Basongo Meno- *Bankutu*) ; d) Les Baluba du groupe occidental (Baluba, Lulua – *Bashilange, Bakete* et Basonge) e) Les Baluba du groupe oriental (Baluba, Bashila- *Balamoto* et Babuiu) ; f) Les Kioko ; g) Les Vuaniema (Wagoma, Wabwari, Bakaramba, Bisi Marungu, Wahombo et Beni-Nondo) et h) des indéterminés : Beni-Marungu, Baushi, Balamba, Wabemba, Waholoholo, Watemba et Basanga.

A.2. **Eastern Bantu** : a) Les Autonomes (Bakongo, Babira, Wania Boga, Wania Ble, Awamba et Busaiga); b) ceux gouvernés par les Bahima : les Batuzi (Balera, Warundi , Wafulero et Basigi) et les Bahima (Banyakole) et c) les Waniamwezi (Bayeke)

B. **Nubia link** with the Nuba : les Azande (Azande- Avungura et Abandia).

C **Nigrific branch**: a) de vieux Nilotiques (Bari, Madi, Moru, Yambara, Misa, Abukaya, Kuku, Kaliko, Mundu et Lugware) et b) de jeunes Nilotiques : les Aluri (Pagnemur, Bagongo, Bangari, Asheri, Boro, Likoti, Pendolo, Paeli, Koro, Bahuda et Panutu)

D. **Negrille branch** with the Dwarfs.

E. **Mixed peoples** : a) Les Bantu-Négrilles (Walese, Bambuba, Wanande) ; b) les Bantu-Négrilles-Nilotiques (Lendu – Balega, Momvu) ; c) les Bantu-Nuba (Mangbetu, Abarambo) les Nuba-Nilotiques (Makrakra, Abaka, Fadjelu, Kakwa) et d) les indéterminés (Mabodo). In Ferdinand Goffart, *Le Congo : géographie, physique*, op.cit.

³³ Bruce Gilley, *King Hochschild's Hoax*, The American Conservative, April 2023.

³⁴ Co-written and directed by Ryan Coogler, 2018.

³⁵ Last paragraph of Yabili, *Fake News*, Mediaspaul, 2020.

³⁶ Parody of H.M. Stanley in Condition of Affairs in the Congo and the founding of its free state, 1882: "Without a railway, the Congo is worth not a penny.

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