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**The Rationalization of Evil**

Through human history it often happens that what is beneficial economically but is morally wrong, will be rationalized by those in charge to excuse what should be inexcusable. In two of his letters King Leopold shows a rationalization of colonizing Africa, as well as the conclusion that the missionary’s priority must be Belgium interests (*Letter from King Leopold II to the Missionaries, 1883*). The logical though process being that for a nation to take care of its’ self-interests it must necessarily expand its borders and influence in order to do this. Further that Belgium is a member of a first rank of nations, and that lesser nations of the second rank find usefulness in serving the first rank (*Letter from King Leopold II to the Minister Beernaert, 1890*).

Another frequent avenue of rationalizing colonization was that it was for the greater good of the people who were to be invaded. The school of thought was that there were different levels of civilized societies, and that it was the duty of the more advanced societies (from their perspective) to pull the other ignorant nations up to their level. The point of view here is that the lesser countries were almost like children, and the higher countries the adults which had to instruct and yes discipline the children to be brought up to a correct way of living. Paul Leroy said that it would be morally wrong for the civilized nations of the world to accumulate and keep the worlds knowledge of science and art to themselves and not share that with the rest of the nations (*Paul Leroy-Beaulieu on the Desirability of Imperialism, 1891*). The rest of Paul’s letter however makes it clear that under the surface of that reasoning the true intention was an economic pursuit.

That it was in the colonized nations best interests to increase the knowledge of the natives, and to secure their welfare is a different way to rationalize invasion (*George Washington Williams’ Open Letter to King Leopold II, 1890*).

Works Cited

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