

Congo, Coltan, and Cell Phones: A People's History

By ALISON KYZIA

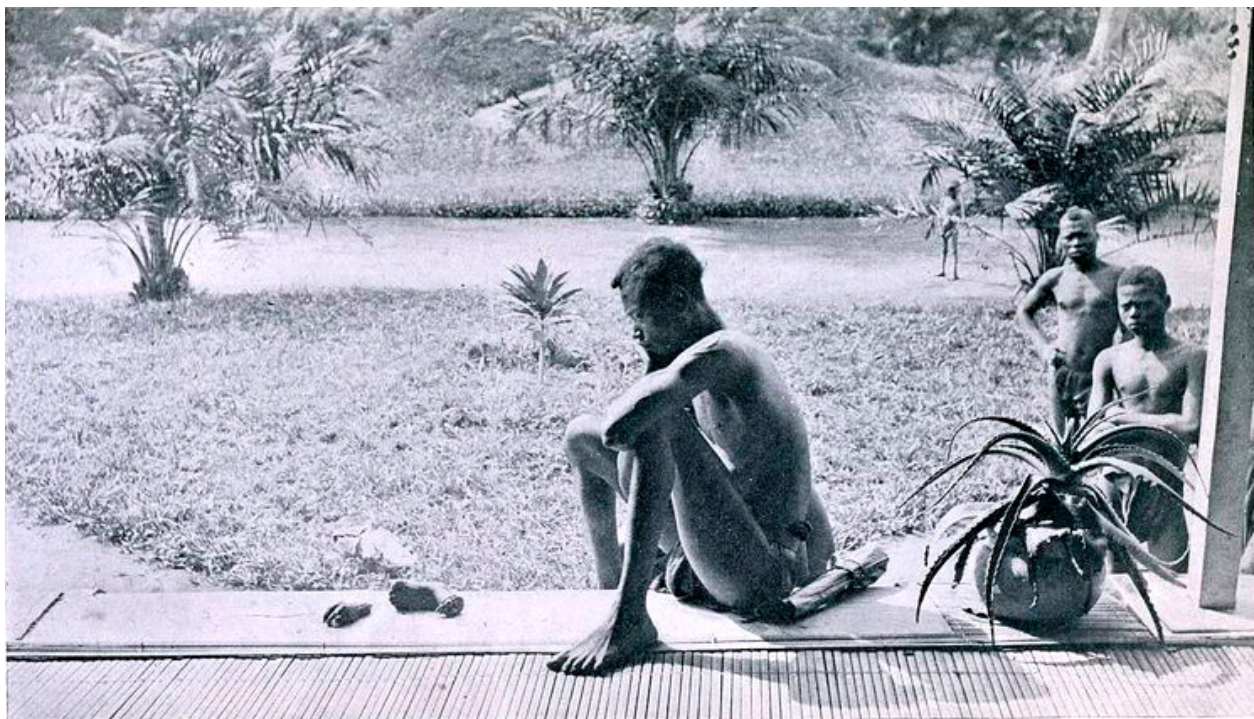
More than 5 million people have been killed in Democratic Republic of the Congo since the late 1990s, home to some of the most serious human rights violations since World War II. A look back at Congo's history sets the stage. From 1885 to 1908, Congo was colonized by the king of Belgium, Leopold II, who took it as his own personal property.

Leopold, crowned in 1865, envied the more successful European colonial empires. After a failed attempt to buy the Philippines from Spain, Leopold funded the expedition of Henry Morton Stanley, a storied explorer whose mapping of the Congo River and subsequent development of a railroad, steamships, and trading stations provided the infrastructure and technology for Leopold's colonial project.

Initially, neither man knew that Congo was rich in wild rubber, one of the hottest commodities on the global market at the time. In 1890, the Dunlop Company in Belfast, Ireland, began producing inflatable rubber tires for bicycles. The worldwide

rubber boom started five years later, with growing markets for hoses, tubing, and gaskets in addition to its use as an insulator of telegraph, telephone, and electrical wiring. The increase in car manufacturing at the turn of the century secured its place as a highly coveted resource. At the opening of the 20th century, Congo was the most profitable colony in Africa. It is estimated that Leopold made about 220 million francs, equivalent to \$1.1 billion today.

Leopold refused to pay a fair price for labor or resources, and instead enslaved the population through a terror campaign, forcing the Congolese to harvest rubber. People were systematically tortured; women were kidnapped, raped, beaten, and killed if their male family members did not meet their rubber quota or rebelled; limbs were regularly cut off; colonial administrators decorated gardens with the skulls of their victims. The magnitude of the violence is incomprehensible. During Leopold's



Father looks at foot and hand of child dismembered by soldiers, Baringa, Congo State, May 15, 1904.

King Leopold's Soliloquy: A Defense of His Congo Rule, Mark Twain, 1905.

rule, 8 million to 10 million people were killed through a variety of colonial policies, making it one of the worst cases of European colonial brutality.

Some of the violence was a response to regular acts of resistance. One ethnic group, the Yaka, fought back for 10 years before they were defeated in 1906. The Chokwe fought for 20 years, known for inflicting heavy casualties on Belgian forces. The Boa and Bidja organized a resistance force of more than 5,000 men. There were also mutinies. One took place in 1895 at the military base in Luluabourg, where the Belgian base commander Mathieu Pelzer was killed by Black officers. That rebellion lasted 13 years. Members of the Congolese resistance chose to fight back.

Leopold succeeded at hiding his crimes and countering opposition by paying off journalists to endorse and validate his scheme under the guise of humanitarianism. He promoted front organizations like the International African Association and International Association of the Congo, fostering an image of concern for the territory's development.

Congo also inspired the first international human rights movement of the 20th century. Edmund Dene Morel, a Liverpool shipping company clerk, studied the cargo receipts for ships docked in Antwerp, many of which were en route to Congo. He noticed that ivory and rubber were being imported while the sole exports were soldiers and weapons. He mobilized a network of activists who publicized the crimes of Leopold, forcing him to sell his private colony to the Belgian government in 1908. While this was an important victory, Belgium maintained colonization until 1960, never ceasing to exploit Congo's labor and resources.

Congo's colonial history foreshadows the current instability and violence plaguing the country. Since 1997, more than 5 million people have been killed there, making it one of the bloodiest battle zones since World War II. That year marked the end of a 32-year dictatorship (1965–1997) led by Joseph Mobutu, also known as Mobutu Sese Seko, a generously compensated and welcomed friend of six U.S. presidents. He came to power by assisting the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in assassinating the first democratically elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, in 1961, according to "[Project Wizard](#)," the name of the covert CIA program. The

United States and other European powers wanted Lumumba dead because of his desire to nationalize natural resources in Congo. In other words, he wanted all of the wealth stolen by Leopold and the Belgians to remain in Congo, where the money could be used to create a functioning state.

Just as the bloodshed of the colonial period was financed by highly lucrative natural resources like rubber, the violence today is likewise fueled by natural resources. One of those is coltan, a mineral required for cell phone production. Congo is rich in coltan. By understanding this history, we can see a direct connection between the brutality of colonialism and the contemporary injustice in Congo: highly coveted natural resources.

As a world history teacher, one of the lessons I reinforce in my classroom is that current global events can be understood only through a study of history. I want students to see themselves as citizens of the world by grappling with some of the most pressing global issues within the context of world history. For these reasons, Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the places regularly featured in my community college classes. Congo forces us to reflect on the roles of race, media, grassroots activism, and historical amnesia, forces that shape our past and present. Providing these kinds of lessons makes space for students to build a vocabulary and consciousness they can use to understand the world today and their place in it.

The initial inspiration for this lesson came from reading Adam Hochschild's *New York Times* best-selling nonfiction book, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (1998). The challenge came in making the story personal for my students, rather than just another tragic story about a faraway time and place. I had to make it personal because the first time I taught the book, students came to a conclusion I had not intended. They ended the book on a note of righteous indignation. "Those people were barbarians [referring to the colonial administrators]," said one student accusingly. Another quipped, "Just so they can have some tires?! I can't believe people would be so greedy." When prodded a bit more, I discovered that none of them could describe present-day atrocities being committed for natural resources nor could they discuss the omnipresence of these resources in our everyday life. A few threw

out the word “diamonds” but none could elaborate outside a reference to a Hollywood movie. I needed to develop strategies to teach these connections.

Lesson plan

Students will...

- Describe the salient features of Congo’s history through a meet-and-greet activity.
- Debate the responsibility in crimes against humanity through a trial activity.
- Explain how coltan, a mineral necessary for the production of cell phones, contributes to

violence in Congo today, similar to the role rubber had in colonial Congolese history.

Time Required:

This lesson consists of three teaching activities:

- Meet-and-greet: one 90-minute period
- Trial activity: one 90-minute period
- Teaching and discussion of post-independence Congo and the role of coltan: one 90-minute period

Alison Kysia is an educator and curriculum developer. She designed this lesson while teaching at Northern Virginia Community College.

Resources

Books

Adam Hochschild. *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Houghton Mifflin, 1998. Nonfiction.

Elizabeth Stewart. *Blue Gold*. Annick Press, 2014. Young adult fiction.

Barbara Kingsolver. *Poisonwood Bible*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005. Fiction.

Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014. Fiction.

Articles

Adam Hochschild. “[An Assassination’s Long Shadow](#).” *New York Times*. January 16, 2011.

Michael Daly. “[The City of Sanford’s Racist Past](#).” *The Daily Beast*. April 12, 2012.

Videos

“Patrice Lumumba: 50 Years Later, Remembering the U.S.-Backed Assassination of Congo’s First Democratically Elected Leader.” *Democracy Now!* (54:50-56:20): <http://bit.ly/1ELIbth>

“Congo: A Curse of Riches.” YouTube: <http://bit.ly/1KtT3Rl>

“Adam Hochschild: ‘America has blood on our hands’ in Congo.” *PBS Need to Know*, January 31, 2011: <http://bit.ly/2myE3LH>

DVD. *King Leopold’s Ghost*. 2006. 1 hour 47 minutes. Directed by Pippa Scott and Oreet Rees. Documentary based on Hochschild’s book.

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Teaching Activity #1:

Congo Meet-and-Greet

Materials Needed:

- Meet-and-greet roles, one for every student
- Blank nametags, one for every student
- Meet-and-greet worksheet, one for every student
- Blank paper/notebook for each student to use for writing reflection exercises

Suggested Procedure:

1. Tell students that they will be meeting the characters in the history of Congo, most of whom are detailed in the nonfiction book *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* by Adam Hochschild.
2. Explain to students: I am going to start out by pointing out an unfortunate reality: Some of us in this room have a connection to the murder of more than 5 million Congolese since 1997 (in the last 20 years). We need to figure out who is responsible.
3. Ask them if they know the total number of residents for local communities in order to put the number of deaths in perspective. For example, I ask students to give me the population of the city of Washington, D.C. (700,000), and the D.C. metro area (6 million).
4. Ask students: "Who in here owns a cell phone or has one in their home? Please pull it out and show it to the group (or raise your hand). Now we can see who has a connection to the deaths in Congo. Each cell phone has coltan in it. Much of the coltan in the world comes from Congo. In order to better understand the connection between our cell phones and violence in Congo, we need to take a look at the history of the country, and then connect the past to the present."
5. Give one meet-and-greet character description to each student. In a class larger than 20, some characters will be played by more than one student.
6. Give each student a nametag and have them write the name of their character on it.
7. Give each student a meet-and-greet worksheet.
8. Students should spend a couple minutes getting to know their character. If the class is unfamiliar with a meet-and-greet activity, explain to them that they should "get in to character" by speaking in the first person, asking one another questions like "What is your name? Where are you from? What is your relationship to Congo?" Remind students that these were real people and they should share their character's life story with respect.
9. Give students time to meet one another in order to fill out their meet-and-greet worksheet. Explain to students that the point of this activity is not a race to fill out a worksheet. Rather, the point is for students to interview one another and figure out how the characters tell the larger story of Congolese history.
10. After the students have mixed and mingled for approximately 30 minutes, ask them to take a seat, get out some paper, and answer the following: Now that we have met many of the characters in this history, spend some time putting what you learned in your own language. **What happened in Congo from 1885–1908?** Try to piece together the story

using as many details as you can from the meet-and-greet characters you met. Also, write down any questions you have. After about five minutes, ask a few students to share their descriptions with the larger group.

11. Now that students have an introduction to colonial Congo, they need to bring the story to life in order to humanize the people they met in the meet-and-greet activity.
12. Show the following short documentary: *Congo: A Curse of Riches* (14:50 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcF9fmTzqkg>
13. After viewing, ask students to:
 - a. Create a list of three adjectives that describe

your reaction to this video. For each adjective, provide an example from the video that made you choose that word.

- b. Go back to the writing you completed after the meet-and-greet activity and add three new details you learned from the video.

After about five minutes, ask a few students to share their list and details with the larger group.

14. Tell students to save the meet-and-greet worksheet, the writing reflection they wrote after the meet-and-greet activity, and the writing they completed after watching the short documentary. They will need all of the details they have collected in order to craft their argument for the upcoming trial activity.

Meet-and-Greet Roles

Nzinga Mbemba Afonso / Afonso I

I was the king (manikongo) of the Kingdom of Kongo from 1506–1543. The kingdom was an imperial federation of 2 million to 3 million people that began forming in the 1380s. I came to power soon after the Portuguese “discovered” us by erecting a stone pillar at the mouth of the Congo River in 1482. Soon after, in 1491, the first European settlers arrived in our capital, M’banza Kongo (M’banza means “court”). With the Portuguese colonization of Brazil in 1500, the Atlantic slave trade began changing societies throughout the west coast of Africa. I was king during this critical period. It is true that I enslaved people and slavery was practiced throughout the kingdom. Nevertheless, I was shocked by the huge number of people—tens of thousands—being taken from our kingdom. I sent letters to the king of Portugal, João III, asking that he stop the slave trade. He ignored my request. After my death, increasing numbers of European ships came looking for people to enslave. In 1665, ManiKongo António I fought an unsuccessful battle with the Portuguese and was beheaded. The territory was ruled by many different local leaders, making it easier for Europeans to colonize our lands.

Edmund Dene Morel

I was a British citizen, journalist, and pacifist. I found out about Congo when I was working in Antwerp, Belgium, for the Elder Dempster, a Liverpool shipping company. I noticed that ships leaving for Congo carried only guns, chains, and explosives rather than durable goods that King Leopold claimed he was providing for humanitarian purposes. Ships coming into Antwerp carried only rubber and ivory. I was suspicious. I started investigating. I quit my job in 1902 and became a full-time journalist committed to uncovering the truth about Congo. In 1904, I founded the Congo Reform Association with Roger Casement, who had published a critique of King Leopold’s behavior in Congo for the British government. I created important alliances with activists like Booker T. Washington and Mark Twain in the United States, and other activists in Europe. Through writing articles and giving lectures, we put enough pressure on Leopold to force him to turn over his colonial possession to the Belgian government in 1908. I didn’t end the organization until 1913 because I worried that the Belgians would continue Leopold’s atrocities. Congo was the inspiration for the first international human rights movement of the 20th century and I was proud to be a part of that. I then focused my activism on promoting pacifism in the lead-up to the Great War (World War I).

King Leopold II of Belgium

I was a German prince related to Queen Victoria of England, among other European aristocrats. I inherited my father's throne on December 17, 1865, and remained king for 44 years. I envied the other European monarchs who had colonies. I tried and failed to buy the Philippines from Spain. I then set my sights on Africa. I funded the expedition of Henry Morton Stanley, a famous explorer who mapped the Congo River and then developed a railroad, steamships, and trading stations. These provided the infrastructure and technology I needed to control the country. I started a number of front organizations like the International African Association and other humanitarian-sounding groups to hide my real intentions: getting rich off of ivory.

Little did I know that Congo was rich in wild rubber, one of the hottest commodities on the global market at the time. In 1890, the Dunlop Company in Belfast, Ireland, began producing inflatable rubber tires for bicycles. The worldwide rubber boom started five years later, with growing markets for hoses, tubing, and gaskets in addition to its use to insulate telegraph, telephone, and electrical wiring. The increase in car manufacturing at the turn of the century made rubber even more important.

At the opening of the 20th century, Congo was the most profitable colony in Africa. It is estimated that I made about 220 million francs—about \$1.1 billion today. Over time, some people spread rumors that I enslaved the Congolese population through a terror campaign to force them to harvest rubber. How would I know? I never stepped foot in Congo and never killed anyone. I got so much bad press that in 1908 I was forced to turn over my precious colony to the Belgian government.

Mary French Sheldon, Journalist

I was a British travel writer and publisher. Along with many other journalists, I helped King Leopold by writing articles that flattered him while demonizing his critics. I got an all-expense paid trip to the Congo and did not see any of the atrocities described by some other writers. I didn't see any of this because the colonial administrators were ordered to make sure I didn't see their crimes. I fell in love with one of the steamboat captains and had a grand time. I then published an article in the *London Times* in 1905, saying that "I have witnessed more atrocities in London streets than I have ever seen in the Congo." King Leopold was so grateful that he hired me as a lobbyist to convince the British Parliament that Leopold was a good guy after all.

Many other journalists helped Leopold by positively portraying his humanitarian and scientific front organizations like the International African Association, the Committee for Studies of the Upper Congo, and the International Association of the Congo. We publicized and celebrated Henry Morton Stanley's expeditions in Africa and helped make him a superstar. The *London Times* let Leopold ghostwrite articles, like the one in which he compared the work in Congo to that of the Red Cross.

We were complicit in attacking George Washington Williams, an African American who traveled to Congo and published an Open Letter pamphlet outlining the atrocities committed there. The *New York Herald*, *Journal de Bruxelles*, and *Le Mouvement Géographique* all published character assassinations of Williams in an attempt to discredit him.

James Cardinal Gibbons, Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore

I was one of many Christian leaders around the world who supported King Leopold's slave state in Congo. I worked in the United States to secure support for Leopold while disregarding stories of violence against the Congolese as the "untrustworthy hearsay evidence of natives."

In reality, thousands of missionaries came in and out of Congo during the colonial period, many of whom reported accounts of the Congolese being murdered, raped, and tortured. Some of my Catholic brethren in Congo got in on the action by working for the colonial government. For example, the Catholic Belgian missions of the order of Scheut Fathers helped colonization by creating and maintaining children's boarding schools. While their parents were being tortured, or were already dead, we taught their children to obey their masters in the name of God. When they disobeyed, we beat them with the chicotte—a whip of raw, sun-dried hippopotamus hide, cut into a long sharp-edged corkscrew strip. Those who survived to adulthood we required to become soldiers for the Force Publique. The Force Publique was a militia used to force the Congolese to harvest rubber.

Some missionaries like George Washington Williams and William Henry Sheppard spoke out but most turned a blind eye. None of this should come as a surprise. Many lay Christians and church leaders used religion to justify racism and slavery.

Roger Casement

I was an Irishman who was a British consul (representative) by profession. In 1903, the British government sent me to investigate accusations against King Leopold in Congo. I later wrote the "Casement Report" documenting the atrocities I found there. Along with Edmund Dene Morel, I founded the Congo Reform Association in 1904. Congo Reform Association members wrote articles and gave lectures about Congo, starting a cross-Atlantic movement that eventually put enough pressure on King Leopold to transfer control of Congo to the Belgian government in 1908. I went on to fight for Irish independence from Great Britain. I was executed by the British government for treason on August 3, 1916.

Leon Rom

I was a Belgian soldier who became a colonial administrator in Congo Free State and later the head of the Force Publique, a militia used to force people in Congo to harvest rubber. Our hard work resulted in the death of about 8 million people from 1890–1910. Thousands of us worked in Congo over the years. I wrote a manual describing how to hold hostages in order to increase rubber collection. I welcomed guests to my house by displaying severed human skulls in my garden: my victims. If any of my men protested, I killed them too. I got my soldiers drunk most days to make the job easier; it is hard to kill so many people day after day. I later became famous as the model for Mr. Kurtz, the bloodthirsty imperialist in Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*.

**Charles Lemaire,
Force Publique Officer**

I was a white Belgian officer stationed in Congo. I helped run a militia of mostly Black men called the Force Publique. We were used to control the Congolese people during the Belgian colonial period (1885–1960). Most of our officers were Europeans, while most soldiers were from communities throughout sub-Saharan Africa. We started out working for Henry Morton Stanley as mercenaries in 1879.

In 1888, Leopold organized us as an army for his new state. Despite aggressive recruitment campaigns, three-quarters of the Force Publique died in transit to their first assignment. Yet over time our numbers swelled to 19,000 and consumed half the state budget. We are responsible for most of the killings during the 1890–1910 period. True, we killed people who were being exploited. Torture and rape were common. We burned villages, and took limbs as souvenirs. The white officers didn't trust Black soldiers walking around with weapons, so we gave them a fixed number of bullets, and if they didn't bring us proof that they killed someone (most often as a cut-off hand) the soldier could be killed as well. We also attacked the freedom fighters who fought back, rebels who represented more than a dozen ethnic groups, including the Yaka, Chokwe, Boa, and Budja.

Yes, we were a brutal bunch, but we didn't have a choice. It was kill or be killed. After independence, we became known as the Congolese National Army.

**Chief Mulume Niama,
Congolese Freedom Fighter**

Members of more than a dozen ethnic groups, including mine known as Sanga, fought back against the rubber terror in Congo during the period from 1885–1908. The rubber terror was the violence used by the Belgians to force us to harvest rubber for them. The Belgians came to my village called Katanga in the south. Though they had superior weapons, we fought back, killing one of their officers and wounding three soldiers. We hid in a chalk cave called Tshamak-ele. The Force Publique commander ordered his men to set a fire at the entrance of the cave to smoke us out. The Force Publique was the militia used to force the Congolese to harvest rubber. We would not budge so the commander sent an emissary to negotiate my surrender. I refused to negotiate with these killers. They set more fires and we refused to leave. After three months, they found our dead bodies in the cave—178 of us who would rather die than submit to their terror. We were not alone. The Yaka people fought for 10 years before they were overrun in 1906. The Chokwe fought for 20 years and they were successful in killing many of Leopold's soldiers. The Boa and Budja people had a militia of more than 5,000 men. The Force Publique was able to exploit our ethnic differences on many occasions in order to defeat us. We didn't have the same technology as the colonizers and that made it much harder to fight against them. Even though we didn't "win," our stories are important symbols of our refusal to submit to the Europeans. Our stories inspire future generations all over the world to never give up or give in.

Joseph Mobutu / Mobutu Sese Seko

I was the president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1965–1997. I was a journalist and started hanging out with anti-colonial activists like Patrice Lumumba. When Lumumba became prime minister, he appointed me chief of staff of the army. I met many advisors from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and European intelligence officers who thought I could do a better job running the country. They wanted Lumumba dead. I thought this was a great career opportunity so I helped plan the assassination, which occurred on January 17, 1961.

On November 25, 1965, I staged a coup. Despite the name of the country, I was the only leader allowed to rule. I modeled my rule on the same principles as King Leopold: authoritarian control, theft of the country's wealth for myself, torture, and murder. I made a fortune while the infrastructure of the country completely fell apart. I didn't want to waste money on roads and schools and hospitals. People say that I made more than \$5 billion. The U.S. and European governments supported my dictatorship. All I had to do was yell, "The communists are coming!" and they would do whatever I asked.

In May 1997, I was overthrown by rebels led by Laurent Kabila. They kicked me out of the country, so I went to Morocco, since they know how to treat a king. I died three months later from prostate cancer.

Ilanga, resident of Waniendo Village, Congo

In 1482, the Portuguese "discovered" Congo and it was all downhill from there. From day one these Europeans proved they were greedy and did not have an ounce of respect for our lives or dignity. First, they shipped large numbers of us across the Atlantic Ocean, enslaving us to masters in the soon-to-be USA, South America, and the Caribbean. Millions of our people were taken away. Then, the Belgians came and all hell broke loose. These people would do anything to get their hands on ivory or rubber. The whites came to my village, forced their way into our home, and dragged us out to the street. They tied cords around our necks and marched us to a work camp. They took my sister Katinga's baby out of her arms and threw it in the grass to die. They murdered my husband, Oleka, right in front of me because he was too tired to keep up the pace. They forced our men to work for their military, called the Force Publique. The whites gave the Black soldiers bullets but they were worried the Black soldiers would use them to rebel. So the whites said, "For every bullet we give you, you need to prove you killed someone." The Black soldiers cut off our hands as proof. Many brave people fought back, but Europeans had deadly technology and used it to keep us enslaved.

Patrice Lumumba

I was the first elected prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I was a postal clerk and traveling salesman. In 1958, I helped found the Mouvement National Congolais, a political party that demanded independence from Belgium. In October 1959, I was arrested and imprisoned for inciting anti-colonial riots. I won the country's first parliamentary election in June 1960.

On June 30, 1960, King Baudouin of Belgium came to grant us our independence. How arrogant. His speech was even worse. He told us that we should be thankful the Belgians brought us civilization. In my speech, I reminded him of all the crimes they committed against us. As you can imagine, he thought I was ungrateful. White kings get upset when Black men talk back to them. Predictably, the United States and Great Britain were also angry. They accused me of being a communist because I believed that the wealth of Congo should remain in Congo to create a strong society. The U.S. CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and their counterparts in Britain and Belgium paid a group of Congolese military men (including Joseph Mobutu) to kill me. I was executed by a firing squad on January 17, 1961, after a long torture session. Before they killed me, they made me eat the paper on which my Independence Day speech was written. After my assassination, people all over the world protested the destruction of our democracy.

Mark Twain, Member of the Congo Reform Association

I was an American writer whose real name was Samuel Clemens. I wrote 28 books and many short stories, including *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

I was controversial due to statements I made about American Indians and African Americans. Some consider my work to be racist. Others consider my work to be critical of racism. For these and other reasons, my books have been banned by librarians and school districts.

I was a member of the Congo Reform Association, which was founded in 1904 through the work of many individuals, like Edmund Dene Morel, a British journalist who found out what was really going on in Congo under Leopold's rule. He and other activists on both sides of the Atlantic used public education to raise awareness about Congo. I was one of those activists. In 1905, I wrote a political satire called *King Leopold's Soliloquy* to help educate Americans about the atrocities being committed in Congo. Through writing and lectures, the Congo Reform Association put enough pressure on Leopold to force him to turn over his colonial possession to the Belgian government in 1908. I was proud to be part of the first international human rights movement of the 20th century.

George Washington Williams

I was an African American minister, veteran, and historian. I was born in Pennsylvania and fought for the Union Army during the Civil War. In 1874, I was the first African American to graduate from the Newton Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, and later ordained as a Baptist minister. I became the first African American to serve in the Ohio state legislature from 1880–81. I wrote several histories of African Americans. In 1889, I met King Leopold II of Belgium and decided to travel to Congo to see what it was like. I wanted to find a place where African Americans could escape the degrading conditions of the United States. I was horrified. On July 18, 1890, I wrote an open letter outlining the atrocities I saw there. Leopold used the media to discredit me. Some people took what I said seriously but most could not hear a Black man criticizing a white king. As I traveled to tell the story of Congo, I suddenly died on August 2, 1891, from tuberculosis.

John Dunlop,

Co-Founder of Dunlop Company

Our huge appetite for rubber led to atrocities in Congo. In 1890, the Dunlop Company in Belfast, Ireland, began producing inflatable rubber tires for bicycles. The worldwide rubber boom started five years later, with growing markets for hoses, tubing, and gaskets in addition to its use as an insulator of telegraph, telephone, and electrical wiring. The increase in car manufacturing at the turn of the century secured its place as a desired resource. We bought this valuable commodity without any concern for its origins; most of us didn't even think to ask. Ignorance is bliss. It is ironic, since 100 years earlier, movements to abolish slavery swept Europe and the Atlantic world. We knew exactly how far our leaders and industrial businessmen would go to make a profit. We helped make Congo the most profitable colony in Africa by the opening of the 20th century and the site of some of the most horrific colonial atrocities.

Chester A. Arthur, U.S. President

I was president of the United States from 1881–1885. Under my administration, the United States was the first country in the world to recognize King Leopold's claim to the Congo on April 22, 1884. We even sent a Navy vessel, the *Lancaster*, to the mouth of the Congo River to give a 21-gun salute to honor Leopold's new Congo Free State in April 1885. We did this for two reasons. We thought this would create trading opportunities for us to make more money. We also hoped Congo could be an African American colony. After the Civil War, many of us just wanted Black people to leave. In 1890, an African American U.S. citizen, George Washington Williams, published an open letter outlining the atrocities being committed in Congo. Instead of taking his concerns seriously and stopping our support of Congo, we ignored him. We used our global power as a cover for Leopold's atrocities.

Otto von Bismarck, German Chancellor

On November 15, 1884, I convened a meeting in Berlin to discuss how European countries would divide the ownership of Africa. I did not invite one person from Africa. Two of the U.S. delegates at the meeting were Henry Shelton Sanford and Henry Morton Stanley, both of whom were on Belgian King Leopold's payroll. The Berlin Conference allowed Leopold and other non-African leaders to decide which African lands could be colonized by each country in attendance (Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway, the Ottoman Empire, and the United States). We didn't ask any Africans about our plans because we didn't care what they thought. We were more militarily powerful. We believed we could take whatever we wanted, and we did.

General Henry Shelton Sanford

I was a U.S. diplomat turned lobbyist for Leopold. I called myself a general but I wasn't really one—I thought it made me sound important. Abraham Lincoln appointed me as the ambassador to Belgium from 1861–1869. I used my influence in Washington, D.C., to convince the U.S. government to recognize Leopold's sovereignty over Congo. I thought it would be a good idea to encourage Blacks to permanently relocate to Congo and I loved the idea of free trade. Free trade is a term used to describe imports and exports that are free of special taxes, making it easier for countries to trade with one another. In reality, free trade is a term used to confuse people about what is really going on, like in Congo where Leopold stole rubber and enslaved the population in order to collect it. My effort succeeded and the U.S. government, headed by President Chester A. Arthur, gave Leopold its blessing on April 22, 1884. They even sent a Navy vessel, the *Lancaster*, to the mouth of the Congo River to give a 21-gun salute to honor Leopold's new Congo Free State in April 1885. True, Leopold tricked me and I was disillusioned when I found out, but the damage was done. A town in Florida is named after me, the same town where Trayvon Martin was murdered on February 26, 2012.

Henry Morton Stanley

(John Rowlands)

I helped King Leopold successfully colonize Congo in 1876. I was an explorer of Africa, although I was from Wales, in Great Britain. I lived and traveled on three continents. I found the source of the Congo River and mapped it for Leopold. Without my work, Leopold could not have colonized Congo. I convinced leaders of communities throughout present-day Congo to sign over their land to me. Sure, I often manipulated their inability to read and I threatened a few. But I did it because I believed that they would be better off in the long run if we ruled their lands. Through the use of low-paid or free labor, I built the infrastructure to move valuable resources out of Congo: the roads, railroads, steamships, trading stations, and weapons. Newspaper articles described how I disregarded the lives of anyone who got in my way. Nonsense. I was a champion of progress. I wrote a book on the founding of the Congo Free State, part of Leopold's colonial project.

Reverend William Henry Sheppard

I was an African American missionary for the Presbyterian Church. I attended the Hampton Institute and Booker T. Washington was one of my teachers. I attended the Tuscaloosa Theological Institute (now Stillman College) in Alabama; they eventually dedicated their library in my name. I spend 20 years in Africa, most of it in Congo, where I arrived in May 1890. I documented the atrocities I saw being committed there. I traveled between Britain and the United States lecturing about Congo. Leopold tried to have me convicted of slander but luckily I beat the charge. I returned to the United States in 1910. I kept talking about Congo but it was tough in the segregated United States to get people to listen.

Meet-and-Greet Worksheet

1. Find two people who benefited from rubber production in Congo. How did they benefit? Include important dates.
2. Find two people who used violence to enslave and terrorize the Congolese. How did they use violence? Include important dates.
3. Find two people who were hurt by racism. How were they hurt? Include important dates.
4. Find two people who used their power and influence to help Leopold exploit Congo. How did they use their power and influence? Include important dates.
5. Find two people who spoke out against the atrocities being committed in Congo. What did they say or do? What happened to them? Include important dates.

Teaching Activity #2: Congo Trial

Materials Needed:

- Six trial roles, one copy of all six for each student
- Clear tape
- Six pieces of blank paper to use as placards to identify defendant groups

Introducing the Trial

Suggested procedure:

1. Explain that we need to decide who is responsible for crimes against humanity committed in colonial Congo.
2. The students are defendants and the teacher is the prosecutor.
3. Break students into six groups. Assign one defendant to each group.
4. Give each student a copy of all six indictments. Ask them to quietly read all of them.
5. Explain that, as a group, they need to create a defense strategy. To do this, they need to embark on a fact-finding mission: They should collect at least three pieces of information they can use to defend their defendant. In addition, they also need to accuse other defendants of having more guilt than their group has—again, using specific information. They should choose two other defendants (other than their assigned defendant) and collect three pieces of information that explain why these groups have more guilt than their assigned defendant. Students should use the information they gathered in the meet-and-greet activity, the video documentary, the two writing activities, and the packet of indictments.
6. As students work, teachers should monitor students' work by moving between groups and asking questions that will help students hone their arguments.



A diamond mine near Luebo, Congo, 1909.

Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Trial Activity

Suggested Procedure:

1. Each group should assemble around a table or create a circle with desks; someone should tape a piece of paper with their defendant's name on it in front of the group. Before the trial begins, choose a few students to be neutral members of the jury. Remind them that they need to disregard their previous affiliation with one defendant.
2. The prosecutor (teacher) makes the first accusation. That defendant group gets to defend themselves and, in their defense, accuses another defendant, using the information they collected during the fact-finding mission.
3. Continue the process until all groups have been given an opportunity to defend themselves. The jury should question the defendants during their defense arguments.
4. Ask the jury to step out of the room and deliberate. They can give percentages of guilt to different parties, or they can simply render a verdict that describes the roles the guilty parties have played, and how these fit together. They have to give clear explanations for why they made the decisions they did, using as many specific examples as possible. While the jury deliberates, students should write out their answers to those same questions of guilt.
5. The jury returns and the entire class discusses the verdict. Allow students to guide the discussion as much as possible. The teacher can insert questions to help students reflect on the lesson: Why did you assign guilt the way you did? Which arguments were most convincing? For those of you who assigned Leopold the most guilt, how did you decide this, since he never killed anyone or even went to Congo? The Force Publique was responsible for most of the killing. Are they, then, most responsible? How do you define responsibility?

King Leopold II of Belgium

The Indictment:

You are charged with committing crimes against humanity.

TRUE, YOU DIDN'T KILL ANYONE WITH YOUR OWN hands. But you were the mastermind behind the colonization of Congo (known as the Congo Free State) from 1885 to 1908. Your greed had no bounds and you were obsessed with competing with other European colonial masters. You paid off journalists like Mary French Sheldon to write newspaper articles about you as a philanthropist who was interested in the economic development of Congo. You created front organizations with humanitarian-sounding names like the International African Association and International Association of the Congo. But you were just using these organizations as a façade for your real motives: power and money. You funded the expedition of Henry Morton Stanley, a famous explorer who mapped the Congo River and then you paid for the development of a railroad, steamships, and trading stations. These provided the infrastructure and technology you needed to control the country. You paid for all of the weapons used to terrorize the Congolese. Your wealth and power was used to enslave the people of Congo to work for you. The power you abused resulted in the death of approximately 8 million human beings. You earned your place at the table of the most brutal men in world



Wikicommons

history. Once your crimes were uncovered, you sold your colony to the Belgian government, knowing they would continue your exploitation.

Colonial Administrators

The Indictment:

You are charged with committing crimes against humanity.

YOUR OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY resulted in the murder of about 8 million people from 1890 to 1910. There were thousands of you working in Congo and yet few of you spoke out. Many of you committed atrocities and you watched them being committed, but you didn't intervene.

Take Leon Rom, for example (more famously known as the model for Mr. Kurtz, the bloodthirsty imperialist in Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*). Rom organized and oversaw the Force Publique. He wrote a manual describing how to hold hostages in order to increase rubber collection. He also welcomed guests to his house by displaying severed human skulls in his garden. While some of you were not as brutal as Rom, you did not intervene to stop the atrocities. Instead, many of you



Belgian colonial administrators and Tetela chief, near Lusambo, Belgian Congo, ca. 1915.

Émile Gorfia/Smithsonian Institution,
National Museum of African Art

were known for drinking copious amounts of wine every day to make the job easier. You enriched yourself at the cost of human life and dignity.

Force Publique

The Indictment:

You are charged with committing crimes against humanity.

You are a complicated group. You are a mixture of European officers and everyday soldiers from numerous communities throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of you are African. You started out working for Henry Morton Stanley as mercenaries in 1879. In 1888, Leopold formally organized you as the Force Publique, an army for his new state. Three-quarters of Force Publique “volunteers” died before delivery. Yet over time your numbers swelled to 19,000 officers and consumed half the state budget. You are responsible for a majority of the killings during the 1890–1910 period. You killed people who were being exploited. You preserved your own life by committing atrocities: beating with the chicotte, torture, and rape were part of your daily repertoire. You burned villages, and took limbs as souvenirs. You also attacked the freedom fighters who fought



Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

Soldiers of the Force Publique, 1912. Print and watercolor by Émile Gorlia (1887–1966).

back. These rebels represented more than a dozen ethnic groups, including the Yaka, Chokwe, Boa, and Budja. You could have turned on the colonial masters and sided with the rebels. But you did not.

Capitalism

The Indictment:

You are charged with committing crimes against humanity.

You are an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production with the goal of making a profit. In practice, there is no ceiling for what you consider “profit.” For you, capitalism, no profit is too big. Your profit motive is so unrealistic, to the point where atrocities are regularly committed in your name. Greed is your engine. The only way this system works is if people keep buying stuff they do not need. If you aren’t producing and no one is buying, there is no profit. You are always on the lookout for natural resources that you can “add value” to and make a profit. The cheaper you can get your hands on natural resources, the higher the profit. In pursuit of rubber, 8 million Congolese were killed. It may be true that individuals did the actual killing, but they were playing by rules that you established. Others may be guilty, but because your rules control others’ actions, you are most to blame for the Congolese slaughter.



IN THE RUBBER COILS.

8932—The Congo “Free” State.

Wikicommons/Punch Magazine

Linley Sambourne depicts King Leopold II of Belgium as a snake entangling a Congolese rubber collector, Nov. 28, 1906.

Consumers of Rubber

The Indictment:

You are charged with committing crimes against humanity.

Your huge appetite for rubber fueled the atrocities in Congo. In 1890, the Dunlop Company in Belfast, Ireland, began producing inflatable rubber tires for bicycles. The worldwide rubber boom started five years later, with growing markets for hoses, tubing, and gaskets in addition to its use as an insulator of telegraph, telephone, and electrical wiring. The increase in car manufacturing at the turn of the century secured its place as a highly coveted resource. You bought this valuable commodity without any concern for its origins. As obedient supporters of capitalism, you failed to question where the rubber came from and how it was harvested. You cannot simply claim ignorance. You were well aware of the movements to abolish slavery that swept Europe and the Atlantic world. These had begun less than a century earlier. You knew exactly how far your leaders would go to make a profit. Your complicity allowed Congo to become the most profitable colony in Africa by the opening of the 20th century and the site of some of the most horrific colonial atrocities.



State Library of Queensland

Ilanga, resident of Waniendo Village, Congo

The Indictment:

You are charged with committing crimes against humanity.

While you were the victims of colonial atrocities, you allowed those crimes to be committed. You should have seen the writing on the wall. In 1482, the Portuguese “discovered” you and it was all downhill from there. From day one, Europeans proved they were greedy and did not have one ounce of respect for your lives or dignity. First, they enslaved Congolese people and started shipping large numbers of you across the Atlantic Ocean to slave masters in the soon-to-be USA, South America, and the Caribbean. Millions of you were enslaved. Then, the Belgians came. They had a huge appetite for natural resources like ivory and rubber. They terrorized you, tortured you, raped you, and killed more than 8 million of you. Many of your men were forced to work for the Force Publique; they were the ones who killed the majority of you. Many of your brave people fought back, but Europeans had superior technology and used it to keep you enslaved. Nevertheless, you should have fought harder, and because you didn’t, your country is still suffering the consequences today.



A family in Luba countryside, ca. 1910.

Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Teaching Activity #3: Post-Independence

Discussion Questions

Suggested Procedure:

1. Tell students it is time to find out what happened after Congo received its independence from Belgium and figure out what cell phones have to do with this history.
2. Show students the following 15-minute interview of Adam Hochschild describing the post-colonial history of Congo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mh_Zu4lrk7o. While viewing, ask them to think about three questions: What happened when the Congolese established their independence from Belgium? What was the role of the United States? What is coltan and how is it affecting Congo?
3. Afterward, break the class down into small groups. Give them the following questions to answer and discuss:
 - a. How did the Belgians insult the Congolese on Independence Day?
 - b. Who was Patrice Lumumba? What did he say at the Independence Day speech?
 - c. What happened to Lumumba?
 - d. Why did the United States find him so threatening?
 - e. Who was Mobutu Sese Seko? How did he come to power?
 - f. How did the U.S. government support Mobutu?
 - g. How does Lumumba's assassination and the support of Mobutu reflect on American ideals like democracy?
 - h. What is coltan? Why is coltan so valuable?
 - i. Compare the role of rubber during the colonial period and coltan today.
4. Bring students back into a large group and ask them to share their responses.
5. Ask students to discuss the following questions: Do we have any responsibility for the crimes being committed today in Congo because of natural resources like coltan? What could we do about the exploitation of natural resources like coltan?

Activism Then and Now: Research and Writing

Suggested Procedure:

The purpose of this final assignment is to help students reflect on the significance of this history as it relates to the present. Students can feel overwhelmed when learning about injustice on this scale and it is important not to let them walk away feeling hopeless. Rather, a people's history should highlight the ways in which people fight injustice. This provides an opportunity for students to think proactively about the power they have to effect change in the world.

Ask students to reflect on the following questions in writing:

1. What is the connection between rubber and coltan in the history of Congo? If we use electronic devices with coltan in it, do we have a responsibility for the conditions in Congo today? Thinking back to the history of colonial Congo, who fought for justice? List as many people or organizations you can remember and describe how they fought for justice.
2. Break students into three small groups. Ask them to research one of the following organizations and answer the following questions: Who are some of the people and organizations fighting for justice in Congo today? What are their goals? What strategies are they using to achieve their goals?

Nobel Women's Initiative
<https://nobelwomensinitiative.org/meet-the-inspiring-women-activists-of-the-drc/>

Fairphone
<https://www.fairphone.com/en/>

#Telema
<https://www.telema.org/>
3. After 30 minutes, teachers can ask a few students to share their research.



Advertisement for "Breaking the Silence," an annual weeklong education series to support the Congo global movement.

King Baudouin's Independence Day Speech

This reading is from Colonization and Independence in Africa (The Choices Program, Brown University, www.choices.edu). Reprint permission was provided to the Zinn Education Project by Brown University.

June 30, 1960, Independence Day

Mr. President,
Sirs,

The independence of the Congo is formed by the outcome of the work conceived by King Leopold II's genius, undertaken by Him with tenacious and continuous courage with Belgium's perseverance. It marks a decisive hour in the destinies not only of the Congo itself, but, I do not hesitate to affirm, of the whole of Africa.

Over the course of 80 years, Belgium sent the best of its sons to our soil, first to deliver the basin of the Congo from the odious slave trafficking that decimated its populations; then to bring ethnic groups together with one another who, once enemies, learned to build the greatest of independent African States together; finally, to call for a happier life in the diverse regions of the Congo that you represent here, united by the same Parliament.

In this historical moment, our thought to all must turn towards the pioneers of the African emancipation and towards those, who after them made the Congo what it is today. They deserve both OUR admiration and YOUR recognition because it is those who, consecrate all of their efforts and even their lives to a great ideal, have brought you peace and have enriched your moral and material patrimony. They must never be forgotten, neither by Belgium nor by the Congo.

When Leopold II undertook the great work that today finds its crowning, it is not presented to you in conquering but in civilizing.

From its foundation, the Congo has opened its borders to international traffic without Belgium ever exercising a monopoly in its exclusive interest.

The Congo was equipped with railroads, roads,

air and maritime routes that, in putting your populations in contact with one another, have favored their unity and have enlarged the country to the dimensions of the world.

A medical service, which has taken several decades to be established, was patiently organized and has delivered you from sicknesses, however devastating. Numerous and remarkably useful hospitals have been built. Agriculture was improved and modernized. Large cities have been built and, across the whole country, living and hygienic conditions have translated into remarkable progress. Industrial enterprises have made the natural riches of the soil valuable. The expansion of economic activity has been considerable, also raising the well-being of your populations and equipping the Country with technicians indispensable to its development.

Thanks to mission schools, like those who create public powers, basic education has known an enviable growth; an intellectual elite has begun to form so that your universities will rapidly grow.

A greater and greater number of qualified workers who earn their living in agriculture, industry, artisanry, commerce, and administration, are penetrating all the classes of the population and emancipating themselves, building the true base of any civilization.

We are happy to have also given to the Congo, despite the greatest hardships, the elements needed to arm a country on the path of development.

The great movement of independence that sweeps all of Africa has found, nearby the Belgian powers, the biggest comprehension. Facing the unanimous desires of your populations, we have not hesitated to recognize you your independence from this time on.

It is up to you now, Sirs, to demonstrate that we were right to trust you.

Henceforth, Belgium and the Congo find one another side by side, like sovereign States but linked by friendship and dedicated to help one another out. Also, we remit in your hands today all the administrative, economic, technical, and social services as well as judicial organization, without which a modern State is not viable. The Belgian agents are ready to give you a loyal and clarified collaboration.

Your task is immense and you are the first to realize it. The principal dangers that threaten you are: the inexperience of the populations to govern themselves, tribal fighting, that formerly have done so much harm that, at no price, must not be begun again, the attraction that might exercise itself on certain region of foreign powers, ready to profit from the least lapse.

Your followers will know the difficult task of governing. One must put first on the agenda their worries, whatever be their political party affiliation, the general interests of the country. They will have to teach the Congolese people that independence cannot be realized by immediate satisfaction of easy pleasures, but by work, by respect of liberty of others and by the rights of the minority, by tolerance and order, without which no democratic regime can survive.

I will give here a particular tribute to the Force Publique that accomplished its heavy mission with unwavering courage and devotion.

Independence will necessitate efforts and sacrifices from all. You must adapt institutions to your conceptions and your needs, in such a manner to render them stable and balanced. You must also form experimental administrative bureaus, intensify intellectual and moral formation of the population, maintain the stability of the currency, safeguard and develop your economic, social, and, financial organizations.

Do not compromise the future with hasty reforms, and do not replace the structures that Belgium has given you, as long as you are not certain that you cannot do better.

Maintain vigilantly the administration of medical services whose interruption would have disastrous consequences and will cause diseases to return that we had succeeded in suppressing. Watch over

on scientific work that constitutes an inestimable intellectual patrimony for you. Do not forget that a serene and independent system of justice is a factor of social peace; the guarantee of respect of everyone's rights confers a great moral authority to the State in international opinion.

Do not fear turning yourselves towards us. We are ready to stay by your side to help you with our advice, to share with you technicians and functionaries (government employees) that you will need.

Africa and Europe mutually complete one another and are called in cooperation to the greatest leap. The Congo and Belgium can play a first class role by a constructive and fruitful collaboration, with a reciprocal trust.

Sirs,

The whole world has fixed its eyes on you. At the hour where the Congo sovereignty chooses its way of life, I hope that the Congolese people conserve and develop the patrimony of spiritual, moral, and religious values that we share and that transcend the political vicissitudes and the differences in race or in border.

Remain united, and you will know to show yourself deserving the great role that you have been called to play in the history of Africa.

Congolese people,

My country and I recognize you with joy and emotion that the Congo attains this 30th of June 1960, in full agreement and friendship with Belgium, to independence and international sovereignty.

May God protect the Congo!

Patrice Lumumba's Independence Day Speech

This reading is from Colonization and Independence in Africa (The Choices Program, Brown University, www.choices.edu). Reprint permission was provided to the Zinn Education Project by Brown University.

June 30, 1960, Independence Day

Men and women of the Congo,

Victorious fighters for independence, today victorious, I greet you in the name of the Congolese Government. All of you, my friends, who have fought tirelessly at our sides, I ask you to make this June 30, 1960, an illustrious date that you will keep indelibly engraved in your hearts, a date of significance of which you will teach to your children, so that they will make known to their sons and to their grandchildren the glorious history of our fight for liberty.

For this independence of the Congo, even as it is celebrated today with Belgium, a friendly country with whom we deal as equal to equal, no Congolese worthy of the name will ever be able to forget that it was by fighting that it has been won [applause], a day-to-day fight, an ardent and idealistic fight, a fight in which we were spared neither privation nor suffering, and for which we gave our strength and our blood.

We are proud of this struggle, of tears, of fire, and of blood, to the depths of our being, for it was a noble and just struggle, and indispensable to put an end to the humiliating slavery which was imposed upon us by force.

This was our fate for 80 years of a colonial regime; our wounds are too fresh and too painful still for us to drive them from our memory. We have known harassing work, exacted in exchange for salaries which did not permit us to eat enough to drive away hunger, or to clothe ourselves, or to house ourselves decently, or to raise our children as creatures dear to us.

We have known ironies, insults, blows that we

endured morning, noon, and evening, because we are Negroes. Who will forget that to a black one said “tu,” certainly not as to a friend, but because the more honorable “vous” was reserved for whites alone?

We have seen our lands seized in the name of allegedly legal laws which in fact recognized only that might is right.

We have seen that the law was not the same for a white and for a black, accommodating for the first, cruel and inhuman for the other.

We have witnessed atrocious sufferings of those condemned for their political opinions or religious beliefs; exiled in their own country, their fate truly worse than death itself.

We have seen that in the towns there were magnificent houses for the whites and crumbling shanties for the blacks, that a black was not admitted in the motion-picture houses, in the restaurants, in the stores of the Europeans; that a black traveled in the holds, at the feet of the whites in their luxury cabins.

Who will ever forget the massacres where so many of our brothers perished, the cells into which those who refused to submit to a regime of oppression and exploitation were thrown?

All that, my brothers, we have endured.

But we, whom the vote of your elected representatives have given the right to direct our dear country, we who have suffered in our body and in our heart from colonial oppression, we tell you very loud, all that is henceforth ended.

The Republic of the Congo has been proclaimed, and our country is now in the hands of its own children.

Together, my brothers, my sisters, we are going

to begin a new struggle, a sublime struggle, which will lead our country to peace, prosperity, and greatness.

Together, we are going to establish social justice and make sure everyone has just remuneration for his labor.

We are going to show the world what the black man can do when he works in freedom, and we are going to make of the Congo the center of the sun's radiance for all of Africa.

We are going to keep watch over the lands of our country so that they truly profit her children. We are going to restore ancient laws and make new ones which will be just and noble.

We are going to put an end to suppression of free thought and see to it that all our citizens enjoy to the full the fundamental liberties foreseen in the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

We are going to do away with all discrimination of every variety and assure for each and all the position to which human dignity, work, and dedication entitles him.

We are going to rule not by the peace of guns and bayonets but by a peace of the heart and the will.

And for all that, dear fellow countrymen, be sure that we will count not only on our enormous strength and immense riches but on the assistance of numerous foreign countries whose collaboration we will accept if it is offered freely and with no attempt to impose on us an alien culture of no matter what nature.

In this domain, Belgium, at last accepting the flow of history, has not tried to oppose our independence and is ready to give us their aid and their friendship, and a treaty has just been signed between our two countries, equal and independent. On our side, while we stay vigilant, we shall respect our obligations, given freely.

Thus, in the interior and the exterior, the new Congo, our dear Republic that my government will create, will be a rich, free, and prosperous country. But so that we will reach this aim without delay, I ask all of you, legislators and citizens, to help me with all your strength.

I ask all of you to forget your tribal quarrels. They exhaust us. They risk making us despised abroad.

I ask the parliamentary minority to help my Government through a constructive opposition and to

limit themselves strictly to legal and democratic channels.

I ask all of you not to shrink before any sacrifice in order to achieve the success of our huge undertaking.

In conclusion, I ask you unconditionally to respect the life and the property of your fellow citizens and of foreigners living in our country. If the conduct of these foreigners leaves something to be desired, our justice will be prompt in expelling them from the territory of the Republic; if, on the contrary, their conduct is good, they must be left in peace, for they also are working for our country's prosperity.

The Congo's independence marks a decisive step towards the liberation of the entire African continent.

Sire, Excellencies, Mesdames, Messieurs, my dear fellow countrymen, my brothers of race, my brothers of struggle—this is what I wanted to tell you in the name of the Government on this magnificent day of our complete independence.

Our government, strong, national, popular, will be the health of our country.

I call on all Congolese citizens, men, women, and children, to set themselves resolutely to the task of creating a prosperous national economy which will assure our economic independence.

Glory to the fighters for national liberation!

Long live independence and African unity!

Long live the independent and sovereign Congo!