6. Conclusion

Without doubt, the international Congo reform movement, to a large extent led by activists from Great Britain and the United States, exposed and opposed one of the ghastliest regimes of New Imperialism. Mercilessly, the 'Congo atrocities' revealed the structural, military and epistemological violence that informs all colonial relations. Relentlessly, the brutalisation of the Congo colonisers showed that racism stimulated even the most appalling iniquities: reduced to 'subhuman' beings, the colonised Congolese women, men and children were unscrupulously punished, tortured and murdered. At the 'heart' of the deterioration of European 'civilisation' that the moral outrages in the international, universal and allegedly 'philanthropic' Congo Free State laid open, an ineluctable realisation awaits: racist dehumanisation and colonial exploitation demolish all ethical boundaries.

As this study has shown, the activists of the British and American reform movement never reached such a conclusion. On the contrary, they maintained, against all evidence, that the Congo Scandal was exceptional in Europe's and America's on-going subjugation of the globe, distinguished not in degree but kind from neighbouring imperial formations. Moreover, it has also become clear that a belief that humanity can be divided into hierarchically ordered, inherent groups, in which the indigenous population of the Congo Basin was 'inferior' or less 'developed' than Europeans, was the fundamental political consensus among all Congo reformers. It is equally apparent that they shared the conviction that the subjugation of the former under the rule of the latter was legitimate, and the resulting accumulation of economic and symbolic capital in the imperial metropoles was well deserved. Moreover, appeals to the racist mind-set of their contemporaries, the activation of the abundant archive of knowledge accumulated in the long history of European racism, and a confident, often instrumental use of stereotypes about the 'myth of the dark continent' and the imperial representation of the Congo as 'Darkest Africa' have been revealed as a central method of Congo protest, to a large extent responsible for the great popular success of the reform movement. Racism, one could conclude, was the ideological 'glue' that bound together the evangelicals, free traders and philanthropists in Great Britain; Protestant missionaries, peace activists, opponents of American expansionism, Black promoters of 'racial' accommodationism

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and 'white' architects of 'racial' segregation in the United States; and the many devoted politicians, academics, journalists and artists who supported the campaign.

Not despite but *because* of its racist foundation, the Congo reform movement became the first great international human rights movement of the 20th century. For contemporaries, the Congo Scandal always transcended the geographic boundaries of the Free State and the narrow question of atrocities. What bothered the activists concentrated in Boston and Liverpool more fundamentally, more dramatically, was how seriously the outrages in Léopold's distant colony affected themselves, their personal (national, 'racial' and cultural) identity and the (collective and individual) rights, privileges and benefits they took for granted as citizens of imperial states and members of imagined racist communities such as the 'white race' and 'Christian civilisation'. At the bottom of the 'heart of darkness' that the Congo reformers opposed, this study has claimed, they identified a profound calamity that shook the discursive, political and social pillars of racist relations and predominance.

The dramatic impact of the Congo Scandal on the contemporary British and the American public has (hopefully) been made intelligible by an investigation of the great expectations that the imperial community invested in the colonisation of the Congo and a constant awareness of the broader discursive-political contexts. In this way, it became apparent that the colonisation of the Congo, represented as the 'most savage' part of Africa, contained far-reaching pledges of 'racial' and cultural superiority, of the establishment of a hegemonic colonial dominance over Central Africa, and of including a fragmented imperial world in one universal, racist imagined community evenly awarded with the economic and symbolic benefits arising from the subjugation of the Congo. As this study has shown, all of these discursive, political and social promises were categorically betrayed, which constituted the real catalyst of the Congo reform campaign. Nonetheless, the outrage would probably have been less pronounced if many 'white' intellectuals, artists and politicians at the turn of the 20th century had not become deeply unsettled by alleged signs of racial decline and cultural regression, fears of an inevitably approaching end of 'white' and European supremacy, and a frustration about the apparent failure of racism to create a coherent form of social and geopolitical solidarity. In this way, the Congo Scandal became symbol and signifier of a sweeping 'crisis of whiteness' that haunted contemporary literary and political discourses. To a significant extent, it was not the fate of tortured and murdered Africans, but rather the conjuncture of two radically opposed racist formations, an 'optimistic' and a 'pessimistic' century, that turned the deterioration of the Free State into a scandal that could stir both political and cultural elites and mobilise the masses in Great Britain and the United States.

Moreover, this study of racism in the context of the Congo reform movement, which ranged over three continents and two centuries, has been able to demonstrate how comprehensive and versatile American and British racism was at this specific historical conjuncture. For one, it has been shown that both Congo reformers and Congo colonisers fundamentally agreed that they were superior human beings invested with the right to subdue the Congo, and that they were entitled to the richness of the 'dark' but 'wealthy' 'heart' of Africa. Racist beliefs constituted the ideological common ground of those generally considered colonising 'villains' and those considered humanitarian

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'heroes' in the great Congo controversy. Of course, racism has never been the exclusive ideological property of the 'villains' of history. The example of the Congo reform movement supports the conceptualisation of racism as a complex social relation marked by the interplay of stereotypical classifications, (institutionalised) politics and group formation processes that affects all spheres of society and can be embraced by actors of all classes, milieus and political orientations – or ascribed 'racial' identities.

However, it has also become apparent that racism was still a heavily contested social relation. This was not only expressed through the enduring anti-colonial resistance against the European occupation of the Congo Basin that was broadly acknowledged – although without any sympathy – by the Congo reformers and the isolated but articulated objections against racism and colonialism raised at the margins or outside of the reform movement. It was also shown by the discordances revealed within the dominant side of imperial and racist relations. Not only Congo reformers and Congo colonisers, but also the reformers themselves thoroughly disagreed about the 'right' representation of the racistly stigmatised 'other', about the most appropriate translation of racist ideas into political practice and about what exactly constituted the imagined communities of superior beings. Cultural antagonisms between 'civilisation and savagery' that had dominated the Congo narrative in its foundational years were increasingly pushed aside by the opposition between 'white and coloured races', for instance, although the 'savage' stereotype continued to thrive in the Congo reform discourse, even in the hey-day of 'race' in the early 20th century. Moreover, inner conflicts within the reform movement exposed the range of contemporary racist and colonial politics, oscillating between assimilation and segregation, international and national colonial governance, and direct and indirect colonial rule. Finally, the growing fragmentation of universal identities such as 'whiteness' and 'civilisation' through nationality, class or confession; the impact of a self-referential 'racism'; and the segmentation of the 'savage' stereotype along lines of age and gender that this study has exposed emphasise that racism can only be compressively studied if its intersections with other socially constructed antagonisms are considered.

However, these symbolic struggles – within the reform movement and between apologists and critics of the Free State – about the nuances of racist hierarchies and the practicability of racist policies should not be misinterpreted as criticism or even as the rejection of racism. On the contrary, as this study has shown, racism was the ideological foundation that drove the motivation and agenda of this reform campaign. In recognition of the inner structuration of the reform discourse around the themes of 'promise, betrayal and redemption', and guided by an understanding of racism as a social relation based on representation, politics and group formation, this study was able to conduct a thorough analysis of racism in the Congo reform movement, its shapes, forms and ambivalences, the 'crisis of whiteness' that emerged in the 'heart of darkness', and the proposed remedies of this racist humanitarian campaign.

The central representational promise of the imperial Congo-narrative was the formation of a collective identity for 'Brightest Europe' that was negatively defined in differentiation to and in the submission of the people and space of an imaginary Congo. In his best-selling literature, the journalist-turned-'explorer' Henry M. Stanley declared the Congo to be 'Darkest Africa'. The Congolese people were divided into two clusters.

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While the political elites who followed Muslim faith and 'Arab' customs were raised to an in-between cultural status, the 'African Congolese' were relegated to the lowest level of human development. The evaluation of the former mirrored changing political alliances and the ambiguity of Orientalist ascriptions oscillating between the appraisal and rejection of allegedly primordial 'Arab characteristics'. In the representation of the latter, several aggregations of the 'savage' stereotype were used to assert a radical historical immaturity of people who supposedly dwelled in a 'state of nature', were 'ferocious cannibals' and followed a 'beastlike' life. This sweeping dehumanisation was further accentuated by fragments of ancient 'monster' stereotypes and patterns of medieval demonological racism. Despite initial scepticism, Stanley eventually developed a 'racial' taxonomy that attempted to turn his established cultural hierarchies into a biological relation. Accordingly, inferior indigenous 'African races' ('Negroes' and 'Pygmies') had, throughout history, gradually been suppressed by superior 'Semitic races' ('Ethiopians' and 'Arabs'). The Congolese forests thus became the last retreat of the 'true negro', it is argued. Stanley's classifications upheld monogenesis and conceded the possibility of 'progress' under European tutelage and dominance, as the ascribed 'docile' and 'childish' character of some 'savages' suggested. Nonetheless, the radical alienation and inferiorisation of the subhuman 'African Congolese', defined as the most degraded, most vicious, most devilish and most primitive people on earth, always implicitly challenged their humanness in principle.

Moreover, the envisioning, mapping and classifying of space was an essential characteristic of Congo literature. The omnipresent motif of 'darkness' that informs all of Stanley's imaginative geography had three dimensions. As an 'epistemological' status, it describes a region untouched by the 'light' of Christian 'civilisation'. That the Congo Basin was 'unknown' to Europeans was tantamount to the claim that the region existed before 'meaning' and 'being' as such, an anachronistic space outside historical time and stuck in a dim 'prehistoric' past. As a 'physical condition', the Congolese 'darkness' was allegedly created by its wild nature. Spectacular imageries of tropical flora and fauna created the Congolese forest as an archetypical 'jungle' that delineated the Congo's as a 'natural' and 'dark' space. Under the perpetual shadow of its giant trees, Stanley claimed to have found one of the 'darkest' places on the planet. Congolese nature was an ambiguous creation. Compared to a 'virgin' and 'fertile' female body, it allured the (male) reader with promises of tropical resources and fascinating scenery. However, Stanley vigorously warned about the hypocritical character of this mysterious beauty. Omnipresent physical and psychological perils culminated in the ascription of a 'metaphysical darkness'. Through the reliance on gothic motifs of horror and Christian colour symbolism, the Congo is described as an eerie pitfall and earthly hell. Eventually, Stanley identifies a supernatural and 'dark' agency that allegedly controls this spiritual home of 'the evil'.

The imperial gaze towards 'Darkest Africa' always led back to the European self, the 'civilised', 'human', 'elected' and 'white' higher beings who stood out against those stigmatised as 'savages', 'monsters', 'devils' and 'coloured'. With the 'heroic' confrontation of this radical African counter-world through the 'discoverer', 'civiliser' and 'conqueror', Stanley signified the inherent supremacy of these imagined communities. The story of a single 'white' and 'civilised' man forcing the people, space and spirit of 'Darkest

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Africa' into submission was read as an iconic demonstration of the racial and cultural superiority of 'Brightest Europe'.

Thus established, this representation of a 'prehistoric' and 'natural' space of 'darkest darkness', inhabited by the most 'backward' and 'inferior' groups of humanity and enlivened by a 'spiritual evilness', defined how generations came to envision 'the Congo' – and it remains scandalously effective today. Nonetheless, under the impact of the Congo Scandal, Stanley's narrative almost collapsed. The classification of the alienated Congo was not challenged, however, but rather the relation of Europe to 'Darkest Africa'. The Congo reform movement accused the colony established by Stanley and ruled by the Belgian King Léopold II first of tearing down the boundaries between 'self' and 'other'. In Joseph Conrad's multifaceted Congo novellas, this 'corrosion of alterity' is the most imposing subject matter. These pioneering (fictional) contributions to the reform debate explore the 'dangerously' close affinity between the 'dark and anachronistic' Congolese 'wilderness' and the 'dark and anachronistic' lusts and instincts slumbering in their European protagonists. The stories cumulate in the horrifying realisation of how easily the thin veneer of 'civilised' behaviour can erode. The claim that the Free State had 'gone native', as the ivory trader Kurtz did in *Heart of Darkness*, was a reoccurring indictment in the reform discourse. Motifs such as the 'cannibal army' and 'the slave state' and the demonisation of Léopold as a 'vampire king', for example, conveyed as much outrage about colonial atrocities as about an alleged approximation of European colonisers to the 'savagery', 'despotism' and 'evilness' inscribed in the contemporary Congo image. The result was a 'monstrous' cultural crossbreed, an amalgamation of Africa and Europe, as the reformers held.

Furthermore, the campaigners assessed a lack of power on the side of the colonisers that betrayed the 'racial' and cultural optimism of Stanley's narrative. Enduring problems with 'domesticating' the rampant Congolese 'nature' through European technology were asserted, and the disastrous mortality rates of the colonisers were interpreted as hints at a worrying weakness of the 'white body', which was apparently incapable of resisting the harsh climate and related diseases. Further fuelled by reports about difficulties in repressing an increasingly rebellious population, many reformers concluded that the attempt to turn 'Darkest Africa' into a 'white man's land' was about to fail. Thus, the Congo suddenly became a disturbing sign of the (biological and political) limits of 'white racial superiority' discussed in so-called 'white crisis literature' since the late 19th century. Conrad's fictional fallen 'hero' Kurtz, once more, brilliantly grasped this 'erosion of superiority', the second major allegation of the reform movement in the realm of representation. Despite his excellent broad education and culture, the once-dedicated philanthropist Kurtz had long since been conquered by the 'darkness' and 'wilderness' around and within him – unnoticed by the would-be colonial master. Indistinguishable and powerless, the negative identity of a superior imagined community of 'Brightest Europe' was unmasked as an illusion.

Third, the Congo Scandal came to symbolise a deep crisis of 'white' or Western culture. Any 'romance of exploration' and 'philanthropic idealism' in the Congo was pushed aside by an unsettling 'civilised savagery'. This motif hinted at an intrinsic viciousness of Western 'civilisation' and modernity, and more precisely at the murderous potential of capitalism and technology. For one, the reformers criticised the suppression of

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free trade through monopoly capitalism and the conflation of political power with that of money as a deterioration of political and economic culture. Some denounced with particular vehemence the influence of a destructive and 'vampiric' financial capitalism and the 'debauchery' and 'moneygrubbing' of Léopold and thus revealed the influence of a regressive anti-capitalism thriving, for instance, in contemporary antisemitic milieus. Others disagreed, however, and argued that the Congo Scandal had revealed the dominance of profit-seeking and commercialism in all spheres of Western culture. For these critics, the deterioration of Léopold's allegedly philanthropic colony categorically contested the moral value of terms such as 'civilisation', 'Christianity' and 'progress'. The outer shells of 'civilisation might have been established, it was maintained, but the atrocities in the Congo exposed that spiritual 'progress' could hardly be asserted. On the contrary, considering the modern weapons and scientific warfare used for the Congolese carnage, doubts were raised about the destructive power of technological advancement, linguistically engraved in the designation of the Free State as a remorseless 'machine' and 'engine' of oppression. Thus, the outrage about a 'corrosion of imperial alterity' and an 'erosion of racist superiority' was combined with patterns of a 'romantic' repudiation of a 'decadent' and overly 'materialistic' modernity.

In reaction to the this crisis of racist representation, the Congo reform movement created a potent humanitarian narrative based on a vivid, three-cornered metaphor, in which 'civilised and white saviours' rescued 'helpless Congolese victims' from their 'savage African perpetrators'. The first step in this discursive manoeuvre was the identification of the 'perpetrators'. Proving individual guilt for the Congolese atrocities was only secondary. Attempts to hold the colonial administration accountable for its crimes were contradicted by the desire to deny an actual or symbolic European responsibility for the horrible deeds exposed. In the debate about the 'cutting off hands', the reformers still vigorously rejected the notion that a similar 'native' and 'barbarian' practice had existed. However, throughout the reform debate, the humanitarian activists embraced to a large extent the same set of stereotypes as the apologists of the Free State. This became particularly evident in the remarks about the 'cannibalistic', 'wild', 'savage' and 'devilish' character of the 'black' Africans in the service of Léopold's Free State, soon declared to be the 'actual perpetrators' of violence. In a strict analogy to Stanley's imagery and the related, broader racist 'knowledge', the reformers asserted a 'natural' predisposition to brutality and sadism that turned these African soldiers and sentries into wilful torturers and murderers who, like wild animals, followed their violent instincts. The 'moral guilt' of the Free State was then identified as the recruitment and limited control of such 'culturally backward' and 'racially vicious' soldiers. The public outrage about colonial violence was derailed by a debate about Africa's 'inherent' cruelty – even when the direct involvement of the colonial masters in acts of atrocities was under discussion. From the reform camp, a broad variety of 'extenuating environmental circumstances' was brought to bear to unburden the common colonial agent, including the 'barbarous' culture, the fierce tropical climate and the 'evil' spirit of the Congo. In such a setting, it was argued, isolated Europeans had understandable difficulties in upholding their 'civilised' morality, and they adapted to the surrounding 'savagery', as the exposed atrocities allegedly showed. Ultimately, the 'cultural' or 'collective' responsibility for the colonial violence was relegated to the essence of a mythical African 'darkness' most rad-

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ically epitomised by the Congo. Thus, new categorical boundaries between 'civilisation' and 'savagery' were raised.

Concerning its racist dynamics, the imagination of the 'victims' was an ambivalent act. While the reformers denied that 'unclaimed' soil or an inherent 'laziness' were as widespread in the Congo as the Free State maintained to justify its systematic land appropriation and forced labour, the evoked counter-image of a primitive peasant and trading culture or praises of the durability of African 'workers', 'boys' and 'carriers' were no less stereotypical. In this context, the reform imagery was influenced by patterns of 'romanticising' racism, heavily swayed by racial determinism, had recourse to the alleged 'docility' of Congolese 'savages' and replicated the existing colonial labour hierarchies.

Moreover, as a racist humanitarian campaign, the reform movement faced a dilemma. The reformers realised that a too-radical dehumanisation of the Congolese led to a breakdown of compassion, which was problematic since the mobilisation of empathy was an indispensable component of humanitarian protests. In response, it was conceded that the 'victims' of Congolese oppression were generally less 'savage' than their 'perpetrators'. In addition, the reformers strictly focused on the display of suffering women and children. The evaluation of cultural 'backwardness' and a division of the 'savage' stereotype along the lines of age and gender channelled racist contempt exclusively onto the 'wild', adult and male perpetrators, while their 'harmless' and 'innocent' targets could once more be embraced by humanitarian empathy. Exceptionally graphic accounts of atrocities were similarly successful in breaking through the insensitivity of a racist public. However, gruesome 'horror stories' and an almost-pornographic exposure of mutilated bodies still dehumanised those displayed. Reduced to mere 'signifiers' of an abstract crime and objects of a paternalistic and voyeuristic curiosity, thus exhibited, these 'victims' were denied any autonomous subjectivity. Eventually, the reform movement extended this 'victimhood' into an ethnographic characteristic of the Congolese people, who consisted of particularly 'helpless races' and 'child-like savages', as the reformers asserted.

While this imagery could never produce more than a 'false empathy', it successfully aroused public sentiment. Most importantly, between 'perpetrators' and 'victims', the discursive space was opened up for the emergence of the 'saviours'. In the case of the Congo reform movement, this subject position was manifestly constituted as a racist stereotype. In differentiation to the 'savagery' of the 'black oppressors' and in relation to the 'helplessness' of the 'black sufferers', the 'redeemers' were envisioned as 'white', 'civilised' and 'powerful'. Leading reform activists were celebrated as vigorous, ardent and altruistic 'defenders' of the Congolese people and praised for the 'heroic' effort, purpose and bravery manifested in their humanitarian 'crusade'.

The tone was thus set for the 'hero-narrative' that thrived in the popular and scientific representation of the Congo reform movement until today. The humanitarian idols were described as reincarnations of classical and even biblical 'heroism', and symbolically took up the merely glimmering torch of enlightenment that the imperial icon Stanley had once brought to 'Darkest Africa'. Only at first glance celebrated for the redemption of the colonised, the heroic Congo reformers had redeemed the imagined community of 'Brightest Europe'. By re-establishing the corroding boundaries between

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'savagery' and 'civilisation', re-installing the latter in a position of power, and reassuring that idealism could prevail in materialistic modernity, the liberation narrative organised around the 'dramatic triangle of racist humanitarianism' ultimately solved the crisis of racist representation triggered by the Congo Scandal.

The essential political promise of the imperial Congo narrative was the transformation of racist representation into institutional dominance through the establishment of a hegemonic colonial structure in 'Darkest Africa'. Lured by reports about the Congolese natural richness and goaded by a long-nourished colonial desire, Léopold II had become determined to establish a privately controlled colony in the Congo Basin that would eventually be turned into a Belgian dependency. In order to acquire support and the pretence of legitimacy, the young Belgian monarch engaged in a series of well-calculated political ploys. First, the impression of a popular colonising movement was created. While philanthropic and abolitionist commitments secured the support of evangelical, humanitarian and anti-slavery organisations in Europe and the United States, the engagement of Stanley as mission leader, given that he was then the most popular among the 'heroes' of Central African 'exploration', brought the sympathy of the masses. Second, the establishment of an international colony was promoted. Pledges to unlock the fabled Congolese resources through a politically, commercially and religiously neutral colony embraced commercial milieus and the governments of concurring imperial powers. Third, public commitments to confederate free Black men and women in the Congo and to offer prospects to 'civilised' African-Americans allured milieus promoting 'repatriation' schemes for the recently emancipated American slaves. As a result, both Black intellectuals interested in overseas opportunities and white supremacists dreaming of a racially homogenous 'white' America began to support Léopold's enterprise. Finally, the material dominance of the emerging colonial state was greatly exaggerated. The admired 'conqueror' Stanley transfigured the nuclei of the colonial infrastructure he had established starting in 1879 into something militarily impregnable, while the 'civiliser' Stanley assured the public that most 'docile savages' readily submitted themselves to European authority and thus facilitated the establishment of a consensual domination merely based on symbolic power relations.

Pressured by supporters in civil society, the sovereignty of the 'International Association of the Congo', which was fully controlled by the Belgian king, was eventually recognised by the United States and relevant European states in The General Act of the Congo Conference 1885, which translated Léopold's political promises into international law. The 'racist contract' of Berlin dispossessed the Central African polity of all sovereign rights in 'exchange' for vague commitments to abolish slavery and to 'uplift' the colonised population, while it established a set of privileges for the imperial community – most importantly, the rights of free entrance, trade and missionising. Under these premises, the assembled powers signalled their support for Léopold's Congo colony as a trustee of European interests in Central Africa.

Shortly after, the Congo Free State was officially proclaimed. Despite initial difficulties, the new colonial state eventually secured its borders against concurring imperial approaches and crushed a fierce primary resistance. With the triumph against the Muslim empires in Eastern Congo in 1894, the Free State destroyed its most powerful inner rival. Proudly, Léopold announced the 'effective occupation' of his territory and the be-

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ginning of the implementation of his 'civilising'-agenda. Dedicated to Europe's historic mission to open up the region to 'civilisation' and 'trade', apparently not only supported by all factions of a fragmented imagined community of 'civilisation' but even the submissive colonised population, and without rivalling power structures challenging its supreme power, the Free State appeared as a hegemonic historic structure, marvelled at by the imperial public for the establishment of European supremacy over 'Darkest Africa'.

Nonetheless, expectations of colonial hegemony were soon severely betrayed. In its political facet, the Congo Scandal had three interrelated dimensions. The 'African' or 'native' dimension was comprised of the 'Congo atrocities', which, until today, are most frequently related with the depravation of Léopold's colony. Starting in 1895, a steadily increasing flow of eyewitness reports reached the metropole, collected and published by British and American reform activists. While these emphasised the systematic character of atrocities within the forced rubber production, they strategically reduced the violence to a few particular outrageous motifs such as alleged acts of cannibalism, the notorious hostage houses, the flogging with the hippopotamus whip 'chicotte' and, above all, the complex of 'severed hands'. While this dramatic symbolism heavily relied on racist stereotypes and tended to obscure the structural character of Free State oppression, it effectively destroyed the benevolent zeal of the colony. Instead of 'civilising' the Congolese, 'savagery' was actually on the rise, it was held. All material improvement, such as infrastructure and technology, had the sole aim of facilitating economic exploitation, and new forms of slavery had replaced the abolished 'Arab' slave trade. Under the impact of this severe 'perversion' of philanthropic commitments, many of Léopold's former supporters in evangelical and philanthropic milieus, and also those engaged in emigration schemes for African-Americans, publicly broke with the king-sovereign of the Free State, and the concept of the Congo colony as a 'popular colonial movement' collapsed.

Instead of ethical or moral problems discussed in relation to the 'Congo atrocities', the 'European' dimension of the Congo Scandal concerned more practical questions. The transformation of the colony's political economy, implemented starting in the early 1890s, became a principal point of contention in the Congo controversy. As the reformers accused, the appropriation of all so-called 'vacant land' and its resources through the administration and its concessionary companies had effectively culminated in the establishment of a monopoly over the lucrative ivory and rubber trade. For international critics, the deaths of the Irish ivory trader Stokes and the Austrian merchant Rabinek in state custody revealed that the administration was willing to recklessly defend its economic interests. British chambers of commerce, merchants and manufacturers, ideologically represented by the former shipping clerk Morel, declared this commercial side to the crux of the Congo Scandal. However, even missionaries and humanitarians and the less commercially influenced American Congo reformers loudly decried the violations of the Berlin free trade obligations.

With particular vehemence, the reformers opposed the national bias that became apparent in these economic transformations. The Congolese markets were gradually closed to all except Belgians, and even in the monopolistic concessionary trusts, British and American investment was replaced by Belgian capital. Moreover, the rising constitutional, political and financial dependency on the Belgian state and a strict Belgian

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priority in the recruitment of civil and military agents signified the shallowness of any commitments to internationalism. In addition, the administration began to favour (Belgian) Catholicism. Despite its commitment to religious neutrality, the Free State categorically denied land grants for new stations for Protestant societies following the first public criticism of state atrocities through Baptist missionaries.

Moreover, the 'white supremacy' dimension was comprised of charges of a corroding material and symbolic power. The reformers created doubts as to whether the colony had the necessary financial and military assets to subdue 'Darkest Africa'. The state expanded only slowly, and many military operations were less successful than was publicly reported, it was asserted. At the same, all claims of a consensual, symbolic form of domination were contradicted by political disorder and a rising contempt for the colonisers. After the tightening of the rubber regime in the mid-1890s, the Free State territory was once more captured by a surge of armed resistance, and the state showed extreme difficulty in guaranteeing the safety of missionaries and merchants. Impetuously, the reformers warned that the engagement of the most ferocious 'savages' for the Force Publique constituted a significant danger. Incapable of suppressing even isolated mutinies of its well-trained and well-equipped African soldiers, the reformers predicted, the Free State might well collapse once Léopold's uncontrollable 'cannibal army' turned against its colonial masters on a large scale.

The peril exceeded the geographic boundaries of the Free State. Critics warned of a weakening prestige and authority of the 'white race' emanating from the Congo, and they prophesied that the resulting 'anti-white' feelings could spread to neighbouring colonies. In the context of the discursive shockwaves sparked by Russia's monumental naval defeat by Japan in 1905, which had ignited both hopes and fears about the apparent limits of 'white' political and military supremacy, the reformers eagerly warned of a continental and even global 'conflagration' of anti-colonial sentiment from the Congo. The impact of the 'Congo Scandal' might well ignite a unified Black resistance movement with the power to overturn 'white rule', it was held – in Africa and perhaps beyond. Hence, once a celebrated guardian of colonial hegemony, the Free State became a menace for white supremacy.

The remedy proposed for this crisis of racist politics was the reestablishment of a stable colonial order in Central Africa. The reformers vigorously rejected demands raised for self-governance. Their 'humanitarian' racism agreed with Stanley's that the Central African population could, in principle, 'progress' to self-reliance. However, there was an overwhelming consensus that this could only be achieved under 'civilised' trusteeship: The asserted present state of Congolese 'immaturity' (explained as 'cultural backwardness', 'racial inferiority' or a mixture of both) made European mastery both inevitable and legitimate.

A return to the legal and ideological framework of the Berlin Congo Conference, with its principles of free trade, religious neutrality and philanthropy, would allow for the restoration of a form of colonial governance that was both practical and humane, the reformers agreed. While guaranteeing open access for missionaries and merchants to the souls and markets of the Congo could reunite the concurring fractions of the imperial civil societies in one colonisation scheme, genuine care for moral and material 'up-lifting' would break the vicious circle of violence and resistance, it was hoped.

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There were severe controversies about the right form of the 'civilising' scheme, though. The 'moral salvation' through Christian conversion propagated by the influential religious reform milieus was the most dominant assimilative ideology of its time. The ability to pursue this evangelical agenda was the principal demand of the Protestant missionary organisations rallying against the Free State. However, some secular reformers wholeheartedly rejected any 'Europeanisation' efforts. Intellectually influenced by the polygenetic racism of Mary Kingsley, these critics of Christian universalism argued that culture was 'racially' and spatially determined. To bestow a superior 'white' and 'European' culture upon a 'Black' and 'African' people was deemed harmful (since it unmade 'racial identity' through 'hybridization') and impractical (since it raised unrealistic expectations of equality between imperial and conquered 'races'). Instead, an 'up-lifting' should be achieved principally by trade and subjection under a capitalist labour ethic to transform the Congolese into obeying customers, peasants and agricultural workers. In this regard, the strictly manually orientated Tuskegee Institute in Alabama was considered a role model for a racially segregated scheme of education to 'civilise' Africa. Instead of promoting a respectful cultural relativism, as has often been suggested, this counter-concept against evangelical assimilation aimed at the institutionalisation of racial inequality through segregation. The 'principle of non-interaction' and the pseudo-empathic care for 'racial purity' ultimately cemented the exclusion of the alienated others from a 'white master culture'.

Beyond these ideological quarrels, most reformers agreed that economic freedom and 'native land tenure' were the core of any benevolent and functional colonialism. In this context, humanitarians, Protestant missionaries and, in particular, Liberal free traders rejected the 'vacant land policy' of the Free State as illegitimate appropriation and insisted on the recognition of the 'ancestral' and 'heredity rights' of the colonised population in the agricultural land and forests they cultivated. The confinement of the colonial 'terra nullius' myth and the postulation of the colonised masses as rights-bearing individuals constituted a thorough difference to the contemporary racist and colonial mainstream. Commitments to reinstall the 'human rights' of the Congolese population, as reformers frequently described them, revealed not only a departure from traditional humanitarianism and evangelical philanthropy but can also be interpreted as the denunciation of a radically dehumanising racism.

However, even more 'progressive' reform activists remained fundamentally racist. While they affirmed a common humanity between the colonisers and the colonised, they still insisted that the human family could be divided into superior and inferior groups based on biological capacities or cultural development. The creation of 'sub-humans' allowed the synchronisation of universalist rhetoric with the reality of white supremacy and colonial domination because it allowed the differentiation of 'human rights', as well. Those that the reformers postulated for the Congolese were not 'natural', 'equal' or 'universal', but merely privileges defined and restricted by the colonisers, always granted under the condition of a submission to foreign domination. Deliberately, the reformers restricted the 'human rights' of the Congolese to economic property rights and separated them from any political, civil or social rights. In this regard, the reform movement once more revealed its ideological ties to the Jim Crow regime of the New South, which explains its alliance with Senator Morgan, one of the chief architects

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of racial segregation in the United States. 'Colonial human rights', as proposed by the Congo reformers, were not a tool of emancipation but constituted an instrument to stabilise the stumbling colonial hegemony in Central Africa.

Through all the years of its activity, the reform movement was chronically at odds about the institutional framework necessary to implement its suggested colonial reform strategy. Regardless, direct appeals to Léopold and more radical plans, such as a partition of the Free State among neighbouring imperial powers or its control through a multi-governmental organisation, were ultimately abandoned. The reform movement settled on the so-called 'Belgian solution', the annexation of Léopold's privately ruled colony through Belgium, which was eventually implemented in November of 1908. Although some of the reformers' significant demands remained unrealised, the Congo Reform Associations ultimately considered the Congo Scandal as resolved by the creation of 'Belgian Congo'. Politically, culturally and economically, the new colony was as oppressive as the notorious Free State. However, the notorious 'rubber regime' and the related political destabilisation had, at this point, already broadly collapsed due to extinguished wild rubber reservoirs. Most importantly, the new administration quickly assigned land for new Protestant mission posts, and free trade regions were moderately expanded. Although the collective European hegemony once promised by Léopold would remain an unrealised utopia, the international campaigners considered a shallowly 'reformed' Belgian colony an adequate solution for the crisis of racist politics and institutions.

The central social promise of the imperial Congo narrative was the negative societalisation of a fragmented imperialist into an egalitarian colonial master class and a broader racist imagined community of 'Brightest Europe'. In consideration of its political legitimation as an 'international colony', Léopold promoted his colonial enterprise not as the fulfilment of a particular national grandeur, racial destiny or sectarian mission, but as a genuinely universal colonisation scheme that appealed equally to all elements of the 'civilised world'. Rights of entrance, settlement and commerce were granted to merchants and missionaries of all nations and confessions, and the colonial administration advertised its military and civil positions globally, to lower social spheres and, as was mentioned above, even to 'educated' African-Americans. This was all done successfully: the national, denominational and social diversity of the state-, economic- and church-sectors of the new colony was unique. Devoted colonisers from well-established imperial powers, those from countries without African dependencies and an exceptionally high ratio of lower-class recruits took their chance to participate in the 'heroic' conquest of 'Darkest Africa'. Moreover, soon, the first African-American missionaries arrived while Black Baptists launched plans for large-scale emigration schemes in the United States.

Arriving in the Congo, all merchants, missionaries and state agents experienced their inclusion into the narrow colonial elite. Initially, the state administration promoted this group formation process with commitments to impartiality towards the nationality, creed, social status or 'colour' of its foreign subjects. However, this was an exclusion fundamentally based on the exclusion of the Congolese. The 'frontier spirit' of the early years and the violent confrontation of the racistly stigmatised 'native' population bound together colonisers of all nations, classes and 'races'. A negative form of

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cohesion was created that successfully covered over the social antagonisms that structured the home countries of the Congo colonisers through a veil of 'colonial whiteness' – not a biological property but rather a social relation and a position of power. Thus, all members of the master class were prima facie considered 'white'. Hence, the Congo offered a 'whitening per sea change' even to those considered not (like Black American missionaries) or not-yet (like Southern Europeans or working-class recruits) (fully) 'white' in their home societies.

The inclusion into the community of 'colonial whiteness' was rewarded with manifold symbolic and material benefits. All 'white' colonisers were ascribed a 'racist symbolic capital', a specific increase in prestige that accrued from the right to despise and humiliate the colonised others. Colonial agents marvelled at the 'awe' of the 'natives and at their sudden increase in power and influence and almost 'royal' status, which was similar to that of the defeated 'Arab sultans' and 'African chiefs'. This racist symbolic capital was distributed equally among all those included in the community of 'colonial whiteness' notwithstanding rank, social background or 'race'. Other 'wages of colonial whiteness' included not only comparatively high salaries, extraordinary luxurious provisions even for a minor administrator and the benefits of the lucrative ivory trade, but a taken-for-granted grasp of the material possessions of the subdued communities and the unrestrained sexual exploitation of African women. Moreover, after their return, many Congo colonisers could build successful careers upon the social and cultural capital accumulated through their experience of colonial mastery.

Material and symbolic benefits were pledged to the metropole, as well. Stanley and Léopold praised the macro-economic potential of the Congo as a market for manufactured goods and as a reservoir of supply means and labour-power in the highest terms. The integration of the region into the global economic circuit under conditions of free trade was promoted to merchants and manufacturers in Great Britain and the United States, but it also promised the creation of jobs and could open up new spheres of consumption by providing the resources for critical commodities of a new metropolitan consumer culture, it was held. Of course, the surplus generated by colonial trade was primarily absorbed by capitalists, just as the access to colonial commodities remained regulated by spending capacity. However, the symbolic benefits of the colonisation of the Congo had the potential to reach broader spheres of the imperial societies. The close association of Léopold's colonial movement with the popular hero Stanley allowed for its marketing on an unprecedented scale. The textualisation of Stanley's imperial adventures in the widely circulating press of New Journalism and the tremendously best-selling travelogues, together with their reproduction and visualisation in spectacular exhibitions, brought the mythical 'Darkest Africa' home to the metropole. Through the particularly 'participative' reading of travel literature, or as a visitor-turned-'explorer' on imperial exhibitions, the British and American masses were incorporated into the set of racist representation evoked in the Congo narrative and emotionally associated themselves with the 'romance' and 'glory' of the 'conquerors' and 'civilisers' of the Congo. Through their gaze upon the several hundred Congolese exhibited as 'savages' in human zoos in two major colonial international exhibitions in Belgium, for instance, visitors of all social and economic classes recognised themselves as 'civilised'. Hence, through its pioneering role in the emergence of a popular form of imperialism and the on-going

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commodification of racist relations in the late 19th century, the Congo was an empire for and of masses. Millions of consumers, readers and spectators from intermediate and subaltern spheres of imperial societies experienced their inclusion into the same imagined community of 'Brightest Europe' with those holding the political and economic power, and they could draw a racist symbolic capital, experienced as 'ethnic mass honour', from the subjugation of 'Darkest Africa'.

However, the promise of the Congo as a geographic and imagined arena of negative societalisation was fundamentally betrayed. Instead of uniting the 'civilised world' in one universal colonial scheme, the Free State restricted the 'free access' guaranteed at the Berlin Conference to the Congo in general, and to the colonial master class in particular. By the turn of the 20th century, all three pillars of colonial governance, the state, the economy and the church, had become institutions dominated by Catholic Belgians, as Léopold's former supporters irately realised. Additionally, the initially promoted egalitarian 'spirit' was radically revoked over the years. Those independent non-Belgian merchants and Protestant missionaries who were still present in the country were confronted with harassment and persecution by state agents. Instead of providing security for all colonisers, as was expected under the implicit 'racist contract' underlying all imperial relations and the explicit provisions of the Berlin Congo Act, the oppressive Free State had become a menace for Europeans, the reform movement asserted. Moreover, the remaining Italian, Danish and American civil and military agents complained about their treatments as 'second-class' officers and about the thriving national chauvinism from their Belgian superiors, which was at times answered with classist scorn about the low education of Belgian officers. Black Americans, on the other hand, were scandalised by the 'racial' bias in the Free State's judicial system and daily practice that, together with discrimination by 'white colleagues', contradicted the pledges to create a 'colour-blind' colonial master class.

That the power of racism to create a negative form of group cohesion showed severe signs of corrosion in the Congo was both the result of a changing Free State policy and a reflection of broader discursive developments. At the turn of the 20th century, universal concepts such as 'Christianity' or 'civilisation' were increasingly replaced by more particular political identities. In this regard, criticism of the rising fragmentation of the once-universal community of 'colonial whiteness' in the Congo along the lines of nationality, class and 'race' related to unease about the apparent limits of racism to create sustainable social and political solidarity, which was a central aspect of the profound crisis of racist relations experienced by many contemporaries.

Moreover, visitors and former employees of the Free State harshly criticised the lack of comfort in the depressing 'barrack towns' and miserable outposts, and they accused Léopold of neglecting his agents. More remote stations often lost contact with supply networks for months, and both state and companies had difficulty providing even the most basic food and medical supplies, not to mention the luxurious rations promised to interested candidates. Instead of being elevated to superior fields of consumption, Europeans were mostly dependent on African communities for sustenance. The living conditions of the colonial masters were barely distinguishable from those of the surrounding 'savages', international critics complained. Overall, the manifold 'wages of colonial whiteness' that had lured them to the Congo remained an unfulfilled promise for most

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colonisers. The lack of medical infrastructure, poor nutrition and hygiene significantly aggravated climatic hardships and health problems, and colonial agents also struggled with loneliness and boredom and (if they were not wholly absorbed in racist sadism) the moral 'degradation' of the atrocities they conducted and accounted for. Homesickness, despair and shame affected many of the once-proud 'pioneers of progress'. Alcohol abuse was widespread, and suicide statistics were high, the reformers asserted. Where the 'white' masters had once enjoyed their high prestige and royal status as part of their ascribed racist symbolic capital, shabby, sick, drunken and brutal colonisers were humiliated by (self-)contempt.

The degradation of the Congolese colonial master class directly affected metropolitan relations, as well, where Congo reformers were much offended by this 'undoing' of colonial heroism. In the public perception, the exposed physical, psychological and moral deterioration had turned the once-admired 'conquerors' and 'civilisers' of the Congo into anti-heroes. Under the impact of the outrageous atrocities in the colony he had founded, even Stanley's public esteem crumbled. For many reformers, the corrosion of the Congolese hero narrative was a crucial aspect of the Congo Scandal. Moreover, committed by 'white' agents and in the name of 'civilisation', 'Christianity' and 'progress', the moral outrages in the Congo dishonoured and 'lowered' the prestige of these collectives, the humanitarian activists asserted. Unsettled reformers felt culturally and 'racially' disgraced by the Congo. Hence, from a public source of racist symbolic capital and 'ethnic mass honour', the Congo had become an 'empire of shame'.

Last, the reform movement protested that the economic promises made had been severely betrayed. Not merely had the Free State closed the Congolese markets to American and British trade, but it actually ruined these markets for all future generations, the reformers maintained. The ruthless rubber exploitation had depopulated vast regions of the Congo and would soon lead to the exhaustion of the precious wild rubber, it was warned. Thus, the Free State threatened to destroy the Congolese economic wealth that belonged to the entire imperial community. This affected traders as well as broader fields of production and consumption that relied on Congolese rubber, for instance. Hence, chambers of commerce, manufacturers and labour organisations should also protest this deprivation of their 'rightful' share of the material benefits arising from the colonial subjugation of the Congo, reformers urged.

The remedies that the reform movement developed for this crisis of racist societalisation involved concrete demands to reinstate the privileges of the imperial community, multifaceted discursive manoeuvres of 'purification' and the staging of humanitarian activism as a racist mass spectacle. In the first dimension, evangelical, philanthropic and commercial milieus agreed that the rights of Protestant missionaries and international merchants to participate in (and benefit from) the economic exploitation and cultural assimilation of the Congo had to be restored. In this, they defended not merely self-serving interests, the reformers emphasised, but the allied rights and economic interests of the British and American societies. Moreover, ethical and utilitarian aspects perfectly overlapped, the reformers contended, since a more humane rubber production would automatically be more sustainable and preserve both people (hence, the labour force and customers) and resources.

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Others deliberately withdrew from the allegedly universal colonial movement. Following the revelations about structural 'racial' discrimination in the Congo, Black Americans quickly abandoned their Congolese emigration plans. Moreover, international recruits' interest in pursuing a civilian or military career in the Congo diminished. The reformers refrained from demanding a return to the multinational administration of the early years, which some considered impracticable, but it was mostly undesirable given the shameful work the Congolese master class performed. In fact, despite the indignation about the national and confessional bias contradicting the early promises of impartiality, the reformers were generally inclined to accept and extend the inner fragmentation of the universal racist community once realised in the Congo in order to disassociate themselves from the related burden of 'ethnic shame'.

Prominent reformers rigorously argued that the 'Congo atrocities' were without historical or contemporary precedent. The 'thesis of exceptionalism' allowed the violence of all colonial relations to be disguised and perpetuated the chimaera of fair and benevolent imperialism. Glorifications of Great Britain as the 'emancipator' of the 'coloured races', Protestantism as the Christian 'conscience' and Anglo-Saxonism as a 'global agent of justice' were, in this regard, rampant in the reform debate. Such appeals to national honour, religious vanity and racial pride were attempts to counterbalance the disgrace of 'Christianity', 'civilisation' and 'whiteness'. In a reoccurring pattern, the reformers compared the Free State (system) to a 'disease', which implied that a 'healthy' body of these imagined communities pre-existed and could recover through the power of its Anglo-Saxon-British-Protestant 'heart' to fight the Congolese 'infection'.

Medical symbolism fully developed into a eugenics metaphor when the reformers speculated about the 'inferior' and 'pernicious' elements within the Congolese colonial elite identified in the lower-class and Belgian Free State officers. In the terminology of an increasingly popular self-referential racism, fuelled by nationalism and classism, the 'poor type' of these agents, their alleged physical disabilities and social deficiencies, became a reoccurring theme. Many reformers claimed that the lower social milieus that were overrepresented in the Free State administration lacked 'manners' and 'morality', while others ascribed a lack of national character and racial quality to Belgian colonisers. Both groups were 'unfit' for and 'unworthy' of colonial mastery, it was asserted, and their predisposition to brutality was largely responsible for the violence in the Free State. In this regard, both practical and symbolic 'cleansing operations' were promoted. Practically, lower-class agents should be replaced, while Belgium should no longer control an African empire, as some leading reform activists opposing the 'Belgian solution' demanded. Symbolically, a cultural affinity between lower classes and Belgians to Congolese 'savages' was subtly implied and at times openly asserted, thus challenging the formers' status as (fully) 'civilised' in the first place. In this way, the moral integrity of the racist imagined communities disgraced by the Congo atrocities was reinstated through the marginalisation and externalisation of its foul elements and the 'ethnic shame' these had produced.

The strong emphasis on particular identities also led to objections and tensions, however. Class contempt, evangelical fervour and anti-Belgian sentiment explain the limited involvement of Labour organisations in the reform movement, the estrangement of Catholics worldwide and the scepticism of the Belgian public. The thriving

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British nationalism complicated alliances with Congo opponents in France and Germany but was similarly disapproved of by leading British activists such as Roger Casement. Considering the long history of Irish repression, the Ulster-born consul was disinclined to see England and the United States as humane imperial actors. Neither were many activists of the Anti-Imperialist League, which had a strong influence in the American Congo Reform Association. Its members opposed the violent American occupation of the Philippines and had often sympathised with the fate of the Boers in the Transvaal conflict with the British Empire. Moreover, Black American commentators emphasised the structural relation of colonial atrocities in Central Africa with anti-black atrocities in the Jim Crow-South, which were bound together by the same 'race-hatred', as they pointed out. Nonetheless, the thesis of exceptionalism was only hesitantly challenged in the reform movement, and attempts to extend the campaign against the Congo Scandal to a broader criticism of racism and colonialism were never pursued.

Finally, the reinvention of humanitarianism as a commodified spectacle included hundreds of thousands of ordinary Britons and Americans in the racist regime of representation established through the reform discourse. Tremendously successful 'atrocity lectures', organised around graphic 'horror stories' and illustrated by limelight projections with the 'magic lantern', became the central tool of a strategic realignment that eventually transformed the British and American reform campaigns into mass movements. Due to the significant influence of Protestant missionaries, the dramaturgy of these protest meetings often recalled a religious ceremony, and they opened with prayers and missionary hymns. While these framed the gathering within the civilising-mission narrative, the first central part of a standard atrocity lecture was designed as a highly entertaining colonial spectacle. The lecturers spoke at length about the alleged 'savagery' and 'darkness' of the Congo and praised the work of pioneering 'explorers' and missionaries, accompanied by spectacular slides of landscapes and people before they turned to the betrayal of the imperial hero narrative. Horrifying accounts of atrocities were intensified through photographs of African soldiers described as 'cannibals' and maimed children, which had a dramatic effect on visitors.

The prominent speakers promoted an extension of Protestant missionary work and political reforms as redemption. However, just as importantly, they appealed to the 'heart' and 'souls' of the 'civilised' audience. Collective singing and praying and loud moans underlined the ritualistic character of the gatherings. Through their emotional response to the 'horror' displayed, the visitors experienced their performative inclusion in the group of the 'civilised saviours' invested with the power to relieve the distant sufferers. Through the racist spectacle of a commodified reform campaign, 'humanitarian whiteness' eventually became a mass property, and the imperial gaze towards 'Darkest Africa' once more became a source of 'ethnic pride' and a 'mass honour' – negatively created against both the Congolese 'darkness' and the foul elements of European 'civilisation'.

All things considered, any humanitarian impetus in this allegedly 'noble' and 'altruistic' campaign had always been supplemented (and many times pushed aside) by the desire to counter worrying signs of racial and cultural decline, attempts to stabilise a stumbling European hegemony in Africa (and white supremacy on a global scale) and the attempt to secure those material and symbolic benefits considered the legitimate

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'wages' arising from the colonisation of the Congo for those included in the racist imagined communities of 'whiteness' and 'civilisation'.

On 16 July 1913, the British Congo Reform Association gathered for the last meeting in the Westminster Palace Hotel in London. More than two years after the American Congo opponents had quietly suspended all activity, and more than two decades after the first public protest against the Congo Scandal was raised, Edmund D. Morel solemnly declared the victory of the campaign he had shaped like no other. Of course, the African population of 'Belgian Congo' would continue to suffer under an oppressive colonial regime for almost half a century. In their struggle for dignity, freedom and equality, the Congo reform movement had brought no advance.

However, the British and American activists had indeed accomplished their historical mission. By confronting the Congo Scandal, this first great human rights movement of the 20th century brought redemption to the redeemers: the imperial community that had struggled deeply under the impact of the 'crisis of whiteness' that accrued in the Congolese 'heart of darkness'.

Contemporaries quickly celebrated the reformers as 'heroic' for this accomplishment. I hope that this study can provide sufficient insights for its readers to decide if they want to continue to adopt this interpretation as their own. Perhaps it is simply time to admit that the European invasion and subjugation of Africa has produced no heroes but only villains – and to recognise that the idea of a just and humane imperialism, as promoted by the Congo reform movement, is nothing more than a delusion. It is possible that a recognition of the racist origins of the modern human rights movement, discussed in the pages above regarding the example of a pioneering campaign, can also be a small step in the 'decolonisation' of human rights in general and can thus help to unfold the full emancipative potential of a concept that, today, is as desperately needed as in the high time of imperialism.

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