

King Leopold's delegates from Belgium

King Leopold II, our most humanitarian king, has interest in only one colony: Congo. He has been fighting his whole adult life to improve Africa, end the slave trade, and opening up the “long-neglected Continent to science, industry, and civilization.” It was our King Leopold who paid for Mr. Stanley’s expedition into Congo. Before that, our King frequently donated money to numerous African expeditions. In 1876, our King Leopold he hosted a very fancy conference for explorers and geographers of Africa, where his noble and humanitarian motives were made clear. Our king wants to build roads, hospitals and schools in Africa. He wants to establish peace among African chiefs. He wants to ensure the slave trade ends forever. He wants Africa to be a base for scientific study, where every trading post will features laboratories. According to Viscount de Lesseps (who opened the Suez Canal), Leopold plans are “the greatest humanitarian work of this time.” Therefore, we Belgians claim the entire land of Congo for our esteemed monarch, King Leopold II.

Berlin Conference Belgium Speech: Instructions to students

On _____ you will be participating in a mock-Berlin Conference. The real conference was held in 1884, and it decided which European countries got to rule over which parts of Africa. No Africans were invited to the Berlin Conference. You represent Belgium. The King of Belgium, King Leopold II has spent the past decade convincing everyone that he wanted to help the people of Congo. You will read about Belgium claims to Congo and then give a speech about them.

Reading and Speech preparation

Answer the following questions in your notebook, using complete sentences. Be sure you thoroughly understand the questions/answers, because your speech must include information from each question.

1. What did King Leopold II SAY that he wanted to do in Congo?
2. Who was Henry Morton Stanley? How did he get involved in Leopold's quest for Congo?
3. Why did King Leopold II have a claim to Congo?
4. What did others think about King Leopold in the 1800s?

Berlin Conference Speech and Participation

Write a speech to give during the Berlin Conference.

- Your speech must be in first person ("Our King wants...")
- Your speech must be at least one minute long (no longer than 5 minutes)
- Your speech must include information from each question
- Your speech must include at least one quote (use "quotations") from *Partition of Africa* or *King Leopold's Ghost*

Speech:

- Speak so everybody in the room can hear you
- Use eye contact, gestures, and your voice to engage others in your speech
- Take turns speaking during the general debate.

During the Berlin Conference:

- Listen to all speeches, but non-verbally react as someone from your country would react to each speech
- Only speak when it is your turn, or during general debate time.
- Complete the "Berlin Conference" worksheet throughout the Berlin Conference.

Map: Draw in the areas that King Leopold II and Belgium claim



Belgium: Speech guide

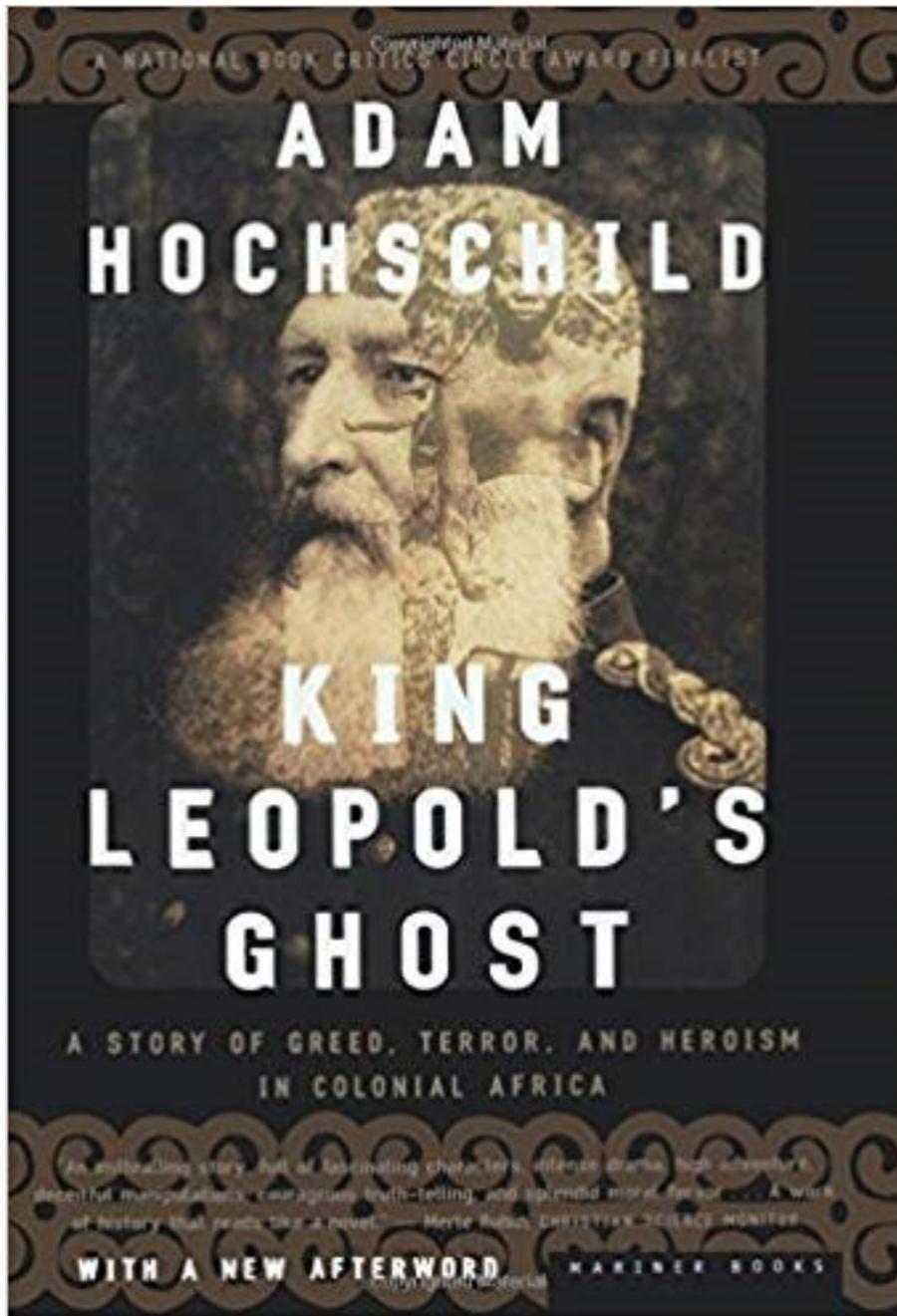
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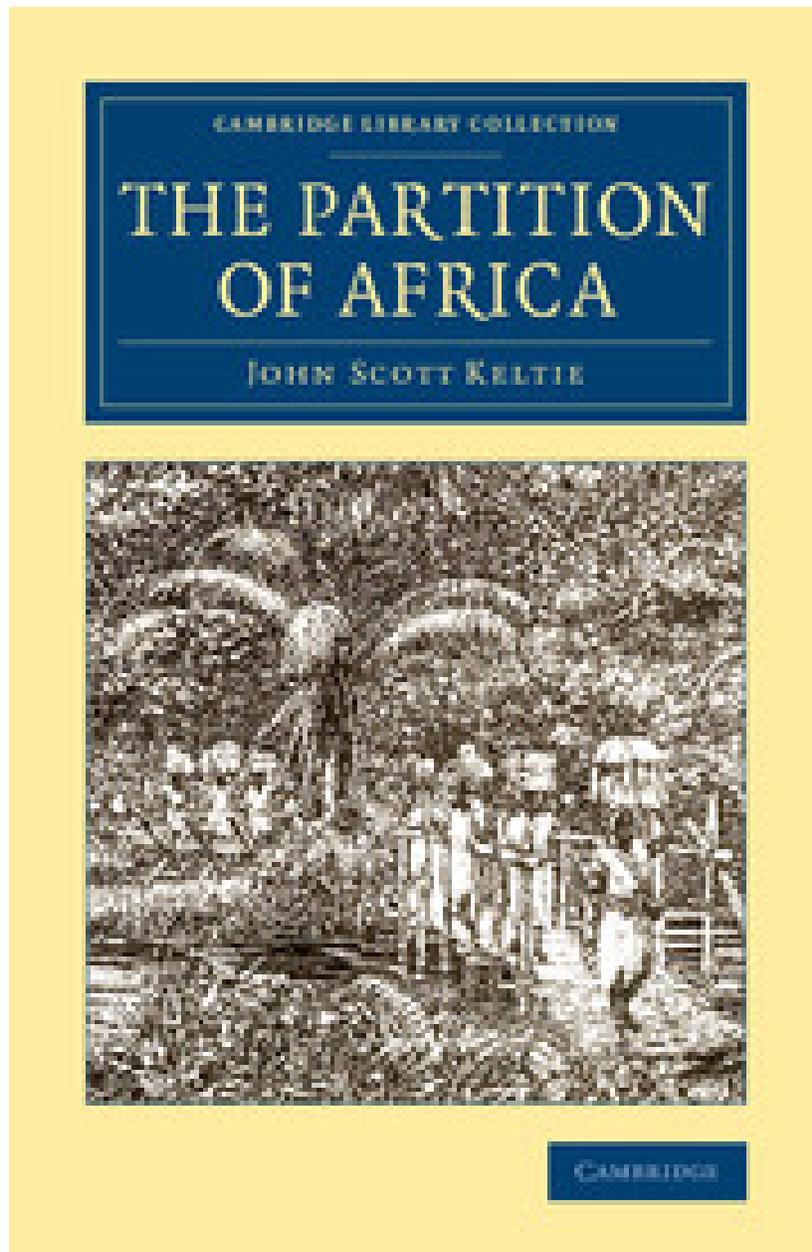
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Therefore, we Belgians claim the entire land of Congo for our esteemed monarch, King Leopold II.



Pages 42 – 46 (not included here)



Full text available at

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Partition_of_Africa/mskTAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&prints_ec=frontcover

Relevant pages included here

A purely
Belgian
enterprise.

Inter-
national
Congo As-
sociation.

merchants of various nationalities, or at least had received considerable subscriptions from various mercantile firms, who no doubt hoped to profit by the enterprise which Mr. Stanley was to lead. But even before Mr. Stanley reached the Congo, it was resolved by the Committee to "return every subscription to the merchants of all nationalities who had previously expressed by their various subscriptions their sympathy with the project." Thus the new Congo undertaking was gradually becoming an almost purely Belgian enterprise. There remained connected with it only those who managed the affairs of the International African Association; and later on (1882), Mr. Stanley tells us, the Committee, "having satisfied itself that progress and stability were secured, assumed the title of 'Association Internationale du Congo,' which, be it remembered," he continues, "was originally started with the philanthropic motive of opening up the Congo basin, and of exploring and developing, according to the extent of its means, the resources of the country around each station as soon as it was founded." We presume that the "grander enterprise" referred to above went even beyond this admirable scheme—a scheme, the success of which would depend almost entirely upon the leader, and certainly, to a considerable extent, on the calibre of the men who served under him.

That the King, the moving spirit, the life and soul of all this stupendous enterprise, whatever may have been his original motives, had now something more in view than the mere promotion of geographical knowledge and the development of Africa's resources, seems

by the representatives of all the Powers except the United States on 24th February 1885. Mr. Stanley was present, nominally as a geographical expert on behalf of the United States, but in reality to look after the interests of his patron, the King of the Belgians.

The General Act of the Conference enacted freedom of trade to all nations within the region watered by the Congo and its affluents, including the coast of the Atlantic from 2° 30' N. lat. to 8° S. lat. The Free Trade Line was further prolonged on the north to the East Coast at 5° N. lat., and down that coast to the mouth of the Zambezi; up the Zambezi to five miles above the mouth of the Shiré, and onwards along the water-parting between the Zambezi and Lake Nyasa to the water-parting between the Zambezi and the Congo. This eastern extension, however, was only to be effective if agreed to by the sovereign States having jurisdiction in the regions included therein. Only such dues were to be levied as would compensate expenditure in the interests of trade; no differential duties were permitted, and all rivers were to be free to the flags of all nations. After a lapse of twenty years the subject of import duties could be reconsidered. The Powers were to combine to suppress the slave-trade and slavery. An International Navigation Commission was instituted to ensure facilities of navigation on the Congo, and to carry out the provisions of the Conference with reference to the river and its affluents. This conventional basin of the Congo was to remain neutral under all circumstances. Only certain fixed navigation dues were to be charged, and these could be

The General Act.

eastern frontier of the Free State ; and in August 1894 the astute King Leopold made an arrangement with France, by which on his agreeing not to occupy nor exercise any influence in the Bahr-el-Ghazal or on the Nile, north of 5° N. lat., France ceded to the Free State a block of territory beyond 4° N. lat., starting from the junction of the Mbomu and the Mobangi, along the former river to its source, and thence along the water-parting of the Nile and Congo to 30° E. long. In this way King Leopold acquired all he really wanted, free access to the Nile and the rounding off of his northern frontier by a natural boundary.

Great things expected of the Free State.

Great things were expected from the foundation of the Free State, which was referred to at the time as one of the most remarkable events of the century. At the concluding sitting of the Conference the new organisation was greeted as one of the great civilising and humanitarian agencies of the nineteenth century, as the chief medium through which the work for which the Conference had been summoned would be carried out. The Free State was to be the model boy in the new African School. He was never to go beyond bounds ; he was never to interfere with his neighbours ; never to bully the weaker boys under him.

The great object for which professedly the International Congo Association had been founded was the opening up of the interior region included in its operations to civilisation and commerce, as well as the exploration of its geography. As has been already said, we cannot doubt that the motives which actuated the King of the Belgians in entering upon this enter-

prise in Africa were to a certain extent disinterested. If to these motives there came in time to be added a kingly ambition to be the ruler of a million square miles of a continent previously given over to savagery and anarchy, this ambition was legitimate, for he could only reap glory and lasting reputation by ruling well. He it was who until quite recently supplied the funds with which the enterprise was carried on, and notwithstanding the increase from other sources, his private purse is still opened to the extent of £40,000 annually. It is not, therefore, surprising that the King should wish to rule his own state in his own way, even though its international character should thus disappear, and Belgium be accorded favours not granted to other nationalities. As a matter of fact, when King Leopold assumed the sovereignty of the Free State it ceased to be international, and rapidly became an almost exclusively Belgian undertaking. The officials of other nationalities gave place with few exceptions to Belgians. In this King Leopold was compelled to yield to the wishes and remonstrances of his European subjects. It was found, moreover, that the absolute freedom of trade insisted on in the Berlin Act could not be maintained; even His Majesty's large resources were not equal to the necessary expenses of administration, and duties and taxes have had to be imposed which can hardly be said to be consistent with the spirit or the letter of the Act. Of the heavy duty which has been placed on spirits none but those interested in their sale will complain. But, however it is to be accounted for, there can be little doubt that the manner in which

Becomes a purely Belgian undertaking.

Disappointed traders.