

## Did You Know the Congo was Key to America's Atomic Age?

### News:

The Congo is linked to the development of the US atomic bomb program, famously known as the 'Manhattan Project'.

### Comment:

The colonial history of the Congo is especially a sad one – more than the familiar narratives of other colonial possessions of Europe of the time. After the Berlin Conference of 1884 – 1885 that set off the infamous 'scramble for Africa' by the European powers, the Congo fell to the lot of Belgium. It was awarded to King Leopold II of Belgium, who owned it as a 'personal possession'. It was a territory larger than all of Western Europe put together and nearly 80 times the size of Belgium – which Leopold II never really bothered to ever visit – (*White Malice* by Susan Williams, pg. 27)

The vast resources stolen from the land are only matched by the unspeakable horrors visited upon the local populace who were converted into slave labour. Leopold II's colonial officers were instructed to dispense an atrocious form of punishment on the people when quotas were not met – the amputation of limbs. It is stated that in 1899 the colonial government killed or mutilated upwards of 6,000 people in only 6 months in the Momboyo River area (Gibbs; *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, pg. 45). "In the twenty-three years of King Leopold II's rule, an estimated ten million people died as a consequence of brutality and executions; this amounted to about 50 per cent of the population" (*White Malice* by Susan Williams, pg. 28)

Control of the Congo was eventually ceded to the Belgian government in 1908, which opened up the territory for business to entrepreneurs. One of these was the British industrialist Lord Leverhulme who simply continued to rely on the ruthless cruelty of the forced labour system created by Leopold II. The locals were forced to work in everything from railways, rubber plantations to the uranium-rich mines of Shinkolobwe. The forced labour worked in the palm groves to produce palm-oil products for the factories of the **Lever Brothers**, the company founded by Leverhulme.

In 1940 when Nazi Germany invaded North Africa, the US government started to pay closer attention to Africa. The intelligence agency called the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was created in 1942 with an Africa Section in line with this new vision. The OSS station in the Belgian Congo was tasked with protecting the uranium sources and its export to the US. The uranium of the Congo, from the Shinkolobwe mines, was by far the richest in the world at the time. Congolese ore was instrumental in the creation of the first atomic weapons in the Manhattan Project. It was used to build the atomic bombs that obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. To this end, a senior chemical engineer, John R. Ruhoff, involved in the Manhattan Project wrote "(the Congo's) resources of uranium, which are the world's largest, are vital to the welfare of the United States". Speaking of additional mineral riches, the report concluded "Definite steps should be taken to insure access to the resources for the United States". Consequently, the Congo suffered from Belgian colonialism, through the British Empire building to American imperialism within the short space of 58 years.

In conclusion, Africa will never know true independence or peace until it is genuinely liberated from the savage tentacles of Western neo-colonialism. Only the Islamic ideology represented by the Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) System, on the method of Prophethood, can achieve the feat of rescuing the Congo and Africa as a whole. Only Islam arrived on this continent without the ill intent of plundering its natural resources. It came with the sublime vision of saving people from the subjugation of human imposed systems to the justice of Allah's (swt) Shari'ah.

﴿يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

**"with it Allah guides those who follow His pleasure to the pathways of peace, and brings them out, by His will, from the depths of darkness into the light, and guides them to a straight path."** [TMQ Surah Al-Maida 5:16].

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

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