

Source: [KBhENG201HeartOfHardness](#)

1 | The Congo Free State, some Background

Leopold's Colonisation and Establishment of Congo Free State Methods Lead first European development efforts into the Congo Basin Privatization of Public State allowed direct control (Congo Free State was a privately held state under the seat of the Belgian monarch, not the seat of the Belgian government), used the guise of Philanthropy and spreading Christian message + approved by big state governments (US, most European monarchies, etc.) Under Europe's transformation to parliament > monarch, Leopold used Congo as a place where he could re-establish his authority Forced Labour due to robber Held up females in villages and forced men to work to free their wives To show that there was not bullet wasted in the army, the Royal Guard had to show the severed hand of each dead victim to his senior officer. If someone missed, the officer would sometimes cut off someone's hand to compensate. Birth Rates fell and famine ensued Effects of colonization Protests about the harsh working conditions Between 10 and 23 million people died during Leopold's rule, from 1885 to 1908. Africans lost their right to land ownership anywhere except within their own villages Colonial administrators also kidnapped orphaned children from communities and transported them to "child colonies" to work or train as soldiers. Estimates suggest more than 50% died there. Statistical information: Population of the state declined from 20 million to 8 million after much widespread brutality in labor forces (mines, plantations, etc.)—estimates that the forced labor system led to the deaths of 50% of the population Over 2 million square kilometers Effects on native peoples. Villages were burned and leveled to make way for rubber plantations Rubber quotas were set impossibly high, the punishment for not meeting requirements was to have hands chopped off. Small wars occurred where villages attacked neighboring communities to gather hands in order to escape the rubber quota. Constant starvation, war, and disease led to large declines in population Millions of Congolese were forced to harvest rubber, build railroads and mine for ore