The Congo Reform Association and the beginning of Transnational Humanitarianism, 1904-1913

Dean Clay

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2019

Table of Contents

Abstract

The British and American Congo Reform Associations were part of a transnational humanitarian movement that sought to end King Leopold II's hold on the Congo Free State. This thesis is a history of that activism and its subsequent impact on British and American foreign policy towards the Congo issue. It provides a sceptical assessment of the impact of the reform agitation on British and American foreign policy regarding the Congo issue by offering a comparative analysis of the efforts of both organisations in lobbying for reform. The Congo activists used transnational networks to pressurise their respective governments into raising the issue to an international level. This study will examine how transatlantic activism concerning Leopold's actions in the Congo Free State developed into a collaborative effort, whilst also analysing the divisions and fractures within the movement, as well as the difficulties of maintaining transatlantic co-ordination at the turn of the twentieth century.

Scrutiny of the role of business interests involved in both supporting and opposing the Congo Reform Association (CRA) and American Congo Reform Association (ACRA) permits an assessment of the motives, and influence exerted, of the business figures involved in the CRA specifically, as well as those interests acting against the wider movement. Congo apologists often claimed that the Congo reform movement was driven by the commercial ambitions of Liverpool shipping merchants, whereas the motives of the activists campaigning for reform are often perceived to be purely altruistic in nature. This thesis argues that quite the opposite was often true of certain members who were self-interested in relation to their drives and ambitions in campaigning for reform in the Congo and used the movement to deflect attention from their own suspect business practices, or attack rivals in the shipping industry.

Furthermore, this study offers an assessment of where the British and American associations sit within the history of humanitarian and human rights organisations, positing that

they were a bridge between the antislavery movements of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Overall, this thesis offers a detailed examination of the successes and limitations of the transnational activism of both associations during the period of Congo reform activism at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, this thesis would not exist without the support of my three excellent supervisors, Professor Nicholas J. White, Dr Christopher Vaughan and Dr James Crossland. All three have been supportive of this project and my own personal circumstances throughout its duration, offering their expertise, guidance, advice, and support when needed, and it is to them that I owe a huge debt of gratitude.

I would also like to thank Liverpool John Moores University for allowing me to pursue this labour of love. It is the generous funding provided for research, the facilities to allow me to do my work, and the help and support provided that have allowed me to undertake this project. Thanks also to the History department and my fellow PhD candidates at LJMU who have created a vibrant collegial environment that I was proud to be a part of, and for their friendship and support throughout.

During the course of my research, I worked at a number of archives in Britain and the United States. I am indebted to the archival staff at the London School of Economics, the National Archives at Kew, the Rhodes Library at the University of Oxford, the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool, Clark University, and the University of Chicago. Thanks to all who work at these institutions for being so welcoming, supportive, and to those that had to deal with my rather tedious requests for material. The interest in the Congo reform movement and transnational activism began as a second-year undergraduate whilst studying at Northumbria University and continued into my MA thesis and beyond. Therefore, as that research helped provide the foundations for my interest in the transnationalism of the Congo reform movement, especially portions of chapter two which explores the activities of the American activists, I would also like to thank my two former supervisors, Professor Michael Cullinane and Dr Daniel Laqua, for their help and support at the beginning of this journey.

Both provided advice and guidance whilst I was their student and continue to do so today. I owe both Mike and Daniel a debt of gratitude. I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr Dean Pavlakis, whose advice and support regarding some of the archival material and the thesis overall has been invaluable.

I would also like to thank my family and friends. They have provided a support network that I have needed, and without their love and support, none of what I have achieved would be possible. Finally, my biggest thanks go to my wife, Zoë. Above all others, she has been a source of strength, love, and support throughout the whole process, and it is to my wife and son, James, that I dedicate this work.

Declaration

This submission is my own work and contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the University or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text, in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Name: **Date:**

Signature:

List of abbreviations

Sources

ASC, RH	Anti-slavery Collection, Rhodes House
CUA	Clark University Archives
FO	Foreign Office
HC	House of Commons (Hansard Papers)
LSE	London School of Economics
MP	Morel Papers

Other abbreviations

ABIR	Anglo Belgian Indian Rubber Company
ACRA	American Congo Reform Association
APS	Aborigines' Protection Society
CRA	Congo Reform Association
BCGA	British Cotton Growers Association
MCIJ	Massachusetts Commission for International Justice
IAA	International African Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation

Introduction

On 29 May 1911, a public presentation luncheon was held in the Whitehall Rooms at the Hotel Metropole in London. The purpose of the presentation was to recognise the 'hero's work' that had been done by Edmund Dene Morel, founder of the Congo Reform Association (CRA) in Britain and the driving force behind the Congo reform movement throughout the first decade of the twentieth century. Morel had shown the power of the individual and investigative journalism to pressure governments to investigate the stories of atrocities and the existence of the slave trade in the Congo Free State. The attendees at the gathering noted that for the 'great moral emergency' that had been the situation in the Congo, 'the providence of God gave us the man.'[1] This gathering, according to the *Daily Post*, was 'strikingly representative – non-party, unsectarian, international.'[2] In attendance at the presentation were notable luminaries such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes novels and Congo reformer; J. Ramsey Macdonald, Labour MP and future Prime Minister; W. T. Stead, a crusading liberal journalist and editor; William A. Cadbury, businessman and the largest single financial contributor to the CRA; Travers Buxton, Secretary of both the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) and the Aborigines Protection Society (APS); Emile Vandervelde, leader of the Belgian Labour Party and President of the Second International; as well as several other leading MPs, religious figures, newspaper editors and businessmen. The *Baptist Times* also reflected on the 'representative character' of the meeting, noting that,

> [I]t was a gathering not only of all parties and all creeds in the country, but of many nations...France sent Pierre Mille, President of the French Congo League, and Felicien Challaye, of the French Congo League. Germany, Switzerland and the United States were all present in their representatives. Africa joined in the

[1] 'The Public Presentation to E.D. Morel,' 29 May 1911, https://archive.org/stream/publicpresentati00cromiala#page/2/mode/2up (accessed 13 September 2017).
[2] F. Seymour Cocks, *E.D. Morel: The Man and His Work* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1920), p.156.

> demonstration, four or five ebony faces adding a picturesque touch of colour to the occasion.[3]

Morel had, it seemed by this point, reached 'hero' status amongst a wide range of his fellow activists. His triumph, however, was short-lived. The CRA would operate for two more years, disbanding after its final meeting on 16 June 1913 where the members agreed to dissolve the association, as they believed that the CRA had achieved its main aims. The CRA's purpose had initially been to reconvene an international conference to arbitrate the Congo Free State matter, and, when that aim looked highly unlikely, later the advocation of the annexation of the colony by the Belgian government. How successful the CRA was in achieving these aims is a matter of debate; that Belgium annexed the territory is fact, but the degree in which the CRA was able to influence this decision is one argument in which this thesis will seek to unpack and explore. Again, at this meeting in 1913, Morel was eulogised once more as the person chosen by God to lead the reform movement to success. The religious nature of this rhetoric was prevalent throughout the lifespan of the CRA, despite its focus to remain a secular organisation; the relationship between secular protest and Christian moral principles was a recurring theme throughout the lifespan of the CRA. The reason for this was that the CRA was part of a movement that had its roots in missionary tales of atrocities beginning with the American Christian missionary George Washington Williams and his criticism of Leopold's system of government in the Congo in 1890, and sporadic accounts littered throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century.[4] However, it was not until Morel arrived onto the scene at the beginning of the twentieth century that the movement moved beyond these humble missionary beginnings

[3] *The Baptist Times*, 2 June 1911, as mentioned in *ibid*.
[4] George Washington Williams, *An Open Letter to His Serene Majesty Leopold II, King of the Belgians and Sovereign of the Independent State of Congo*, in John Hope Franklin, *George Washington Williams: A Biography* (Duke University Press: Durham; London, 1998), pp.243-254.

and became transnational in scope and purpose. The reason for this transnational growth was due to the emerging global context in which humanitarian activists were beginning to operate.

Rationale

The purpose of the thesis is to examine the transnational dimensions of the CRA and its counterpart in the United States, the American Congo Reform Association (ACRA), by adopting a comparative approach to both organisations. By adopting this method of analysing both the CRA and ACRA, the thesis will show that, whilst the CRA was better funded and far more organised than the ACRA, it was the latter organisation that was able to have more of an impact in the political sphere, despite its disordered organisation and sparse funding. The extent to which the British and American activists were able to influence government policy on the issue of the Congo Free State was limited, but because the ACRA's campaigning was not shaped by business interests, as the CRA's activism was, it was able to enjoy more success than its British counterpart.

Another central aim of this thesis is to deconstruct certain aspects of the Congo reform movement, and of the CRA and ACRA specifically, presenting a more sceptical reading of the activism of these organisations than what currently exists within its historiography to date. In particular, the thesis will tackle the idea of the reformers as humanitarians, examining to what degree they can be considered as such, by unpacking their motives for participating in the reform campaign. As chapters one and four will explore, current research on the nature and workings of humanitarianism has shown us that the latter is not always purely altruistic; a degree of self-interest can be part of the humanitarian package. The project investigates this aspect by considering the role of economic factors within the Congo campaign, as exemplified by the backing of transnational business interests, notably John Holt and William Cadbury, and those business interests in opposition to the Congo reform movement, specifically Sir Alfred

Jones. It will show that the influence of these donors meant that their business interests often trumped the humanitarian principles that the activists claimed to possess.

Alongside this, the thesis will analyse how the activists involved with both organisations were able to express and articulate their humanitarianism by the beginning of the twentieth century. It will show that that their activism was a continuation of a long-standing tradition of antislavery activism, yet also laid the foundations for modern-day humanitarian and human rights organisations in their criticisms of the colonial project, and by expressing a consideration of the rights of the natives who were the colonial subjects. The CRA and ACRA were not particularly new in their opposition to the slave trade, nor were they in any way radical in their methods of campaigning; leaflets, books, public presentations, and the use of images were all familiar tactics deployed by humanitarian organisations at the turn of the twentieth century. However, what this thesis will argue is that the movement for reform in the Congo Free State, which was largely, but not entirely, driven by the CRA and ACRA, was one of many, but relatively understudied, humanitarian movements that, by being transnational yet focused on a specific geographical area, was unique. Transnationalism is used here to refer to multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states, and, as Akira Iriye has stated, transnational history can be defined as 'the study of movements and forces across national boundaries.'[5] Using this transnationalism as a framework, this thesis will examine how the people and institutions involved in the Congo reform movement worked together across borders in their campaign, and how specifically key activists involved, such as Morel, deployed transnationalism as a tool in the quest to exercise pressure on the government of the Congo Free State. Moreover, the thesis will examine the extent to which this

[5] Steven Vertovec, 'Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.22, Issue 2 (1999), pp.445-462; Akira Iriye, 'Transnational History,' *Contemporary European History*, Vol.13, Issue 2 (2004), p.213.

transnationalism was limited and how this often made it difficult for the Anglo-American activists to work coherently across the Atlantic.

By examining these factors, this study will not only expand existing knowledge on the CRA and the key figures involved in the movement in Britain, it will also shed new light on the role of the American activists in the reform campaign and add to the literature on its transnational dimensions. The current historiography of the CRA, and the wider Congo reform campaign, encompasses several facets of the movement. These range from the economic aspect of Leopold's regime in the Congo to studies on the making of Belgian imperialism as a whole and the role of propaganda; from revisionist work on the key figures involved in the campaign for reform, to work examining the role of religion in highlighting the atrocities in the Congo Free State; from an examination of the CRA to the role of British humanitarianism and the Congo reform movement; as well as work on particular individuals and leaders of the Congo reform movement, specific officials and missionaries, or Leopold II himself. However, to date, the ACRA has not been given any great deal of scholarly attention, and this is one area where this thesis will aim to make an original contribution to knowledge.

In addition to this, the British and American CRA's place in the history of humanitarian and human rights movements and organisations will be analysed, looking at the motives of activists, their humanitarian concerns and reasons for participating in the reform movement. This thesis will also examine how the leading figures in Britain and the United States who were involved in the movement used transnational networks to pressurize their respective governments into raising the issue to an international level, and consequently influenced Leopold's decision to relinquish his control over the Congo Free State. So far, little attention has been given by historians to the role, and long-term significance, of the CRA and ACRA in the history of human rights. It is important to study this as the historiography on human rights

history is a complicated one and, as chapter one will examine, there is much debate as to when humanitarianism and human rights history began, and the definition of the term itself. This thesis also aims to examine the degree to which the CRA and ACRA's agitation for reform, and to bring those guilty of 'crimes against humanity' to justice, influenced the imperial considerations of national governments after the First World War regarding the idea of trusteeship, and how the organisations were potentially a precursor for institutions such as the International Criminal Court, and its rhetoric influencing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Whilst this late nineteenth and early twentieth century movement did not represent the first time that people felt moved to act against inhumanity, the significance of the British and American CRAs is that its demands were expressed as international appeals that challenged state authority and were also legalistic and philosophical in nature, highlighting the transnational, cross-border and cross-Empire dimensions of the reform movement. For example, the Congo reform activists made appeals based on what they deemed to be common standards for all humanity and used existing international agreements to hold those perpetrators of the atrocities to account – essential elements to what we would today recognise as a human rights argument. The failure to promote the welfare of the Congolese and the restoration of land rights, their rights to the produce of the soil, and their personal freedom, were all cited as failures to be consistent with both the 1885 Berlin Act and 1890 Brussels Act.[6] As Michael Barnett has stated, whereas humanitarianism 'focuses on a discourse of needs…shifts public attention to moral codes and sentiments' and concentrates on the 'urgent goal of keeping people alive', human rights 'relies on a discourse of rights…focuses on legal discourse and frameworks…[and

[6] The Berlin Act (1885) was the outcome of the Berlin Conference in 1884-85 and was designed to regulate European colonial expansion in Africa. The Brussels Act (1890) was the result of the Brussels Conference at which all the major powers in Europe who had colonies in Africa, as well as the United States, came to an agreement to end the slave trade in Africa. The Congo Free State government also signed the treaty. Both the Berlin and Brussels Acts were used by Congo activists who often argued that the Congo Free State was a violation of both.

typically] focuses on the long-term goal of eliminating the causes of suffering'; all of which both the CRA and ACRA, and the members and affiliate branches, stated as their aims and purpose of their agitation.[7]

There is no doubt that the movement contained activists who were campaigning due to their own humanitarian ideals, but the British and American CRAs themselves, as organisations, were not solely a collection of humanitarians working towards humanitarian goals but were primarily concerned with changing the system in place in the Congo Free State in order to end the suffering of the Congolese. The CRA and ACRA were together a transnational organisation that focused its efforts on a specific cause in a distant place, and although the motives of the activists are often perceived to be purely altruistic, throughout the duration of the Congo reform movement they showed that quite the opposite was often true; as chapter four will explore, certain members were politically motivated in joining the movement, and self-interested in relation to their drives and ambitions. This contradiction will be explained in this thesis.

The atrocities committed in the Congo Free State under the rule of King Leopold II during the age of imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century eventually became one of the greatest international scandals in recorded history. Of all participants in the scramble for Africa, engaged by most European colonial powers in the nineteenth century, Leopold II, King of the Belgians, left arguably the biggest and most damaging legacy of all. In response to Leopold's transgressions in the Congo Free State, the CRA was formed in Great Britain and, although there was modest support in Europe for the Congo reform movement, nowhere other than in the United States did the cause gain as much momentum as it did in the

[7] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.16.

United Kingdom. One of Morel's initial aims was to make the CRA a transnational organisation, in order to pressure foreign governments in turn to pressure the British government, as he believed domestic public opinion on its own would not ensure the successful outcome that both he and the CRA desired. His attempts at forming a multinational reform movement in Europe, with CRA branches in countries throughout the continent, were only modestly successful; sporadic support existed in Europe but the only other real sustained movement that was almost as strong as the one in Britain was through the ACRA in the United States.

Background

The story of Leopold's exploits in the Congo Free State is a long and detailed one. However, to set the scene and give a brief explanation of the background to the Congo reform movement, a short summary will help to better illuminate the story.

In 1885 the Berlin Conference concluded with the major European powers having formalised the 'Scramble for Africa'; this despite the lack of any African presence at the talks. The outcome for Leopold II, King of the Belgians, was the recognition of his smokescreen humanitarian organisation, the International Association of the Congo, with Leopold as its chairman, as the *de facto* government for the area now named the L'État Indépendant du Congo – the Congo Free State. This personal success for Leopold was the reward for nearly twenty years of political manoeuvring in which he had managed to convince the world's powers of his altruistic, humanitarian and philanthropic intentions in the Congo region. At long last, Leopold had the colony he had sought after for so long.

After coming to power in 1865, Leopold pursued his dream of acquiring colonies abroad. Belgium had virtually no territory overseas and Leopold was suffering from a severe case of kingdom and empire envy. His first cousin, Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom of Great

Britain and Ireland, was about to be made Empress of India, and as he was related to most of the other royal families in Europe, Leopold was also envious of the empires they were building too. His previous attempts at purchasing Fiji and the Philippines had both failed. As a result, Leopold's jealousy and greed led him to pursue his colonial ambitions in a ruthless and ingenious manner.

The mid-nineteenth century was the age of exploration and Leopold took full advantage of this when seeking out potential locations for his empire. The King of the Belgians was a keen reader of the proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, as well as the *Times* and the *Telegraph* newspapers. Through these publications, he had followed closely the story of Henry Morton Stanley, possibly the greatest African explorer of all time, and his exploration of Central Africa. Leopold soon realised that Central Africa was essentially 'up for grabs' and met with Stanley upon his return, congratulating him on his success and convincing the explorer to allow Leopold to finance his return to the Congo, for the purposes of convincing the local chieftains to sign over their land to Leopold. To persuade the major powers in Europe and the United States that his intentions were purely altruistic, and that he wanted to open up the region to free trade for all nations, as well as improving the lot of the Congolese people who lived there, Leopold set up the Association Internationale Africaine, the International African Association (IAA), which was a front for his aims to dominate the Congo. He invested his own money into the association, as well as attracting financial support from antislavers and philanthropists alike. During the 1880s, Leopold embarked on a series of diplomatic manoeuvres. He craftily sought out the advice of Oxford scholar Sir Travis Twiss, who advised the King of the Belgians on how he could convert his Association into being recognised as a formal state, as well as sending his agent to the United States and convincing President Chester A. Arthur to recognise his African Association – this despite nobody in the United States really knowing what the

organisation actually was.[8] It was this initial recognition of the flag of the Congo Free State by the United States that later provided the foundations for the ACRA to protest the American government to intervene there in the early twentieth century.

Once Leopold had secured sovereignty and recognition of the flag of the Congo Free State by a major power, he then sought to further solidify his position by speaking to the French, asking for recognition of his right to rule there, and to overcome their initial reluctance, Leopold promised them that it would be the French, and not the British, that could have the region if his endeavour there was to fail; cunningly playing two of the great powers off against each other in order to achieve his aims. This was partly in response to British recognition of Portuguese claims to the mouth of the Congo, both having been in discussions regarding the signing of a treaty to that effect that Germany had refused to ratify and had led to the question of ownership of the Congo region.[9] He also approached Otto von Bismarck, the first Chancellor of the German Empire and the host of the Berlin Conference. Despite his initial hesitancy – Bismarck realised that Leopold was not the humanitarian he portrayed himself to be, noting that he was both a 'swindler' and a 'fantasist' – he nevertheless still supported Leopold's plans for the Congo region.[10]

Leopold had been crafty in his approach to obtaining the Congo region for himself, taking full advantage of the paternalism that lurked behind the Berlin Conference; the powerful nineteenth century reasoning that European colonisation was good for Africans and that neatly fitted into the three Cs of colonialism: Civilization, Christianity, and Commerce. Leopold had realised that in order to get himself into Africa he would have to use the zeitgeist, which was

[8] Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p.81.
[9] Hamburg benefitted most from the palm oil trade in West Africa at the time and highlights Anglo-German rivalry at the level of mercantile interest.
[10] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p.83.

anti-slavery, to prove to the world powers that he was in the Congo for humanitarian reasons – to help rid the Congolese of the 'plague' of Arab slave traders. By the end of the Berlin Conference, Leopold had acquired a territory that was 1.3 million square miles in size – seventy-eight times bigger than the size of Belgium – and under the guise of philanthropy, found himself to be the toast of abolitionists and humanitarians, from whom he received much support; given the context, no-one anticipated that Leopold's ploy would lead to one of the major humanitarian disasters of the age.

The seeds of disaster were sewn almost immediately. Under the rule of Leopold and his *Force Publique*, the Congolese people found themselves forced to work continuously to collect ivory, and after its boom of the 1890s and early 1900s, large quotas of rubber laboriously stripped from vines – both of which to satisfy the increasing demand for these resources in Europe and North America. Failure to meet the set quotas resulted in the mutilation – the severing of hands or feet of those who failed to meet their quotas – and the torture, rape and murder of the Congolese people. The resulting death toll from the system operating in the Congo Free State was enormous; despite the lack of a census to determine the exact figure of Congolese killed during Leopold's reign, estimates are usually around the ten million mark, with others exceeding that.[11]

Existing Literature

Over a century has passed since King Leopold II first colonised the Congo and the subject of Belgian imperialism and the resulting atrocities committed in the Congo region has caused much debate and controversy. However, most of the work produced has been restricted to

[11] Robert B. Edgerton, *The Troubled Heart of Africa: A History of the Congo* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), pp.111-112, 124.

academic circles, due to their specialised subjects and the different languages that the historiographical body of work is published in.

The early history of the Belgian Congo began with the recording, and publishing, of the personal testimonies of the explorers, missionaries and colonial administrators collected at the time. One of the most influential, and controversial, pieces of literature produced in the wake of Leopold's project in the Congo Free State was Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* In his work, Conrad created a fictional account of an ivory transporter working in the Congo who witnesses the atrocities. The story was based on Conrad's experiences of working on a steamboat in the Congo and, as Hochschild has noted, delivered a story which tells of an experience which strayed 'very little' from the 'original facts of the case'.[12]

Most of the early work produced by historians was written at a time when their own countries were still colonial powers. The first work produced on the history of the Congo Free State was written as early as 1916 by Herbert Adams Gibbons, an American journalist, entitled *The New Map of Africa 1900-1916*. The year 1916 was a significant year for Congo reformers as Roger Casement, the British Consul whose personal funding helped found the CRA and whose report in 1904 publicised the conditions within the Congo Free State, was hanged for treason for his role in the Easter Rising in Ireland.[13] In his book, Gibbons praised the British reform movement and the wider public for their role in bringing about the end of the atrocities in the Congo Free State, ushering in the creation of a historiography in which the reformers, and E.D. Morel in particular, were placed at the centre of the movement in a heroic narrative,

[12] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Boston, Mass.: Bedford St. Martin's, 2011); Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 1998.
[13] Herbert Adams Gibbons, *The New Map of Africa (1900-1916): A History of European Expansion and Colonial Diplomacy* (New York: The Century Company, 1916).

which positioned them as the key factor in the amelioration of the awful conditions that existed in the Congo Free State.

The Morel-centred narrative continued on with other work produced during the 1930s.[14] This was expanded further when Robert Wuliger drew on the vast amount of material in the Morel archives held at the London School of Economics, going into great detail in his unpublished 1953 PhD thesis, in which he analysed the economic conditions that allowed for the creation of the Congo Free State and the subsequent reform movement.[15] Wuliger continued the characterisation of the reform movement as a battle of good versus evil; that Leopold was the Congo Free State and Morel embodied the CRA and the reform movement itself. Catherine Ann Cline continued this argument with her biography of Morel, which examined the reform movement through the prism of the man himself, subsequently relegating all of the other key figures into the background of the story.[16] Donald Mitchell's recent biography continues on in the same vein as previous work in the Morel-centred narrative, arguing that the progress achieved by the reform movement was minimal and failed, to some extent, the Congolese people.[17]

The role of religion and the atrocities in the Congo has received notable attention from scholars. The work of the missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, was crucial in providing not only eye-witness accounts of the brutality of the Leopoldian regime in the Congo, but also of their role in raising awareness of the problem. As a result, their role in the movement has been widely covered by several historians. Ruth Slade's work was the first to provide an

[14] See: Bertrand Russell, *Freedom and Organization, 1814-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934), pp.450-456; Howard and Ralph Wolf, *Rubber: A Story of Glory and Greed* (New York: Covici-Friede, 1936), pp.102-135.
[15] Robert Wuliger, 'The Idea of Economic Imperialism with Special Reference to the Life and Work of E. D. Morel,' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1953).
[16] Catherine A. Cline, *E. D. Morel 1873-1924: The Strategies of Protest* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1980).
[17] Donald Mitchell, *The Politics of Dissent: A Biography of E.D. Morel* (Bristol: Silverwood Books, 2014).

examination of the role of the missionaries in the Congo reform movement, stating that they were vital to its durability and success.[18] Later, David Lagergren built on Slade's earlier work with a study of the missionaries and their often complicated relationship with the Congolese people, the reformers, the Congo Free State and its government, and the companies that operated in the region.[19] Cline has also written about the role of religion within the Congo reform movement, examining the relationship between the Catholic and Protestant Churches through the prism of the reform movement as one fraught with tension.[20] Cline's work also highlights how the Catholic and Protestant missionaries were diametrically opposed in their views towards the Belgian treatment of the Congolese; whilst the Protestant missionaries working in the Congo Free State were the earliest critics of the Belgian regime, the Catholic position was one of rejecting the reformers' claims that the abuses which occurred were 'both systematic and unique', and that they were an intrinsic part of the regime there and were no worse than what occurred in other European colonies.[21] The role and significance of the missionaries involved in the Congo reform movement received little attention after this initial work until Kevin Grant's book on the religious dimensions of the Congo reform campaign in Britain, and later Robert Burrough's research on the work done by Casement and the missionaries in gathering evidence of atrocities being committed by the Congo Free State government.[22]

[18] Ruth Slade, 'English Missionaries and the Beginning of the Anti-Congolese Campaign in England,' *Revue Belge de Philologie d'Histoire*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1955), pp.37-73; Slade, *English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State* (Brussels: Academie Royale des Sciences Coloniales, 1959).
[19] David Lagergren, *Mission and State in the Congo: A Study of the Relations between Protestant Missions and the Congo Independent State Authorities with Special Reference to the Equator District, 1885-1903* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wikshells, 1970).
[20] Catherine Ann Cline, 'The Church and the Movement for Congo Reform,' *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture,* Vol.32, Issue 1 (March 1963), pp.46-56.
[21] *Ibid*, p.49.
[22] Robert Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities: Eyewitness Accounts of Colonialism in the Congo, Angola, and the Putumayo* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slaveries in Africa, 1884-1926* (New York; London: Routledge, 2005).

Grant's work in particular has been an important contribution to the historiography. His work brings the missionaries involved in the campaign back to the forefront, reprioritising them in the story of Congo reform and continuing on in the same vein as the earlier work by Slade and Lagergren. Grant documents the significance of the role played by missionaries through their hosting of the hundreds of atrocity meetings in Britain between the years 1905 and 1908.[23] This form of campaigning helped the reform movement arouse public outrage at the atrocities being committed in the Congo Free State, although Grant's work only focuses on the meetings held in Britain and largely ignores the same campaigning method carried out by missionaries in the United States. In addition, Grant also argues that it was the missionaries who helped sustain the movement in Britain after Morel's initial strategy had failed.[24] However, Grant's work overstates the role of the missionaries in the reform movement and moves too far in the other direction to that of the Morel-centred narrative. He relegates the role of the Foreign Office in the Congo reform movement, which will be explored in further detail in chapter three, as well as recasting Morel as the 'primary spokesman for the merchant lobby.'[25] This was originally a charge levelled at Morel by Congo Free State sympathisers that was designed to undermine his reform efforts and, as chapter four will examine, a slur not completely without foundation. This is because the charge conflates two periods of Morel's life; his time with the

[23] Part of the success of these 'Lantern Lectures' was the utilisation of new developments in photographic technology. Powerful images of mutilated Congolese people played an important role in winning over public opinion to the side of the reformers. For more on the role of the images used in the reform campaign and their origins, see: Óli Jacobsen, *Daniel J. Danielsen and the Congo: Missionary Campaigns and Atrocity Photographs* (Brethren Activists and Historians Network, 2014); Sharon Sliwinski, 'The Childhood of Human Rights: The Kodak on the Congo,' *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol.5, No.3 (January 2006), pp.333-363; John Peffer, 'Snap of the Whip/Crossroads of Shame: Flogging, Photography, and the Representation of Atrocity in the Congo Reform Campaign,' *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol.21, No.1 (Spring 2008), pp.55-77; Christina Twomey, 'Framing Atrocity: Photography and Humanitarianism,' *History of Photography*, Vol.36, No.3 (August 2012), pp.255-264; Twomey, 'Severed Hands: Authenticating Atrocity in the Congo, 1903-14,' in Geoff Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser (eds.), *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, (London: Raktion Books, 2012). For more on the impact of the reform campaign on Leopold II and the political structure in Belgium, see Barbara Emerson, *Leopold II of the Belgians: King of Colonialism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979).

[24] Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, pp.60, 65-76.

[25] *Ibid*, pp.32-33, 50.

Elder Dempster shipping company, which was heavily involved in trading with West Africa and whose owner was Sir Alfred Jones, Consul for the Congo Free State in Britain, and the early days of Morel's journalism and his subsequent life with the CRA during the reform campaign.

Dean Pavlakis has also examined the role of religion in the history of the humanitarian efforts of the Congo reformers as a continuation of the humanitarian tradition.[26] He has identified that, within this study of the work of the missionaries, historians have developed three branches of thought on the subject. In Pavlakis' opinion, some historians, such as Hochschild, identify and understand the important role played by the missionaries, acting as 'individual heroic…agents, albeit minor players in a Morel-centred narrative.'[27] The second branch sees the missionaries as vital to the Congo Reform Association; a view propagated by historians such as Slade, in which she states that the shape of the whole campaign against Belgian atrocities in the Congo would have been very different without the missionaries.[28] The third branch includes work produced by historians, such as Grant, which views the missionaries as being very important in 'creating popular outrage and support for reform' and who argue against the 'dominant Morel-centred historiography' that the missionaries were crucial in turning around a failing reform campaign.[29] Whilst the religious figures involved played an important role within both the CRA and ACRA, this thesis will not focus in any great detail on the religious dimensions of the reform campaign specifically. Both the British and American CRAs propagated a secular message in their reform activism. Therefore, this thesis will instead examine the role and significance of these religious figures within the wider reform movement,

[26] Dean Pavlakis, 'The Development of British Overseas Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Campaign,' *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol.11, No.1 (Spring 2010); Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Movement, 1896-1913* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).
[27] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p.304, as cited in Pavlakis, 'Development of British Overseas Humanitarianism,' p.4.
[28] *Ibid*, p.4.
[29] *Ibid;* see also Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*.

and both the CRA and ACRA in particular. Nor does this work fit easily into Pavlakis' 'three branches' idea. Whilst it will show the important role played by the missionaries, acting as individual heroic agents, albeit minor players, the thesis will also stay away from the Morel-centred narrative which places him at the centre of the movement. As the following chapters demonstrate, several key figures all played important roles in bringing an end to the situation that existed in the Congo Free State.

One of these key actors was the Foreign Office, whose role in the Congo reform movement has also received significant attention from scholars. As with most others involved in the campaign aside from Morel, the Foreign Office was largely ignored in the early historiography of the Congo reform movement. The first work to really discuss the Foreign Office and the Congo Free State was Mary Thomas' article in 1953, in which she argued that the campaign did not matter to the British government which, at the time, prioritised its relationship with France, having recently signed the *Entente Cordiale*, ahead of any possible humanitarian concerns in Leopold's private colony.[30] Over a decade later, Myron Echenberg's master's thesis offered a different perspective on the role of the Foreign Office in the Congo reform movement.[31] His work analysed the mechanics behind the Foreign Office's methods for pressing for reform in the Congo Free State, stating that they eventually ceased applying pressure on the Belgian government due to favourable reports emanating from British consuls in the region and elsewhere, disproving Thomas' earlier work citing Anglo-French relations as the primary reason. Echenberg's work also placed Morel at the centre of the reform movement,

[30] Mary Elizabeth Thomas, 'Anglo-Belgian Military Relations and the Congo Question, 1911-1913,' *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (June 1953), pp.157-165.
[31] Myron Echenberg, 'The British Attitude toward the Congo Question, with particular reference to the work of E. D. Morel and the CRA, 1903-1913' (MA thesis, McGill University, 1964).

crediting him with influencing British foreign policy on the matter, continuing in the form of the previous work on Morel and the Congo reform movement.

The focus on the role of the Foreign Office continued on into the 1960s, with William Roger Louis, Jean Stengers and Silvanus J. S. Cookey all examining the extent to which its actions led to reform in the Congo Free State.[32] Louis' work not only showed that the Foreign Office was an autonomous agent which played an active role in the reform movement, to varying degrees at different times, but also brought key figures within the campaign who had been previously overlooked in the historiography into the spotlight; figures such as Roger Casement, Arthur Hardinge and Reverend John Harris.[33] Cookey's book neatly pulled together Belgian sources, private papers, and also took advantage of newly-released Foreign Office papers to shed new light on the role of the Foreign Office in the reform movement. His examination of the domestic and international factors involved in the forming of British policy towards the Congo Free State until it recognised Belgian rule there in 1913 has added much to the diplomatic thread of the historiography.

John Bremner Osborne developed this further in his work, showing that Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs during the later stages of the reform movement, shared the same objectives as that of the CRA; only that Grey operated at the pace of international diplomacy, which, to Morel especially, was too slow and led to conflict between

[32] Silvanus J. S. Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd, 1968); William Roger Louis, 'The Triumph of the Congo Reform Movement, 1905-1908,' *Boston University Papers on Africa: Transition in Politics,* Vol. 2, edited by Jeffrey Butler (Boston: Boston University Press, 1966); Louis, 'Morel and the Congo Reform Association 1904-1913,' in Morel, Louis, Jean Stengers (eds.), *E. D. Morel's History of the Congo Reform Movement,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp.171-220.
[33] Louis, 'Roger Casement and the Congo,' *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1964), pp.99-120; Louis, 'Sir John Harris and "Colonial Trusteeship,"' *The Bulletin of A.R.S.O.M. (Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer) for 1965 and 1966*, Part 6, pp.832-856; Louis, 'The Philosophical Diplomatist: Sir Arthur Hardinge and King Leopold's Congo, 1906-1911,' *The Bulletin of A.R.S.O.M. (Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer) for 1968*, pp.1402-1430.

the CRA and the Foreign Office.[34] Osborne developed his argument further many years later by deploying information gathered from the papers of Wilfred G. Thesiger, British Special Consul to the Congo, sent by Grey between 1907 and 1909.[35] Osborne places Grey at the centre of the success of the reform movement, citing the decisive pressure he applied to ensure Belgian annexation and implementation of the subsequent reforms thereafter.

The nature of the debate has changed over the years, as well as a change in the backgrounds of those who have contributed to it. The most notable change is in the authorship of its history. From previously being solely the pursuit of white European historians, work produced by African scholars was published on the subject, challenging both the conclusions reached by the white European historians as well as their historical method. A focus on African agency and resistance in the face of European colonial rule, the impact and legacy of Leopold's exploitative regime and a synthesis of Congolese history as a whole from Congolese historians were important landmarks within the historiography of the Congo Free State.[36] This development has given the field a whole new perspective to that of the white European literature produced which has dominated the historiography since the Congo Free State was formed.

The late 1990s saw a resurgence in interest in the subject of the Congo Free State and Congo reform and was largely due to the release of Adam Hochschild's book *King Leopold's Ghost*, a controversial work which became an international bestseller.[37] Earlier that decade, the

[34] John Bremner Osborne Jr., 'Sir Edward Grey, the British Consular Staff, and the Congo Reform Campaign' (PhD dissertation, Rutgers University, 1971).
[35] John Bremner Osborne Jr., 'Wilfred G. Thesiger, Sir Edward Grey, and the British Campaign to Reform the Congo, 1905-9', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Jan 1999), pp.59-80.
[36] For an overview of Congolese history written by Congolese historians, see: G. Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London: Zed Books, 2002); C.D. Gondola, *The History of Congo* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2002); Isidore N'Daywel, *Histoire Générale du Congo* (Paris, Brussels: De Boeck & Larcier, 1998).
[37] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*.

subject had received further attention in two chapters of Thomas Pakenham's work on the Scramble for Africa.[38] However, it was Hochschild's book that brought the spotlight back onto the subject, mainly due to its accessibility to a wide audience of readers through Hochschild's writing style.

In his book, Hochschild describes King Leopold II's exploitation of the Congo and its people and how it led to the death of approximately ten million people – nearly half of the estimated population of the Congo at the time – killing at a level of what Hochschild called 'genocidal proportions'.[39] Using such terms as 'holocaust' and essentially guessing the death toll inevitably raised questions and caused controversy, especially in Belgium. Hochschild's book has received criticism from historians, such as Angus Mitchell, for not examining key primary sources in his work; for example, the letters exchanged between Morel and Casement, as well as his reliance on the 'Black Diaries' as a reliable source for monitoring Casement's movements through the Congo in 1903.[40] Other historians, such as Guy Vanthemsche, have objected to Hochschild's use of associating the atrocities and violence that occurred in the Congo Free State with twentieth century interpretations of mass genocide, as well as questioning the basis of his claims of the figures involved regarding total deaths; although they do agree that actual atrocities occurred during Leopold II and the Belgian state's control of the region, which was an important step forward regarding Belgian attitudes towards their colonial past.[41] However, what Hochschild did achieve with the publication of his book was the reintroduction of previously overlooked figures important to the story of Congo reform –

[38] Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (New York: Random House, 1991).
[39] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost,* p.225.
[40] Angus Mitchell, 'Reviews', review of *King Leopold's Ghost*, by Adam Hochschild, *History Today,* Vol.49, Issue 8 (August 1999), p.52. The 'Black Diaries' – the authenticity of which has provoked much debate – were supposedly written by Casement and contained detailed accounts of his homosexuality. They were later used by the British government as a way of discrediting Casement during his trial for committing treason after playing a significant role in the Easter Rising in 1916.
[41] Guy Vanthemsche, 'The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo,' in Csaba Lévai, (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography* (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp.92-119.

people such as the African-American missionaries George Washington Williams and William Sheppard.[42] Hochschild also re-ignited the debate over Belgian atrocities in the Congo Free State. This is a debate that had ebbed and flowed over the course of the twentieth century, with the story of the Congo Free State and the reform movement often vanishing from the Belgian consciousness in a period Hochschild has described as 'the great forgetting'.[43] The subject was subsequently 'rediscovered' in waves by new generations of scholars outside of Belgium – particularly in Britain and the United States.

The effect of the Belgian atrocities and how they were received in the United States has also been considered by historians of the subject and is something that this thesis will examine in order to understand the factors that drove membership of the Congo reform movement in America, as well as the impact of the activism there on the United States government and its relationship with Leopold and the Congo Free State. Paul McStallworth's unpublished PhD thesis was the first to examine the relationship between the United States and the Congo Free State from when Leopold's colony came into existence until the outbreak of the First World War.[44] McStallworth's work is useful when studying the American involvement in the reform movement, often cited by anyone researching the United States and the Congo Free State, but it has rarely been developed further within the historiography. More than twenty years later, Hunt Hawkins examined Mark Twain's role in the Congo reform movement, shedding light on one of the most influential members of the ACRA and his role in its limited success.[45]

[42] For more on both Williams and Sheppard and their work in the Congo region, see, Franklin, *George Washington Williams*; William E. Phipps, *William Sheppard: Congo's African American Livingstone* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2002).
[43] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p.292.
[44] Paul McStallworth, 'The United States and the Congo Question, 1884-1914' (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 1954).
[45] Hunt Hawkins, 'Mark Twain's Involvement with the Congo Reform Movement: A Fury of Generous Indignation', *The New England Quarterly*, Vol.51, No.2 (1978), pp.147-175.

More recently, in Jeanette Eileen Jones' book *In Search of Brightest Africa*, the argument is put forward that many Americans were behind Leopold's project in the Congo from the outset.[46] Jones states that, to American eyes, the prospect of one of their own (Henry Morton Stanley) opening up the Congo to trade and commerce brought Africa into the realm of United States governmental diplomacy and would be a beneficial relationship to both. However, public opinion on Belgian control of the Congo Free State changed during the 1890s when reports began to circulate regarding Stanley's mistreatment of natives in his expedition.[47] These attacks came from British newspapers and had resonance in the United States, helping to turn the tide of public opinion against Leopold's regime. This led to a lot of American anti-imperialists joining the ACRA. It was not until this turning point, Jones argues, that Americans really began to understand what was happening in the Congo; before that, most American anti-imperialists had very little concern about the realities of colonial rule in Africa.[48] Michael Cullinane has also explored the activism of anti-imperialists in the United States and their role in the American Congo reform movement in his work on anti-imperialism in the United States during this period.[49]

Of course, work had been produced by Americans at the time of the atrocities regarding Leopold's control of the Congo Free State and his mistreatment of the natives; the work written by missionaries was the first to arouse American public interest on the Congo question. Mark Twain's *King Leopold's Soliloquy* has been studied at length and interpreted for its cultural significance as well as its historical importance in relation to the Congo, mainly for

[46] Jeanette Eileen Jones, *In Search of Brightest Africa: Reimagining the Dark Continent in American Culture, 1884-1936*, (Athens; London: The University of Georgia Press, 2010).
[47] *Ibid,* pp.50-51
[48] *Ibid*.
[49] Michael Patrick Cullinane, 'Transatlantic Dimensions of the American Anti-Imperialist Movement, 1899-1909,' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies,* Vol.8, Issue 4 (2010), pp.308-309; Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism, 1898–1909* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

understanding the support both the ACRA and CRA received during their existence.[50] Dean Pavlakis' book on British humanitarianism and the Congo reform movement also dedicates a chapter to the internationalist dimensions of the campaign, and within that chapter the ACRA is discussed, albeit briefly.[51]

The historiography of Belgian atrocities in the Congo is still developing, producing literature that examines the Belgian colonial experiment in the Congo, its impact and legacy. The subjects tackled by historians are numerous - ranging from the economic aspect of Leopold's regime in the Congo, to studies on the making of Belgian imperialism as a whole and the role of propaganda; from revisionist work on the key figures involved in the campaign for reform, to work examining the role of religion in highlighting the atrocities in the Congo Free State.[52] The social, cultural, political and economic factors have all been examined and are continuing to be researched in order to further develop the understanding of the complex nature of Belgian imperialism in the Congo. Challenging pre-conceived ideas regarding Belgian imperialism in Africa is certainly a worthwhile pursuit and, even now, work is being published which challenges these ideas whilst simultaneously adding new perspectives to this dark chapter in Belgian history.

[50] Mark Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy* (Boston: The P.R. Warren Co., 1905).
[51] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, pp.157-175.
[52] See (in no particular order): Neal Ascherson, *The King Incorporated: Leopold the Second and the Congo* (London: Granta, 1999).; Séamas Ó Síocháin, *Roger Casement: Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2008); Catherine Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002); Matthew G. Stanard, *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the making of Belgian Imperialism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Guy Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Robert Harms, 'The End of Red Rubber: A Reassessment,' *The Journal of African History*, Vol.16, No.1 (1975), pp.73-88; Kenneth Dike Nworah, 'The Liverpool "Sect" and British West African Policy, 1895-1915,' *African Affairs*, Vol.70, No.281 (October 1971), pp.349-364; Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Aidan Forth, "The Politics of Philanthropy: the Congo Terror Regime and the British Public Sphere, 1884-1914." (MA thesis, Queen's University Kingston, 2006); Daniel Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880-1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

Sources and Methodology

The present work is empirical and based predominantly on research conducted in government and private archives in the United Kingdom and the United States. The sources have been utilised in order to develop a fresh perspective on issues and events often subsumed within the wider historiography of the Congo Free State, the reign of Leopold II, and the CRA. This thesis takes advantage of the vast amount of primary source material available from this period in relation to the key members of the CRA and ACRA; specifically, in the United Kingdom, but also in the United States too.

Research for the thesis was carried out predominately in the archives at the London School of Economics (LSE), where the Morel papers are stored. As he was the central figure in the Congo reform campaign throughout the first decade of the twentieth century and beyond, an examination of Morel's papers is vital when researching the Congo reform movement. The rich archival material held at LSE has been both a help and a hindrance; the archive is full of material which portrays Morel in a positive light, praising him for his efforts in the reform movement but there is a notable absence of material critical of Morel and his activism. However, it was essential to this thesis that Morel's letters were examined as it is vital to not only understand the motives of the campaigners (examined through their correspondence with Morel) but also how he was able to harness this support for the cause of Congo reform. As Morel was the central figure in the Congo campaign, with everything related to the reform issue going through him, examining his letters in detail was crucial.

There is also a significant amount of personal correspondence between John Holt, the Liverpool merchant trading to West Africa, and Morel, among others, held in the archives at both the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. Holt was one of the largest donors to the CRA and also provided Morel with private

funding in order to allow him to concentrate on his activism. In addition to his financial support, Holt was also Morel's confidant throughout the lifespan of the CRA. His relationship with Morel was paternal in nature and he would both advise and scold Morel, when necessary. His rivalry with fellow Liverpool shipping magnate Sir Alfred Jones – whom Morel had previously worked for at Jones' shipping firm Elder Dempster – preceded the Congo reform movement, but they also clashed over the issue of free trade and slavery in the Congo Free State throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, with Jones representing Leopold's interests in Britain. The archives provided a very useful insight into the dynamics of the relationship between Holt and Morel and their relationship with Jones and were therefore indispensable.

Archival material for the ACRA and the leading figures involved in the movement in the United States is not as voluminous as that of their British counterparts. The original documents from the ACRA, unlike the CRA, have almost disappeared, with the exception of some ACRA newsletters held online at the HathiTrust Digital Library, making any account of their activism incomplete. However, personal correspondence between the leading figures within the American movement, such as Robert Ezra Park, G. Stanley Hall, Thomas S. Barbour, and Mark Twain, and Morel on the British side, provides an important window into the motivations of those involved in the activism and the effort to reform the Congo Free State in the United States. This is one area in which this thesis will make an original contribution. By using the American sources in tandem with the British files, it will allow for a more complete picture of the transnational activism that took place during the Congo reform movement.

The Robert Ezra Park papers held at the University of Chicago were voluminous, but they are more substantial on his post-Congo reform activism, especially on his work with Booker T. Washington at the Tuskagee Institute and his later work in sociology at the University of Chicago – for which he is best known– rather than during his time with the ACRA. Park was

the first Secretary of the ACRA and was often in correspondence with Morel during the early years of the Congo reform movement in the United States. He sought Morel's advice and guidance on how best to agitate for reform and propagate their message, as well as editing some of the British propaganda and offering his own views on the situation in the Congo Free State and how it could best be resolved. However, little of this relationship is evident within the Park papers, with the majority of his views being expressed through the articles he wrote and had published in newspapers, as well as both his correspondence via the ACRA and his personal letters to Morel, stored at the LSE.

A similar problem presents itself when examining the papers of G. Stanley Hall held in the Archives at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Hall was the President of the ACRA alongside his academic career in psychology and as President of Clark University itself. Due to his eminence within the field of psychology, like Park, Hall's papers largely consist of his correspondence in relation to his career in academia. There is very little on his work with the ACRA, which is unusual given his prominence within the organisation.

The National Archives at Kew and the Foreign Relations of the United States archive were also consulted, in order to examine the relationship between the British and American governments at the time. This allowed for an assessment of the impact of the activism by both the CRA and ACRA on diplomatic relations, revealing what the two governments were saying about the situation in the Congo Free State at a diplomatic level, and how it affected the relationship between the two countries in the era of the Great Rapprochement. Accessing these archives was key in understanding the extent to which transnational humanitarian activism on the Congo issue influenced the formulation of foreign policy by the British and American governments, and to what degree, if any, the situation in the Congo Free State was elevated over other issues of the day.

Whilst the research for this thesis has meant an examination of papers that have already been thoroughly looked at in the secondary literature that exists in the historiography of the Congo reform movement, in particular the Morel papers, the elements of originality have arisen from asking new questions of this material. Previously, the literature based on the examination of Morel's papers has often produced work that has led to the creation of a heroic narrative, placing Morel at the centre of the movement. Whilst there is no doubting that he was the leading figure within the CRA, what this thesis will investigate is how he coordinated his efforts with other reformers and the nature of that communication, especially with the activists in America, to ascertain the level of transnational activism involved.

Structure

The questions that arise when engaging in a study of this nature – the degree to which a humanitarian organisation is transnational and where the CRA and ACRA can be located in the history of human rights and humanitarian organisations and movements – have been approached thematically and in a chronological order within those themes. By assessing the contemporary relevance of both organisations through a consideration of how innovative they were in terms of their activism, and what those involved in the campaign understood human rights to mean, a better understanding of where the British and American CRAs and the activists involved exist in the history of humanitarianism and human rights can be ascertained. As the thesis will explore, there has been much debate on the origins of humanitarianism and human rights, and what exactly constitutes and defines a humanitarian and/or human rights organisation. The terms 'rights' and 'human rights' in particular were used interchangeably by the activists during their campaign for reform in the Congo Free State. How the activists understood these terms is important as it allows for an examination of where the CRA and ACRA sits in the history of humanitarian and human rights organisations.

Chapter one examines the continuities and changes in the history of humanitarianism. Taking the antislavery movement of the late eighteenth century as a starting point, this chapter will analyse the foundations that had been laid in order to provide the Congo reform activists with a platform upon which they were able to articulate their humanitarian activism at the beginning of the twentieth century. This was a key juncture in the history of humanitarianism, a time when a wider critique of imperialism and the colonial project was developing in Britain, on the back of the Boer War, and in the United States, following its war against Spain over possession of the old empire's colonies.

Chapter two provides an examination of the ACRA, its origins, members and their motivations for joining the movement, as well as its methods of agitating for reform, analysing how successful the organisation was in its campaign for reform in the Congo Free State. It is important to study the ACRA, in order to understand the nature of the transnationalism in the Congo reform movement and the extent to which the ACRA was a transnational organisation. In addition, the chapter also highlights the role and impact of key individuals who were members of the organisation, and their role in the limited success of the ACRA on the Congo issue. As the ACRA has largely been neglected in the historiography of the Congo reform movement, this chapter aims to add a correction to this narrative by considering how the success it did achieve shows its importance to the Congo reform story.

Chapter three considers the impact of the reformer's activism on both sides of the Atlantic on the relationship between both the British and American governments regarding the issue of the Congo Free State. In particular, the focus of the chapter is to understand to what extent their campaigning influenced government foreign policy and the debates that took place within the governments at the time. Morel identified quite early on in the Congo reform campaign that they would need to win over public opinion in order to pressure the respective governments to,

in turn, pressure Leopold into relinquishing his old over the Congo Free State. It is important to understand the impact of the activists' campaigning and the role they played in the governments formulating policy, in order to ascertain the degree of success which the CRA achieved. By investigating this dimension of transnational humanitarian activism, it can help develop a clearer understanding of its impact. Moreover, it can help to provide an answer to the question of whether the British and American CRAs were the driving force behind the reform campaign's success, or did both the British and American governments act independently, insulating their decision-making from pressure group politics?

Chapter four examines the role of the business interests involved in the wider Congo reform campaign and the CRA in particular. These business interests were multinational enterprises operating not just within the British Empire but also across the colonial world in Africa. The most notable figures in relation to the story of the Congo Free State and the reform movement were the Liverpool merchants involved on both sides of the campaign; John Holt and Sir Alfred Jones. Both were influential figures involved – Holt in his support of both the CRA and Morel; Jones in his role as Consul of the Congo Free State. William A. Cadbury's role in supporting the CRA will also be analysed in order to ascertain the level of influence the key donors to the organisation wielded and the level of their philanthropy; was their involvement purely altruistic or did they possess ulterior motives? The question of the motivations of those who engage in humanitarian endeavours, ranging from individuals and financial donations to government intervention in national and international humanitarian issues, is one of many factors in the debates about the history of humanitarianism and human rights, and an attempt to answer this question will be a theme that runs throughout this thesis.

Chapter One

Continuity and Change in the 'Politics of Pity'

> There is in the atmosphere of England at this moment a singular determination to liberate, with God's help, the natives of the Congo from their unspeakable bondage, and to save Europe the shame of tolerating, by consent, the revival, under worse forms, of the African slave trade.[1]

Debates about the Origins of Humanitarianism and Human Rights

Scholars have been writing about humanitarian causes for some time now. However, due to the terms 'humanitarian' and 'humanitarianism' taking on a wide range of meanings over time, it can be quite difficult, if not impossible, to identify a specific point in time when humanitarianism came to be and create a simple narrative of this 'big bang' moment. The term 'humanitarianism', as Michael Barnett has noted, only 'slowly entered into everyday vocabulary' at the turn of the nineteenth century.[2] In the 1819 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which contained the first citation of the word 'humanitarian', the term is described as 'having regard to the interests of humanity or mankind at large; relating to, or advocating, or practising humanity or human action.' Due to this relatively recent development then, it may be tempting to view humanitarianism as a modern phenomenon. However, this would mean, as Daniel Laqua has observed, that it would have to then be considered to be 'distinct from Christian notions of charity or philanthropic acts of giving' that preceded it, though 'charity, philanthropy and humanitarianism were and remain overlapping phenomena.'[3] Britain was the leader in philanthropy by the beginning of the nineteenth century, counting 10,000 voluntary associations in existence; France having 2,000, Italy 443 and Russia only six.[4] The number of

[1] E.D. Morel, *Red Rubber: The Story of the Rubber Slave Trade Flourishing on the Congo in the Year of Grace 1906*, 2nd Edition (London: T. F. Unwin, 1907), pp.xxvi-xxvii.
[2] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p.20.
[3] Daniel Laqua, 'Inside the Humanitarian Cloud: Causes and Motivations to Help Friends and Strangers,' *Journal of Modern European History*, Vol.12, No. 2 (2014), p.176.
[4] Pavlakis, 'The Development of British Overseas Humanitarianism,' p.1.

International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) that existed by 1900 are estimated to range between 175 and 200, growing at a rate of approximately ten per year. This was a result of an increase in international activism during this period caused by the imperialist expansion of the European state system and technological and industrial developments; steamships and railways facilitated transoceanic and transcontinental travel, as well as the transatlantic telegraph network, allowing for the accelerated dissemination of information that enabled activists to coordinate their message of reform.[5] The rapid increase over the course of a century was facilitated in part by the development of a space that allowed humanitarians to further their understanding of humanitarianism and what it meant to be a humanitarian at different stages throughout the nineteenth century, a space that accommodated a transnational exchange of ideas that helped develop a global society of humanitarians. Originally operating within the national context, this exchange of ideas allowed for a more refined – if still rather broad – definition of what humanitarianism meant to nineteenth and early twentieth century activists.

Although there has been a high degree of fluidity regarding the term, as well as taking on a different meaning at different periods in history, a general definition of humanitarianism is the extension of a moral concern across borders of nation, ethnicity and religion for a distant other. In this, and in a wider political and cultural sense, its history is hundreds of years old. However, within the historiography, it is a period during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that has been identified as when modern humanitarianism came to the fore. As Thomas Haskell has observed, 'an unprecedented wave of humanitarian reform sentiment swept through the societies of Western Europe, England, and North America in the hundred

[5] Tracie Matysik, 'Internationalist Activism and Global Civil Society at the High Point of Nationalism: The Challenge of the Universal Races Congress, 1911' in A. G. Hopkins, eds., *Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.136.

years following 1750.'[6] With reference to a potential starting point and origin of humanitarianism, Barnett has stated that 'if we equate humanitarianism with compassion, then humanitarianism is as old as history', but if limited to when 'individuals used the concept to characterise their actions and those of others, then humanitarianism is roughly two centuries old.'[7] Regarding the ambiguity of the term, scholars – including Barnett – have opined that there is no 'real general definition of humanitarianism'; that there is not 'one humanitarianism, but several' or 'multiple humanitarianisms' and that the term is complicated by the suffix '-ism' itself. Furthermore, humanitarianism 'connotes three separate but overlapping realities: an ideology, a movement and a profession'; that 'together…they also form a political economy' and that humanitarianism 'signifies a set of institutions, and a business and industry'.[8] In addition to this, as Mark Cutts has observed, there is also an ambiguity given 'much confusion over differences between the terms "humanitarian action", "humanitarian assistance" and "humanitarian protection"'.[9] It is important then to ask questions when attempting to establish the 'origins' of humanitarianism; what do we mean by the term 'humanitarianism'? What is its value when applied to different periods in time? The fluidity of the term throughout history means that these questions are often difficult to answer. However, defining a general understanding of the term can be useful when approaching an analysis of its history and, generally, the above definition will be used throughout this thesis when referring to humanitarianism.

From the late eighteenth to the early twenty-first century, new developments in media and communications technologies enabled humanitarians to create a community of activists

[6] Thomas Haskell, 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1,' *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (April 1985), p.339.
[7] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p.19.
[8] *Ibid*, p.13; Antonio Donini, 'The Far Side: The Meta Functions of Humanitarianism in a Globalised World,' *Disasters*, Vol.34, Issue S2 (April 2010), pp.S220-221.
[9] Mark Cutts, 'Politics and Humanitarianism,' *Refugee Slavery Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No.1 (1998), p.1.

that were able to foster a sympathy across borders. As a result, these networks have been able to mobilise large numbers of people to rally around their particular cause, through the creation of transnational networks which raised large sums of money to facilitate their activism and, in some cases, relieve the suffering of distant others through the organisation of international relief efforts. In addition to this, they have also lobbied their respective governments for state intervention. This method of campaigning and activism – from the sourcing of funding to the advocating of state humanitarian intervention – has, within the historiography, often been framed as existing within an interconnected discourse of 'rights' and 'humanity'. Scholars such as Gary Bass, Michael Barnett and Davide Rodogno have drawn parallels between humanitarian interventions in the nineteenth-century and those of today, placing these interventions at essentially different points on an evolutionary continuum of humanitarianism situated in a linear narrative of human progress.[10] However, as Abigail Green has noted, this 'emphasis on parallel discourses…is helpful when it comes to making comparisons across time-periods' but is not as useful 'when it comes to tracing more precisely the continuities and ruptures between the nineteenth-century "origins" and late twentieth-century flowering of the ideology of human rights.'[11]

It would be a flawed approach to the history of humanitarianism and human rights to try and identify one single point of origin. As Laqua has noted, 'historians must resist the temptation of portraying individual undertakings as steps towards the *telos* of a modern humanitarian field', stating that it is more important 'to consider why groups and individuals launched initiatives in support of people who were often quite removed from them.'[12] This is

[10] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Gary J. Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008); Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015).
[11] Abigail Green, 'Humanitarianism in Nineteenth-Century Context: Religious, Gendered, National,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol.57, No. 4 (2014), p.1159.
[12] Daniel Laqua,'Inside the Humanitarian Cloud: Causes and Motivations to Help Friends and Strangers,' *Journal of Modern European* History, Vol.12, Issue 2 (2014),p.175. Emphasis in the original.

an important, yet often overlooked, facet of approaching the history of humanitarianism and human rights history – avoiding the assumption that either has a particular origin and has been continually evolving on a clear, linear path until the present day. In their description of humanitarianism's move 'between the imperial and the new "international" frames of reference' over the course of the twentieth century, Rob Skinner and Alan Lester have stated that 'at least in terms of its spheres of operation', this move was 'not…a linear progression' but was one that came about 'through a long, complicated and often fraught process.'[13] This observation can also be applied to the history of humanitarianism itself.

Another strand of humanitarianism emerged in the nineteenth century, that of humanitarian intervention and, in particular, the efforts to provide assistance for wounded soldiers and civilians in war. An edited collection by Simms and Trim examines the concept and practice of humanitarianism from the sixteenth to the end of the twentieth centuries.[14] The essays focused on various subjects, ranging from religious solidarity in the French Revolution to interventions in the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of transnational pressure groups and an early form of public humanitarianism. Their work shows that, rather than these events occurring as part of a linear progress to modern humanitarianism, instead they were unanticipated instances that took place within the local and national frameworks of what humanitarian intervention was understood to be.

Further work has been produced more recently that analyses humanitarian intervention practice in the nineteenth century, and the recognition that it has long been acknowledged that intervention might be justifiable if it is on humanitarian grounds. The dominant narrative prior

[13] Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol.40, Issue 5 (2012), pp.738-739.
[14] Brendan Simms and D. J. B. Trim, eds., *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

to Gary Bass's work on the history of humanitarian interventions stated that it was the product of the end of Cold War rivalry. Bass shows that, rather than being a relatively recent phenomenon, instead humanitarianism has its roots in the nineteenth century. This period is often characterised as synonymous with imperialism, and rightly so. Yet, Bass' account shows that there were arguments being put forward during the nineteenth century that were in favour of humanitarian intervention by both individuals and states, in order to relieve distant others from their suffering. Starting with the Greek Revolt in the 1820s – generally considered to be the first case of humanitarian intervention – through to the Bulgarian Uprising of the 1870s and the Armenian question at the end of the nineteenth century, Bass' work shows that there is indeed a longer tradition of humanitarian intervention.[15]

Building on Bass' work, Davide Rodogno has examined the coming together of humanitarian intervention and geopolitical rivalries in the nineteenth century. His work details humanitarian intervention and how it was defined in relation to the Ottoman Empire. Rodogno has shown how interventions were primarily to prevent atrocities being committed against fellow Christians.[16] Work by Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla also examines interventions in the nineteenth century, including the Greek War of Independence, as well as the Bulgarian atrocities and United States intervention in Cuba and the Spanish-American War. In particular, they discuss how the Greek Revolt in the 1820s provided a 'springboard for a new concept' – humanitarian intervention – in several ways, ranging from the 'significant role of public opinion and its moral consciousness' when considering humanitarian intervention, to 'consultation of the powers, peremptory demands made of the guilty state…formal great power agreements…mediation attempts, a peace conference…a peacekeeping force'.[17] Both works

[15] Bass, *Freedom's Battle*.
[16] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*.
[17] Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp.123-124.

rightly correct the historiographical misinterpretation of the origins of humanitarian intervention. They have allowed a deeper exploration of the importance of such a correction and the roots of contemporary legal practices and institutions.

When examining both the British and American branches of the CRA and their place within the history of humanitarianism and human rights, it is important to identify the difference between the two strands. Scholars often use the terms 'humanitarianism' and 'human rights' interchangeably but drawing a distinction between them is crucial to one of the themes of this thesis; that the CRAs were part of a wider humanitarian movement but were human rights organisations. Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown have stated that the distinction between the two lies in their practice; 'the humanitarian seeks to assist fellow human beings and to alleviate suffering and does not necessarily act to defend violated rights.' This difference between the two also meant 'the difference between immediate action to achieve individual results and unrelenting, generations-long efforts to establish new legal and political arrangements for whole classes of people.'[18] However, Wilson and Brown also state that, as a result of humanitarian relief, there can also be a denial of rights, citing Margaret Kellow's observations on humanitarian payments to the owners of slaves in the 1840s and 1850s; that the payments meant a recognition of the legitimacy of slavery that the abolitionists simultaneously campaigned to abolish.[19]

Another advocate of the practice-based distinction between the two, Barnett has stated that there is a distinct difference between human rights and humanitarianism; the former relies on a 'discourse of rights' whereas the latter on a 'discourse of needs'. In Barnett's view, human rights focuses on 'legal discourse and frameworks', with the long-term goal of 'eliminating the

[18] Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown, eds., *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilisation of Empathy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.11-12.
[19] *Ibid*, p.11.

causes of suffering.' Humanitarianism, on the other hand, 'shifts attention to moral codes' and focuses on the 'urgent goal of keeping people alive.'[20] In addition to this, Barnett also states that the principles, objectives, methods and actions of humanitarian movements can be divided into two categories; emergency, which 'limits itself to saving lives at risk', and alchemical, which has a 'desire to remove the causes of suffering.'[21]

Other scholars have opined that there is a clear distinction between humanitarian activism and human rights campaigning. The term 'humanitarianism' often implied military interventions conducted by the 'civilised' powers of Western Europe against the actions of 'barbarians' on their borders, particularly the Ottoman and Tsarist Russian Empires. As Wilson and Brown have stated, Anglo-American imperial hypocrisy and aggression reached its peak during the nineteenth century; the British 'denounced Ottoman and Russian barbarism while standing unmoved while famine decimated Ireland' and, for the United States, their 'diplomacy adopted a sanctimonious tone while conducting brutal wars to subordinate Native Americans.'[22] Regarding humanitarian military interventions, David P. Forsythe has stated that 'most European interventions for supposedly humanitarian purposes were heavily affected by potential calculations' and that 'international relations was…affected by the notion derived from state sovereignty that states should not intervene in domestic affairs of other states…and while this norm was violated, it also exerted considerable influence.'[23] Therefore, which international issue or cause both the British and American governments involved themselves in was selective, and, for the most part, dependent on 'Great Power' politics and imperial rivalry; more of which will be examined in greater detail in chapter three.

[20] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p.17.
[21] *Ibid*, p.22.
[22] Wilson and Brown, *Humanitarianism and Suffering*, p.17.
[23] David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.25.

In the view of some scholars, humanitarianism and empire have been inextricably linked. Skinner and Lester have stated that 'humanitarianism was always an engagement in the *politics* of empire and nation.'[24] This is one aspect of the CRA and ACRA's activism and the motives of those involved with both organisations. The idea that there was a clear link between empire and the Congo activists will be explored throughout the thesis, as both the British reformers, and, to a lesser extent, some of the American activists, firmly believed that colonialism was necessary for civilisation. With reference to earlier empires, David Armitage has drawn attention to the link between humanism, humanitarianism and empire building, noting that 'classical humanism…did transmit important assumptions regarding the superiority of civility over barbarism and the necessity for civilised polities to carry their civility to those they deemed barbarous.'[25] The ideas of race and a hierarchical view of civilisation that emerged in the nineteenth century became a fundamental tenet of imperialism and justified the global expansion project that the Western powers embarked upon. Colonisation was largely supported by both liberals and imperialists alike for most of the nineteenth century, as a way to 'civilise' those perceived to be lower down on the ladder of civilisation, bringing with them its benefits and enlightening those 'inferior races' to the standard of 'civilisation' that, by this stage, the Anglo-Saxon race had achieved. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that critics of empire emerged in any great number, including John Hobson and his critique of capitalist imperialism, and Morel – as a member of the 'Liverpool School', alongside John Holt and Mary Kingsley as critics of imperialism – who derided its manifestations on the west coast of Africa.[26] As Barnett has stated, '[I]mperial humanitarianism reflected the spirit of the times even as it occasionally tried to challenge them…[I]t embodied the unapologetic paternalism of

[24] Skinner and Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire', p.731. Emphasis in the original.
[25] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.51, as cited in Wilson and Brown *Humanitarianism and Suffering*, p.17, n.28.
[26] Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radicals and the Imperial Challenge* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008), p.239.

the period, with missionaries and liberal humanitarians sharing the belief that they had a duty to civilise and improve the lives of the native populations…there were even instances in which missionaries and liberal reformers began to reflect critically on their own attitudes and came to believe that local cultures had their own integrity and value.'[27] Morel and the Congo reform activists – at least a large number of them on both sides of the Atlantic – fit neatly into Barnett's assessment of imperial humanitarianism. They believed that the 'civilised' nations in the West were responsible for helping those less 'civilised' achieve a higher state of civilisation than they currently occupied, but that the Western model of this may not be applicable to each and every culture. For some of the Congo reformers, it was now not just preferable but vital for those who they perceived as less 'civilised' to be able to grow as a people, and they were proponents of a cultural relativism towards the Congolese; that they should be allowed to retain their own cultural beliefs and practices and develop a type of civilisation of their own. Why, then, involve oneself at all in a humanitarian campaign for a distant other? What were the motivations for those reform activists who participated in humanitarian campaigns throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth?

Whilst the motives of governments to get involved in humanitarian efforts and intervention are often dictated by 'Great Power' politics, what then are the motives of individuals to campaign and work to help a distant other? Lynn Hunt has stated that liberals in the West developed their beliefs in the natural rights of the individual and empathy for a distant other was, in large part, due to the rise of the novel in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[28] Pavlakis has also observed that 'humanitarian publicity campaigns had much in common with novels' in that 'they often dealt with places where few Europeans and Americans

[27] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p.75.
[28] Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York and London; W. W. Norton, 2008) p.40.

ventured; only a tiny number had first-hand experience of the Congo Free State's rubber districts as adventurers or missionaries.'[29]

However, as stated in the introduction, humanitarianism and, more specifically humanitarian activism, is not always altruistic and there can often be a certain degree of self-interest in the motives of those who are considered to be humanitarians. David Kennedy's work on international humanitarians is a scathing critique of the motivations for their activism and their often-mistaken assumption that, because their intentions are good, their activism will only bring benefits to the recipient of their humanitarian efforts. Kennedy's work also states that humanitarianism has many unintended costs. Primarily, this originates in the lack of understanding of how their activism became increasingly influential on policy-making at an international level, and that if there was more engagement with a cost/benefit analysis by humanitarians, it would then be easier for them to avoid many of the dark sides of their humanitarian activism.[30] This thesis will show that this was also true for many members of the CRA and ACRA; that their motivation to campaign for reform was not solely based on their concern for the welfare of the Congolese, but also born of their own personal ambitions, rivalry and beliefs about civilisation and imperialism.

There is also much debate regarding the origins of the concept of human rights. Paul Lauren's work has attempted to trace the beginning of human rights in history from antiquity up to the present day; Michelle Ishay follows a similar path.[31] Other scholars, such as Aryeh Neier, date its origins to the dissenting movements that emerged in sixteenth century England.[32]

---

[29] Pavlakis, 'To Reform an Imagined Congo: Novelists Tackle the Congo Rubber Scandals,' *English Studies in Africa*, Issue 1 (2016), p.30.
[30] David Kennedy, *The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp.111-114.
[31] Michelle R. Ishay, *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2009).
[32] Aryeh Neier, *The International Human Rights Movement: A History* (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 2012).

Lynn Hunt also places its beginnings in the Enlightenment period but primarily in the latter-half of the eighteenth century.[33] Gary Bass has identified the starting point for human rights in the British response to the Bulgarian atrocities committed in the 1870s and concludes that 'the agitation over the Bulgarians in the 1870s paved the way to the modern human rights movement', citing William Gladstone's defence of the Bulgarians and criticism of the British government's response to the atrocities as evidence of this.[34] As a result of this agitation, contemporary human rights activists, rather than being 'particularly modern' are actually the 'ideological and organisational descendants of the nineteenth century's activists against cruelty'.[35] Moyn's work argues that there is a discontinuity in the history of human rights and that it was not until 1977 that the international human rights movement first emerged. He dismisses accounts that organise human rights history into a sort of chronology as falling into 'teleology, tunnel vision and triumphalism.'[36]

Since the late 1990s historians have attempted to locate the Congo Reform Association as representing one of the key junctures in the history of modern human rights movements. Hochschild has described the organisation as the 'first great human rights movement of the twentieth century.'[37] Sharon Sliwinski agrees, stating that the CRA was 'the twentieth century's first great human rights movement' and credits the organisation with influencing modern-day humanitarian groups, describing the CRA as a 'forerunner' for 'groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International'; an argument also forwarded by Nzongola-Ntalaja.[38] Elsewhere, in reference to the CRA, Robert G. Weisbord has stated that 'so nightmarish was the scenario [in the Congo Free State] that it spawned the first global human

[33] Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights.*
[34] Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, p.6.
[35] *Ibid*, p.5.
[36] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), p.311.
[37] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p.2.
[38] Sliwinski, 'The Childhood of Human Rights, p.334; Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo*, Chapter One.

rights campaign of the new century.'[39] Other scholars have described members of the reform movement as being human rights campaigners. Paul Gordon Lauren has stated that Morel was 'one of the most influential human rights visionaries of his time'.[40] In addition, Angus Mitchell has described Roger Casement's work in the reform movement as 'the greatest human rights achievement of his age'.[41] Derrick M. Nault has gone further than these assessments. Using as a framework Moyn's argument that human rights requires one to engage with 'a politics of suffering abroad' and not just a 'politics of citizenship at home', as well as 'recasting of rights as entitlements that might contradict the sovereign nation-state from above and outside rather than serve as its foundation', Nault states that 'human rights did not emerge in strictly Western settings'. His argument is that, instead, human rights emerged through the Congo reform movement and the 'international drama which unfolded' in the Congo Free State and that, as a result, the Congo reform movement can be considered to mark the beginning of human rights history.[42] Yet all of these arguments seem to lack any real analysis of the rhetoric deployed by the Congo reformers, and their understanding of the term 'rights'. For the most part, the scholarship seems to adopt the lazy assumption that because the activists used the term, then the natural conclusion is that the movement was a human rights campaign. A more nuanced view is needed.

Networks

Whilst avoiding the approach of portraying the history of humanitarianism and human rights as a linear progression, it is useful to identify a key juncture in history when a more familiar

[39] Robert G. Weisbord, 'The King, the Cardinal, and the Pope: Leopold II's Genocide in the Congo and the Vatican,' *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol.5, No.1 (2003), p.35.
[40] Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p.84.
[41] Angus Mitchell, *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (London: Anaconda Editions, 1997), p.24.
[42] *Ibid*; Derrick M. Nault, '"At the Bar of Public Sentiment": The Congo Free State Controversy, Atrocity Tales, and Human Rights History' (paper presented at the Humanity and Humanitarianism in Crisis', the 2012 AAGS Conference at International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan, 2012).

version of humanitarianism came to the fore. This approach allows for a better understanding of the space that existed which allowed the Congo reformers to articulate their activism. The antislavery movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is an example of a humanitarian moral sensibility that has arguably received the most scholarly attention. It is also often considered to be the earliest expression of organised humanitarian sentiment, although more recent work challenges that notion; Amanda Moniz has recently posited that the American War of Independence was an earlier critical juncture in the development of a global humanitarianism, preceding the antislavery movement by several years.[43] However, given the links to the antislavery movement that the Congo Reform Association had – which will be explored in greater detail here – mean that it is the most useful starting point for this thesis.

One potential issue with examining the antislavery movement in this way is that to consider it a recent phenomenon may lead scholars to overlook the fact that the movement contained several dimensions to its activism; that the 'ideas about Christian charity, a longing for personal salvation and the quest for a moral reshaping of British society sat side by side with the impulse of basic human compassion.'[44] The British and American activists involved in the antislavery movement were central to its emergence and the movement often provides a useful starting point when examining the history of mass mobilisations that, in some way, promote human welfare. The antislavery movement is also a useful starting point for setting the scene to understand just how the Congo reformers were able to articulate their humanitarian concerns for the Congolese and how they came to recognise their moral responsibility for a distant stranger in a faraway land. As Hochschild has noted, the antislavery movement was the

[43] Amanda Moniz, *From Empire to Humanity: The American Revolution and the Origins of Humanitarianism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[44] D. B. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford, England; New York, Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.231-176; C. L. Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), as cited in Laqua, 'Inside the Humanitarian Cloud,' p.176.

first time that 'a large number of people became outraged, and stayed outraged for many years, over someone else's rights…the rights of people of another colour, on another continent.'[45] Therefore, it is a useful starting point in framing just how the Congo reformers were able to articulate their grievances with the Congo Free State, using previous humanitarian campaigns as a framework and a platform from which to launch their campaign for reform. The Congo reformers were not something wholly new but, instead, were continuing in the tradition of the antislavery movement.

Establishing a transnational network was vital in propagating a coordinated message of Congo reform in Britain and the United States. However, this was made easier for the Congo reform activists, as they were able to use long-established networks of activists and reformers to their advantage, making it easier to spread their message of reform. In particular, they used deep-rooted Quaker networks of antislavery campaigning that had been created and developed during the antislavery campaign of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Later, from the 1840s until the 1870s during the 'encyclopaedic moment' phase of the transnational sphere, there was an emergence of transnational networks consisting of what has been termed a 'gentlemanly network of experts' that was established through attendance at the many conferences organised during this period in various European capital cities.[46] However, the networks used by the Congo reformers had been developed further from 1870 onwards, during a period that has been referred to as the 'heyday of internationalism within the emerging transnational sphere' that was an 'organizational turning point' which resulted in 'the creation of an international society under the rule of law'.[47]

[45] Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery* (London: Pan, 2012), p.5.
[46] Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck and Jakob Vogel, eds., *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks, and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), p.7.
[47] *Ibid*, p.8. For more on the post-1870s as the era when the transnational humanitarian networks came to life fully, see, James Crossland, *War, Law and Humanity: The Campaign to Control Warfare, 1853-1914* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp.1-7.

Most of the leading figures involved in the antislavery movement of the late eighteenth century were Quakers and the antislavery networks established were firmly rooted in Quakerism. These figures continued in the Quaker tradition of travelling both domestically and across the Atlantic to spread the doctrine of Quakerism. Their religious beliefs inspired them, giving both a theological and moral conviction to their activism whilst simultaneously providing them with an informal network structure that allowed the Quaker activists to propagate their antislavery activism. These Quaker networks facilitated the spread of the antislavery message and laid the foundations for the transatlantic antislavery campaigns of the late eighteenth century. They ushered in a crucial stage in the history of campaigns for a distant other and their methods of campaigning had a pattern that continue to exist in modern-day humanitarian and human rights organisations. The Congo reformers were not the first to tap into these networks in order to propagate their message of reform but were a continuation of previous activists who used those networks to form international groups in order to achieve their moral aims.[48]

The CRA and ACRA both followed in the footsteps of other overseas humanitarian societies in their organisational methods of campaigning; they deployed the same methods of gathering information, generating publicity and funds; how they organised their activism and how they influenced their respective governments. They each adopted a similar structure – appointing a president or chairman, a treasurer and secretary – in addition to a committee to oversee strategy, as well as using local auxiliaries or branches to help propagate their message of reform. They also deployed familiar methods to publicise their campaign; public meetings,

[48] Antislavery was not the only meeting point between humanitarian activism and a national and international rights discourse. For example, Ian Tyrrell and Abigail Green have both drawn attention to Josephine Baker's efforts regarding prostitution and the rights of women, and how both Baker and others formed groups to campaign against these issues using the existing networks formed at the end of the eighteenth century. See, Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp.21-23; Green, 'Humanitarianism in Nineteenth Century Context,' pp.1165-1166.

articles in the press, pamphlets, newsletters, and later, the lantern lectures, displaying images of mutilated Congolese.[49] Yet both the British and American CRAs were also different from what had existed previously. Kenneth Cmiel has described the reform agitation of the CRA activists as resembling a 'smaller version of earlier transnational antislavery efforts' as opposed to reflecting 'contemporary human rights activism.'[50] Yet the CRA and ACRA, and the humanitarian activism of their members, was neither a smaller version of earlier transnational antislavery efforts, nor were the views they held as developed as those of contemporary human rights activists today. This is most evident in the views, held by most of the activists, that there was a two-tier system when it came to rights and that colonialism, essentially, could be a force for good. Of course, these would not be acceptable views to hold in a modern-day human rights organisation but given their belief that colonialism could be reformed into what would resemble an international trust for humanity, the CRAs were radical for the time.

There were three groups central to the Congo reform movement, both in its wider sense and, in particular, that were involved in both the British and American associations; namely Quakers, free traders, and Evangelical Christians. All three of those groups had the necessary organisational experience and ideological commitment to their beliefs that enabled them to effectively campaign for Congo reform; tools that had been present within each group since their previous antislavery struggles.[51] However, it was the Quakers that had pioneered politicised antislavery. The most influential Quaker involved in the British CRA was William Cadbury, the British cocoa merchant, who made thirteen large donations totalling £1,241 – 10.7% of total donations during its existence – to the British CRA which sustained its campaign

[49] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, pp.23-4.
[50] Kenneth Cmiel, 'The Recent History of Human Rights,' *American Historical Review*, Vol. 109, Issue 1 (2004), p.128.
[51] Peter Stamatov, *The Origins of Global Humanitarianism: Religion, Empires, and Advocacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.7.

for reform. Indeed, four of the top five largest donors to the British CRA were Quakers, consisting of Barrow Cadbury, as well as William A. Albright, a Quaker and manufacturer who later joined the British CRA's Executive Committee, and Joseph Rowntree, a Quaker philanthropist and businessman. However, the British CRA did not solely benefit from the financial assistance of prominent Quakers. William Cadbury, in particular, helped Morel network and communicate with influential figures within the Society of Friends, who had a longstanding history of antislavery activism and, as a result, their committee embraced the Congo reform issue, boosting the CRA's activism considerably. Yet Quakers as a group did not join the CRA's cause en masse; only 127 Quakers donated to the British CRA, which is a small number in comparison to the estimated 20,000 Quakers in Britain at that time.[52] The finance from the Quakers was important but using their long-established networks to spread their message of reform was arguably far more important in order for the British CRA's campaign to be successful.

This period of Quaker activism has been referred to by Thomas Kennedy as a 'Quaker renaissance', when their newly energised activism also became infused with 'liberal thought…and set the stage for an unparalleled Quaker engagement with the problems of Britain and the world'.[53] The British CRA in particular relied heavily on Quaker support. However, there were also tensions that existed between the different religious groups in the Congo reform campaign. Evangelical Christians, and their ideological drive to convert non-Europeans, clashed with the Quakers, who were non-conversionists.[54] Despite this, they were able to work together and have a shared humanitarianism largely due to the close relationship missionaries

[52] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.124.
[53] Thomas C. Kennedy, *British Quakerism, 1860-1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.6-7, 193, as cited in Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.19.
[54] Stamatov, *Origins of Global Humanitarianism*, p.7.

had with the antislavery movement, a relationship that can be traced back to the early part of the nineteenth century.

As discussed in the introduction, within the historiography there has been a tendency to frame Morel's activism, and, to a lesser extent, Roger Casement's role in the campaign, as part of a heroic narrative, assigning to both a status of heroes within the Congo reform movement. However, the links to Quaker antislavery campaign networks were vital in propagating their message of reform. What was also important were the links to a group of British merchants involved in trading with West Africa, and, in particular, Liverpool shipping merchant John Holt. They were also critical of the imperial policies implemented. These criticisms came from two branches of the same viewpoint; an ideological commitment to free trade, believing it to be the best way to achieve 'civilisation', and a business commitment to free trade, especially for those with business interests in West Africa in particular – such as Holt – and those involved in colonial trade more widely – such as Cadbury. Holt's initial donation to help set up the British CRA – both he and Casement donated £100 each, alongside Morel's £5, worth £10,000 and £500 respectively today – as well as his financial assistance in helping to launch the CRA's mouthpiece, the *West African Mail*, helped their campaign to get off the ground.[55]

The free traders did not hold the same beliefs and ideas of their religious counterparts in the Congo reform movement. Yet their movement did deploy similar methods of activism that the antislavery movement had done in the decades before, both in the way they organised their campaign and how they framed the issue as a moral and public concern. Although, as Peter Stamatov has observed, this approach was primarily deployed to 'take advantage of the committed constituencies that powered religious associations at the time.'[56] However, the

[55] All conversions in this thesis are from www.measuringworth.com.
[56] Stamatov, *Origins of Global Humanitarianism*, pp.6-7.

culture of antislavery that existed by this juncture meant that the Congo reformers thought of the atrocities as a problem that had to be addressed urgently as a society. Due to the history of political mobilisations this culture had produced, it allowed the activists to carry out their campaign for reform, giving them the standard tools and, by the turn of the twentieth century, the technology with which to address the Congo issue.

Finally, the Evangelical group also played an important role in campaigning for reform in the Congo. As well as making up a large part of the British CRA Executive Committee, Evangelical missionaries had been the first to report on the atrocities being committed in the Congo Free State, meaning they had first-hand experience and knowledge of the Congo government's actions there. They also provided Morel with material for his propaganda in addition to helping shape Casement's official report that helped frame the situation in Britain and, to a lesser extent, in the United States. To help win over public opinion, they also used images of mutilated Congolese as part of a series of 'lantern lectures' that they delivered all across Britain and the United States, making full use of technological developments in photography to deliver pictorial evidence of the atrocities being committed. These 'atrocity tours' on both sides of the Atlantic proved to be popular and both energised and mobilised support for the reform campaign. The images were also used in literature produced by the British and American CRAs – most predominantly in Morel's *King Leopold's Rule in Africa* and Mark Twain's *King Leopold's Soliloquy* – to reach a wider audience than the pamphlets could.

All three groups played an important role in the wider imperialist expansion project and the Congo reform movement, in particular. They were distinct groups but their ideas, beliefs, and goals often overlapped and they cooperated as a network of actors to carry out their goals

and implement their world values.[57] Individuals were certainly important in the CRAs on both sides of the Atlantic. In Britain, Morel's drive and determination, coupled with Holt's financial support, meant that he rightly deserves credit for his work in bringing about reform in the Congo. In the United States, Thomas S. Barbour deserves the most credit – certainly far more than the historiography has afforded him to date – for sustaining the ACRA and its Congo reform agitation throughout its existence, and that is one area in which this thesis will contribute to the historiography of the Congo reform movement. Barbour has been overshadowed by bigger names involved in the campaign, such as Twain and Park in the United States, and Morel in Britain. Yet, without him, the American movement would not have been sustained and Barbour deserves to be brought to the forefront of the story of the reform movement in the United States because, as the next chapter will show, he was one of its key figures.

Without those existing networks and individuals and organisations, the CRAs in Britain and the United States would not have achieved the level of success that they did. As Stamatov has stated, the Congo reform movement was 'a complex web of organisational and cultural continuities in the long-term history of other-directed popular mobilisation.'[58] All of the activists involved in the British and American CRAs had been shaped by a long tradition of the culture of organised antislavery humanitarianism. The international abolitionist network that had arisen at the beginning of the nineteenth century had created this culture, and the reformers in the CRAs on both sides of the Atlantic became a part of it; because they had to navigate between local, national, and imperial spheres of influence, they also helped develop it from one

[57] Alan Lester's work on imperial networks has shed new light on the differences between these networks and their analytical importance. See: Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001); Lester, 'Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire,' *History Compass*, Vol.4, No.1, (2006), pp.124-141.
[58] Stamatov, *Origins of Global Humanitarianism*, p.5.

which primarily operated within its national framework, to a culture that was transnational in nature.

However, they also brought with them reasons for Congo Free State defenders to be able to criticise the motives of both the British and American CRAs. The free traders were often accused of involving themselves purely for business reasons and for profit; as mentioned in the previous chapter, this was also an accusation levelled at Morel personally, accusing him of being the spokesperson for the Liverpool merchant lobby. Alongside this, the religious activists also attracted criticism from Congo Free State defenders, framing their arguments for reform as a Protestant reaction to 'successful' civilising work done in the region by Catholic missionaries, and an attack on Belgium itself, a largely Catholic country. Nevertheless, given that it had been religious figures that had pioneered the ideological and organisational foundations of humanitarian action for a distant other, the picture is far more nuanced than a simple 'Protestant v Catholic' argument. It was because of the work of those pioneers, who were not necessarily disinterested or altruistic in their motives for developing this humanitarian action, and the networks they had developed, that it is almost inevitable that the Congo reform movement would take on some religious dimension. As Stamatov noted, 'the distinctive logic of religion…brought to the fore and problematized the issue of proper relations with "imperial others"'.[59]

Humanitarianism NGOs and the Nation State

Transnational activist networks did not suddenly emerge during the nineteenth century, but they did take on a new form with broader aims. As Tyrrell has stated, 'networks themselves are both sites and conduits of power' and this was certainly true of the network of activists that

[59] *Ibid*, p.17.

the Congo reformers accessed.[60] However, understanding how these networks interacted with national governments and to what extent, if any, they were successful in achieving their aims is important when approaching a study of the British and American CRAs and their reform activities. Chapter three will examine the impact of the transnational CRA's activism on the relationship between and decision-making of the British and American governments during the first decade of the twentieth century. Yet at what point – if there is a specific juncture – did the humanitarian networks of the nineteenth century begin to interfere in the affairs – in particular, the foreign policy – of national governments, and what was the relationship between NGOs and the nation state during this period?

By the mid-nineteenth century, it was more familiar to see the emergence of groups and organisations of experts that gathered to contribute to government policy. The antislavery movement was an early manifestation of this. As Barnett has stated, 'the antislavery movement had caused the British public to broaden its moral imagination and to recognise its special responsibilities to the colonised' – essentially, British people had developed a deeper consciousness on their role in helping to alleviate the suffering of those less fortunate.[61] Yet, at the same time, they were also being encouraged by religious figures and proponents of empire to colonise the lands occupied by a distant other. NGOs had previously operated on the boundaries of the nation state but were slowly beginning to transcend that boundary and directly influence government policy. They were able to do this because government policymaking grew more bureaucratic during this period, enabling the NGOs to emerge as a viable way of advocating for nation states to assume a greater role in safeguarding the wellbeing of its own citizens, as well as those in its colonies.

[60] Ian Tyrrell, 'Reflections on the transnational turn in United States history: theory and practice,' *Journal of Global History*, Vol.4, Issue 3 (2009), p.467.
[61] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p.63.

The rise of NGOs during this period is particularly interesting as it occurred alongside the rise of the nation state and nationalism. Indeed, the 'civilising mission' embarked upon by the two 'Great Powers' in question within this thesis – Great Britain and the United States – was racist at its core; Britain, with its 'White Man's Burden' and the United States and its 'Manifest Destiny'. The paradox of the nineteenth century was, as Bayly has observed, that there was the creation of a transnational sphere alongside the rise of the nation state; a period that saw 'the triumph of the nation-state…and the plethora of voluntary associations, reform societies, and moral crusades, now increasingly organised at both a national and an international level'.[62] As Laqua has stated, 'activists cooperated across national boundaries and adopted similar language and methods, but still operated within very specific national boundaries.'[63]

NGOs often worked alongside the nation state during this period, some acting on behalf of national governments and receiving support for their endeavours. As discussed earlier, the antislavery movement is one example of this, in that it created a network of activists who advocated for a change in legislation in both Britain and the United States, albeit within national frameworks. The American equivalent to the British antislavery movement was not as large or as prominent, but there was still a certain degree of United States influence in the movement. As Patricia Clavin has stated, '[T]he "nation" does not stand in opposition to transnationalism as a border-crossing understanding of the latter term implies, but rather is an essential element in shaping the phenomenon'.[64] Transnational encounters in the nineteenth century shed light on the national contexts from which they occurred in and they cannot be separated. This

[62] Christopher Alan Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780 – 1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009), p.243.
[63] Daniel Laqua, 'The Tensions of Internationalism: Transnational Antislavery in the 1880s and 1890s,' *The International History Review*, Vol.33, Issue 4 (2011), p.706.
[64] Patricia Clavin, 'Introduction: Conceptualising Internationalism between the World Wars,' in *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars*, ed. Daniel Laqua (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), p.4.

includes the wider Congo reform movement, and, in particular, the British and American CRAs. There were many international organisations and networks of experts on social problems that existed before, during, and after the time of the CRA's existence; examples include the Universal Postal Union, the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau, the International Council of Women, and, of course, the most conspicuous example being the International Red Cross.[65] The latter, in particular, was not so much a committee formed to regulate an international movement, but, rather, a Swiss body that stood apart from, and provided the origin for, an interlinked transnational movement of national Red Cross societies who did not enjoy a great deal of interaction with each other. All these NGOs worked to promote humanitarian causes across national borders, which led to an internationalisation of this shared transnational consciousness of humanitarianism. Akira Iriye has observed that the latter half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of a 'global community' in a new era of global integration, formed alongside and not against nation states. Iriye also states that 'a characteristic of nineteenth – and twentieth – century history was that internationalism grew in strength…even as states developed as important definers of people's lives and of world affairs.' This 'internationalism' Iriye defines as the realisation by nations and peoples that 'they shared certain interests and objectives across national boundaries and that they could best solve their many problems by pooling their resources and effecting transnational cooperation, rather than through individual countries' unilateral efforts.'[66] As Dromi has highlighted, within the historiography of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), there has been much scholarship on being part of a 'transnational field, in which actors supersede their national positioning and work in relation to other global actors', due to their engagement in providing aid to people regardless of ethnicity, nationality or religion. Yet there are also other studies showing that

[65] Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organisations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), pp.10-17.
[66] *Ibid*, pp.9-36.

'activists regularly link the form of universal aid they provide with their national values and character, thereby suggesting that national-level dynamics may impact the subtleties and divisions of the transnational humanitarian field.'[67]

What then of the relationship between humanitarian organisations and the nation state? Iriye has stated that NGOs 'were never completely independent of national governments.'[68] This could prove to be useful for the latter, because, as Wilson and Brown have noted, for nation states, a 'humanitarian morality can become politically useful and can reshape state interest in unintended ways.'[69] Barnett has stated that 'the international community has tended to rally around humanitarianism at precisely the moment that its humanity is most suspect.'[70] Whilst this may be true in some instances, this was not the case in the Congo reform movement. Both the British and American governments, on the back of their imperialist ventures in the Boer War, the Spanish-American War and the Philippines respectively, decided to avoid using the issue of the Congo Free State to deflect attention away from their own questionable administration of colonies and distant others. Indeed, it seems the reverse was true, especially for the British government, and Leopold ensured that he drew attention to British colonial abuses ranging from the opium wars in Asia, to floggings in South Africa and abuse of the natives in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Australia.[71] In the United States, the Anti-Imperialists were already critical of American policy towards the indigenous population of the Philippines.

Nation states were not impervious to pressure from humanitarian networks during the nineteenth century. Without pressure from the press and public opinion, both influenced to a certain degree by the activism of these networks, there may have been no humanitarian

[67] Shai M. Dromi, 'For Good and Country: Nationalism and the Diffusion of Humanitarianism in the Late Nineteenth Century,' *The Sociological Review Monographs*, Vol. 64, Issue 2 (March 2016), p.80.
[68] Iriye, *Origins*, p.15.
[69] Wilson and Brown, *Humanitarianism and Suffering*, p.18.
[70] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p.15.
[71] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p.237.

intervention in the examples discussed earlier in this chapter. From the Greek War of Independence to the Spanish-American War in Cuba, the humanitarian plight of the distant others and the press and public response to that was vital in calling for intervention.[72] This growth of influence by these networks resulted in them becoming more emboldened and widening their spheres of influence and the causes that they would take up, ranging from social policies on issues such as 'poor relief and schooling, to the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases.'[73] They contributed to a newly-formed 'supranational consciousness' that enabled those involved in these networks and NGOs to transcend the boundaries of the nation state, creating a space that allowed for an exchange of ideas to influence domestic policies or international legislation.[74] However, as stated, they were not in direct competition against the nation state during this period, but, rather, worked alongside them and often helped national governments achieve their ideological aims, especially concerning the 'civilising mission'. Their activism did not take power away from the nation state but often empowered them further. This was visible in empire, as Skinner and Lester argued, stating that '[T]he long-distance webs of concern spun by humanitarians within empire have always been intrinsic to the politics both of empire itself and of nation-state foundation.'[75] These non-state activists often acted according to their own beliefs and ideologies, sometimes for altruistic reasons but on many other occasions with a large degree of self-interest, all simultaneously helping to reinforce the imperial project embarked upon by the 'Great Powers' and their 'civilising mission'.

[72] Heraclides and Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention*, p.228.
[73] Rodogno, Struck and Vogel, *Shaping the Transnational Sphere*, p.2.
[74] *Ibid*.
[75] Skinner and Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire,' p.731.

Congo Reform Association, Humanitarianism and Human Rights

Where then do the British and American CRAs fit into all this? As Barnett has opined, 'the expansion of those whose suffering matters is related to changes in the meaning and the boundaries of the international community.'[76] This included the Congolese. By the first decade of the twentieth century, when the CRAs were formed, the vision and understanding of 'humanity' was no longer restricted to Christians, or, to be more specific, European Christians. Barnett also states that 'progress depends on more than just widening our circle of sympathy; it must also incorporate the wishes, interests and values of those who are the objects of sympathy if it is to avoid a politics of pity'; something which the Congo activists did not consider during their campaign for reform on behalf of the Congolese.[77] Humanitarians helped contain the Congolese people and did not emancipate them.

It can also be helpful to understand to what degree the British and American CRAs were unique to their time, if they were at all. In order to explain this, an examination of the motivations for creating such organisations can prove useful. Iriye has stated that, 'for the inspiration behind the organisation of NGOS, their commitment to activism derived from a moral conception of the world, their humanitarianism, and their support of human…rights', meaning that they are reflective of the core values of the time.[78] The Congo activists involved in both the British and American CRAs were reflective of views held by other radicals at the time. Whilst they were imperialists, as Bernard Porter has argued, they were 'imperialists with a difference', which 'puts them in a tradition which runs closely parallel to...that of New Radicals.'[79] Their views were not essentially a criticism of colonialism but about the type of colonialism that existed in the Congo Free State – namely that it was in the hands of an

[76] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p.13.
[77] *Ibid*, p.14.
[78] Akira Iriye, 'A Century of NGOs,' *Diplomatic History*, Vol.23, No.3 (Summer 1999), p.435.
[79] Porter, *Critics of Empire*, p.239.

individual rather than a government, the latter of which they preferred as they believed government control of the Congo, or its colonisation by the Belgian government, was the best way of ensuring the wellbeing of the Congolese people. The Congo reformers were part of what Barnett refers to as the 'alchemical branch' of humanitarians. Their concern for saving humans and humanity led to an invocation of compassion as the best vehicle through which to save the lives and souls of the Congolese. They were as wary of politics as the 'emergency branch' of humanitarianism but, due to their programme of engaging in sweeping reform that would remove the causes of suffering in the Congo Free State, it was almost unavoidable that they would venture into 'sensitive areas claimed by the state';[80] in this case, 'Great Power' politics, intergovernmental relations and foreign policy.

When examining the CRAs in this context, they do resemble more of what we would recognise today as a human rights organisation. The activists' demands were expressed as international appeals against a system of dubious legality in place in the Congo Free State, citing it as the reason for the suffering of the Congolese and that its removal would bring an end to the atrocities being committed there. They also launched appeals that challenged state authority and were legalistic and philosophical in nature, which we would recognise today as human rights arguments. Both associations also advocated a restoration of the land rights of the Congolese and a greater consideration of their welfare, as well as an acknowledgement of the rights of the Congolese regarding the produce of the soil, and their personal freedom, all of which were cited as inconsistent with both the 1885 Berlin Act and 1890 Brussels Act. Of course, these are limited in comparison to what we would expect to constitute human rights today; namely rights to education, political representation, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that are inherent to all human beings, regardless of nationality, place of

[80] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p.56.

residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status.[81] The rights that the Congo reform activists advocated were very much focused on property and economic liberty and based in free trade ideology. As Pavlakis has noted, the CRA was dedicated to more secular notions of 'human rights' – 'freedom of commerce...freedom of operation for missionary groups...safeguarding rights of the Congolese people that complemented their own traditions...rights [that] included freedom to trade, land rights...and traditional cultural practices'.[82] Essentially, all of their goals were based on the ideals purported by the Congo reformers of free trade, property rights and their understanding of humanity.[83] The rights dimension, which will be explored further in chapter four, was expressed by both the British and American CRAs through their rhetoric throughout the reform movement.

The British CRA was largely comprised of humanitarians who believed in the imperialist project, just not essentially in the way Leopold was carrying it out in practice. They rarely, if ever, criticised British imperial practices in Africa, which also attracted criticism regarding how they treated the indigenous populations. However, the American CRA was slightly different in its makeup. As the next chapter will show, both imperialist and anti-imperialists alike worked together towards the same goal – initially to pressure national governments to convene an international conference on the issue, then later to pressure Leopold into handing control of the Congo Free State to the Belgian government – despite their ideological differences. Nevertheless, members of both associations were a continuation, and extension, of humanitarian networks that had existed for the previous one hundred years at

[81] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'What are Human Rights?' www.ohchr.org http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx (accessed on 30 March 2017).
[82] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.65.
[83] *Ibid*.

least. They had inherited this transnational humanitarianism and complied with its norms whilst also expanding further their contemporary understanding of the term ‘rights’ and what it meant.

Chapter Two

The Transatlantic Congo Reform Movement

> Is the conscious of Christendom dead?...[I]n the name of humanity, of common decency and pity, for honour's sake, if for no other cause, will not the Anglo-Saxon race…the Governments and the peoples of the United States…make up their minds to handle this monstrous outrage resolutely, and so point the way, and set an example which others would then be compelled to follow?[1]

Introduction

The Congo reform movement was at its strongest in Britain, but there was also a significant movement across the Atlantic. The United States was identified as a key ally by the British activists in achieving success in their campaign. It was in America that British activists believed they would get most support for their cause. They realised that it would require international pressure to be brought to bear on Leopold for the campaign to be successful. With the recent history of transatlantic cooperation and Anglo-Saxonist beliefs of the American activists, the British reformers felt that the United States was an obvious choice as a potential ally to their cause. As this chapter will explore, a large number of both the British and American activists involved in the CRA and ACRA felt a shared identity with their transatlantic cousins. This was timely given that the campaign occurred during a period of cordial relations between the British and American governments. This chapter will examine the activism of reformers in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, which led to the creation of the ACRA. It will also examine the ACRA's methods of raising awareness for their campaign of reform, analysing the key figures involved in the campaign and the courses of action it pursued. The chapter will show that there was a disjointedness both between the activists in the United States

[1] E. D. Morel, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1904), p.372. Portions of this chapter are based on my MA thesis and the journal article produced from that, which is referenced wherever appropriate.

and Britain, and within the ACRA itself, highlighting the limitations as well as the relative achievements of the movement.

Support for the cause of reform in the Congo did exist in Europe, but it was sporadic. In France, the League for the Defence of the Natives of the Conventional Basin of the Congo contained such luminaries as Pierre Mille, nicknamed the 'French Kipling' due to the success of his colonial fiction; the French historian Paul Viollet; the politician Gustave Rouanet; as well as attracting support for its cause from the French poet, journalist and novelist Anatole France.[2] In Italy, the situation differed slightly in that there was involvement in the Congo Free State at government level. In 1903, the Italian government struck a deal with the Congo Free State to 'lend' Italian army officers to the Congo State's military force, with the ultimate aim of finding a *spazio di vita* for Italian emigrants. However, these plans collapsed when an Italian representative named Captain Baccari returned from a trip to the Congo Free State and declared that the area the Italian government had desired for the living space, near Lake Kivu in northeast Congo, was unsuitable for settlement. As a reward for his work, Baccari was imprisoned, and when his report was eventually released, public opinion in Italy was, by that stage, sceptical. Subsequently, the emigration scheme planned ended. Italian newspapers continued to publish articles on the subject but interest in the Congo Free State faded out.[3]

In Switzerland, organised reform took a similar shape to that which existed in France, through the Swiss League for the Defence of the Natives of the Conventional Basin of the Congo, founded in 1908. Although formed late on in the campaign, the League boasted 400 members by 1909, which, as Pavlakis has noted, was significant in that it was not as large as

[2] Yaël Schlick, 'The "French Kipling": Pierre Mille's Popular Colonial Fiction,' *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1997), pp. 226; Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.163.
[3] *Ibid*, p.161-162.

the membership of the CRA, but larger in terms of proportion to the country's population.[4] The reform movement in Switzerland was largely driven by two men, Dr René Claparède, a journalist and zoologist, and Dr Hermann Christ-Socin, a botanist, who were both effective propagandists in the fight to raise awareness of the situation in the Congo Free State.[5] Meetings were organised, involving notable speakers, including Morel, as well as the production of pamphlets, books and letters to newspapers – all methods practised regularly by their British and American counterparts – to champion the cause. The League also publicly lent its support to two American missionaries, who were on trial for the 'calumnious denunciation' of the officers of the Kasai Company, petitioning the United States President William Taft to intervene and help the missionaries.[6] The strength of the Swiss movement lay in its position of not being imperialist; that it could not be accused by Leopold, or any other Congo sympathiser, of having any colonial interests in the region. However, whilst it was successful in bringing the issue to the attention of the public, the Swiss movement made no real significant impact on the situation in the Congo Free State.

Despite the support for the reform movement that existed in Europe, there was no real coordinated effort on the part of these activists to form an organisation similar to the CRA in order to focus their reform agitation into a sustained movement. Only in America was there an association formed with the purpose of creating a movement to coordinate the efforts of American reformers into one concentrated effort, with the sole purpose of applying sustained pressure on their government into taking action over Leopold's hold over the Congo Free State. The ACRA was simultaneously both a branch of the CRA as well as an independent organisation in its own right, and its members were a diverse group, with supporters of all

[4] *Ibid*, p.163.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] 'Want Missionaries Freed,' *Boston Evening Transcript*, 19 July 1909, p.14.

different backgrounds and professions; from literary writers, to academics and religious figures. The ACRA was part of a transnational movement that included individuals with a range of views on religion, race and imperialism – often competing views at times – yet were successful in pressuring the American government into taking action over the issue of the Congo Free State.

In addition, the chapter will also examine the ACRA's methods of communication with their British counterparts and the subsequent events that shaped their methods of propagation, in order to analyse the dynamics of their relationship and its effect on the reform campaign. An examination of the way in which it propagated its message is important as analysing the key aspects of the movement can help to better understand how the activists approached their campaign for reform. It also allows for a more thorough analysis of their efforts; whether the organisation encountered difficulties in coordinating their efforts from across the Atlantic, or if it was able to fully utilise the methods of communication available to them at the beginning of the twentieth century. What this analysis will also show is the type of person who was attracted to the reform campaign; whether the movement strictly appealed to anti-imperialists and one particular religious denomination at the time, or whether their supporters were quite a diverse group who held different political and religious beliefs but who came together in support of Congo reform. This chapter will answer those questions by providing an analysis of those who became involved in the reform campaign and the obstacles faced in communicating with their fellow activists, the United States and British governments, and the wider general public. In particular, the issue of Anglophobia as a significant obstacle to transatlantic cooperation will be examined in order to understand its impact on the American reform movement and how activists, in particular the Anglophiles, sought to navigate this problem. Furthermore, the intertwining issues of American hostility to British Congo activists

and their motivations, and the consensus between the Anglo-American activists regarding the issue of free trade that ran through the Congo reform campaign on both sides of the Atlantic, will also be unpacked, in order to highlight both the unity and disunity of the transatlantic reformers regarding such issues. By doing so, this chapter will demonstrate that these factors had a significant impact on the ACRA's attempts to form a cohesive movement in the United States. It will show that, instead, the problems presented by the presence of Anglophobia within the ranks of the ACRA meant that the reform movement in the United States lacked any real cohesion and contained an ideological struggle within itself, while simultaneously attempting to participate in a wider ideological battle with the Congo Free State.

This approach will add to the existing scholarship on the Congo reform movement, and, in particular, the transnational dimensions of the CRA and ACRA. To date, the historiography has mostly focused on the CRA and its role in the Congo reform movement, placing the organisation at the centre of the activism that brought about the end of Leopold's reign in the Congo Free State, whilst only highlighting the ACRA's activism as being a branch of the CRA and just one part of the reform movement's wider story. This chapter will draw more attention to the role of the ACRA, showing that the organisation made a more significant impact in the reform campaign than the historiography credits it with, and, in particular, highlighting the significant role played by its leading figures, including Thomas S. Barbour, who, as it will be shown, played an integral role in forming, maintaining, and organising the Congo reform movement in America and maintaining constructive working relations with its transatlantic counterparts. Furthermore, whilst this chapter will examine the methods of campaigning that the ACRA engaged in, the impact of that activism on government policy and Anglo-American relations regarding the Congo Free State will be examined in the next chapter.

The Congo Reform Campaign in America

By the turn of the twentieth century, Congo sympathisers in America were already at work disseminating information, via written articles in the press and pamphlets distributed throughout the United States, to raise awareness of the plight of the Congolese; all built on earlier literature produced by missionaries denouncing the conditions that existed in the Congo Free State.[7] Despite these efforts, the propaganda produced up to – and including – 1903 had little influence on public opinion. The reason for this, primarily, was because most of the work produced before 1904 had been written by missionaries, which left their work open to criticism. Missionary accounts of life in the Congo left them vulnerable to accusations of having ulterior motives. This was primarily because the Congo debate occurred at a time when relations between Protestants and Catholics were marked by mutual hostility. Catholics in Belgium, a predominately Catholic country, naturally suspected the motivations of a movement which originated in Protestant England that was directed against abuses in a territory owned by the Belgian king. As individual Protestant missionaries were some of the earliest critics of the Congo Free State in general, and Leopold in particular, they were accused of having sectarian motives behind their allegations; Belgian Catholics defended the Congo Free State whereas any ambivalent opposition to the regime and Leopold was assumed to be Protestant in nature.[8]

[7] In 1890, George Washington Williams, a historian and African traveller, was the first to report on the conditions in the Congo Free State in his work entitled *An Open Letter to His Serene Majesty Leopold II, King of the Belgians and Sovereign of the Independent State of Congo*. Later, accounts emerged from American missionaries William Sheppard and William Morrison, as well as the American agent Edgar Canisius who had worked for a rubber company in the Congo Free State. For more on these earlier accounts and their authors, see, in no particular order: Franklin, *George Washington Williams*; William E. Phipps, *William Sheppard: Congo's African American Livingstone* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2002); Robert Benedetto, *Presbyterian Reformers in Central Africa: A Documentary Account of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission and the Human Rights Struggle in the Congo, 1890-1918* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997); Stanley Shaloff, *Reform in Leopold's Congo* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1970); Edgar Canisius, 'A Campaign against Cannibals,' in Guy Burrows, *The Curse of Central Africa* (London: R.A. Everett & Co., 1903), pp.63-80.

[8] Cline, 'The Church,' pp.49-52. Missionaries took an ambivalent role in regard to empire. In the case of the Congo Free State, Catholics especially were unsure which position to take. Not all Catholics were in support of Leopold and not all denied the allegations made against the king. Some admitted to knowledge of the abuses but stated that they were not systematic nor were they unique; similar examples could be found in colonies governed by other countries, such as Britain. Cline states that the reasons for the Catholic position towards supporting Leopold's regime in the Congo Free State was a combination of sectarian interest, national loyalty and a strong

However, with the emergence of non-religious eyewitness accounts of atrocities in the Congo Free State that provided the activists with some much-needed material – that carried more weight than the previous reports – the reform movement started to gather momentum.

Nevertheless, as long as there was a lack of coherent and sustained pressure on Leopold, the King of the Belgians would always be able to issue a rebuttal to any charges levelled at him; alongside the missionary reports of atrocities, the accounts published by ex-agents of the State who had spoken out against the conditions in the Congo Free State were also 'dismissed as the testimonies of disgruntled employees.'[9] In order to tackle the issue of reform in the Congo, and combat this counter-attack from Leopold, an organisation solely dedicated to the cause of Congo reform was needed. As long as opposition to Leopold's actions in the Congo came from individuals, as opposed to one concentrated group speaking out against the regime, the King of the Belgians would always be able counter those claims and discredit them.

The significance of ACRA lay in its capacity to provide this concentrated group. There were a number of stages to the formation of the ACRA. Interest in the situation in the Congo Free State within the United States had been stirred early in 1904 by the appearance in the American press of a letter written by Henry Richard Fox Bourne, secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society (APS) in Britain. The letter was sent to President Theodore Roosevelt, via the American ambassador in London, as well as to several leading newspapers in the United States. In the letter, Fox Bourne detailed the state of affairs in the Congo and the history of the Congo reform campaign. He also appealed to American citizens to help the Congolese, implying that they had a certain responsibility to do so because the United States government

faith in the benefits of Europeanization. For further reading on the role of missionaries in the Congo, see: Cline, 'The Church'; Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, 2005; Ruth Slade, 'King Leopold II and the Attitude of English and American Catholics towards the Anti-Congolese Campaign,' *Zaire*, 11 (June 1957), pp.593-612.

[9] *Ibid*, p.49.

had been the first and 'therefore the most responsible…of the civilised nations that recognised the Congo State's flag as that of a friendly government'. Fox-Bourne also took the opportunity to remind them of the absence of territory held by the United States in the region, meaning that the Americans could act on humanitarian grounds alone, free from any accusations of imperialistic ambitions.[10]

Around the same time of the appearance of Fox Bourne's letter, a *Memorial Concerning Conditions in the Independent State of the Kongo* was presented by Barbour, Secretary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, on behalf of the American Congo Missionaries to Senator John Tyler Morgan requesting that the United States government investigate the conditions in the Congo Free State.[11] Morgan was a Democrat who was also a staunch advocate of the separation of the black and white races in the United States, and who actively encouraged African Americans from the southern states to resettle in Africa.[12] Similar to Fox Bourne's claim, the memorial also declared that the United States government must be regarded equally as responsible as the European governments who signed the Berlin Act of 1884-85 for what it described as the 'proper carrying out of that act' – primarily the commitments made by its signatories regarding free trade and the moral and material welfare of the Congolese. The memorial stated that the United States had a duty to ensure that the Act was enforced in the way that it was intended.[13] This was despite the United States having never signed the act, thus meaning that it had no legal obligation to do so. However, the memorial was subsequently referred by the Senate to the Committee of Foreign Relations and was a sign that the reform

[10] 'Notes and Comments,' *The Aborigines' Friend,* April 1904, pp.57-65; Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question,* pp.171-172.
[11] Hawkins, 'Mark Twain's Involvement,' p.154; Charles Laderman, 'The Invasion of the United States by an Englishman: E. D. Morel and the Anglo-American Intervention in the Congo,' in W. Mulligan and M. Bric (eds), *A Global History of Anti-slavery Politics in the Nineteenth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2013), p.178.
[12] That such a fervent racist as Morgan could not only occupy a place at the Senate but also espouse rhetoric of this nature shows that race in the transatlantic world was very different in Britain and America at this time.
[13] 'Action in the United States,' *The Aborigines' Friend*, July 1904, pp.156-157.

campaign in America was gathering pace and attracting powerful and influential people to its cause. [14]

Organised Congo reform in America started to take shape in the summer of 1904 through the emergence of the Congo Committee of the Massachusetts Commission for International Justice (MCIJ). The Congo Committee had been formed 'for the unique purpose of disseminating information and directing public attention to reports in regard to conditions in the Congo Free State'.[15] The Congo Committee acknowledged that it could not 'prescribe the definite action that a conference of the Powers would or should take'. Instead, it stated that: '[A]ll that is asked is an investigation of the facts and a definite determination of the status in international law of the present Congo government.'[16] Despite this aim, it was still unclear as to how this activism would manifest itself and how best to propagate its message. The Congo Committee's new secretary was Robert Ezra Park, a journalist who would later become one of the leading figures in what came to be known as the 'Chicago School' of sociology. With the endorsement and guidance of the MCIJ, Park would later help found the ACRA. Park wrote to Fox Bourne, who had also been promoting the Congo issue, to advise on how best to appeal to an American audience. He suggested that Fox Bourne deploy the term 'slavery' when writing for an American audience, as the word is 'charged with meaning for the average American'. Park added that an appeal to American philanthropy should be made through highlighting the connection the United States had enjoyed with Africa, requesting that, 'if you could say something about Liberia, and the relation of American philanthropy to that State...I think you would produce an article that we would all like to read.'[17]

---

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] 'The Congo News-Letter,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1906, p.1.
[16] 'The Real Issue in Re Congo Intervention,' *The Congo News Letter*, September 1904, p.1.
[17] Park to Henry Fox Bourne, 25 July 1904, ASC, RH, G261, Vol.1, No.28, as quoted in Aidan Forth, 'Politics of Philanthropy,' p.84.

For Park, his admiration for Morel and what he perceived to be the common goals that they both shared, were both important factors as to why he became involved in the Congo campaign. In a letter to Morel, Park declared that:

> I agree perfectly with what you say that this is not a fight against the Congo State alone, it is against slave labour in…Africa. It is simply the race issue in its most concrete form…there is nothing in the world that a man of your temperament or of my temperament would rather do than fight just such iniquity…it is a great privilege…a luxury that few men can afford themselves…I mean politics…is the real business of human life.[18]

Park confided to Morel that, 'I am not clear as to just exactly what we are to do in the future', identifying the need for the unification of 'various currents of interest in the United States' – with such organisations as the American Colonisation Society – and the publication of a paper that should 'first of all represent the Congo movement, but...later represent the increasing interest...in the United States in colonial matters in general.'[19] A newsletter was subsequently created and printed on a fortnightly basis that promoted the issue of reform in the Congo. The Congo Committee stated that '[B]ecause we [the United States] have no territorial ambitions in Africa our intervention cannot be ascribed to interested motives...our participation in a new conference of the Powers on the subject of the Congo should be an assurance that commercial and humanitarian not territorial interests would determine its action.'[20] This position is an interesting one for the ACRA to have taken, as it clearly distinguished the United States as being different from the imperial European powers, who possessed colonies in Africa, whilst also highlighting the lack of free trade in the Congo as one motivation for the reconvening of an international conference on the issue. Indeed, the statement essentially draws attention to

[18] Park to Morel, 15 January 1905, as quoted in Louis and Stengers, *Morel's History*, p.184.
[19] Park to Morel, 31 August 1904, Morel Papers, London School of Economics (hereafter MP), F4/15:44. The American Colonisation Society was formed in 1816 to support the migration of free African Americans to the continent of Africa, and which, by the beginning of the twentieth century, still exercised, according to Park, a 'paternal control' over the State of Liberia. Senator John Tyler Morgan was a member of the Society and the 'representative in Congress of the...Congo reform movement in the United States' in 1904.
[20] 'The Real Issue in Re: Congo Intervention,' *The Congo News Letter*, September 1904, p.1.

the Open Door principle that the adherents to the Berlin Act agreed on in 1885, accepting that no nation would enjoy a monopoly in the Congo Free State. This position meant that the ACRA was immediately on a different level to that of its British counterpart, as the seemingly disinterested position of the United States in the matter meant that the ACRA had more freedom to engage in a campaign of reform; essentially, it did not have to contend with accusations from Leopold and the Congo government, as the CRA did, that the movement for reform was driven by British designs on the Congo region.

The purpose of the ACRA newsletter was to provide editors of newspapers and journals with 'pertinent and forcible paragraphs of authentic information, new and old, in a shape suitable for quotation'.[21] The newsletter gathered together articles written by Congo reform activists and published them in a way that would mean they were accessible for any newspaper editor who also wished to use them. In addition to letters written to local and national newspapers, the Congo Committee organised regular meetings and talks in order to generate interest in the cause of Congo reform. However, membership figures for the Congo Committee were still, at this point, relatively small. Despite this, interest in the situation that existed in the Congo Free State was continuing to grow in America. The Congo Committee was beginning to make plans to create a unified, more organised body of support to oppose Leopold and to launch a coordinated effort in America towards Congo reform. The inspiration of which, however, would not come from within the United States itself. Rather, reflecting the transnational nature of the Congo reform movement, the inspiration to coordinate activities would come from across the Atlantic.

[21] 'Action in the United States,' *Aborigines' Friend*, July 1904, p.221.

The Morel Visit of 1904

After pressure from Congo activists in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century, prominent members of government were debating the issues that had arisen under Leopold's governance in the Congo Free State in parliament, leading to the passing of a resolution by the House of Commons in March 1903 to 'abate the evils' that existed in the Congo Free State through the creation of an 'International Commission'.[22] Literature was produced on the subject by journalists, such as Morel, which was influencing public opinion and raising awareness of the atrocities being committed in the Congo Free State. Later, Roger Casement's report was published in 1904 which helped bolster the arguments put forward by the Congo activists in Britain.

Much has been written about Casement's Report and its impact has been debated within the historiography of the Congo reform movement. However, a brief description here is necessary to better illuminate the formation of the CRA and ACRA. After a parliamentary motion was debated and a resolution subsequently passed in May 1903 calling on the British government to consult with the other powers on the issue of the Congo Free State's adherence to the Berlin Act, Casement, the British Consul at Boma in the Congo, was despatched to investigate. Upon his return, Casement wrote a report detailing what he had seen during his time in the Congo Free State, which was published in February 1904. Casement's Report on the harsh conditions that existed in the Congo Free State aroused indignation within political and public spheres in Britain, confirming the reports of the atrocities that had emanated from the region up to that point. However, in order to ensure that those who had given their testimonies to the report remained anonymous, the Foreign Office substituted names and places for letters and symbols, much to Casement's annoyance. The impact of the report has been the

[22] Hansard Papers, HC Debate 20 May 1903, Vol. 122, c.1299.

subject of debate within the historiography. William Roger Louis has argued that the Casement Report, as well as the establishment of the CRA, was a significant factor in Leopold transferring the Congo Free State to the Belgian government, whereas Jules Marchal disagrees, stating that the minimal interest in the Congo shown by the Belgian population meant that its impact was insignificant.[23] However, that it was an official validation of some of the atrocity stories in the Congo Free State, and the subsequent positive impact it had on Morel's and Casement's working relationship, Casement's report was important in helping the reform movement turn a significant corner towards gaining international support to pressure Leopold.[24]

A month later, both Casement and Morel founded the CRA in the city of Liverpool. In a bid to raise awareness and generate support for the cause of Congo reform, the Congo Committee invited Dr Henry Grattan Guinness, founder of the Congo Balolo Mission, and later co-founder of the CRA with Morel and Casement, to come to America and talk about the situation in the Congo Free State. Guinness had already developed a lecture entitled 'A Reign of Terror on the Congo' that he had delivered at a series of 'Congo atrocity meetings' throughout Scotland in late 1903, and was a natural choice to be the invited speaker on the subject.[25] Guinness had suggested the idea of going to the United States himself to present a memorial to President Roosevelt, before embarking on a tour of several major cities there to

[23] William Roger Louis, 'Roger Casement and the Congo,' *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1964), p.117; Jules Marchal, 'Roger Casement in the Congo: Reactions in Belgium,' in Mary E. Daly (eds), *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2005), p.32; both cited in Pierre-Luc Plasman and Catherine Thewissen, 'The Three Lives of the Casement Report: Its Impact on Official Reactions and Popular Opinion in Belgium,' *Breac: A Digital Journal of Irish Studies*, 1 April 2016 https://breac.nd.edu/articles/the-three-lives-of-the-casement-report-its-impact-on-official-reactions-and-popular-opinion-in-belgium/#_edn2 (accessed 9 August 2018).

[24] For an in-depth look at the Casement's own version of the report, as well as the 1903 diary he kept whilst in the Congo, see: Roger Casement, *The Eyes of Another Race: Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary*, ed. Seamas O. Siocháin and Michael O'Sullivan (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003).

[25] Kevin Grant, 'Christian Critics of Empire: Missionaries, Lantern Lectures, and the Congo Reform Campaign in Britain,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol.29, No.2 (2001), p.37.

promote the cause.[26] However, the governing board of the CRA instead thought Morel the better choice to travel to the United States.[27]

Why then did the CRA's committee target America as a place with which to spread the message of reform? There was a lack of consolidated support in Europe for the reform movement, but this isolation in Europe was not the reason to look across the Atlantic for support. The United States was an ideal target for the CRA's efforts due to the Congo reformers in America having already begun their campaign of raising awareness of conditions in the Congo. Morel believed that a successful trip to the United States would mean that it was possible for a 'branch organisation' to be founded in America, 'either working on its own lines, or in conjunction and under the control' of the CRA.[28] He also hoped that the reform movement there would be influential enough to pressure the United States government to form an alliance with its British counterpart to force Leopold to relinquish his hold on the Congo Free State. Morel knew that the United States could be a potentially powerful ally in the quest for reform in the Congo and, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, although efforts were made throughout Europe to raise awareness, the United States was always a key target for the CRA in recruiting support for its cause. One important reason for this was the common sense of shared ideals both nations enjoyed in the eyes of the reformers, as well as a common language, which made coordinated activism far easier to organise.

Throughout the correspondence between the British and American activists, there is clearly a sense of a shared history, culture, and a belief that they belonged to an antislavery tradition that dated back at least a hundred years prior to the Congo reform movement. What then does this attempt to forge a transatlantic connection between the activists tell us about

[26] 'Congo Reform Association Plan of Campaign,' MP, F4/2:153, 154.
[27] Alfred Emmott to Morel, 27 April 1904, MP, F8/53, 56.
[28] 'Congo Reform Association Plan of Campaign,' MP, F4/2:156.

their perceptions of each other? The unique link they shared by being part of the Anglo-Saxon race forged a large part of this for the activists, and the reformer's belief that it was their unique responsibility to protect the rights of the Congolese people and abolish slavery wherever it was to be found.[29] This long tradition of the antislavery movement in both countries was a significant factor in their efforts to create a transatlantic relationship to fight for Congo reform. The United States was targeted by British activists as a potential partner in the Congo reform movement in the very early period of organised reform activism. As Cullinane has stated, the 'American experience of oppression during the Reconstruction era' served as a 'potent reminder of the tradition of equality and human rights' that existed in the United States. The antislavery tradition that existed on both sides of the Atlantic and the support for the abolition of slavery in the post-American Civil War era in the second half of the nineteenth century, meant that the United States was considered fertile ground for support of the Congo reform movement. However, the notion of shared ideals and traditions between the British and their American cousins were not the only reasons for courting American support.[30]

Morel also believed, as some of the American reformers did, that the United States bore a unique responsibility to help put right the wrongdoing that had occurred in the Congo region, given that America was the first nation to recognise the Congo Free State in 1885. In Morel's opinion, the United States was the logical choice with which to try and gain support for the Congo reform cause. He believed that the 'Anglo-Saxon race, in a spirit divorced from political selfishness – for neither Great Britain nor America have any political ends to serve in this [Congo] matter – will make up its mind that the Congo evil has got to be put a stop to, once

[29] For more on the dynamics of Anglo-Saxonism in Britain and America during this period, see, Paul A. Kramer, 'Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910,' *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (March 2002), pp.1315-1353.
[30] Cullinane, 'Transatlantic Dimensions,' p.309.

and for all'; a view he had also articulated in his latest book, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa*, released shortly before his trip to America.[31]

After some speculation that his trip would be postponed until November of that year, Morel eventually arrived in the United States on 29 September 1904. The visit was designed to generate support for the cause, and a meeting with President Roosevelt was first up on the agenda. Morel was aware that there would be suspicions of British motives in taking an interest in the Congo Free State. He sought to allay any doubts that the President and the American public may have had about the possibility of the Congo activists having ulterior motives. Morel was mindful of the anti-imperialist views that were prominent in the United States, and so informed Roosevelt that Britain had no imperialist interest in the Congo, and that its motives were 'disinterested' and 'pure'. This declaration was designed to appeal to anti-imperialist sentiment in the United States and to allay any concerns that the American politicians regarding British imperial designs on the Congo region. Morel insisted that the reform movement was driven by a humanitarian concern for the Congolese and was confident that the American people could be convinced to add their voice to the 'moral demand for an absolute change in the system' that existed under Leopold's rule in the Congo Free State.[32]

From Washington, Morel travelled to Boston to deliver an address to The Thirteenth International Peace Conference, which was sponsored by the MCIJ.[33] On 7 October 1904, Morel told the audience in attendance that the purpose of his visit was to 'appeal' to the Americans 'on behalf of the oppressed and persecuted peoples of the Congo', preaching the

[31] 'Reform in the Congo,' *Washington Post*, 3 October 1904, p.9; Dean Clay, 'Transnational Dimensions of the Congo Reform Movement, 1904-1908,' *English Studies in Africa*, Vol.59 (2016), pp.19-20; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa*.
[32] Wuliger, 'Economic,' p.87.
[33] *Ibid*, p.87; Cline, *E.D. Morel*, p.44. The MCIJ in Boston was a major gathering of activists from different countries, and people such as Edwin D. Mead of the United States, who later became a senior figure in the ACRA, and W. T. Stead of Britain, who were both present, embodied the transatlantic links present in the Congo reform movement.

'moral responsibility' that the British and American people had to the Congolese. Appealing to the antislavery sentiment and tradition shared by both countries, Morel stated that,

> The African slave trade has been revived, and is in full swing in the Congo today. I ask you to help us to root it up and fling it out of Africa, and just as I have no doubt of the greatness and loftiness of your ideals, so I have no doubt of what your answer will be.[34]

Morel's words were carefully chosen. His speech shrewdly appealed to the abolitionists in America – with whom he shared a common interest in abolishing slavery – by stating that the slave trade in Africa had now been 'revived', whilst also tapping into the common antislavery traditions both the British and American reformers believed that they had shared since the early nineteenth century. Morel's visit to America prompted much debate within the press, receiving coverage in several leading newspapers, and a war of words ensued between the ACRA and Leopold's press bureau in the United States.[35] Despite Park's concern that there had been 'no great immediate returns' from Morel's visit, the trip was a successful one.[36] Morel had managed to secure meetings with President Roosevelt and Secretary of State John Hay, and secured the support of a world-famous author in Mark Twain, as well as other leading figures within the American Congo reform movement. Morel also helped to organise the formation of the ACRA, which took place at the end of 1904, shortly after he returned home. The support from ACRA was vital for Morel in assuring Americans that this was not a British imperial adventure.

The Work of the ACRA

The newly-formed ACRA stated that its aim was to secure an impartial and international investigation into the reports of the atrocities. The association defined its objective as seeking 'international action with a view to full disclosure of conditions in the Congo State and

[34] 'Plight of Congo,' *The Washington Post*, 8 October 1904, p.1.
[35] Clay, *Transnational Dimensions*, p.21.
[36] Park to Morel, 22 November 1904, MP, F4/15:266.

authoritative adjudication of the issues to which these conditions are related.' Morel visited the United States, in September 1904, leading to a 'surge in membership' of the Congo Committee.[37] Initially, membership was free and the ACRA welcomed all who shared its desire for reform in the Congo Free State. Within this surge of support came figures of notable public standing in the United States, which lent credibility to the ACRA and its cause; figures including politicians Curtis Guild Jr., Governor of Massachusetts, and ex-Secretary of State, John W. Foster; authors, including Booker T. Washington and Twain; and academics and reformers such as Park, Edwin D. Mead, David Starr Jordan, Benjamin F. Trueblood, Henry van Dyke, and the ACRA's President, G. Stanley Hall.[38] By the early months of 1906, membership was estimated to be approximately between 1400 and 1500 people.[39] With this boost in membership and the support of Morel, the ACRA was poised to move into the next, pro-active phase of its existence.

Shortly after he arrived back from his trip to the United States, Morel continued writing to his fellow activists in America to ensure that they coordinated their efforts on both sides of the Atlantic, reminding them of the merits of the Congo reform movement and trying to persuade them to use their influence in generating support for the cause. In a letter written to Reverend Charles F. Dole, Chairman of the Twentieth Century Club in Boston and a member of the General Committee of the ACRA, Morel stated that, given the 'unique and colossal' state of affairs that existed in the Congo, which was 'a revival under the worst forms of the African slave trade against…which our forefathers struggled for so many years'. All of this was the work of what Morel described as 'the sole interests of an unscrupulous individual', and

[37] Cullinane, 'Transatlantic Dimensions,' p.309. Cullinane states that there was a surge in membership for the American CRA, but this was most likely for the Congo Committee; Morel was still receiving letters on Congo Committee letter headed paper until late November 1904. It was not until December 1904 that the first letter in the Morel archives on official ACRA paper was received.
[38] *Ibid*.
[39] 'Guild Moves,' *Boston Globe,* 31 March 1906, p.11; 'A Forward Look,' *The Congo News Letter,* April 1906, p.2.

he expressed his hope that Dole would use his influence to convince others to rally to the cause.[40] Morel also voiced his desire to communicate regularly with Park regarding efforts with both the CRA and ACRA.

By November 1904, Park informed Morel that the ACRA was progressing and 'moving in the direction which you [Morel] planned', reassuring him that things were developing well on the other side of the Atlantic, highlighting Morel's influence in the American reform movement.[41] However, Park also warned Morel that the efforts of American activists in drumming up support for their cause were being hampered by the presence of Leopold's lobbyists at reform meetings in America.[42] Leopold's counter propaganda campaign in America was another obstacle that the ACRA would have to overcome, and this incident provided an early warning to both Park and Morel that Leopold was prepared to fight for victory in the court of public opinion. Around the same time, the CRA was struggling financially and Morel was not sure how to resolve this issue, other than send out an appeal for funds to Congo reform sympathisers.[43] At the same time, the ACRA was also struggling financially. Morel was informed that the ACRA lacked its own fund with which to finance its propaganda campaign.[44]

In late 1904, the American activists found it difficult to attract significant publicity for the reform movement. They struggled to get their propaganda into print in certain newspapers, which they found 'very disheartening'. However, to combat these obstacles, they speculated as

[40] Morel to Charles F. Dole, 15 November 1904, MP, F4/15:256. The Twentieth Century Club in Boston, Massachusetts, was a place in which informal gatherings were held so that prominent members of society, including newspapers editors, reformers, missionaries, socialists, educators, authors, labour leaders and economists, could meet to discuss and share ideas and viewpoints across the political spectrum. It was this type of organisation that Morel targeted in his campaign to raise awareness in the United States for Congo reform, as within its membership it counted influential figures who, if convinced of its merits and intentions, could have a positive effect on the Congo reform campaign.
[41] Park to Morel, 14 November 1904, MP, F4/15:254.
[42] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p.244.
[43] Morel to Colonel Stopford, 14 November 1904, MP, F4/15:253.
[44] A. W. Warden to Morel, 15 November 1904, MP, F4/15:257.

to whether or not it would be better for the ACRA to find a new secretary who had 'leisure and money' in order to fully concentrate on their role; hardly a ringing endorsement for Park. As a result, during the early period of the ACRA's existence, correspondence between Morel and the organisation's leading figures was regular and constructive, with a frequent exchange of ideas and tactics on how the movement could progress. However, there remained an imbalance in the relationship at this point, as the ACRA still sought Morel's advice on certain issues during the early period of its formation. Morel offered to send them literature to disseminate as well as offering advice on the recruitment of Twain, insisting to Park that they 'must not ask him to join your Committee' – a request that the ACRA ignored.[45] Whilst Morel still held some influence over the ACRA's campaign strategy, this is another example of the ACRA acting independently from its British counterpart, highlighting a lack of efficacy to transatlantic cooperation over the issue of recruitment of members. Morel's advice regarding Twain came shortly after he arrived back in Britain and given his influence in the formation of the ACRA, it is reasonable to assume that he felt his advice would and should be heeded. It is not clear as to why Morel felt this way about Twain – it is plausible that Morel felt the author's celebrity and anti-imperialist position would cloud the message the CRA and ACRA were trying to propagate. Nevertheless, the ACRA decided to invite Twain to become a member of its committee and he went on to play a significant role within the organisation.

Despite being a leading member of the ACRA for only a short time, Twain would help contribute to some of its most effective propaganda. After inviting Morel to visit him at his home in New York on 17 October, Twain was convinced of the merits of the reform movement and later decided to join the ACRA, becoming its first vice-president.[46] A known anti-imperialist, Twain now took up the cause of Congo reform, largely due to a humanitarian

[45] Morel to Park, 26 November 1904, MP, F4/15:275.
[46] Cullinane, 'Transatlantic Dimensions,' p.309.

concern for the atrocities being committed in the Congo Free State, as well as a commitment to his democratic principles; the most fundamental rights, in Twain's opinion, were being denied to the Congolese by Leopold's regime.[47] Booker T. Washington noted at the time that, 'I have never known him [Twain] to be so stirred up on any one question as he was on that of the cruel treatment of the natives in the Congo Free State…he never seemed to tire of talking on the subject.'[48] Indeed, Twain would begin to engage intensely in activity over Congo reform. It was during this time that he embarked on at least three trips to Washington D.C., meeting with President Roosevelt and the Secretary of State Hay.

As well as visiting Washington D.C. to petition the President and Secretary of State, Twain also began work on what would become arguably the reform movement's most famous propaganda work regarding Leopold and the Congo Free State. This was *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, a work of political satire written from the point of view of Leopold himself, which was harshly condemnatory of the King of the Belgians' regime in the Congo Free State.[49] Although the *Soliloquy* was also published in French, German and Italian – a sign that the reformers were still keen on support coming from Europe – it was primarily aimed at an American audience as a political tool. In the *Soliloquy*, Twain quite cleverly had Leopold gibe at the United States and their recognition of the Congo Free State's flag in 1884, knowing this would anger some Americans, when he wrote 'I was a shade too smart for that nation that thinks itself so smart…pirate flag? Let them call it so – perhaps it is. All the same *they were the first to salute it.*'[50] Twain also satirically poked fun at Leopold's hypocrisy, when the *Soliloquy* had Leopold describe the acts he had committed in the Congo Free State, saying that,

[47] Hawkins, 'Mark Twain,' pp.148-149.
[48] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost,* pp.241-242.
[49] Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy,* 1905.
[50] *Ibid*, p.7. Italics are the original author's own.

> God has observed them from the beginning and has manifested no dissatisfaction with them, nor shown disapproval…nor hampered nor interrupted them in any way. By this sign I recognise his approval of what I have done.[51]

Twain was also aware of the influence that religious figures could have on the reform campaign. He arranged for copies of the *Soliloquy* to be sent to 'one hundred prominent Protestant clergyman and offered to pay the costs himself' and later planned to send more out to Catholic priests too; Barbour duly obliged but stated that the ACRA would cover any costs involved.[52] Twain believed that, by targeting key religious figures with his propaganda, it would be easier to persuade Americans to take up the cause of reform. He felt that the only way in which to get the people of the United States on their side was to make religion the central focus of the fight, declaring that they 'can rouse it [America] to war-point in twelve months…in the interest of religion.'[53] It is interesting to note that, as Hawkins has observed, despite Twain writing the piece as an 'atheist...railing against God's apparent indifference to human suffering', the religious figures involved with the ACRA were not deterred from using it as propaganda against Leopold.[54] Barbour informed Morel that he thought it would 'greatly broaden and deepen interest' of the Congo reform campaign in the United States.[55] That the Congo reform activists had religious motives in their reasons for campaigning against Leopold was a charge that had been levelled at the activists many times during the early stages of the reform campaign by Leopold and defenders of the Congo Free State. To avoid this criticism, Morel had continually stressed the importance of ensuring that the CRA and ACRA were both secular in their missions.

---

[51] *Ibid*, p.8.
[52] Hawkins, 'Mark Twain,' p.160.
[53] *Ibid*.
[54] *Ibid*, p.158.
[55] Barbour to Morel, 27 September 1905, MP, F4/18:43.

As a piece of propaganda, Twain's *Soliloquy* was a success for the ACRA and CRA. In 1905, it went through two editions in America and was followed by a British edition in 1907. It sold at twenty-five cents per pamphlet, with all proceeds going to the ACRA and the CRA benefitting from the profits on sales of the pamphlet in Britain. Twain followed on from the success of the *Soliloquy* by writing his second piece about the Congo, entitled *A Thanksgiving Sentiment*. This work was critical of the United States for being the first nation to recognise the flag of the Congo Free State, declaring his own nation the 'official Godfather of the Congo Graveyard.'[56] Late in 1905, Twain wrote yet another essay on the Congo situation and, although the thirteen-page manuscript was never published, in the article the author criticised the United States for its inaction.[57] In his capacity as vice-president of the ACRA, Twain continued to work hard to raise awareness for the Congo reform movement. In ways other than through the pen, Twain also gave interviews to newspapers in which he voiced his dislike for Leopold's regime in the Congo, his belief that the United States and its citizens were required to take an interest in what was happening as they were the first nation to recognise the flag of the Congo Free State, and his belief in the testimonies and photographs taken by the missionaries who had worked there.[58] However, Twain began to grow disillusioned with what he perceived as a lack of progress made by the Congo reform movement; a perception largely fuelled by his misunderstanding of the legal relationship between the United States and the Congo Free State. Twain resigned his position as vice-president of the ACRA on 10 February 1906, at the second attempt.[59] Twain had mistakenly believed that the United States had a legal obligation to take action over the conditions in the Congo due to their signing and ratification of the Berlin Act, a ratification that never took place. As Hawkins has stated, throughout his

[56] Hawkins, 'Mark Twain,' p.161.
[57] *Ibid*, p.162.
[58] *Ibid*.
[59] *Ibid*, p.148.

involvement with the Congo reform campaign, Twain believed the United States had a legal obligation to supervise Congo rule. However, when informed by the State Department in January 1906 that the Senate never ratified the Berlin Act, Twain became disillusioned with the reform movement and decided that there was no basis for such a movement in America. Twain confided to Barbour that he had 'retired from the Congo'. Despite telling Morel that he would not tie himself 'to any movement of any kind, nor be officially connected with a movement of any kind', he now found himself 'committed to journeys and speeches' which he described as 'perfectly appalling activities' that, according to Twain, were 'entirely out of my line and foreign to my make'.[60] Nevertheless, Twain had furthered the reform campaign in America more than anyone else had by that point and he had helped change the course of public opinion in favour of the Congo reform movement for good. However, Twain was not the only influential member of the ACRA who had access to the White House.

At Barbour's request, the famous African-American activist Booker T. Washington also joined the ACRA as a vice-president, and it was in this role that he used his influence with high-ranking American officials in order to pressure the government into taking action over the atrocities in the Congo. After also speaking at the International Peace Conference in Boston, alongside Morel, Barbour, and G. Stanley Hall, all of whom either gave a speech or were in attendance, Washington personally called on President Roosevelt, taking with him a protest committee from the National Baptist Convention. Washington had convinced the committee that reform in the Congo was needed in order to exert more pressure on the President and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (which he also visited). The National Baptist Convention was the largest black organisation in America at the time, which meant that its presence would

[60] Twain to Barbour, 8 June 1906, MP, F4/19:4; the letter is cited in Hawkins, 'Mark Twain,' p.166, albeit from a different archive.

also draw support and interest for the cause.[61] As well as pressuring those in government, Washington persuaded influential white friends of his to take up the cause, as well as discussing the atrocities and the need for reform in his public lectures. In addition, he also toured and spoke with Twain on several occasions at meetings in major American cities.[62] Alongside his public speaking, Washington also wrote several articles regarding the Congo regime and the atrocities being committed in the Congo Free State. An article entitled 'Cruelty in the Congo Country', which was published in *Outlook* magazine, described the atrocities being committed in the Congo under Leopold's rule, with the article ending with an appeal for a 'careful investigation and swift action' to be taken to end the abuses being committed towards the Congolese.[63] Although the article has been credited to Washington, the royalties for it were instead sent to Park and the ACRA. This suggests that it may have been written by Park himself, who had previously ghost-written articles for Washington and, by attaching Washington's name to the article as its author, Park was ensuring that it carried more weight and would reach a wider audience as a result.[64] Park and Washington would continue to publish letters and articles in the name of Congo reform, drawing attention to both the system that existed in the Congo and the resulting atrocities, and the role of the United States in the Congo Free State's creation.

> Barbour approached Washington about the possibility of selling copies of Twain's *Soliloquy* at a meeting Washington was planning on attending in Tuskegee. This was most likely a fundraiser for the Tuskegee Institute and Barbour proposed to distribute free pamphlets either inside or outside of the meeting. He stated that he believed 'that

[61] Louis R. Harlan, 'Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden,' *The American Historical Review*, Vol.71, No.2 (January 1966), pp.449-450.
[62] *Ibid,* p.451.
[63] Booker T. Washington, 'Cruelty in the Congo Country,' *Outlook,* Vol.78, No.6 (8 October 1904), pp.375-377.
[64] Harlan, 'Booker T. Washington,' p.450.

the two movements, in God's good providence, shall reach on to one great end'.[65] However Washington was reluctant. He politely objected, stating that he feared this type of distraction 'would greatly divert attention from the purpose of that meeting and might serve to confuse the people with regard thereto.'[66] Despite this, Washington continued to work to gain more support for the cause of Congo reform. Alongside his success with the National Baptist Convention, another article by Washington was published, originally printed in the *Independent* in March 1906, and later reprinted in *The Congo News Letter*, and was entitled 'The Future of Congo Reform'.[67] The article discussed the recent announcement by Leopold to implement the necessary reforms that the Congo reform activists had been pressuring for since the campaign began; reforms to be conceded by Leopold after the publication of his own committee's report into the alleged atrocities being committed there. The article also called for a 'permanent international society' whose members should include 'scientists, explorers, missionaries and all those who are engaged in constructive work in Africa' to influence international opinion in order to improve the situation for Africans and, in particular, the Congolese.[68] Washington was wary of Leopold's sincerity and, despite pressure from Park to accept invitations from Leopold's agents both to embark on a free trip to the Congo – even offering him the opportunity to choose his own route – as well as the opportunity to speak at a Congress on Economic Expansion in Belgium, alongside the Belgian ambassador to Belgium and an American professor, Washington, somewhat shrewdly, declined both invitations. This was most likely due to a warning from Park

[65] Barbour to Washington, 3 January 1906, in Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 8: 1904-1906* (Urbana; Chicago; London: University of Illinois Press, 1979), p.483.
[66] *Ibid*, p.484.
[67] 'The Future of Congo Reform,' *The Congo News Letter*, August 1906, p.9. This may have also been written by Park.
[68] *Ibid*.

that Leopold would try and win Washington over to his theory of how best to treat Africans, stating that Leopold had a 'cynical view of things in general that everyone can be purchased with money or flattery.'[69]

Washington's efforts for the ACRA began to wane around mid-1906, prompting Park to write him a letter voicing his concerns, informing Washington that 'there seems to be a feeling here that you have not as much interest in the work of the association as [you] formerly did.' Washington replied agreeing to lend his signature to an article written by Park for the cause of Congo reform.[70] Despite Washington's fluctuating interest, he was undoubtedly an influential figure within the reform movement whose status ensured that the matter was taken into consideration at the highest levels of government. Both Twain and Washington were active in promoting the cause for reform in the Congo on behalf of the ACRA. Yet Washington did not fully lend himself to the cause – allowing Park to ghost-write articles on his behalf – whilst Twain's participation, despite making a significant impact, was relatively short-lived. This partial commitment to the cause was a limitation to the ACRA, as both Twain and Washington were influential figures, and both, if fully committed, could have greatly boosted the reform movement in America. Their ad hoc approach to activism on the Congo issue shows the casual approach some reformers took to their campaigning and highlights the disorganised nature of the ACRA's activism.

Yet both Twain and Washington also operated within national and transnational frameworks. As Ira Dworkin has stated, both authors approached their work for the ACRA from different viewpoints. Twain 'saw the mission of the [A]CRA in strictly national terms' and subsequently resigned when he realised that non-ratification of the Berlin Treaty meant

[69] Harlan, *Booker T. Washington Papers*, p.76.
[70] Harlan, 'Booker T. Washington,' p.451.

that the United States was powerless to act, whereas Washington recognised that the Congo Free State's existence was down to the intervention of the United States in recognising the State's flag 'in what seemed to people at that time a purely European affair'. Yet, especially in his article *Cruelty in the Congo*, Washington also 'spoke out on the basis of transnational identification and human rights.'[71] This transnationalism, highlighted through those comments and his awareness of the need to internationalise the reform movement through the aforementioned 'permanent international society', was shared by many within the ACRA. As discussed, that Washington's article may have been written by Park also highlights his views on these issues, and that he also operated within a transnational framework. It also shows that both Park and Washington shared similar ideals and beliefs in this context, as Washington would not have essentially 'signed off' on it had the article contained views that were contrary to his own.

This transnationalism was not exclusive to Washington. As discussed earlier, Morel believed that the British and American people, as Anglo-Saxons, should take responsibility for the Congo issue and that there was a natural affiliation between the two nations. One supporter of the reform movement in America was Robert Lincoln O' Brien, editor of the *Boston Herald*, who wrote to Morel to express his admiration for his activism, reassuring Morel that he had attached his name to the Memorial sent to President Roosevelt. O' Brien also stated that he hoped Morel would raise his children in America, perceptively observing that 'the two or three hundred million people destined to live [in America] in a state of freedom and civilisation, cannot fail to have a dominating influence in the affairs of the world. The American inheritance…is bewildering in its proportions; we speak English!'[72] Morel was widely

[71] Ira Dworkin, *Congo Love Song: African American Culture and the Crisis of the Colonial State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), p.89.
[72] Robert Lincoln O' Brien to Morel, 23 November 1904, MP, F4/15:264.

respected within the network of activists sympathetic to the plight of the Congolese and this resulted in him being allowed to have a platform from which to air his views, and to also receive the support of powerful and influential Americans.

Despite the mutual respect that existed between its members, there were also significant tensions that existed between the two associations. As a way of overcoming any potential Anglophobic sentiment in the United States at the time of the ACRA's creation, Park and the other members publicly stressed the Association's independence from its British counterpart.[73] In addition, a lack of clarity on the position of the British government on the issue of the Congo Free State also exacerbated tensions between the CRA and ACRA, as well as conflicting opinions on the style and substance of the propaganda material coming from the CRA to America.[74] Both members of the CRA and ACRA realised that pressure would need to be exerted on both the British and American governments to work together in order to achieve their aim of bringing about an international inquiry and conference regarding the situation in the Congo Free State. However, both sets of reformers were also aware that their respective governments would not act unless the other took the lead and acted first. The position of the British government, in particular, was confusing and frustrating for the ACRA. Park wrote to Morel asking why there was no intervention by the British government on the basis of trading rights – that had been non-existent since the creation of the Berlin Act – and expressed his puzzlement as to why the British government had adopted a position on humanitarian grounds, as opposed to the rights of traders and what he called 'perfectly straightforward international grounds.'[75] The argument of free trade, or lack of it, in the Congo Free State would be a central

[73] Clay, 'Transnational Dimensions,' p.21.
[74] *Ibid*, p.20.
[75] Park to Morel, 13 December 1904, MP, F4/15:295; Clay, 'Transnational Dimensions,' p.21.

platform for the CRA and, as shown by Park's letter, and an idea which will be explored later in this chapter, it was a belief shared by some of the ACRA members too.

In addition to the articles and pamphlets written by its leading members, the ACRA also released pamphlets under the name of the organisation itself, as well as petitioning the American government. The use of propaganda in this way was an effective method of applying pressure on politicians to act on the atrocities. The potential role of the American government, and its legal position regarding possible intervention, was another area of concern for the activists. In this context, the ACRA investigated potential obstacles to American intervention. It noted that in discussions held with an expert from Columbia University, who was 'frequently brought [into] international questions that arise', it had been suggested that the United States would have no legal right to interfere in the Congo. Moreover, the ACRA's advisor had suggested that the American government would even struggle to make a humanitarian case, due to the way that it had 'appropriated the land of the Indians' and allowed some of the African-Americans 'to be burned at the stake'.[76] Furthermore, there was scepticism regarding the memorial that had been presented to President Roosevelt by Senator Morgan on behalf of the Congo reformers. The expert found 'Barbour's memorial' to be full of 'various tales of atrocities' which did not add up to an effective legal case.[77] The argument that the United States had no right to intervene on humanitarian grounds was countered by the ACRA, citing recent events such as American intervention in Cuba, leading to the Spanish-American War, which, notably, had become a war of colonisation in the eyes of many Americans, and the 'strong protest' that the American government had made regarding the anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia.

[76] Warden to Morel, 2 December 1904, MP, F4/15:289. This expert is more than likely to be John Bassett Moore, who was Professor of International Law at Columbia University between 1891 and 1928. In addition to his academic role, Moore was also frequently appointed to roles of public interest; he served as Acting Secretary of State in 1898 and represented the United States government at the United States and Dominican Arbitration Tribunal in 1904. Later, Moore was also on The Hague Tribunal and a judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice.
[77] Warden to Morel, 2 December 1904, MP, F4/15:289.

These instances, argued the ACRA, meant that the United States had set a precedent which meant that it now had to act over the situation in the Congo state and, if it would not intervene directly, that it at least could cooperate with Britain in insisting that an international committee be created to investigate the affairs of the Congo Free State.[78]

Despite now having an organisation dedicated to agitating for reform in the Congo, the ACRA were struggling to make any progress with the American government. Senator Morgan informed the ACRA that, although he had been reassured that the Congo issue would be taken up by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in January 1905, the general attitude of the committee was 'how best to get rid of the matter'.[79] This was most likely due to the reluctance of the American government to entangle itself in the affairs of a European country. This position was a blow for the ACRA and Park conceded that the activists in the United States and in Britain needed to be realistic in what they expected to achieve, and not to deceive themselves with 'false hopes'.[80]

The next month, Park left Boston and his position with the ACRA and headed for the Tuskegee Institute to work with Washington. Park informed Morel of his departure, reassuring him that it would not hinder the progress of the ACRA. Park drew attention to the work being done by Barbour in driving the reform effort on in the United States, stating that Barbour had managed to 'enlist aid and sympathy where nothing but persistence could have accomplished it', adding that 'no-one realises the difficulties under which he [Barbour] has laboured.'[81] This was no doubt a reference to Leopold's press bureau and the work it was doing in the United States to disrupt the work of the ACRA. Indeed, progress for the ACRA was slow throughout

[78] *Ibid*.
[79] Park to Morel, 13 December 1904, MP, F4/15:295.
[80] *Ibid*.
[81] Park to Morel, 22 April 1905, MP, F4/18:19.

the early months of 1905. By May, Barbour informed Morel that the memorial presented to President Roosevelt had achieved little. Although he expected a quiet summer of reform activity, he had been assured by some leading senators during his last trip to Washington that the issue would be given more consideration now that the President's inauguration was out of the way, admitting that Park's departure had left the ACRA in disarray.[82]

Later that month, John R. Gow stepped in as acting secretary of the ACRA to try and help regain its focus and organise its reform activities. Despite having been offered Twain's *Soliloquy*, it had yet to receive Twain's work and the ACRA did not have his address to allow them to contact him. It would be a while longer before the ACRA would get around to finally publishing the *Soliloquy*. In addition, Gow confessed that the ACRA was behind on its work and that 'many items of correspondence had been neglected' as a result, adding that it was also going to delay publication of its newsletter until the ACRA president, William A. Munroe, and Barbour returned from their missionary duties abroad. Gow asked Morel for a complete update on 'the whole movement and latest phases', stating that America's distance from the Congo Free State, and Britain's geographical proximity, meant that the CRA was better informed than the ACRA. Possibly to try and show that things were not completely lost in America, Gow informed Morel that the ACRA planned to draw up a new memorial to be submitted to the Senate and to 'push the matter of publicity and of pressure upon legislators...as earnestly as possible throughout the summer, in preparation for action in the autumn.'[83] This conflict in opinion between Barbour, one of the leading figures in the ACRA, and its new secretary Gow, on potential activism over the summer of 1905, again highlights the weaknesses with which the ACRA faced at this relatively early juncture in the reform movement. This was further evidence that the ACRA was stumbling its way through a reform campaign, with key figures

[82] Barbour to Morel, 5 May 1905, MP, F4/18:23.
[83] Gow to Morel, 17 May 1905, MP, F4/18:29.

such as Park having departed, Washington focused on other issues, and the impending departure of Twain, all highlighting the disorganised nature of the association.

Progress continued to stagnate. By the autumn of 1905, the ACRA had managed to reorganise and finally decided to publish Twain's *Soliloquy*. This particular piece of propaganda had in itself led to tensions between members of the ACRA themselves, as well as between Morel and the ACRA. Throughout 1905, Morel had urged the ACRA to publish the *Soliloquy* as he was aware of its power as a piece of propaganda, but also as a way of raising money; one member of the ACRA had lamented to Morel that the organisation was out of funds by this stage, and so Morel stressed the importance of the publication of Twain's essay as a way of generating money.[84] As stated earlier, the CRA itself would benefit from the proceeds raised by its sale in Great Britain. Within the ACRA, dissatisfaction regarding the delayed publication of the *Soliloquy* also surfaced. Twain himself vented his frustration in a letter to a friend, stating that 'I hope they will get it out soon and force it to a wide circulation. I shall feel sweeter inside after I have spread out my opinion on Leopold.'[85] The delay had been caused largely due to the desire to add new illustrations of mutilated Congolese, as well as the addition of an interview between W. T. Stead and John Harris that had recently been published.[86]

By late 1905, the ACRA suffered another setback when the Senate could not devote much time to the Congo issue in its autumn session. More work was needed. Senator John C. Spooner, a supporter of the Congo reform movement in America, wrote to Morel to ask for more information on the issue, in order to strengthen the reformer's argument in preparation for the

[84] Morel to Park, 9 May and 20 June 1905, MP, F10/12:217, 307.
[85] Hawkins, 'Mark Twain's Involvement,' p.156.
[86] Stead supported the Congo reform movement, although he never formally joined the CRA, and his position as an influential newspaper editor helped the Congo cause. He wrote four articles on the Congo Free State, denouncing Stanley and Leopold, with his short article 'Ought King Leopold to be Hanged?' being arguably the most controversial. For more on Stead's work on the Congo Free State, see, Marysa Demoor, 'When the King Becomes your Personal Enemy: W. T. Stead, King Leopold II, and the Congo Free State,' *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Vol.19, No.16 (23 April 2013). DOI: http://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.662

next session.[87] Around this time, the ACRA suffered a blow as its first chairman, William A. Munroe, had recently passed away. Despite working alongside Washington in Tuskegee, Park still tried to help out where he could. He wrote to Morel to voice his concerns about the style and content of the propaganda Morel was sending across the Atlantic, as well as seeking to clarify his own role within the movement. Park felt that Morel had misunderstood his attitude on the issue, and that, although he was no longer formally involved with the ACRA, he would still help out, albeit in a different way to the other leading reformers.[88] This tension between the activists was possibly a reflection of the frustration felt on both sides of the Atlantic at the perceived lack of progress on the Congo issue. What the Congo reform campaign needed was a turn of events in their favour, and the report published by Leopold's own commission would provide the boost it needed to gather pace again.

The Commission of Inquiry, Lantern Lectures and Root's Letter

Having been pressured to create a Commission of Inquiry on the back of the publication of the Casement Report, Leopold relented and despatched three commissioners of Belgian, Italian and Swiss nationality – chosen to ensure impartiality – in October 1904 to the Congo Free State to report back on its findings. The Commission of Inquiry returned in February 1905 to write up its report. However, suspicions began to arise as its publication was significantly delayed; it was known that the report had been completed in August but was only eventually published on 30 October.[89] When it was printed, not a great deal of the content was a surprise. The CRA subsequently published its *Evidence Laid before the Congo Commission of Inquiry* pamphlet, which the ACRA also published soon afterwards, shortly before the release of the official

[87] John C. Spooner to Morel, 30 September 1905, MP, F4/18:48. Morel noted on the letter that Spooner was 'one of the most influential members of the American Senate.'
[88] Clay, 'Transnational Dimensions,' p.22.
[89] For more on the Commission of Inquiry, see, Emerson, *Leopold II*, pp.248-252; Ruth Slade, *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Congo Independent State* (London: Oxford University press, 1962), p187-189.

report. The CRA's pamphlet was heavily informed by missionary testimony, primarily due to Morel's suspicions that the final report would not be free from bias. To counter this, he had encouraged missionaries in the Congo Free State to send the CRA any evidence they had submitted to the commission.[90] The Commission's report was highly critical of Leopold's regime in the Congo Free State and provided a timely boost to the movement on both sides of the Atlantic, highlighting another external factor that benefitted the ACRA's reform efforts.

After the report was published, Barbour and Park both wrote to Morel to inform him that interest in the Congo reform movement in the United States was growing once more, stating that the 'Congo Reform Association is active again' and that 'the prospect of Congo reform is nearer.'[91] Barbour had ordered two hundred copies of the report that the CRA had published in the first edition of the *Official Organ of the Congo Reform Association*, which the ACRA planned to include in a pamphlet, along with testimony that the report had omitted, and circulate it accordingly. Barbour hoped that a shortened version in a pamphlet form would widen the number of people who were 'acquainted with the facts' of the Congo situation, as not many in America had a deep knowledge of the issues. He also congratulated Morel on the vindication that the report gave him and informed Morel that the ACRA was releasing a second edition of *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, with an order of thirty-six copies coming from Britain itself. However, just as the reform movement was regaining its footing, the ACRA would soon receive a new blow to the cause.

Following a meeting with President Roosevelt, Twain informed Barbour, who in turn informed Morel, that,

> [I]f the President could have quietly trustworthy assurance that the British government is ready to take action if the American government will follow suit, he

[90] Slade, *English-Speaking Missions*, pp.306-308; Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.254.
[91] Barbour to Morel, 7 December 1905, MP, F4/18:58; Park to Morel, 30 December 1905, MP, F4/18:94.

> would be inclined to act. In any case Mr Clemens will see the President…if you can privately get for him such assurance. Can you manage this?[92]

This would have been considered a major breakthrough for the ACRA and the wider reform movement. As a result of Twain's overtures to President Roosevelt, Morel contacted the British government to see if he could also get such an assurance. However, only a few weeks later, Barbour again wrote to Morel to inform him that, despite giving the impression that Roosevelt had promised to act if the British government were to do so also, Twain had actually inferred the President's position, and had received no concrete offer from Roosevelt. Barbour asked Morel to clarify the British government's position so neither Roosevelt nor Twain would be embarrassed by the apparent mix-up. Barbour later wrote that, in order to avoid any embarrassment, he would inform Twain that Morel had 'the strongest confidence that the government is favourably disposed'.[93] This was a disappointing setback for the ACRA, although it would have been unaware that Morel's request had been immediately dismissed, with Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, stating that even if the British government was prepared to vocalise its willingness to work with the United States on the issue of Congo reform, 'the only course in such matters is always to proceed "ab initio" through the recognised diplomatic representatives of the countries concerned', and not 'through third parties' that are 'exceedingly liable to lead to misunderstandings and disappointments.'[94] This miscommunication again reflects how disjointed the transnational reform movement was at this stage.

By the beginning of 1906, Twain had informed Barbour that he was 'retiring from the Congo', dealing the movement another blow.[95] Despite this loss, Barbour remained optimistic

[92] Park to Morel, 30 December 1905, MP, F4/18:94.
[93] Barbour to Morel, 17 January 1906, MP, F4/19:6.
[94] Sir Edmund Fitzmaurice to Morel, 22 December 1905, MP, F4/18:71.
[95] Twain to Barbour, 8 January 1906, in Robert Wuliger, 'Mark Twain on King Leopold's Soliloquy,' *American Literature*¸Vol.25, No.2 (May 1953), p.237.

about the potential for success for the ACRA. He informed Morel that the movement was growing and gaining strength in the United States, and that it was about to begin a series of meetings on the subject of Congo reform, with the organisation having been bolstered by the arrival of its new chairman, G. Stanley Hall, whom Barbour described as a 'power' and who was 'deeply interested in their [the ACRA] cause.'[96] Soon afterwards, Reverend John Harris and his wife Alice embarked on a tour of the United States with their 'lantern lectures', a series of talks at which they displayed images of mutilated Congolese workers to large audiences, and spoke in major cities such as New York, Washington, Pittsburgh and Atlanta.[97] This tour was a successful one for the transatlantic Congo reform movement, and for generating support for the ACRA. Harris stated that they had held over 200 meetings during their time in America, and that 'the ever increasing pressure from the humanitarian public has forced [Secretary of State] Root to alter his position', proclaiming that 'on the whole we have every reason to be thankful for the work done in the United States of America, being assured that action by the government is now practically certain and at no distant date.'[98] The Harrises claim that they held nearly 200 meetings during their time in America in late January and February 1906 sounds impressive, but the logistics of it hint at an exaggeration on their part.[99] John Harris' assessment of the position of the United States was overoptimistic but a corner had been turned by the ACRA. The Harrises tour had a galvanising effect on the ACRA's reform efforts and enabled them to garner far more support than it had enjoyed to date. More progress was to follow.

That the United States had neither signed nor ratified the Berlin Act hampered the ACRA in its efforts. However, the issue came to the fore in February 1906 when a letter sent by

[96] Barbour to Morel, 17 January 1906, MP, F4/19:7.
[97] Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, pp.66-67.
[98] Harris to Morel, undated letter (circa March 1906), MP, F4/19:21.
[99] *Ibid*, MP, F4/19:19.

Secretary of State, Elihu Root, to Representative Edwin Denby of Michigan, was made public. This was a fortuitous development for the ACRA. In the letter, Root stated that the United States government had 'no opportunity or power' to investigate the conditions in the Congo. Root explained that only those nations who have 'possessions or spheres of influence in Africa' could act, and that, unfortunately for those agitating for the government to take action, Root confirmed that 'the United States has neither'. By this, Root meant that it had 'no treaty right to interfere' in the affairs of the Congo Free State and that it also did not have any 'diplomatic or consular representatives in that country.'[100] The publication of this letter brought about a swift and firm response from the ACRA. It declared that Root was wrong on the lack of opportunity for intervention on the part of the United States. The new ACRA president, G. Stanley Hall, made public a statement in which he declared that, whilst the United States 'may not [have] treaty rights empowering interference, the United States…has every right to interfere on the grounds that it stands for freedom and humanity'; that the United States still had a responsibility to interfere as it was one of the leading nations in handing Leopold's jurisdiction over the Congo.[101] Shortly after the publication of this article, members of the ACRA met with Root to discuss the possibility of United States intervention and the letter to Denby. Soon afterwards, at a meeting of the ACRA members in Boston, a telegram exchange between Root and the ACRA was read out to those in attendance confirming Root had stated that, whilst the United States government was not able to conduct an investigation at that time, it was still open to receiving more information and facts regarding the conditions in the Congo and that the matter was not closed.[102] The ACRA seized on this lack of closure from the Secretary of State. A new memorial was prepared and sent to President Roosevelt and Congress, and it urged its

[100] Memorandum from Mr Bacon to Mr Wilson, 2 March 1906, *Foreign Relations of the United States* Part I, December 1906. <.http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1906v01> (accessed 10 August 2018).
[101] 'Root Wrong about Congo,' *Washington Post*, 8 March 1906, p.6.
[102] 'The Attitude of Secretary Root,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1906, p.3.

members to send as many 'letters, telegrams, personal appeals and petitions' to the government in order to reinforce the argument and apply more pressure on those in power.[103] Leading members of the ACRA, such as Hugh P. McCormick, Correspondence Secretary of the ACRA, and Edwin D. Mead, a member of the Local Committee of Administration, also went on the offensive, sending letters to several newspapers on the subject of Root's letter and its possible effect on the campaign for Congo reform.[104]

The incident regarding Root's letter could have been a huge stumbling block for the reform movement and its activists. However, through the pressure applied for clarification from Root as to exactly what he meant in his note (leaked to the press), the reformers were able to overcome this obstacle, and consequently, this political misstep inadvertently provided the reform movement with a much-needed boost. Barbour informed Morel that the discussion that he had, via telegram, with Root would 'neutralise the influence of his [Root's] earlier letter [to Denby].' This, Barbour explained, meant that the activists now had a 'clear road' ahead of them in which to pursue their goals, and they were confident that a discussion regarding the Congo would now take place in the Senate as a result; 'interest is broadening,' Barbour declared, 'and we do not mean that it shall decline.'[105] This was a clear statement of intent by the ACRA, and a sign that it had been emboldened by Root's apparent backtracking and the ACRA felt confident that it would be able to pressure the American government into raising the Congo question on the international stage.

By mid-1906, the Congo reform movement had a new lease of life in America and activists there were now as enthusiastic as ever about the campaign for reform. Herbert S.

[103] *Ibid*, p.3.
[104] 'Mr Root and the Congo Affair,' *ibid*, April 1906, pp.6-7; 'Daniel Webster, John Hay and Elihu Root,' *ibid*, pp.8-10.
[105] Barbour to Morel, 16 March 1906, MP, F4/19:37.

Johnson, a pastor of the Warren Avenue Baptist Church of Boston and an active member of the ACRA, wrote to Morel to inform him that the public sentiment had grown 'very rapidly' over the past few months and that the members of the Congo Reform Association of the United States would 'never drop its work until those wretched people [the Congolese] are freed from the tyranny of Leopold.' Johnson also spoke of a new-found determination in the efforts of the American reformers. He described how Senator Morgan had prepared yet another petition, containing 'the signatures of the Lieutenant Governor, all the members of the Council, every member of the State Senate and an overwhelming majority of the House of Representatives'; an impressive list of signatories. Johnson also declared that if the matter was not acted upon in the present session of Congress, then the activists would prepare a much stronger campaign in the months that follow; a campaign 'much stronger than they had attempted thus far'.[106] John Daniels, now the Correspondence Secretary of the ACRA, wrote to Morel to request they contact each other weekly to keep themselves updated on events on either side of the Atlantic. This frequent transatlantic correspondence would mean that the reformers would be able to sustain a joint campaign for reform and would allow them to capitalise on any progress made.[107]

Further developments in the Congo matter also gave a boost to the cause of the reformers. The release of Professor Cattier's book, *A Study of the Situation in the Congo Free State,* in which the Belgian academic criticised the conditions in the Congo, gave the ACRA more ammunition in its fight for reform. What was now needed was either the American or British government to take the lead in bringing about an international enquiry. Morel suggested to the ACRA that public opinion would be the determining factor in getting the United States

[106] Herbert S. Johnson to Morel, 6 April 1906, MP, F4/19:40.
[107] John Daniels to Morel, 21 April 1906, MP, F4/19:43.

government to act, and it discussed Morel's idea of the American reformers sending their British counterparts a memorial, highlighting further transatlantic cooperation.[108]

These latest developments occurred at an important time during the ACRA's existence. Since its formation in 1904, the ACRA had been experiencing financial difficulties, emphasising yet another limitation to the ACRA's activism. By April 1906, the ACRA estimated its expenditure to have been approximately $10,000. This was used to facilitate its activism, financing the printing and circulating of its propaganda, and the expenses incurred through holding public meetings and debates. Only one person was in receipt of a salary and that was the secretary of the headquarters.[109] However, its income was only an estimated $6000, made up from pledges, membership fees (which were now one dollar), collections at public meetings, voluntary contributions and income from the sale of literature.[110] The ACRA was not in receipt of large donations from wealthy business interests, nor did it have any financial backers propping up its activists personally, or the organisation itself, as its British counterpart did; an issue that will be further explored in chapter four. Instead, the ACRA relied on small donations collected from supporters at meetings, and from its annual membership fees of one dollar per annum. The estimated membership of the ACRA by April 1906 was around 1500.[111] This gap between money raised and expenditure left a $4000 debt. As a result, the ACRA made an appeal to the readers of *The Congo News Letter* and its supporters to help them raise the funds necessary to continue the fight, declaring that 'now is not a time for staying the hand of relief of the stricken people through lack of funds.' It reassured potential members who may not have been as articulate or comfortable with writing, speaking and touring, that membership

[108] Daniels to Morel, 18 September 1906, MP, F4/19:65.
[109] 'A Word about Finances,' *The Congo News Letter,* April 1906, p.15.
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] 'A Forward Look,' *ibid*, p.2.

'involve[d] no defined responsibilities' but instead was 'simply a token that you approve the cause which the association represents.'[112]

Despite the financial struggles, the ACRA continued to pressure the government and produce articles informing the public of what was happening within the Congo reform campaign. When studying *The Congo News Letter*, the official organ of the ACRA, it is evident that, during this period, progress with the United States government was slow. A lot of the issues raised by the activists, as well as the actions of the United States government in response to pressure exerted by the reformers, were repeated throughout with very little in the way of new material published. Another example of this was when Park wrote an article questioning whether the Congo Free State was an 'international outlaw', largely due to the fact that it was governed by an individual citizen in Leopold, as opposed to the government of a specific country; in this case, Belgium.[113]

Yet these setbacks do not seem to have affected the effort of the activists in the organisation, as reflected in their rhetoric. In one article, Johnson stated to the readers that 'victory for our movement is not far removed'. But this was shortly followed up by yet another appeal for funds, as well as an appeal to readers to forward any names of potential speakers who they thought would be able to embark on a speaking tour in the name of Congo reform.[114] Despite the gains made at the beginning of 1906, it seemed that the ACRA was beginning to run out of steam. The request for speakers seems like an almost desperate plea for help with the cause. What was needed was the tide to turn dramatically in the ACRA's favour and for

[112] *Ibid*; 'Membership,' *The Congo News Letter*, August 1906, p.11.
[113] 'Is the Congo State an International Outlaw?' *ibid*, August 1906, pp.13-14.
[114] 'What can you do for Congo Reform?' *ibid*, p.20.

something to accelerate change, and this would come in the form of another fortuitous development external to the ACRA.

The 'Kowalksy Incident' and the Lodge Resolution

That development would come through a major turning point in the reform campaign. In December 1906, the *New York American* newspaper ran an exposé on the existence of an American Congo lobby, revealing Leopold's attempts to influence Congress. Appearing in the *American* every day for a week, stories recounted how Leopold had paid his agent Colonel Henry I. Kowalsky an annual retainer of 100,000 francs – worth over $500,000 today – if he was able to influence Congress to not pass any unfavourable resolutions or make any declaration harmful to Leopold's Congo Free State. Kowalsky was also paid a lump sum of 125,000 francs for his silence once Leopold decided his services were no longer required, as well as an additional 100,000 francs in Congo state bonds.[115] The most damaging revelation was that Kowalsky had bribed a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to help derail any Congo protest resolutions. The information for these revelations presumably came from Kowalsky himself, who had been disgruntled by his lack of involvement in Leopold's American propaganda effort. Although Kowalsky maintained that his office had been robbed, it seems that the more plausible reason was that he had sold his papers to the *American* instead.[116] Although this was a huge boost for the reform movement in America, as the next chapter will show, whilst it was an important factor, it was not the sole reason for Root reversing the United States government's previous policy of non-intervention, subsequently

[115] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp.247-249; McStallworth, 'The United States and the Congo Question,' p.276.
[116] *Ibid*, p.248; *Ibid*, p.277.

changing it to one which was in favour of supporting the British on the matter of applying pressure on Leopold.[117]

The change of direction breathed new life into the Congo reform campaign in America. The day after the Kowalsky scandal was published, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, whose home state was Massachusetts, the home of the ACRA, introduced a resolution in the Senate pledging support for the President and any policy or action which would be required to secure the reforms needed in the Congo. The subsequent action taken by the United States government to communicate with the British government in resolving the issue, and the sensation created by the discovery of Leopold's American lobby, all seemed, at this stage, to accelerate the campaign for reform in the Congo Free State. When the Senate passed the resolution in February 1907, it seemed like it was only a matter of time before said action would take place. It all depended on whether the United States would wait until other countries, specifically Great Britain, initiated the pressure for Congo reform at government level. In its *Newsletter,* the ACRA questioned whether the United States would take the lead.[118] In the meantime, it despatched several letters of gratitude to some of the Senators involved in passing the resolution, as the ACRA believed this marked the beginning of the end for Leopold's oppressive regime in Africa.[119] It is also notable that, by April 1907, the association was no longer in debt; indeed, it claimed to have 'a small balance in the treasury', although it still appealed for funds from its supporters to build on the work it had achieved so far. Whilst this would have most certainly been true, it is interesting that, as a result of Leopold's American lobby being exposed, as well as the Lodge resolution and the communication with the British government, that the ACRA received such an influx of money that allowed it to not only clear

[117] *Ibid*, pp.248-249.
[118] 'Will the United States take the lead?' *The Congo News Letter,* April 1907, p.6.
[119] 'Association expressed gratitude to Senators for Congo Resolution,' *ibid*, pp.9-11.

its debt, but to also have a surplus of money in its account available to use when needed. It is also interesting to note that in the publication in April 1907 of its first newsletter of the year, that both Twain and Washington were still named as a vice-president, possibly as a way to reassure any potential recruits to the movement that its campaign was going well, as both Twain and Washington had actually left the organisation at this point. Whether this was down to the poor organisation prevalent in the ACRA, or simply a cost-effective measure on producing literature – updating the letterheaded paper would have incurred a cost that the organisation could ill-afford – is not clear. However, Twain's and Washington's names would remain on ACRA letters until the dissolution of the organisation. The ACRA continued its appeal to Congo reform sympathisers to write to Secretary Root and apply pressure for reform on the United States government, stating that letters from individuals were a much more effective tool than petitions from organisations as each letter had to be noted and answered.[120]

The Belgian annexation of the Congo Free State had been negotiated. Yet the conditions of the transfer of the territory from Leopold to the Belgian government concerned the ACRA. In the press, the ACRA found itself debating the conditions in the Congo with Frederick Starr, an anthropologist from the University of Chicago. Starr had initially been a member of the ACRA but had departed the organisation shortly after its formation. After a visit to the Congo Free State, Starr returned to the United States and wrote fifteen articles in support of the Congo Free State, all published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and later reprinted as a book.[121] In his work, Starr stated that the atrocities had not occurred for a long time, if at all, and that he had made an error when he initially signed a petition to the government that had been organised by the ACRA.[122] The activists retorted by stating that Starr was either 'seeing things contradictory

[120] 'What is now to be done,' *ibid,* p.4.
[121] Frederick Starr, *The Truth about the Congo* (Chicago: Forbes and Company, 1907).
[122] 'Attack Starr on Campus,' *Chicago Daily Tribune,* 20 November 1907, p.8.

to his statements which he made upon his return, or he was blind.'[123] They also decided to sue. However, this was a side issue for the reformers with regards to the issue of annexation.

The ACRA's main concern over the annexation of the Congo Free State was that the Belgian government would not implement the necessary reforms and instead that they would be a continuation of Leopold's regime. They believed that, if the Congo Free State was annexed by Belgium on the terms that Leopold had proposed, then they would have to continue the fight to 'secure the institution of real reforms' by Belgium, instead of the changes Leopold had declared he would implement nearly two years previous; the ACRA described the situation as 'a sore which has festered malignantly for years [that] will take years to heal.'[124] In October, Daniels wrote to Morel to inform him that the activists were starting to agitate for reform again in the United States but that they were deeply suspicious as to whether Leopold and Belgium would implement the reforms needed in the Congo. Daniels said that he had 'no confidence in Leopold's willingness to allow real reforms to be made' in the Congo and that he did not believe the Belgian people 'have any strong desire for reform, for they and King Leopold are in together on the Congo profits and wish to be gainers financially.'[125] This highlighted the real concerns on the part of some reformers that, when annexed, Belgian control would mean a continuation of the current conditions that existed in the Congo Free State. This was in contrast to the CRA's position, which fully supported the idea of annexation of the Congo Free State by the Belgian government. This difference in opinion on the best outcome for the Congo Free State highlights a limitation to the transnational activism of the CRA and ACRA. This was a fracturing of the previously coordinated strategy that both had employed and now meant that the two associations were on different paths in their campaign for reform.

[123] 'Tells of Horrors in Congo,' *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 November 1907, p.8.
[124] 'Association Organises More Permanently,' *The Congo News Letter*, September 1908, p.1.
[125] Daniels to Morel, 17 October 1907, MP, F4/21:12.

Suspicion regarding the British position lingered throughout 1908. The ACRA informed its British counterpart that it was wary of Grey's position on the matter, stating that it believed the State Department was in agreement with both associations, and it seemed like Grey was now retreating from the issue. The ACRA now believed that, 'instead of seconding the British government', Root and the American government may 'now be the more radical.'[126] The issue of Anglophobic suspicions regarding motives for agitating for reform also arose again, too. The ACRA clarified to Morel that, whilst there had been some suspicion of the CRA's motives amongst the ACRA's committee members, it had been keen to stress from the beginning that it had highlighted the importance of the independence of the ACRA, stating that, '[W]e have known that the movement in England would be advanced if supported by an evidently entirely independent and national movement over here, and advanced far more than if the movement over here appeared to be to any extent auxiliary.'[127] This was in part an explanation as to why it had not given Morel more credit for his help since the formation of the ACRA, in order to overcome the potential obstacle of Anglophobia, which clearly existed well into the reform campaign.

Daniels also wrote an article which was published in the *North American Review*, reinforcing the ACRA's position and accusing Leopold of giving away the Congo Free State with one hand and, in his capacity as King of the Belgians, taking it back with the other; declaring that, whatever the outcome of any proposed international conference on the issue, 'the Congo Free State, and all that this ghastly misnomer has come to mean, must go.'[128] Soon after, the American consul-general to the Congo Free State confirmed the atrocities and, although Leopold did his best to delay the transfer, on 15 November 1908 the annexation was

[126] Daniels to Morel, 17 October 1908, MP, F4/21:51.
[127] Daniels to Morel, 11 September 1908 and 17 October 1908, MP, F4/21:45, 52.
[128] John Daniels, 'The Congo Question and the Belgian Solution,' *North American Review,* Vol. 188, No. 637 (December 1908), pp. 891-902.

complete. The Congo Free State was now a Belgian colony. Leopold had managed to negotiate a compensation package worth millions of francs but his personal rule in the Congo Free State was over.

Annexation and Beyond

Now that annexation was complete, and with Leopold's death a year later, some of the leading members of the ACRA believed that its objective had been achieved. The ACRA president, G. Stanley Hall, had been considering his position for some time prior to annexation. As early as February 1907, he informed Barbour that he wanted to 'retire from the presidency in the most quiet way possible'. Hall believed the ACRA had achieved a lot during its existence, but that it should now 'lie low, cut down expenses and simply watch events.' He also thought that the atrocities in the Congo Free State had been abated and that much had been done 'in arousing a humanitarian interest for a suffering race in a distant part of the world.' Hall confessed his desire to resign in favour of Barbour, whom he perceived to be the 'real Congo Association'.[129] In July, Hall formally resigned from the ACRA, stating that he was now 'preparing for another organisation in the interests of primitive people'. This organisation was a branch of the International Congo League, of which he became president when it was formed in 1908. Interestingly, although he had officially resigned his position in July, a month later Hall wrote to the Secretary of State, stating he was writing in his role as president of the ACRA to inform Root that it would be sending a copy of the memorial the CRA had sent to the British Foreign Secretary to the State Department, asking whether the United States should organise an international conference to pressure Belgium into annexing the Congo Free State on terms guaranteeing the reforms.[130] This was Hall's last action in connection with the ACRA.

[129] G. Stanley Hall to Barbour, 7 February 1907, Clark University Archives (CSU), Hall Collection, Box 26, Folder 13, No.1.
[130] Hall to Barbour, 7 February 1907, CSU, Hall Collection, Box 26, Folder 13, No.4.

Daniels had asked Morel if he thought both the CRA and ACRA should both become branches of this new league that had been formed, primarily due to its concern with the wider Congo basin and not just the Congo Free State.[131] When an appeal to Andrew Carnegie, the industrialist and philanthropist, for funds to aid the ACRA was refused, Daniels stated that no more appeals would be made to Carnegie unless its work was 'extended as a branch of the International League', as Carnegie was not interested in the issue being solely focused on the Congo Free State and not the wider Congo basin. Daniels also expressed the ACRA's optimism that the new American President, William Howard Taft, would be sympathetic to the cause. Taft had made 'no public expression' on the Congo issue, but the ACRA believed that the President's 'broad and humane opinions' and his tendency to 'perpetuate "the Roosevelt policies"' would mean that he would be on the side of the Congo reform movement. In addition, as Root was on his way out of office, the ACRA also believed that, regarding the Congo issue, he would want to 'clean this matter up' before he left the State Department for the Senate.[132] Later, Daniels again appealed to Morel for the CRA to join the International League, stating that the 'staying out of your association weakens the league, and also puts you in an unsatisfactory position', referring to the CRA being isolated in its activism now that the ACRA was going to formally become part of the International League.[133]

However, Daniels was also planning to leave the ACRA. As early as February 1907, Daniels approached Hall about leaving the ACRA to return to his work at Harvard and suggested two replacements he had in mind.[134] Despite these plans, Daniels did not leave his role immediately and continued on throughout 1907. It was not until September 1908 that

[131] Daniels to Morel, 18 September 1908, MP, F4/21:48.
[132] Daniels to Morel, 18 November 1908, MP, F4/21:53.
[133] Daniels to Morel, 10 February 1909, MP, F4/22:20, 23. The International League soon changed its name to the International Committee.
[134] Hall to Barbour, 5 February 1907, CSU, Hall Collection, Box 26, Folder 13, No.1; Daniels to Morel, 18 September 1908, MP, F4/21:48, 49.

Daniels informed Morel that he planned to continue his work on African Americans in Boston, and then to travel abroad to study further.[135] By December 1909, Daniels had left for Buffalo.

Whilst it had now declared itself a branch of the International League, it seems that the ACRA also continued to also work alongside the CRA for some time after, with Barbour's daughter, Florence, acting as assistant secretary. She informed Morel that both Hall and Barbour were arranging to meet the new Secretary of State, Philander C. Knox, on the issue of reform in the Congo.[136] Yet correspondence across the Atlantic soon faded away and the ACRA dissolved. This may have been due to the assimilation of the ACRA into the new International League, or because several leading figures had left the organisation. Morel, taking a somewhat negative view of the ACRA's dissolution, stated that 'Americans…have not got much staying power.'[137] Barbour continued on to speak out in defence of the Congolese but reverted back to the missionary line he had been scolded for taking back in 1904. Yet, despite Morel's dim view of the Americans and the dissolution of the ACRA, both the British activists, including Morel, and their American counterparts had managed to successfully coordinate their efforts over the previous years into a transatlantic movement (albeit fractured) that was based on an exchange of ideas and news and a coordination of strategy to apply pressure on their respective governments on the subject of Congo reform. How they coordinated their efforts had been integral to their success. Yet the path to achieving this limited transnational activism had been a rocky one. The ACRA's approach to the reform campaign had been messy from its inception, reflected in the disorganised nature of the association and its activism. It was also boosted greatly by the timely mistakes of others who stood in its way.

[135] Daniels to Morel, 18 September 1908, MP, F4/21:48.
[136] Florence Barbour to Morel, 14 February 1910, MP, F4/22:84.
[137] Morel, Louis, Stengers, *History*, p.202.

Conclusion

Barbour is often referred to by his fellow activists in the United States as the figure that kept the American movement together, almost single-handedly at times. When Twain 'retired from the Congo', in his cover letter informing Morel of his decision, he also stated that 'Mr Barbour works, and works hard and well, but he is all alone, so far as I can see, and has no help.'[138] Around the same time, when discussing the success of the outcome of Leopold's Commission of Inquiry's report confirming the reformer's accusations, Park stated that 'Dr Barbour has done it all'.[139] These sentiments were echoed by Hall later and, when Barbour died in 1915, the *New York Times* noted in an obituary that 'he became prominent...as leader in the movement to put a stop to the atrocities in the Congo.'[140] Barbour deserves more credit for his reform efforts and his work with the ACRA than the historiography to date has afforded him. Essentially, Barbour was the ACRA's equivalent of Morel in the way that he drove the movement on through the American association, holding it together at times when little to no progress was being made, as well as working with the high-profile recruits to the ACRA, alongside writing articles, delivering lectures and raising money.

The ACRA had been successful in pressuring the United States government to take action regarding the issue of the Congo Free State. As one historian has observed, of the personal letters, petitions and resolutions sent to the United States government, around 94 per cent of them favoured American intervention, which is reflective of the success of the ACRA's activism; repeated calls were made to its supporters to pursue this method of lobbying the government.[141] However, the ACRA did not achieve its aim of a reconvening of an international conference to resolve the matter, but it was able to create a reform movement that,

[138] Twain to Morel, 12 January 1906, in Hawkins, 'Mark Twain on King Leopold's Soliloquy,' p.236.
[139] Park to Morel, 30 December 1905, MP, F4/18:95.
[140] 'The Rev. Dr. Thomas S. Barbour,' *New York Times*, 27 September 1915.
[141] McStallworth, 'The United States,' p.237.

whilst it suffered peaks and troughs, over a relatively short period of time, exerted considerable pressure on decision-making in the foreign policy of the American government. In this context, it was more successful than its British counterpart. The Foreign Office was informed of the issues in the Congo Free State by the CRA and enjoyed a healthy relationship with the association in the early years of its existence. But, as will be examined in a later chapter, the British government was far more susceptible to 'Great Power' politics and, as a result, managed to keep the CRA at arm's length.

The issue of Anglophobia in America and suspicions over British motives for participating in the reform movement proved to be a significant obstacle to overcome for the Anglophiles within the ACRA, who were keen on forging a working transatlantic relationship with their British counterparts. President Roosevelt had earlier identified these two competing beliefs in political circles, when he stated that, 'there exists in the lower strata of political life an Anglophobia quite as objectionable as the Anglomania of social circles.'[142] There were many factors involved in the issue of Anglophobia within the ACRA. There was a perception held by many of those involved in the movement, especially the activists who were also involved with the Anti-Imperialist League, that Britain was an imperial enemy of the United States which interfered in border disputes, currency markets, and, as Cullinane has stated, was a country that was 'devoid of liberal intentions and acted only on behalf of its material interests.'[143] This viewpoint was based on perceptions of the difficulties experienced by the United States when defining the boundary between Alaska and Canada, and on the issue of the Panama Canal. However, that the ACRA was able to overcome these suspicions to organise a coordinated transatlantic movement shows that, whilst Anglophobia was a potent threat,

[142] Theodore Roosevelt, *American Ideals, and Other Essays, Social and Political* (New York; London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), p.95.
[143] Cullinane, *Liberty and Anti-Imperialism*, pp.79-80.

Anglophilia was also an important factor that helped to counter this obstacle. Anglophiles often used the 'Anglo-Saxon racial and cultural dynamics to identify the two nations as sister republics', contending that the United States 'inherited the positive characteristics of Britain and shed any less appealing ones.'[144] Whilst this reference specifically relates to anti-imperialists in America, this was also true for many of the activists involved in the ACRA, whose Executive Committee consisted of notable members of the Anti-imperialist League in Jordan, Twain, and Hall.

Yet there was also a natural affiliation between American and British exponents of the free trade ideology within the Congo reform movement. The issue of free trade will be explored in further detail in chapter four as several of the key figures involved in the ACRA were members of the Cobden Club, founded in Britain after the death of Richard Cobden, the British MP, for believers in the doctrine of free trade, and whose largest foreign membership was in the United States. These American Cobdenites shared the same beliefs as their British counterparts on the subject of free trade, the absence of which in the Congo Free State was an important issue for some of the reformers. Therefore, it was not just the issue of race – membership of the Anglo-Saxon race, in particular – nor solely a shared notion of religious proselytisation and the 'civilising mission', or either imperialist or anti-imperialist views that bound the Anglo-American reformers together. Economic issues and the issue of free trade was also a central tenet of the activists' thinking that largely informed their reform campaign – dimensions that will be explored in chapter four – and highlighting the multifaceted dimensions to the Congo reform movement. As it will be shown, whilst the message of free trade was not central for the ACRA as an organisation, that the association's proponents of the doctrine

[144] *Ibid*, p.80.

shared beliefs and values with their British counterparts emphasises both the transnational ideas they shared, and the various motivations of the activists involved in the CRA and ACRA.

There is also the question of whether or not the expectations the reformers had of their potential transatlantic reform movement lived up to the reality. Enthusiasm for a coordinated transnational movement existed within both the CRA and ACRA. Yet the degree of cooperation that both organisations enjoyed varied at different junctures throughout the reform campaign. Morel and the CRA were aware from the beginning that gaining the support of a foreign power would greatly improve their chances of success in campaigning for reform in the Congo. As the Americans were the first to speak out on the atrocities being committed in the Congo Free State, they were an obvious choice. In addition, that there was already a Congo reform movement in the United States meant that the activists already had the foundation with which to build an organisation dedicated solely to reform in the Congo; assimilating the Congo Committee made this aim easier to achieve. Yet, despite the relatively easy formation of the two organisations, what was more difficult to sustain was a consistent and coordinated message of reform. This was primarily due to both organisations being constrained by the national frameworks within which they operated. The activists were able to share ideas, exchange resources and strategies for campaigning, but ultimately limited to campaigning within their own countries. Morel had envisaged multinational consensus and cooperation on the issue of Congo reform. However, it was only in the United States that the message achieved any real level of success. The limited achievements of both organisations meant that the expectations of the reformers only partially lived up to reality. This partial success, a result of limited transnational cooperation across the Atlantic, through the lobbying of the respective governments of the CRA and ACRA would impact the Anglo-American relationship at the

beginning of the twentieth century and highlight the potential influence that humanitarian activism could exert on intergovernmental relations and the formulation of foreign policy.

Chapter Three

Anglo-American Relations and the Congo Free State, 1900-1909

> The "Congo Free State" is a monster which should not be allowed to live. Therefore, the demand for Congo reform strikes deeper than technicalities; it appeals to the "principles of international justice," to the inviolable rights which the United States has simply as a member of the family of nations.[1]

Introduction

For the Congo reform activists, the key to effecting real change would be to convince the powers with interests in Africa, as well as the United States, to pressure Leopold into relinquishing his hold over the Congo Free State, paving the way for annexation of the territory by the Belgian government. This was the 'Belgian Solution', an idea advocated by Morel as early as 1900 and one which eventually became the only serious option available to the reformers and governments involved.[2] In order to achieve these goals, the activists had first to win over public opinion to their cause. As chapter one has shown, this course of action stumbled in continental Europe and failed to gather any real pace. However, reformers found that they had some success in Britain and the United States, in both the court of public opinion and with government officials who were involved in creating policy that could affect the Congo.

The British and American positions on the Congo Free State were not too dissimilar. Whilst the accusation of having imperial designs on the Congo region was often levelled at the British, this was not the case for the Americans. Yet, both were primarily concerned with the issue of free trade in the Congo. During the Scramble for Africa, European nations carved up regions of the continent for themselves. Whilst the Monroe Doctrine prevented the United

[1] 'The Correction of a Misunderstanding,' *The Congo News Letter*, August 1906, p.5.
[2] Morel later changed his opinion on the merits of Belgian annexation, believing it to be open to Leopold's influence and, subsequently, the desired reforms would not be implemented. See, Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.211.

States from making any territorial gains in Africa, it did not preclude it from becoming involved in trade there. American attendance at the Berlin Conference and recognition of the flag of the Congo Free State were reflective of the desire in Washington to protect American international trade. The United States could still adhere to the Monroe Doctrine whilst it expanded its commerce across the world. Morel had tried to reassure the American people that their intervention in the Congo Free State as part of the reform movement would not infringe on the Monroe Doctrine, framing the Congo question as a 'world question, not merely a question for the nations of Europe to settle'. Morel added that the reformers' aim was to keep the Congo question 'out of politics and on the broad humanitarian basis where it properly belongs. On this basis, America may usefully and with perfect propriety lend a hand to redress a great wrong without fear of international complications or infringement of the Monroe Doctrine.'[3] For the British, suggestions of an ulterior motive in the reform campaign would remain persistent throughout the first decade of the twentieth century. However, for the British government, the issue of free trade was also important. As this chapter will show, the British government avoided adopting a position on the Congo issue based on moral grounds, as some of the reformers were keen on doing, in fear of the spotlight being placed on its own colonial practices. Instead, it decided that attacking the Congo Free State on free trade grounds seemed like the safest and most prudent option. In the debate in the House of Commons on 20 May 1903, when the motion was passed that the government confer with its fellow signatories of the Berlin Act regarding the Congo issue, the MPs Herbert Samuel and Sir Charles Dilke – the latter also the parliamentary spokesman for the APS – emphasised that the rigid trade monopoly and land policy in existence in the Congo Free State meant that the Congo government had violated the terms of the Berlin Act.

[3] 'Hopes The President Will Aid Congo Reform,' *New York Times*, 17 October 1904, p.5.

This chapter will focus on Anglo-American governmental relations regarding the issue of the Congo Free State, examining the level of cooperation between the two governments in pressuring for reform, with a specific focus on the period between 1902 and 1909, when the reform agitation was at its most fervent. Whilst there has been some work on the decision-making of specifically the British government, and, to a lesser extent, the American government, in formulating their foreign policy approach to the Congo Free State within the historiography, there has not yet been a particular focus on the extent of Anglo-American cooperation at government level. In particular, the literature produced to date has been mainly on the impact of the CRA's activism on British foreign policy decision-making. This chapter aims to fill a gap within the historiography on the impact of the ACRA's activism on the United States government and its policy towards the Congo Free State.[4] To date, the historiography gives little credit or attention to the role of the American government in its role in pressuring Leopold to relinquish his hold on the Congo Free State. This chapter seeks to correct that narrative, drawing attention to the work done behind the scenes diplomatically by the United States government, and its foreign ministers, in encouraging a working relationship with its British counterparts and adding weight to the British attack on the Congo Free State. Moreover, this chapter argues that, without American support, it would have been more difficult for the British government to pursue the course of action it did, highlighting that the United States government played a more significant role in ending Leopold's reign in the Congo Free State than it has previously been credited with.

[4] For the work on the United States and the Congo Free State, its relationship and the subsequent reform movement, that has received the most coverage, see, Shaloff, *Reform*, pp.84-107; Jones, *In Search of Brightest Africa*, pp.47-82; Peter Duignan and L. H. Gann, *The United States and Africa: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.126-139, 191-200; Johnny van Hove, *Congoism: Congo Discourses in the United States from 1800 to the Present* (Transcript Verlag: Bielefeld, 2018), pp.139-177; Cullinane, *Transatlantic Dimensions*, pp.307-311.

In addition, it will also examine the effect that the campaign for reform had on the Anglo-American relationship during the period of reform agitation between the years 1903-1909, which was when the campaign gathered pace at both government and non-governmental level. There will be a specific focus on the correspondence between the diplomatic figures involved in both the United States and Britain at the time, both within their own structures of government, and the communication between the Roosevelt administration and Lord Lansdowne and Sir Edward Grey, both of whom held the post of Foreign Secretary during this period. This chapter will show that there was a certain level of Anglo-American cooperation in the lead up to the formation of both the British and American Congo Reform Associations and the Belgian declaration of annexation. This chapter will examine the consensus between the British and American governments during this period, as well as the restrictions placed on their governmental agitation for reform and highlight the level of the impact of reform activism by both the CRA and ACRA on the formulation of foreign policy on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet this chapter will also show that, despite the active campaigning of both the CRA and the ACRA, 'Great Power' politics had a significant impact and influenced the decisions both the British and American government made on the issue of the Congo Free State. More specifically, 'Great Power' politics dictated British foreign policy-making more than it affected the American government, especially for certain individuals within the Foreign Office. Whilst the ACRA was more successful than its British counterpart in pressuring the American government to take steps to intervene, this limited success was prolonged as both associations were caught up in, and hindered by, the wider political and geostrategic issues at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Great Britain, the United States and the Congo Free State

As discussed, the United States government, on 22 April 1884, was the first to recognise the flag of the Congo Free State. Several European nations, including France, Germany, and Great Britain, soon followed on from the American example and also gave their recognition to Leopold's imperial project. It was believed by those in attendance at the Berlin Conference that Leopold's colony would bring civilisation to the region and with it the abolition of the Arab slave trade, as well as bringing an end to some of the more 'barbaric' cultural practices of the Congolese, such as cannibalism and the purchasing of women to become wives. Interest and support for Leopold's enterprise had a history within the United States. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the role of Britain and the United States in the creation of the Congo Free State, some background regarding this will be necessary for context.

In the 1870s, both British and American audiences became interested in Africa through the reports received from Henry Morton Stanley, which were published in the press, of his explorative missions in Africa.[5] Later, Stanley returned to Africa, employed by Leopold to claim the Congo region for the King of the Belgians. Stanley had initially offered the Congo basin to the British government, which was not interested in the proposal, most likely as Britain was otherwise engaged in the Anglo-Egyptian War in 1882. In addition, Americans were also involved with the creation of the Congo Free State. Henry Shelton Sanford, former United States Minister to Belgium, was a representative of America on the Executive Committee of the IAA, the front organisation used by Leopold to put in motion the chain of events leading up to his eventual creation, and control over, the Congo Free State. When Stanley had embarked upon his exploration of the Congo region, he had, although unofficially, taken with him the

[5] McStallworth, 'The United States', p.2. Stanley appealed to both nations in that he was born in Wales, declared himself an American during the time of his exploration of Africa – gaining American citizenship in 1885 – then applying for British citizenship in 1892, two years after marrying an Englishwoman.

American flag as a way of ensuring that there were no political motives suspected by any white people he encountered; a European flag would have attracted deep suspicion.[6] Sheldon's influence over President Grover Cleveland allowed him to exert enough pressure to push for American recognition of the flag of the Congo Free State. This recognition, to some British imperialists, looked like 'a piece of very sharp practice – an act of immorality, in fact - novel in international relations and hardly contemplated by International Law.'[7] Despite this, the British government soon followed suit.

In 1890, there was another international conference on the issue of the Congo, at which both Great Britain and the United States had representatives in attendance. The Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference of 1889-90 was convened by Leopold and included diplomats representing seventeen countries, who all met to discuss the eradication of the slave trade, the regulation of the consumption of liquor, and the prohibition of the importation of arms in Africa.[8] The British representatives at the conference were its ambassador to Belgium, Lord Hussey Crespigny Vivian – who apparently shed tears of joy at its outcome – and Sir John Kirk, Britain's envoy to Brussels. The representatives of the United States government at the conference were Edwin H. Terrell, the American ambassador to Belgium, and Sanford; the latter, now in an official role and not under Leopold's employment, was selected because of his familiarity with the Congo Free State.[9]

The British government had a friendly attitude towards the Congo government during this period. The Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, had invited Leopold to organise the Brussels

[6] *Ibid*, p.10, n.26.
[7] *Ibid*, pp.23-24.
[8] For more on the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference and its humanitarian aspects, see: Laqua, *Age of Internationalism*, pp.47-53; Mairi S. Macdonald, 'Lord Vivian's Tears,' in Fabian Klose, ed, *The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas and Practice from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp.121-141; Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem* (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 2003), pp.20-25.
[9] Duignan and Gann, *The United States*, p.138.

Conference, lending his and the government's support to it. Alongside this, the British government also allowed Leopold to repeal Article IV of the Berlin Act in order to allow the King of the Belgians to levy import duties in the Congo Free State, as well as extending to Leopold facilities that allowed him to recruit workers from British colonies.[10] The Foreign Office, in particular, held the belief that it was not the business of the British government to interfere in the affairs of the Congo government and its treatment of the Congolese.[11] After reports of the ill-treatment of British immigrant workers in the Congo Free State, a ban was placed on the recruitment of workers from the British West African colonies, which was later rescinded due to pressure both from the Congo government and trade interests in the region.[12] The Stokes Affair had threatened the good relations between the British and Congo governments that, according to Salisbury, could have possibly led to a potential 'blood-feud' between the British and the Belgians.[13] However, Anglo-Congolese relations returned to relative normality after this.

United States official diplomatic interest faded somewhat after the Brussels Conference. The Americans did despatch a commercial agent to the Congo Free State, in order to represent American interests in the region, despite trading relations between the United States and the Congo Free State being non-existent. The American commercial agent later lobbied on behalf

[10] Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question*, pp.24-25. Article IV of the Berlin Act had stated that any merchandise imported into the Congo Free State would remain free from import and transit duties.
[11] *Ibid*, p.27.
[12] *Ibid*, pp.29-31.
[13] *Ibid*, p.34, n.4. Charles Henry Stokes was an Irish trader and British subject who was arrested by Captain Hubert Lothaire, a Belgian officer who served in the Force Publique, for trading arms with Arab traders – the enemies of the Congo Free State – in exchange for ivory. He was subsequently hanged for his crimes and his death prompted outrage in Britain, leading the Congo government to prosecute Lothaire and restore all property belonging to Stokes. Lothaire was subsequently acquitted in his trial and returned to Central Africa in a higher office than before. See: William Roger Louis, 'The Stokes Affair and the Origins of the Anti-Congo Campaign, 1895-1896,' *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, Vol. 43, No.2 (January 1965), pp.572-584; Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question*, pp.31-34.

of the Congo government against Arab slave traders, but it was not until the early twentieth century that the American government would become involved in the Congo reform issue.

Early Diplomacy

Despite American complaints and protestations at the conditions that existed in the Congo Free State dating back to 1890, beginning with George Washington Williams and running through the last decade of the nineteenth century with appeals for reform made by Reverend William M. Morrison, no real approach was made directly to the United States government to directly intervene in the affairs of the Congo government. However, both the British and American governments were working together in the Congo Free State. In 1901, the British government informed its American counterpart that, at the request of the United States government, it had authorised Roger Casement, British Consul in Boma, to take care of American interests in the Congo Free State.[14] This was a result of protestations made by the American Presbyterian Congo Mission to the American government to appoint their own consular representation in order to help consult in matters that arose between the Mission and the Congo government.

In 1902, after a 'recently influentially attended meeting' held in New York, a 'strong resolution was passed condemning the various administrative methods employed in the Congo State and calling upon the United States government to intervene.' According to the United States Minister to Belgium, Lawrence Townsend, the resolution was strongly worded and 'contained such references to the King of the Belgians that it was not communicated to the Press in the United States but handed directly to the President.'[15] It was subsequently forwarded to the American Minister in Belgium, instructing him to 'bring this matter to the notice of the

[14] Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Annual message of the President transmitted to Congress, 3 December 1901, pp.205-206.
[15] Constantine Phipps, British Ambassador to Belgium, to Lord Lansdowne, 13 June 1902, The National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter TNA), FO 10/773:127.

Secretary to the Congo government.' When Townsend approached Adolphe de Cuvelier, the Congo Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs, he somewhat wisely decided to present a toned-down version, instead asking a general question on the state of conditions in the Congo Free State and informing de Cuvelier of the significance of the movement in the United States. Townsend's caution was driven by his desire to maintain the cordial relations that existed between Washington and Brussels and too many questions about conditions in the Congo Free State would only jeopardise those relations.[16] Constantine Phipps thought that his American counterpart was 'overcautious in executing the discretionary instructions of his government,' primarily because he believed the previous protestations from missionaries regarding conditions in the Congo Free State had to be approached with the 'greatest reserve.'[17] This scepticism regarding the authenticity of missionary accounts had pervaded their reports from Williams' initial *Open Letter* in 1890 and was an obstacle for reformers on both sides of the Atlantic. Phipps would later be replaced by Arthur Hardinge as Grey believed him to be suffering from a 'bad case of Congophilia.'[18] Hardinge would become an important figure in the Congo reform movement and have a significant impact on Britain's approach to the Congo question.

Lawrence's cautious approach reaped some reward. A month later, de Cuvelier handed the United States Minister a note verbale refuting the charges of alleged cruelties that had been levelled at the Congo Free State by American missionaries. Lawrence duly passed this note on to Phipps, who believed the defence to be weak, stating that de Cuvelier 'appears to generalise' on the subject and 'supplies no very precise data or evidence' to refute the claims.[19] Clearly, at

[16] Shaloff, *Reform*, p.91.
[17] Phipps to Lansdowne, 13 June 1902, TNA, FO 10/773:127.
[18] Pakenham, *Scramble for Africa*, p.662. Phipps' removal soon followed after he made remarks in praise of Leopold and the Congo Free State at a banquet in Belgium. See, Echenberg, 'The British Attitude,' p.116.
[19] Phipps to Lansdowne, 19 July 1902, TNA, FO 10/773:361.

this stage, both the British and American governments were aware of the rising issue of the Congo Free State and discussed the matter, albeit through back channels, sharing information they had received from the Belgian and Congo governments. This was most likely due to the reluctance on the part of both governments to publicly discuss the issue, instead preferring to 'feel' out each other's position on the matter. However, things soon went quiet on the issue of atrocities and intervention in the Congo Free State, at least at government level.

Progress in Britain

In January 1903, Phipps wrote to Lansdowne to inform him that an American missionary was on his way to Belgium to discuss the 'abuses of authority and atrocities committed under the government or the companies' in the Congo Free State.[20] This missionary was William M. Morrison, who proved to be a key figure in the wider Congo reform movement in the United States. Before he returned to America, Morrison spoke of the situation in the Congo Free State whilst visiting Britain. Morrison gave an address at a meeting of the Royal United Service Institution in London on 5 May 1903 and his words were keenly listened to by prominent MPs, religious figures and journalists who attended his lectures. The charges levelled at the Congo Free State by Morrison informed the opinions of several MPs and led to a debate in the British parliament. Previously, in March 1903, the British government was asked in the House of Commons as to whether or not it had any information or confirmation that the abuses alleged to be occurring in the Congo Free State were taking place and whether they planned to take any action to 'enforce the regulations of the Berlin Conference of 1885.' Lord Cranbourne, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, informed his fellow MPs that the government had no reason to think slavery existed in the Congo region and that they did not have enough information with which to bring the matter before parliament, citing Article VI of the Berlin

[20] *Ibid*, 3 January 1903, TNA, FO 10/803.

Act as the only regulations relevant and one that is 'undoubtedly binding on the Congo Free State.'[21] Later, on 20 May, Herbert Samuel, who had been in attendance at Whitehall for Morrison's address, and had been collaborating with Morel, Fox Bourne and Dilke, put forward and had passed a resolution that was critical of the Congo Free State.[22] The resolution was unanimously passed without division, although, as Pavlakis has noted, not many MPs were in attendance.[23] The passing of the resolution led to the British government's decision to send Casement into the interior of the Congo region to make a full investigation into the allegations of atrocities.

Unbeknown to the British reformers, there was both sympathy and opposition to the proposal to pressure Leopold and put the spotlight on his colonial practices. At the root of the opposition lay fear that the proposal would, in turn, draw attention to British colonial rule in Africa. Lord Lansdowne had previously written that he thought the conditions that existed in the Congo Free State were '[G]hastly! But I am afraid the Belgians will get hold of the stories as to the way the natives have apparently been treated by men of our race in Australia.'[24] As Louis has observed, Lansdowne was wary of British interference in the Congo Free State and its political consequences in Europe and refused to make any move until the publication of Leopold's own investigation of maladministration in July 1904.[25] Lansdowne had to consider the balance of power and intergovernmental relations between the 'Great Powers' in Europe.

[21] Slavery in the Congo Free State. HC Deb 11 March 1903, Vol. 119, cc381-2. The relevant section of Article VI states that: 'All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization.'
[22] 'The Congo Free State,' HC Debate 20 May 1903, Vol. 122, cc1289-332.
[23] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.67.
[24] Minute by Lansdowne on Mackie to Lansdowne, 11 March 1903, TNA, FO 10/815, as quoted in Morel, Louis, Stengers, *History of the Congo Reform Movement*, p.185.
[25] *Ibid*, p.185.

British public opinion on the Congo Free State was no longer isolated as Germany was now interested in the issue, primarily due to the decreasing trade of German East Africa as a result of Leopold's diverting of the Central African trade to the Congo. In addition, the death of an Austrian trader, Gustave-Marie Rabinek, led to some of the German press to denounce the Congo government and add its voice to the call to revise the Berlin Act. However, there was little desire to do so on the part of the British and German governments. For Germany, the issue of French interests in the Congo region (where France had a concession system in the French Congo that was similar to Leopold's in the Congo Free State) meant a potential clash with France over its interests on the West Coast of Africa. Lansdowne was aware that there had been hostility shown by the German public towards the British approach to the Anglo-Boer War, and the differences of opinion that had arisen between the British and German governments over their respective polices regarding the recent Boxer Rebellion in China and rising tensions over Morocco. As a result, Lansdowne concluded that any potential collaboration with the German government on the issue of the Congo was 'objectionable.'[26]

In the United States, public opinion was not on the side of the reformers at this stage, with the *New York Times* stating that 'it is the general opinion here [in the United States] that this systematic campaign has been carried on…for the purpose of paving the way for a cession to Great Britain of those territories in the [Congo] Free State situated on the line of the famous Cape to Cairo railway.'[27] Suspicions of British designs on the Congo region lingered which would have proved favourable to Leopold who, wary of the power of public opinion and the

[26] Cookey, *Britain and the Congo*, pp.72-75.
[27] 'Belgians on the Congo: Charges of Cruelty in Governing the Free State Resented,' *New York Times*, 22 March 1903, p.4.

rise of criticism in Britain and the United States, stated that '[A] state cannot continue in existence if it has world opinion against it.'[28]

Anglo-American Cooperation

On 8 August 1903, the British government sent out a Circular to the Powers who were signatories to the Berlin Act, and to the United States, on the subject of the administration of the Congo Free State. However, nothing was forthcoming. The American government stated that, 'with the exception of a charge of cruelty against a "Chef de Zone", which was investigated, they had no occasion to approach the Congo government on the subject of ill-treatment of natives.'[29]

After being visited on 7 November 1903 by two delegates from the Foreign Missions Committee, Samuel Chester and Morrison – both of whom were surprised to see an open copy of one of Morel's books on the Congo Free State on the President's desk – Roosevelt informed the missionaries that, although he personally sympathised with the cause of Congo reform, the United States government could not intervene unless there were specific instances of personal mistreatment of American missionaries in the Congo Free State.[30] The President stated that, in the event that any mistreatment occurred, then the missionaries were to 'bring the matter straight to me [Roosevelt] and I will see your wrongs are righted...by George, that's what I'm here for!'[31] However, unbeknown to the Congo activists, Roosevelt had already decided not to intervene, primarily because of domestic political concerns, namely the upcoming election,

[28] Slade, *English-Speaking Missions*, p.286.
[29] Congo Circular – Answers of the Powers, 30 April 1904, TNA, FO 881/8414. A common feature of Leopold's administration of the Congo Free State was its division into separate zones. The 'Chef de Zone' was in effect the leader of that particular zone.
[30] Shaloff, *Reform*, p.91, n.21. Shaloff mistakenly stated that it was a copy of Morel's book *Red Rubber* that was found to be on Roosevelt's desk, but that particular book was not published until 1906. The book in question on the President's desk would have most likely been Morel's most recent work, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa*, having been published earlier that year.
[31] Benedetto, *Presbyterian Reformers*, pp.193-4.

writing that 'in the closing weeks of a national campaign it is out of the question for me to take up the matter he has at heart.' Roosevelt agreed with the sentiment of Morel's appeal when he visited the Whitehouse, adding that,

> [F]rom all I can gather, the Congo Free State has done very badly as regards the natives and I absolutely agree…that a government which trades is certain to go crooked under conditions like those in Central Africa. But I do know that anything I said of any kind or sort on the subject during the next six weeks would be twisted by my opponents into being something improper.[32]

Morrison's work on the suffering of the Congolese informed Roger Casement's later investigation into the conditions in the Congo Free State.

In February 1904, the Casement Report was published. The report elicited a mixed response within the British government. Lansdowne thought highly of the report, whereas Francis Hyde Villiers, an African expert at the Foreign Office and later Hardinge's replacement in Brussels, was wary of its implications for the balance of power in Europe, maintaining that Anglo-Belgian friction regarding the Congo issue could 'compromise Belgian neutrality in Germany's favour.'[33] The report was also coolly received in some quarters of the American Press, with *The Washington Times* casting doubt on the legitimacy of some of its claims and British motives in the Congo region, stating that 'England does not have to admit her willingness to take over the Congo State along with her other African possession. Her position in that part of the world and her consistent policy in other parts of the world make the ultimate [sic] of her diplomacy only too apparent.'[34] It was not until March 1904 that the President of the United States and the Secretary of State, John Hay, were officially petitioned by a delegation of American Missions to take action and intervene.[35] However, this fell on deaf ears.

---

[32] Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt Papers: Series 2: Letterpress Copybooks, 1916; Vol. 49, 1904, Aug. 11-Sept. 18:475*. 1904. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss382990383/> (accessed 14 July 2018).
[33] Echenberg, 'The British Attitude,' p.73.
[34] 'The Congo Atrocities,' *The Washington Times*, 11 June 1904, p.6.
[35] Durand to Lansdowne, 26 March 1904, TNA, FO 10/808.

Hay explained that he could not 'hold out any definite promise of relieving the situation…because the United States was not one of the Signatories to the treaty under which the Congo Free State came into existence,' whilst Roosevelt 'promised to give the subject careful consideration,' from which nothing materialised.[36]

Soon after, another petition, largely informed by extracts from Casement's report and Morrison's personal testimony, came from a delegation of American Missions, including Morrison, and was led by Thomas Barbour (see chapter two). When presenting the Memorial to the Senate, Senator Morgan stated its purpose was to pressure the United States government into intervening in the Congo Free State 'for the relief of American citizens resident in the State and of the natives,' adding that 'he had not the slightest doubt' that the findings in the Casement Report were 'entirely just and correct.'[37] In June 1904, Sir Charles Dilke raised the question in the House of Commons regarding possible British cooperation with the United States.[38] However, the United States government continued to take the position that it was powerless to act as it was not a signatory to the Berlin Act and, subsequently, had no right to intervene in another state's affairs. The American reformers, however, felt differently. They believed that there was historical precedent for the United States Secretary of State to intervene in foreign affairs when the interests of 'freedom and humanity' were at stake, citing two previous incumbents in the role – Daniel Webster and Root's immediate predecessor Hay – as examples of this. Webster, according to the activists, and his support for Lajos Kassuth in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, was an example of early American intervention in the affairs of a foreign state – very much part of the tradition of humanitarian intervention during the nineteenth century, as explored in chapter one. Webster had declared that the United States government

[36] Extract from the *New York Tribune*, 26 March 1904, in Durand to Lansdowne, 26 March 1904, TNA, FO 881/8414.
[37] Durand to Lansdowne, 21 April 1904, TNA, FO 881/8414.
[38] 'Class II,' HC Debate, 9 June 1904 Vol. 135, c.1247.

and its people had been 'attracted toward a nation struggling for national independence' and that the best way to stand up to 'autocratic or despotic power' was the use of the 'power of intelligent public opinion in all the nations of the Earth.'[39] In 1902, Hay had protested the persecution of the 400,000 Jews that lived in Romania – 50,000 of which had taken refuge in America – by 'addressing an identical note to the European Powers signatory to the Berlin Act,' stating that, whilst the United States had not been signatories to the Act, Washington appealed to the 'principles contained therein, because they are the principles of international law and eternal justice.'[40]

Reformers on both sides of the Atlantic knew that Roosevelt was concerned with the upcoming election and keen to avoid 'disturbing elements' getting in the way of his re-election.[41] When Morel finally met with Roosevelt during his initial visit to the United States, he was questioned about the level of sectarianism within the Memorial and whether or not it had been signed by any Roman Catholics, with Morel assuring the President that there was 'neither sectarianism nor commercial jealousy of any kind behind the movement'.[42] That highlighted another wider political issue that the activists had to overcome. The Roman Catholic vote was important to Roosevelt and would mean he was reluctant to move on the issue for fear of jeopardising it through both criticism of predominantly-Catholic Belgium and its king – who had given preferential treatment to Catholic missionaries in the Congo Free State ahead of their Protestant counterparts – as well as entering into an alliance with Great Britain. The Irish Catholic vote in particular was a source of Anglophobia, which proved an early obstacle for Anglo-American cooperation. Morel was informed that Roosevelt was 'itching' to

[39] 'Daniel Webster, John Hay and Elihu Root,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1906, p.8.
[40] *Ibid*, p.9.
[41] Morrison to Morel, 16 June 1904, MP, F8/115:14.
[42] Report of the Honorary Secretary of the Congo Reform Association on his visit to the United States, MP, F4/15:1.

take up the matter, but that Hay was more doubtful, which was a blow as Roosevelt 'in matters of foreign policy… regulated his conduct in accordance with the views of Secretary Hay' (in the belief of the reformers).[43] Hay informed Morel that the United States was unable to act, stating that '[T]he difficulty is the absence of any American interest directly threatened.'[44] What was unfortunate for Morel, however, was that just days before his arrival in the United States, Hay had voiced his feelings on the Congo issue in private to Roosevelt, stating that he felt it was 'a well-meant impertinence...for Englishmen to come to us to take up their Congo quarrel.'[45] Roosevelt replied stating that he agreed with Hay's assessment.[46] This private disclosure of Hay's was not another case of Anglophobia but most likely, as Laderman has observed, a sensitive response to previous criticism of his fondness for the British. Hay was closely linked with the rapprochement between Britain and the United States and, as a result, often received harsh criticism for his closeness to the British, leading him to complain that '[A]ll I have ever done with England is to have wrung great concessions out of her with no compensation...yet...these idiots say I'm not an American because I don't say "To hell with the Queen",' at every breath.'[47] Hay's openness to British diplomacy was not as welcomed by others, most notably in sections of the fourth estate.

Public opinion had shifted by late-1904, in some quarters at least, in the favour of the activists. What the American government should do, according to supporters of the reform movement, was to participate, alongside other signatory powers to the Berlin Act, in an international conference to conduct an 'impartial and international investigation' into the

[43] *Ibid*, MP, F4/15:16.
[44] Report of the Honorary Secretary of the Congo Reform Association on his visit to the United States, MP, F4/15:19.
[45] Roosevelt to Eugene A. Philbin, 28 September 1904, in Elting E. Morison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Volume IV: The Square Deal: 1903–1905* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), No.3255, p.958.
[46] Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt Papers: Series 2: Letterpress Copybooks, -1916; Vol. 50, 1904, Sept. 19-Oct. 25:106*. 1904. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss382990384/.>
[47] John Hay to J. W. Foster, 23 June 1900, in William Roscoe Thayer, *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, Vol. II, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915), pp.234-5, cited in Laderman, *Invasion of the United States*, p.187.

conditions that existed in the Congo Free State.[48] However, this opinion was not shared by all, and some congratulated Roosevelt for his 'refusal to take notice' of Morel and the CRA's 'folly,' suspecting British designs on the Congo region and not allowing the United States to be 'humiliated by employment as a stalking-horse for England.'[49] Anglophobia was quite divisive and proved to be a important obstacle for both the American government and the Congo reform activists. As examined in chapter two, it proved to be a significant factor in the early existence of both the Congo Committee and the ACRA in the United States, especially in terms of propagating their message of reform and recruiting members to their cause. However, there was cause for hope. In his State of the Union Address, Roosevelt noted that, whilst he was aware that the United States was constrained by the Monroe Doctrine in taking action on matters that were outside of American interests, he appreciated that those issues were also of great concern to American citizens. Highlighting both American exceptionalism and benevolence, Roosevelt stated that,

> In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavouring to circumscribe the theatre of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large. There are, however, cases in which, while our own interests are not involved, strong appeal is made to our sympathies. Ordinarily it is very much wiser and more useful for us to concern ourselves with striving for our own moral and material betterment here at home than to concern ourselves with trying to better the condition of things in other nations...nevertheless there are occasional crimes committed on so vast a scale and of such peculiar horror as to make us doubt whether it is not our manifest destiny to endeavour...to show our disapproval of the deed and our sympathy with those who have suffered by it...the cases in which we could interfere by force of arms as we interfered to put a stop to intolerable conditions in Cuba are necessarily very few. Yet it is not to be expected that a people like ours, which...as a whole shows by its consistent practice its belief in the principles of civil and religious liberty and of orderly freedom...should desire eagerly to give expression to its horror on an occasion like that of the massacre of the Jews...or when it witnesses such

[48] 'The Case of the Congo Free State,' *New York Times*, 1 October 1904, p.8.
[49] 'The President's Wise Choice,' *The Washington Post*, 9 October 1904, p.4.

> systematic...cruelty and oppression...of which the Armenians have been victims, and which we have won for them the indignant pity of the civilised world.[50]

In addition, both Roosevelt and Hay were known to look upon Britain favourably in international politics. Hay stated that 'a friendly understanding with England' should be an 'indispensable feature' of United States foreign policy, and Roosevelt wrote that he felt 'very strongly that the English-speaking peoples are now closer together than for a century and a quarter...for their interests are really fundamentally the same, and they are far more closely akin, not merely in blood, but in feeling and principle, than either is akin to any other people in the world.'[51] Aside from the issue of Anglophobia, there was a certain hypocrisy attached to the idea that the American government could instruct another country to return land back to its original inhabitants; the issue of the seizure by the United States of land from the Native Americans was raised at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Peace Congress in Boston, at which Morel first spoke when arriving in the United States.[52]

Leopold suppressed the findings of his own commission and delayed publication of the report until November 1905, resulting in little diplomatic action on behalf of the reform campaign. Whilst the reformers continued their activism, and the release of Twain's *Soliloquy* being one of the most significant steps towards reform, the CRA and ACRA continued to make little headway with either of their respective governments. Twain's 'sarcastic lampoon' had 'permanently damaged the Congo cause,' according to the American Minister at Brussels.[53] However, this belief was proven to be unfounded. Phipps reflected that,

> [T]he state has monopolised the entire fruits of the soil, and has interfered with the whole evolution of native existence. It has failed to give a liberal and wide

[50] Theodore Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 6 December 1904, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100855040> (accessed 20 August 2018).
[51] Alan P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict, and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p.23; Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994), p.174.
[52] 'The Closing Session,' *Evening Star*, 8 October 1904, p.1.
[53] Phipps to Grey, 5 January 1906, TNA, FO 367/31.

> interpretation to the Laws of 1885 and 1886, which conferred on the native population the free enjoyment of the zones of territory…enabling them to trade in the produce of such zones. This Law had become a dead letter.[54]

Phipps retired at the beginning of 1906 and was replaced by Hardinge, a supporter of reform in the Congo. Hardinge's views differed to that of the Congo reformers on the issue of the Congo Free State. As Louis has observed, his ideas on reform 'flowed from the conservative tradition of imperial responsibility' – that the King of the Belgians had behaved irresponsibly in the Congo, and that he should be held accountable for his actions by the Belgian government.[55] He stated that the Congo Free State had 'louder and longer complaints' against its system of rule than other imperial governments had received, including Britain. However, for Hardinge, the key difference was that the British colonies, as well as those of the other imperial powers, were 'ruled by States possessing parliaments, through which public opinion, if aroused by abuses, could bring its influence to bear on their Administrations, whereas the Congo government was absolute and irresponsible'.[56] Tasked with proving that the atrocities had taken place, despite not being convinced himself that they had occurred due to the evidence provided being unreliable, Hardinge's distaste for the 'mischievous' activism coming from the Congo reformers as a way of achieving reform meant that he would pursue a different path, one that was often in conflict with the CRA.[57]

In February 1906, as detailed in the previous chapter, the now famous exchange took place between Root and Senator Edwin Denby regarding American intervention in the Congo Free State. In Root's response to Senator Denby's letter regarding American intervention in the Congo Free State, he stated that, because the American government did not sign the Berlin

[54] Sir Constantine Phipps to the Marquess of Lansdowne, 7 November 1905, TNA, FO 403/364, p.228.
[55]William Roger Louis, 'The Philosophical Diplomatist Sir Arthur Hardinge and King Leopold's Congo, 1906-1911,' *Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer Bulletin des Séances*, Vol.11, No.6 (1965), p.1403.
[56] Hardinge to Grey, 29 March 1906, TNA, FO 367/31.
[57] Louis, 'The Philosophical,' p.1408.

Act – which was one of the key arguments the reformers used to justify intervention – the United States had no right to intervene; indeed, Root believed that it was questionable whether the signatories themselves had any right to intervene in the affairs of the Congo State.[58] Root further explained that, because the United States had no diplomatic or consular representatives – to send someone there would be an 'invasion of its [the Congo government's] sovereignty' – the information the American government received on the conditions there 'comes at second hand' and, as a result, was unreliable.[59] Root was sympathetic towards the Congo government and the unenviable task it had of ruling such a large colony, stating that '[I]f the United States had happened to possess in darkest Africa a territory seven times as large and four times as populous as the Philippines, we, too, might find government difficult and come in for just or unjust criticism. No such responsibility falls upon us.'[60] The Senate resolution of 11 January 1892, in which the United States disclaimed any interests in the possessions of other powers, was cited by opponents of reform in the United States as justification for non-intervention and, as McStallworth has stated, it most likely factored into Root's thinking when replying to Denby.[61]

After sustained pressure from the ACRA, Root was successfully lobbied by the reformers and on 2 May the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reported an amendment to the House Diplomatic and Consular Bill to provide a consul-general at Boma in the Congo Free State. This amendment passed the Senate on 11 June, was accepted by the House Conference Committee and reported to the Senate on 15 June.[62] Root had initially turned to Stanley Hall for a suitable candidate for the new post of consul-general. Hall nominated Professor George

[58] Root to Denby, 20 February 1906, FRUS, With the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress, 3 December 1906, Part 1, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, Washington D.C.: 1909, p.88.
[59] *Ibid*, p.89.
[60] *Ibid*, pp.88-89.
[61] McStallworth, 'The United States,' p.301.
[62] 'Consul-General to Congo Free State,' *The Congo News Letter*, August 1906, p.16.

Blakesee, a fellow Clark University professor, but Leopold's consul-general in Washington, James Whiteley, voiced his opposition to Hall's recommendation, stating that 'anybody recommended by [the ACRA] President Stanley Hall…could not under any circumstances be looked upon favourably.'[63] On 23 June 1906, Clarence Rice Slocum, a Consular officer who had previously been based in Europe, was appointed the new consul-general of the Congo Free State. This appointment was a result of the intense pressure exerted by the ACRA on the American government. However, Wilson informed his British counterparts that the appointment was a result of the American legation requesting the appointment due to the methods deployed to obtain information about the Congo Free State being 'unreliable and unsatisfactory.'[64] This contradiction is most likely due to the American government not wanting to reveal the extent of the influence of the ACRA in its foreign policy formulation. Despite not having its own nomination selected for the new role, the ACRA members were still optimistic that Slocum would be able to provide a direct source of information on local conditions to the United States government, which they believed would only be beneficial to the cause.[65] This period of success for the ACRA was reflected across the Atlantic by its British counterparts. During its early existence, the CRA enjoyed a healthy relationship with the Foreign Office, with officials exchanging information with Morel, acting on information that Morel supplied to them. As Pavlakis notes, 'Morel helped shape Foreign Office thinking on many questions' during this period of reform activism.[66]

By early 1906, public opinion had been roused to such a level that the American government felt more inclined to take action. This was primarily on the back of the Harris' tour

[63] Jerome L. Sternstein, 'King Leopold II, Nelson W. Aldrich, and the Strange Beginnings of American Economic Penetration of the Congo,' *African Historical Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2 (1969), p.198; Cullinane, 'Transatlantic dimensions,' p.310.
[64] Percy C. Wyndham to Grey, 20 September 1906, TNA, FO 367/33.
[65] 'Consul-General to Congo Free State,' *The Congo News Letter,* August 1906, p.16.
[66] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.215.

of the United States, discussed in chapter two, and the reaction from the ACRA to the exchange between Denby and Root. Roosevelt expressed his frustration at not being able to take action that reflected the will of the American public. In a letter to Oscar Solomon Straus, the United States Secretary of Commerce and Labor in the Roosevelt administration, he stated that,

> Large numbers of people...asking that we interfere about the Congo Free State...it is a literal physical impossibility to interfere in any of these cases...under penalty of making this nation ridiculous and aggravating instead of ameliorating the fate of those for whom we interfere.[67]

Whilst little diplomatic action took place publicly, privately Roosevelt felt more sympathy with the reformer's cause but felt that, on the international stage, his hands were tied. He confided to Andrew Carnegie that 'it would be an advantage to justice if we were able in some way effectively interfere in the Congo Free State to secure a more righteous government...but at present I do not see how we can interfere...and the one thing I won't do is to bluff when I cannot make good; to bluster and threaten and then fail to take the action if my words need to be backed up.'[68] This was a recurring theme in Roosevelt's approach to the Congo Free State issue throughout this period, and to other aspects of his foreign policy, too; his advocacy of 'Big Stick Diplomacy' characterised his approach to the United States' diplomatic objectives before and during his presidency. Later in 1906, Roosevelt's frustration at the level of pressure being applied to the government regarding the Congo issue began to show. In a letter to Lodge, a close confidante of the President, Roosevelt stated that he felt that '[T]he only tomfoolery that anyone seems bent on is that about the Congo Free State outrages, and that is imbecile rather than noxious.'[69] Roosevelt perceived the Congo issue as a humanitarian problem and not a diplomatic matter. He believed it differed from the other foreign policy issues dealt with during

[67] Roosevelt to Straus, 10 April 1906, in Elting E. Morrison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt: Volume V: The Big Stick, 1905–1907* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), No. 3880, p.207.
[68] Roosevelt to Andrew Carnegie, 6 August 1906, in *ibid*, p.345, no.3993.
[69] Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, 2 October 1906, in *ibid*, p.439, No.4086.

his presidency, most notably those in China and Venezuela, in that other 'Great Powers' would not go to war over the Congo issue.[70] The midterms loomed large at this point and Roosevelt felt under pressure due to his non-intervention on a matter that was gaining more prominence as the months passed by.

By mid-1906, the American government became aware that Leopold was considering annexation, and Henry Lane Wilson, the American ambassador to Belgium, informed Root that the whole process would happen within a year.[71] In November 1906, it was announced that the United States would now cooperate with Britain.[72] Grey responded by stating that he would 'welcome cooperation from any of the Powers and that there was not the slightest desire to secure political advantages for Great Britain.'[73] This was most likely a response to the unofficial announcement on behalf of Roosevelt and, as McStallworth has observed, Grey's plea was almost a 'direct invitation' to his American counterparts to work together on the Congo Free State issue.[74] This progress did not go unnoticed in Belgium. Hardinge informed Grey that, in response to the Foreign Secretary meeting with a deputation of Congo activists and British businessmen, which will be examined further in the next chapter, and the subsequent attack from pro-Leopold newspapers, two leading Catholic newspapers in Belgium, the *Patriote* and the *Bien Public*, were actively countering the Leopoldian argument against foreign meddling into the affairs of the Congo government. They reminded Belgians that Britain was its 'European protector' and to alienate any British sympathies 'in the prosecution of a personal African policy by the King, which is not only of no advantage but may prove

[70] Roosevelt to George O. Trevelyan, 13 May 1905, in *ibid*, p.439, No.3519; Roosevelt to Straus, 10 April 1906, in *ibid*, p.207, no.3880; Roosevelt to Carnegie, 6 August 1906, in *ibid*, p.345, no.3993.
[71] Wilson to Root, 18 December 1906, FRUS, With the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress, 3 December 1906, Part 2, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, Washington D.C.: 1909, p.795.
[72] *Morning Post*, 3 November 1906, as cited in Cookey, *Britain*, p.170.
[73] 'May Act in the Congo,' *New York Daily Tribune*, 21 November 1906, as quoted in McStallworth, 'United States,' p.305.
[74] McStallWorth, 'United States,' p.305.

positively detrimental...to Belgium.'[75] Around the same time, there was criticism in the German press regarding the British motives for intervention in the Congo issue, with several leading newspapers questioning the usefulness of convening another international conference on the matter. Stating that the United States had no interest in intervening in the issue, which was a continuation of its original policy since 1885, the German press suspected that the British had designs on the Congo Free State, stating that the purpose of the Berlin Conference in 1884-5 was specifically to 'save' the Congo region from Britain, and that the issue of free trade in the area was really an issue of 'English commerce'.[76] Hardinge suspected Leopold's hand in these stories, yet clearly there was still suspicion amongst the other 'Great Powers' as to the British motivations in the Congo reform campaign.

Soon afterwards, the United States government officially communicated with the British government to offer its cooperation. Root informed Chargé Carter to notify Grey that the United States was ready to support British action regarding the Congo Free State. The communique stated that,

> Moved by the deep interest shown by all classes of the American people in the amelioration of conditions in the Kongo State, the President has observed with keen appreciation the steps which the British Government is considering toward that humanitarian end. You will say so to Sir Edward Grey, inviting from him such information as to the course and scope of the action which Great Britain may contemplate under the provisions of the [G]eneral [A]ct of the Kongo and in view of the information which the British Government may have acquired concerning the conditions in Central Africa, and you will further express to Sir Edward Grey the desire of the President to contribute by such action and attitude as may be properly within his power toward the realisation of whatever reforms may be counselled by the sentiments of humanity…[T]he President's interest in watching the trend toward reform is coupled with the earnest desire to see the full performance of the obligations of articles 2 and 5 of the general Africa slave-trade act of Brussels of July 2, 1890, to which the United States is a party, in all that affects involuntary servitude of the natives.[77]

[75] Hardinge to Grey, 21 November 1906, TNA, FO 367/33.
[76] 'The Congo State,' *The Times*, 23 November 1906, in TNA, FO 367/33.
[77] Root to Carter, FRUS, with the Annual Message of the President transmitted to Congress, 3 December 1907, p.793.

In addition to this declaration of support, as discussed in the previous chapter, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge introduced a resolution stating that the President should receive full support from the Senate to support and work alongside a Power that was signatory to the Berlin Act to ameliorate the conditions in the Congo Free State. However, this resolution was amended and by February 1907, it was now apparent that United States intervention in the Congo Free State would be conditional; it would only be within the framework of the Monroe Doctrine and 'necro-isolationist in character'– that the United States would have freedom of action and not be bound by any written treaties or agreements.[78] This was significant progress for the ACRA. Lodge had previously been disinterested in the fate of the Congolese, with his favourable view of Leopold after meeting the king of the Belgians whilst in Paris and his belief in the purity of race most likely informing his opinion on the Congo issue.[79] Lodge had not acted under orders from the State department but as a result of the pressure exerted by his constituents in Massachusetts – the home of the headquarters of the ACRA – and would continue to defend his resolution.[80]

Grey was 'gratified' by this declaration, stating that he believed that a 'radical change was necessary in the management of affairs in the Kongo' and that 'there should be a parliament behind the government in the Kongo', meaning that the Belgian government should now annex the territory.[81] In response to a question in the House of Commons two days later as to whether or not the British government, in conjunction with the United States government, would take the necessary steps to summon an international conference, Grey stated that, although the issue

[78] McStallworth, 'The United States,' p.310.
[79] Emerson, *Leopold II*, p.229. Lodge had previously espoused his views on the purity of races when discussing the issue of interracial breeding in a speech to Congress in 1896, stating that, 'if a lower race mixes with a higher in sufficient numbers, history teaches us that the lower will prevail.' See, Hans P. Vought, *The Bully Pulpit and the Melting Pot: American Presidents and the Immigrant, 1897-1933* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), p.16.
[80] Shaloff, *Reform*, p.106, n.53.
[81] Root to Carter, 10 December 1906, FRUS, with the Annual Message of the President transmitted to Congress, 3 December 1907, pp.793-794.

had not specifically been mentioned, 'the United States government have recently intimated their desire to contribute to the realisation of whatever reforms may be counselled by sentiments of humanity,' and that 'such an announcement is most cordially welcomed.'[82] However, Root was still of the opinion that the United States should take a softer approach to the matter of reform in the Congo Free State. A letter to Root from several prominent public figures who spoke out against the Congo government, including J. Pierpoint Morgan, the American financier and banker, urging the use of 'moral support...in the direction of correcting abuses' in the Congo Free State, was taken into consideration. But the Secretary of State declared that 'all this country [United States] could do was to decorously and politely urge Belgium to greater activity.'[83]

Throughout 1907, a tug-of-war raged within Belgium between Leopold and the Belgian parliament over the issue of annexation and the proposed Colonial Bill. Wilson notified Root that one potential issue with the Bill was that it proposed the creation of a colonial council that was responsible for determining Congo policy, and was to consist of nine men all appointed by Leopold. This council, as Root observed, would effectively be controlled by the King and would provoke the Congo reform activists. He informed the American ambassador to Britain, Whitelaw Reid, that the United States was now approaching the position of considering the Congo Free State a violation of the Brussels Act of 1890.[84] Reid was to sound out the British opinion on this, reporting back that the British government's reply was that it 'agreed entirely' with the American viewpoint but that the British and Americans had to be cautious when approaching the Belgian government as it might feel that they only have two choices –

[82] Hansard Papers, HC Debate, 13 December 1906, Vol. 167, c.664.
[83] 'America and the Congo,' *New York Times*, 27 December 1906, p.4.
[84] Wilson to Root, 16 October 1906; Root to Whitelaw Reid, 4 November 1906, FRUS, with the Annual Message of the President transmitted to Congress, 3 December 1907, pp.810-812.

'accepting the bill proposed by the King, or appearing to yield to foreign dictation.'[85] Clearly, the British government believed patience and caution were key to achieving its goals. Yet it is interesting that, having clearly secured American support, the British government, and Grey in particular, did not seize the opportunity to press Leopold and Belgium harder on the issue of reform, highlighting the geopolitical considerations at work in British policy on the issue.

Belgian public opinion had shifted in favour of annexation, whereas Leopold was still unwilling to part with his colony. Grey perceived this struggle between the Belgian monarch and government as an opportunity to emphasise to his own government that Britain had now 'abstained from taking any action which was likely to prejudice a favourable result.'[86] Yet there was always the issue of 'Great Power' politics casting a shadow over the Congo issue that concerned Grey. Out of fear that the French would exercise their right to pre-emption, and the subsequent complications that would arise from the Congo being handed over to France, Grey suggested that both France and Germany partition the Congo between them.[87] Grey believed that, if the French took control of the Congo Free State, given that Germany had important

[85] Grey to Mr Bryce, 19 November 1907, TNA, FO 881/9155. The Second Article of the Brussels Convention stated:

> The stations, the cruisers organised by each Power in its inland waters, and the posts which serve as ports for them, shall, independently of their principle task, which is to prevent the capture of slaves and intercept the routes of the Slave Trade, have the following subsidiary duties: 1. To serve as a base, and, if necessary, as a place of refuge, for the native populations placed under the sovereignty or the Protectorate of the State to which the station belongs, for the independent populations, and temporarily for all others in case of imminent danger; to place the populations of the first of these categories in a position to cooperate for their own defence; to diminish intestine wars between tribes by means of arbitration; to initiate them in agricultural works and in the industrial arts so as to increase their welfare; to raise them to civilisation and bring about the extinction of barbarous customs, such as cannibalism and human sacrifices; 2. To give aid and protection to commercial undertakings, to watch over their legality, especially by controlling contracts of service with natives, and to lead up to the foundation of permanent centres of cultivation and of commercial establishments; 3. To protect, without distinction of creed, the Missions which are already or may hereafter be established; 4. To provide for the sanitary service, and to grant hospitality and help to explorers, and to all who take part in Africa in the work of repressing the Slave Trade.

[86] Hansard Papers, HC Debate, 25 February 1907 Vol. 169 c.1227.

[87] William Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization: Collected Essays* (London: Tauris, 2006), p.176.

territorial possessions that adjoined the Congo region, this would ultimately lead to friction between the two continental powers. Anglo-German relations had already deteriorated by this stage, and Grey was anxious to avoid any further complications. As a result, there was little to no hope on any possible German cooperation on the Congo issue, with Lord Fitzmaurice noting that the recent slowdown in progress was timely in Leopold's favour, as 'it is not our interest to be having a row with Germany.'[88] It was also in the interests of both France and Germany not to pursue the Congo issue for fear of driving Belgium into the arms of the other rival power. The 'Great Power' politics were clearly factoring into government decision-making. The prospect of a potential war with Germany factored into the British government's foreign policy formulation, as it realised the alienation of a strategically important country such as Belgium could tip the balance of power in Europe.

Grey informed Hardinge that, in cooperation with Wilson, he must inform the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the British government, in accordance with the Berlin Act of 1885, would hold the Belgian government responsible for free trade and the 'welfare of the natives' in the Congo Free State. If pressed on the specifics of this statement, Hardinge was instructed to state that the Belgians must initiate reforms in land tenure and in the system of forced labour, with Grey showing his awareness of the importance of joint collaboration on the matter when noting that 'it will not do to lose the opportunity of joint action with the [United States] Minister.'[89]

After his appointment as Consul-General of the Congo Free State, Clarence Rice Slocum had been instructed to produce a report into the conditions there. He duly informed the United States Assistant Secretary of State that, if his report of December 1906 were to be published in

[88] Echenberg, 'The British Attitude,' p.132, n.2.
[89] Grey's minute, no date, on Hardinge to Grey, 8 January 1908, TNA, FO 367/115.

the press, his activities in the Congo Free State would be greatly restricted.[90] As a result, his report was not made public.[91] In the report, Slocum described the Congo Free State as 'nothing but a vast commercial enterprise,' a place where exploitation for raw materials was rife, and a colony that was 'not open to trade in the intended sense of article 5 of the Berlin Act,' which gave weight to the reformer's claims that Leopold's personal colony violated the very principles it was founded on.[92]

A year later, James A. Smith, Slocum's replacement as Consul-General after the former had 'succumbed to climatic influences', wrote that the Congolese were subject to high taxation. Smith added that the Congolese were willing to work hard if there was sufficient reward for their labours but were denied this opportunity. Instead, they were treated badly, and the taxes imposed were unjustifiable. This was a violation of the Congo Free State government's obligation to its natives and, as a result, a contravention of the Berlin Act.[93] Root informed the ACRA that the American position was to stimulate Britain into taking the lead on the Congo issue, as it was a signatory to the Berlin Act and the United States was not. He informed Barbour on 24 February that,

> [W]e have been pressing England pretty vigorously to take her position upon her right under the Berlin treaty, and have made as strong representations concurrently with England to the Belgian government as it seemed it would be useful. I do not think we could have gone further without doing more harm than good.[94]

In another letter to a close friend on 15 April 1908, Root also lamented that the United States had done all they could on the Congo issue as it was not a party to the Berlin Act, and, as such, was unable to interfere, stating that,

[90] McStallworth, 'The United States,' p.223.
[91] 'New Consul-General in Free State,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1907, p.11.
[92] Slocum to Root, 1 December 1906, FRUS, with the annual message of the President transmitted to Congress, 3 December 1907, p.791.
[93] McStallworth, 'The United States,' p.224.
[94] Philip C. Jessup, *Elihu Root: Volume II 1905-1937* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1938), p.64.

> [W]e cannot send an army to the Congo to take possession of the country and administer it ourselves. It is by only moral pressure that we can accomplish anything. This we have been exercising in conjunction with England, but to do it publicly would result in complete disaster by creating resentment in Belgium against foreign interference. The officers of the Congo Reform Association have been advised of what we have been doing.[95]

Root was also keenly aware of the 'Great Power' politics at play regarding the Congo issue and was keen to not jeopardise the American position regarding its most pressing issue on the matter – the return of free trade in the Congo Free State. The State Department, by this stage, was still working closely with the ACRA regarding the best approach to take on the issue. In turn, the ACRA, as shown in the previous chapter, was still in regular communication with its British counterpart in an exchange of ideas and strategies. Yet the CRA no longer enjoyed a similar relationship with the Foreign Office. The once close relationship Morel and the CRA had enjoyed with his allies in the Foreign Office had, by this stage, now turned sour, with Morel attacking Grey and the government's slow progress on the Congo issue; a strange criticism, given that the Foreign Office had made some progress, with annexation fast approaching.

Belgian government protestations at the now more proactive British approach to the Congo question resulted in a souring of relations between Brussels and London, which led to further Anglo-American cooperation. The Foreign Office, under pressure from the CRA, several chambers of commerce and politicians, used this Belgian protest and subsequent deterioration in relations to raise the question of post-annexation reforms in the Congo Free State. In particular, the British government identified three specific reforms that needed to take place in order to bring about satisfaction; the relief of the Congolese natives from excessive taxation, the granting of land sufficient enough to allow the Congolese to reap the benefits of its produce, and the opening up of the region to international traders in order for them to build

[95] *Ibid*.

factories and trade with the Congolese.[96] The Americans added two further demands, requesting 'the inhibition of forced labour' and 'the procurement and guarantee of equal and exact justice to all inhabitants of the Congo through the establishment and maintenance of an independent judiciary'.[97] However, Grey changed his mind on the British demands soon afterwards, instead pushing for a Belgian guarantee that forced labour would be abolished immediately after annexation and to refer any commercial issues to the Hague for arbitration – a change that the United States also supported. When the Belgian government stated that it could not give any assurances regarding a colony it was not yet responsible for, the British and American governments decided to withhold recognising the annexation until the reforms implemented by Belgium were working to their desired effect. This led to the question of whether or not Belgium had to notify the other powers of the annexation either due to being treaty-bound to do so, or by way of diplomatic courtesy. Leopold refused, stating that the British had set the precedent on non-notification when they annexed the Transvaal in 1900.[98]

Grey later reflected in his memoirs (published in 1925) that it was the maintenance of the delicate balance of power in Europe that led him to approach the issue of Congo reform with some trepidation. Although fully subscribed to the 'Belgian solution' from 1905, he was also aware of the suspicions regarding British interest in the matter. Grey explained the considerations taken into account when formulating policy, reflecting that,

> To do this [disregard the right of Belgium to take over the Congo Free State once Leopold relinquished his hold over the region] would also be politically unwise, for it would open up a vista of political complications…European powers had already enough complications on hand, and it would be the height of imprudence, and even of impolicy, to add the Congo to them. On the other hand, if the Congo were transferred to Belgium, not a finger would be stirred or a word said by anyone. The

[96] Cookey, *Great Britain*, pp.219-220.
[97] Wyndham to Grey, 2 April 1908, TNA, FO 403/116, as cited in *ibid*, pp.220-221.
[98] Cookey, *Great Britain*, p.225.

> Belgian solution was therefore the only one that would be effective, expedient, and honourable to all concerned. For this we pressed.

Grey also observed that:

> Our action was based on the international treaties or arrangements respecting the Congo and Africa in general to which we, with other Powers, were parties. But we got no support from anyone; we were left coldly and severely alone in our representation. King Leopold did at last relinquish it. From that moment the representations of the British government ceased; the CRA dissolved itself; the agitation stopped. This should be fairly be noted as proof that the stir of British public opinion about the Congo was, what it professed to be, genuinely philanthropic and disinterested. The transfer of the Congo to Belgium was regarded not only with satisfaction, but with relief; and the expectation that Congo reform would result proved to be justified, and the hope has been fulfilled.[99]

By 1908, as a result of continued Anglo-American diplomatic efforts to maintain the same viewpoint on the Congo issue, both the British and American governments were aligned on the issue of the rights of the Congolese to their land and its natural produce. As a result, both governments were also occupied the same position on that issue as both the CRA and ACRA. Subsequently, neither government would recognise Belgian annexation until a guarantee was given that all desired reforms were implemented. Root had intimated to the ACRA that public opinion would also need to be mobilised in France and Germany, alongside that of the United States and Great Britain, to strengthen the position against Belgium. Grey also hoped that further support would come from either France or Germany, or both, allowing a united front to be presented to Belgium in pressing for reforms in the Congo Free State after annexation. Belgium, for its part, was worried that if either power joined with Britain and the United States then it could lead to a crisis domestically.[100] Morel had voiced his concerns to the ACRA about the possibility of getting support on the continent, stating that '[T]he Congo is being used as a pawn in the European chessboard, and is being treated from that point of view alone, so far as

[99] Edward Grey, *Twenty Five Years: 1892 – 1916*, Vol. I (London, 1925), pp.198-199.
[100] Cookey, *Great Britain*, pp.232-233.

the Continent is concerned.'[101] Morel's assessment of the current political climate was astute; both France and Germany were wary of driving Belgium into the arms of the other, and, as a result, recognised Belgian annexation. Therefore, Britain and the United States stood alone in refusing to accept Belgian annexation of the Congo Free State. German support would come later but after Grey had informed the Americans that he had retreated to a position of 'benevolent expectancy' on the issue of intervention in the Congo.[102] After the German suggestion of tripartite action on the Congo, Grey, being aware that this would isolate the Americans on the issue, countered with a suggestion that all parties involved in the Congo Free State should work together for a resolution regarding treaty rights. The Germans ignored this request. Soon after, Root informed the Belgian Minister he was confident that the Belgian government's administration of the Congo Free State 'would meet every need and objection.'[103] When confronting the Belgians on the issue of reforms and annexation, it was the United States which took the initiative and stated that there should be Anglo-American intervention in the Congo Free State.[104] Grey stated that he was 'very glad to be in accord' with Secretary Root and the United States government on the matter of intervention.[105]

Once the Belgian government had taken over the Congo Free State, the American government still pressed for assurances that the reforms would be carried out and withheld its formal recognition of the annexation. Root's appeals to Belgium to carry out the required reforms were all framed by the Brussels Act of 1890, to which the United States was also bound. Root resigned and received warm praise from the ACRA for his support for the Congo

[101] Morel to Daniels, 15 April 1909, MP, F4/21, as cited in Laderman, 'Invasion of the United States,' pp.176-177.
[102] Grey to Bryce, 1 December 1909, TNA, FO 267/211, as cited in *ibid*, p.259.
[103] Jessup, *Elihu Root*, p.64.
[104] Root to Reid, 4 November 1907, FRUS, with the annual message of the President transmitted to Congress 3 December 1907, p.812.
[105] Carter to Root, 21 January 1908, FRUS, with the annual message of the president transmitted to Congress 8 December 1908, p.539.

reform movement. Barbour sent Root a memorandum which expressed the gratitude of the ACRA and praise for Root's Congo policy, and Hall and several other members of the ACRA wrote to him thanking Root for his 'splendid service...to humanity.'[106] Johnson even went as far as to compare Root's efforts on Congo reform to that of Lincoln and his Emancipation Proclamation, stating that the United States was now solely responsible for 'restoring the lost liberties' to the Congolese people.[107]

Conclusion

Pavlakis has stated that American policy 'shifted in December 1906 when the exposure of Leopold's paid lobby in the United States enflamed public opinion.'[108] However, as has been shown, over the course of the year in 1906 there was a gradual shift away from a non-interventionist policy to one that consisted of cooperation with one of the signatories of the Berlin Act, with the aim of pressuring Leopold to relinquish his hold over the Congo Free State. The natural ally for that policy was Great Britain, as it was there that the real force and desire for reform existed; as discussed in chapter two, there was little to no appetite for the reform campaign elsewhere in Europe.

Although the Foreign Office would prove to be an important actor in the Congo reform campaign, Grey's reluctance to pursue any policy regarding annexation alone meant that he attracted much criticism for his perceived dithering on the issue from the Congo activists. Yet this careful, pragmatic approach to the Congo issue was in stark contrast to Grey's personal feelings on the matter. In a letter to Hardinge, Grey expressed his opinion on the Congo Free State in a far more forthright manner, stating that '[M]y own personal feeling is that we are

[106] Jessup, *Elihu Root*, p.63.
[107] Johnson to Root, 10 March 1908, General Records of the Department of State, 1763–2002, Numerical File: 1806/206-1806/325:736. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/19271603> (Accessed 20 September 2018).
[108] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.166.

justified in any measure which will result in taking the Congo out of the hands of the King. He has forfeited every claim to it he ever had; and to take the Congo away from him without compensation would be less than justice, for it would leave him still with all the gains he has made by his monstrous system.'[109] Whilst Casement had been disillusioned with the Foreign Office since 1905, Morel, in particular, expressed his disappointment with Grey's approach, which led to a fracturing of the relationship between the Foreign Office and Morel; a relationship that had previously been a close one until Morel's break with the Foreign Office in 1909.[110] Grey was cautious in his approach to the Congo issue, and although he believed that Britain would eventually have to act alone, he also tried his best to avoid that particular course of action. He was additionally aware that Britain would be perceived as the 'interfering foreigner' if it pressed Leopold and the Belgian government too far.[111] However, to satisfy public opinion, Grey had to consider what steps to take towards resolving the issue. Therefore, American cooperation would have been a relief and much welcomed by Grey; unilateral action in the Congo meant that the prospect of another 'Egyptian question' would arise and complicate international relations.[112]

American foreign policy has often been monopolised by the current administration in power, yet this monopoly does not always go unchallenged and throughout its history, the foreign policy of the government has constantly been challenged by outside interests, including

[109] Echenberg, 'The British Attitude,' p.163, n.2.
[110] For more on the fracturing of the relationship between Morel and the Foreign Office, see, Catherine Ann Cline, 'E. D. Morel and the Crusade against the Foreign Office,' *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.39, No.2 (June 1967), pp.126-137.
[111] George Macauley Trevelyan, *Grey of Falloden* (London: Longmans Green, 1937), p.198.
[112] Cookey, *Great Britain*, p.203. Once Britain had taken control of Egypt, the withdrawal of British troops was a protracted affair, and the event became a byword for British political procrastination. Britain's unilateral action in Egypt also led to resentment in France, which had previously shared responsibility for Egypt with Britain, and the British occupation proved to be a liability diplomatically until de facto independence was granted to Egypt in 1922. This was a situation Grey was keen to avoid regarding the Congo issue.

business, ethnic, academic and ideological groups.[113] This was true of the Roosevelt administration and the ACRA, and was a continuation in that tradition of campaigning to influence government policy. Yet the State department felt the pressure of the ACRA more than its British counterpart did from the CRA. As a result, Reid informed the Foreign Office that the United States government was unhappy with the Colonial Bill being presented in the Belgian parliament and expressed its desire to know the British position before they decided how best to proceed. Hardinge seized upon this development to subsequently alter the position of the Foreign Office. Previously, the Foreign Office view was that it was best to wait to intervene once the Belgian government had annexed the Congo Free State. After the American government expressed its interest, the position changed to one of working with the United States to give the Belgians a 'private hint' that both the British and American governments would insist on its compliance with the Berlin Act once annexation was complete.[114]

The consideration of 'Great Power' politics meant that the British government had to pursue a more cautious approach on the Congo issue. The French right of pre-emption, Germany and Portugal owning territories adjoining the Congo Free State, and suspicions of British designs on the region all meant that the Foreign Office had to tread carefully when pushing for reform. The issue of British occupation of Egypt meant that, for Grey, the sending of force was never seriously considered. He later reflected that, 'the precedent of Egypt, where we had landed with temporary intentions and stayed permanently, would have been vigorously recalled. Our contention that the Congo agitation here was disinterested would have been stultified.'[115] Alongside this, avoiding attention being drawn to Britain's own colonial practices

[113] Ralph Hilton, *Worldwide Mission: The Story of the United States Foreign Service*, (New York: World Publishing, 1971), as quoted in Elliot P. Skinner, *African Americans and U.S. Policy Toward Africa, 1850-1924: In Defense of Black Nationality* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1992), p.3.
[114] Cookey, *Great Britain*, p.206.
[115] Grey, *Twenty Five Years*, p.192.

figured in the foreign policy mind in the early stages of the Congo reform movement. One of the reasons that the British welcomed American support on the issue was that it would allow the British to avoid any focus on its own colonial practices away, as a country that had no territorial interests in Africa supporting the British position meant that there was no real criticism of Leopold's treatment of the Congolese per se, just that it was more an issue of free trade in the Congo region; a matter of central importance to the United States government as well. The American government also had to consider Great Power politics when formulating its foreign policy approach to the Congo matter. The issue of the Russo-Japanese War, in which Roosevelt acted as mediator, took precedence over affairs in Africa, as did the Moroccan issue in which, again, Roosevelt acted as an unofficial mediator. For Roosevelt and the United States government, the preoccupation with other international problems meant that the Congo issue was not perceived to be a pressing issue.

American support also gave credence to the British claim that it did not want the Congo to become part of the British Empire, but that its motives were solely based on the issue of free trade, or, at least, its absence in the Congo Free State. Yet the American position was also criticised and, as a result, the United States also had to take a more cautious approach than the Congo reformers and, to a lesser extent, the British government, had hoped for. Recent American excursions into the Philippines – which drew criticism primarily from the Anti-Imperialist League, which included Twain – and the Spanish-American War, as well as its treatment of Native Americans, meant that the United States government also had to proceed carefully, as any approach on moral grounds could be rebuked. Yet this cautious policy was really the result of the intense and persistent activism of the ACRA. Root later reflected that,

> [T]he case of the...Congo is a very conspicuous illustration of the difficulties which are created for diplomatists, the men handling foreign affairs in a democratic country, regarding matters of sentiment. The very people who are most ardent

> against entangling alliances insist most fanatically upon our doing one hundred things a year on humanitarian grounds, which will lead to immediate war.[116]

Both Britain and the United States perceived themselves to be in a special position to intervene on such a matter as the Congo Free State. For Britain, its tradition of philanthropy and its position as a humanitarian force on the international stage meant that intervention in the Congo issue was vital if it was to maintain its moral superiority. In the American case, the 'city upon a hill' metaphor was also beginning to frame foreign policy. The United States government had recently heeded Kipling's call to take up the white man's burden, and, as a result, had embarked on a program of what it believed to be benevolent tutelage – but one that was also marred by a high degree of violence – of the peoples of its recently colonised islands after the Spanish-American War. Whilst the ACRA perceived the 'Congo question' to be a 'moral and humanitarian' one, the United States government was primarily concerned with trade issues in the Congo region; the same as its British counterpart. Yet the American government was more susceptible to pressure from Congo reformers, whereas the Foreign Office was able to keep the CRA at a safe distance, especially for the latter part of the reform movement leading up to annexation.

The issue of free trade was made central to the argument for reform in the Congo Free State by the British government. For the Americans, initially their trade in Africa was of central importance, although this would fade somewhat during the heady years of the Congo reform campaign. Whilst there was a shared goal of free trade in the Congo region, both the British and American governments also had different agendas regarding Great Power politics and the international stage. Britain was far more vulnerable to any potential conflict than the United States was with the 'Great Powers' of Europe, and subsequently geopolitics informed the British position. Yet, as has been shown, 'Great Power' rivalry did not completely escape the

[116] Jessup, *Elihu Root*, p.62.

attention of the United States, with Roosevelt's reluctance to get involved in the Congo issue because, essentially, he believed that the Americans lacked the necessary force with which to back up any potential threats made to Belgium and Leopold. Once annexation was complete, the United States government seemed to take a step back from the Congo issue. This was partly due to Roosevelt and, more specifically, Root leaving government, and then Leopold's death in 1909 all but drew the issue to a close for the Americans. The British kept up pressure for some of the proposed reforms, but the situation in Europe and the looming world war meant that the Congo was no longer an important enough issue. For the better part of the first decade of the twentieth century, both the British and American governments actively pressured first Leopold and then the Belgian government into annexation. Both nations were themselves pressured into doing so by the CRA and ACRA respectively, as well as by sympathetic politicians and wider public opinion. Yet both governments were also under pressure to maintain the delicate balance of power amongst the other 'Great Powers' and it was the diplomatic issues that played the most significant role in the formulation of British and American foreign policy regarding the Congo issue. Both the CRA and ACRA exerted influence over their own governments in the early period of Congo reform; the latter more so than its British counterpart. However, the activism of both associations was hindered by international diplomacy, the priority for both the British and American governments. Anglo-American governmental relations helped bring about the annexation of the Congo Free State by the Belgian government, and the Congo issue was another example of Anglo-American cooperation during this period.

Yet, whilst the issues that the British and American governments had to consider were relatively clear-cut, what was not as obvious were the motivations of the activists in participating in the reform campaign. This undoubtedly factored into the decision-making of both the British and American governments when deciding which position to adopt regarding

the Congo Free State problem, as vested interests were also involved in lobbying both governments and were significant in their impact on the reform movement, especially in Britain. This additional complication will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Four

'Big Business' and the Congo Reform Movement

By Black man's blood that stains the sod,
By White man's blood and Christian's God,
No treaty "rights" shall ever stand
Till Freedom reigns in Congo land.[1]

At night in sleep our Hero's laid;
He dreams he feels the accolade,
And murmurs – as his brain has strayed –
"Sir Alfred L. sounds mighty well"
"But then he sadly moans –
"The follow on is simply Hell"
"Why was I surnamed Jones?"[2]

Introduction

Why individuals become involved in the type of humanitarian movement that the CRA and ACRA belonged to was complicated. Often their motives can be perceived to be altruistic. Yet further examination of the role of these individuals can sometimes reveal a certain degree of self-interest in their rationale for participating in these campaigns. The same was also true of the activists in the Congo reform movement. Therefore, to what extent were the motives of those involved in the Congo campaign driven by altruism, if at all? Focusing on the individuals involved in the Congo reform campaign can help develop a better understanding of where

[1] 'Britons Awake!', Hymn specifically written for Congo meetings, words by Rev. A.T. Brainsby, music by Rev. W. Boyd, Liverpool Auxiliary, MP, F4/41.
[2] A poem entitled 'That Wonderful Man of Liverpool,' author unknown, MP, F8/95:161.

business and imperial politics connected during this period and can also shed light on the relationship between big business and imperialism at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In order to unpack the motives of the business interests involved, this chapter will focus on figures such as John Holt, William Cadbury and Morel, showing that the reasons for their involvement were multifaceted and not always driven by altruism towards the plight of the Congolese specifically, or an ideology regarding humanitarianism and human rights more generally, and were often motivated by their own personal interests; Holt, as a way of attacking a close business rival in Alfred Lewis Jones – the subject of the above poem – and Cadbury, to distract from his own questionable business practices.

In addition, this chapter will also focus on the business interests involved in the Congo issue, both on the side of Leopold and of the reformers, analysing the level at which the business interests and financial influence in an organisation such as the CRA helped shape its strategy and modus operandi. In particular, the role of proto-multinational corporations and the influence exerted on the reform movement by their leading figures will also be examined, in order to ascertain what impact their involvement had on the campaign. Frequently, Congo reformers deployed talk of the rights of the Congolese, specifically their treaty rights to free trade as defined by both the Berlin Act and Brussels Act, as a central motivation for their campaigning. Yet how did their ideology regarding rights affect the CRA's strategy for its campaign for reform? This chapter will show that there was significant influence exerted by prominent businessmen involved with the CRA, and, in particular, Holt and his views on the rights of the Congolese, which largely dictated the CRA's reform campaign.

Moreover, the personal relationships of those involved will be considered in order to better understand their motives for participating in the reform campaign and how those relationships also shaped the CRA. As discussed in the second chapter, the ideology of free

trade was central to the beliefs of several of the Congo reformers on both sides of the Atlantic, and was, for some, the central issue in the campaign. Indeed, a closer examination of the business rivalry between Holt and Jones – the two most prominent figures in Britain who were on opposite sides of the issue – that was played out through the Congo reform movement will show that personal agendas and interpersonal relationships often superseded ideals and beliefs on race and rights, and shaped organisations such as the CRA as a result.

The Liverpool 'Sect'

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a new humanitarian group had emerged in Britain. It had developed a conscience regarding colonial matters which set it apart from the other two schools of thought on colonial development and imperialism. These latter schools, as Morel detailed, were in opposition to the 'Third Party' of which he, Holt, and Mary Kinglsey belonged. The first school advocated that the wealth of Africa belonged to the white race, with the native being relegated to the role of labourer and wage-earner and was also against the idea of West Africans being landowners. The second school, which largely consisted of missionaries and philanthropists, had, despite their good intentions, unwittingly subjugated the West African.[3] The 'Third Party' occupied the space between these two groups, calling for those who had interests in West Africa to acknowledge the existing systems of governance in place there, as well as its traditions. This group also argued that the West African people should be afforded time to develop their own particular form of civilisation. As Morel stated,

> It was a school of thought which saw in the preservation of the West African land for him and his descendants; in a system of education which shall not anglicize; in technical instruction; in assisting and encouraging agriculture, local industries and scientific forestry; in introducing labour-saving appliances, and in strengthening all that is best, materially and spiritually, in aboriginal institutions, the highest duties of our Imperial rule.[4]

[3] E. D. Morel, *Nigeria: Its People and its Problems* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911), pp.x-xi.
[4] *Ibid*, pp.xiii-xiv, as cited in Nworah, 'The Liverpool "Sect,"' p.350.

The colonial ideology for this 'Sect', later termed 'Morelism', was, as Porter has observed, drawn from two sources; Kingsley's ideas and Holt's commercial interests.[5] Although Kingsley died before the formation of the CRA in Britain, her views on Africans informed both Holt's and Morel's beliefs, and both Holt and Morel carried on her principles throughout the first decade of the twentieth century in their campaign for reform in the Congo Free State. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some brief context on Kingsley and her role in the wider Congo reform movement in order to better understand Holt's ideals regarding the Congolese and, in particular, his view on their rights, which help shed light on his motives for participating in the reform campaign.

Kingsley has been described as being the intellectual and philosophic spokesperson for the British traders to West Africa in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and it was in this role that she formed a relationship with Holt and influenced his beliefs on the rights of Africans.[6] Her support for those traders was absolute and Kingsley fought for their interests continually during this period, until her death in 1900. This support was so strong that Kingsley heavily criticised both the missionaries and colonial rule in West Africa, to the point where she wished both were no longer present in West Africa.[7] Describing herself as 'a hardened, unreformed, imperial expansionist', Kingsley also advocated the creation of a belt of territory that stretched from the east to the west coast of Africa.[8] However, after visiting West Africa, Kingsley returned to Britain and was dismayed by the difference in opinion she had with other imperialists in Britain; she believed that the latter were not interested in the real issues in West Africa, instead preferring to adopt a 'self-satisfied ignorance' on the matter and to leave the

[5] Porter, *Critics*, p.240.
[6] J. E. Flint, 'Mary Kingsley – A Reassessment,' *The Journal of African History*, Vol.4, Issue 1 (1963), p.96.
[7] *Ibid*.
[8] Porter, *Critics*, p.241.

welfare of Britain's African subjects in the hands of the missionaries.[9] For Kingsley, Africans were a 'different kind of being to white men'; they possessed a different type of intelligence to that of a white person – one which could still potentially be superior – but that particular form was incapable of operating in the same way as the European version. Kingsley was of the opinion that 'African religion, morality, and society were natural and proper expressions of African personality, and to try to "improve" them would produce only bastardization, corruption, and degradation.'[10]

By the end of the nineteenth century, a change in approach to African colonies began to take shape in Britain. The previous theme of Commerce, Christianity and Civilisation had developed into a new concept, one that advocated a more settled government of the colonies in order for them to be developed for the benefit of Africans and Europeans involved in Africa. In 1895, this policy was vocalised by the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, at a time when an emerging critique of British imperialism entered the public debate on colonialism.[11] It was also around this time that Kingsley emerged as a 'symbol of dissent' in imperial attitudes towards West Africa, and began her friendship with Holt.[12] It was through her campaigning on behalf of the traders involved with West Africa that Kinglsey had first met Holt. They both opposed the methods deployed by the Colonial Office in its administration of Britain's West African colonies and became allied over the issue of the imposition of a hut-tax on the natives in Sierra Leone and the subsequent rebellion that resulted from it. Both were of the opinion that the system was at fault, and, in particular, those in charge of overseeing the system of government in the colonies were not fit to do so. Instead, they

[9] *Ibid*.
[10] Flint, 'Mary Kingsley – A Reassessment,' p.100.
[11] Cherry Gertzel, 'John Holt: A British Merchant in West Africa in the Era of Imperialism,' (PhD thesis. University of Oxford, 1959), p.556.
[12] Nworah, 'Liverpool Sect,' p.352.

believed that those colonies should be operated by professionals who were experienced in dealing with Africans and who possessed the required knowledge of the geography of West Africa and its people; in other words, the traders should be in charge.[13]

The relationship between Kingsley and Holt was one of mutual admiration and respect, yet their alliance was not as closely-knit as it first appears. Whilst they agreed on some matters regarding colonialism, such as the hut-tax in Sierra Leone, on others they disagreed. Kingsley's central tenet regarding African colonialism was that of native customs and indirect rule, whereas Holt firmly believed in commerce and economic indirect rule – essentially that the focus should be on commercial domination, rather than formal colonization and territorial expansion. Yet both believed that it was Britain's job to rule in Africa and that it had contributed greatly in West Africa, and together they laid the foundations of the ideology of the Liverpool 'sect'. When Kingsley died in 1900, this ideology developed and lived on through the addition to the group of Morel and the reformist critique described as 'Morelism'.[14] All three would be proponents of this particular school of thought, and it would be the central tenet in the movement for reform in the Congo.

It was through Kingsley that Holt and Morel had met. Kingsley asked Holt to take Morel under his wing if Jones ever dismissed him from his position with Elder Dempster, which was the leading shipping line to West Africa during this period, noting that Morel was 'a struggling young man with a family'.[15] Holt's connections were of huge benefit to Morel. In 1900, Morel began to write a series of articles, published anonymously, that appeared in *The Speaker* which denounced the system in the Congo Free State, and, in particular, the absence of free trade in

[13] *Ibid;* Porter, *Critics,* pp.247-248.
[14] Porter, *Critics,* p.240.
[15] Kingsley to Holt, 25 July 1899, as cite in Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism,* p.43; Kenneth D. Nworah, 'Humanitarian Pressure Groups and British Attitudes to West Africa, 1895-1914' (Unpublished PhD dissertation, King's College London, 1966), p.51.

the region. He focused his attack on treaty obligations; there was no reference to native rights at this stage, and, as Pavlakis has observed, this developed later through Holt's influence.[16] Holt was instrumental in orchestrating Morel's first public appearance at the annual meeting of the Women's Liberal Association on 11 June 1901, at which Morel lectured the audience on British government policy in West Africa, and how economic progress there was dependent on native labour, in a climate that precluded white people working the land, meaning that it was imperative that the African was conciliated.[17] Morel also used the opportunity to network with influential figures 'who could be of use to him later.'[18]

The relationship between Holt and Morel was mutually beneficial, yet their relationship was not an equal one. For Morel, Holt provided not only invaluable contacts with leading business interests and high-ranking officials at the Foreign Office, but his financial support both to him individually and the CRA allowed Morel to focus on and sustain his reform activism from the turn of the century until Belgian annexation. However, for Holt the relationship allowed him control over an effective mouthpiece in Morel, which provided him with someone who could promote his business interests and help disparage the practices of others, most notably his rival in Liverpool, Sir Alfred Jones. Whilst Holt confessed that Morel had been an influence on his views on West Africans, he also exerted a great influence on Morel, both philosophically, and, arguably more importantly, financially, and sought to control him throughout this period of Congo reform. In 1905, when Morel considered taking a position with the African Society in order to strengthen his position in the morality of the Congo argument, Holt disapproved, stating, 'I do not want to see you in the company of such a lot of respectables that you may run the danger of becoming as emasculated as they are. I see the

[16] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.45.
[17] Nworah, 'Liverpool Sect,' p.361; Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.24.
[18] *Ibid*, p.361.

influence of your connexion with those "powers that be" in that you do not so freely criticise their doings as you used to.'[19] Later, in 1910, Holt acknowledged Morel's usefulness when articulating the economic argument in West Africa in a letter to Cadbury, stating that 'Morel is a great asset...if we know how to make use of him properly in our West African work.'[20] By 1911, Holt pressured Morel into taking on the joint role of secretary and publicist of the African Association alongside the role of Managing Director and editor of *The African Mail*. Morel declined, stating that the poor salary and the compromising of his independence on the Congo issue as reasons. Holt then insisted that Morel worked instead for his company in London, which he subsequently did, despite the obvious conflict of interest. Clearly Morel's dependence on his financial support meant that Holt was able to exert great influence over his decision-making and, ultimately, the course of his activism and career.

Within the historiography, this relationship between Holt and Morel has been described as one that resembles a father-son relationship, with the development of a 'warm and often fatherly correspondence' between the two, interspersed with examples of 'paternal disapproval' and 'paternal scolding'.[21] Yet, what is certainly true about their relationship is that Holt exerted a father-like control over Morel's activism throughout this period, a control he was able to maintain through his financial contributions to the CRA and, in particular, to Morel.

Motivations

The motivations of those involved in the Congo reform movement in Britain were manifold. One of the objectives of this chapter is to unpack the reasons for the involvement of those businessmen involved in the movement, with a specific focus on Holt, in particular. In order to

[19] Holt to Morel, 28 September 1905, MP, F8/85:394.
[20] Holt to Cadbury, 20 August 1910, as cited in Porter, *Critics*, p.258.
[21] Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.15; Nworah, 'Liverpool Sect,' p.361; Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.43.

understand his motivations, it will be necessary to examine his beliefs and views on the rights of Africans to better understand the level of altruism at play in his Congo activism.

Holt had first-hand experience of West Africa. From his first visit to Fernando Po in 1862, he began to build up his business, encountering opposition from the already established Liverpool traders operating on the West African coast. Despite this, by the 1880s Holt had managed to establish a successful company, expanding his trading interests in Africa. However, he also faced stiff competition from monopolies consisting of those Liverpool traders he had previously encountered, to whom Holt was now a bigger threat. This also coincided with the period in which European powers were extending their political authority based on treaties made with African rulers. These treaties also threatened the trade of the Liverpool merchants operating in West Africa, as their trade was primarily based on economic collaboration with West African middlemen. Holt, despite his opposition to monopolies, decided to instead join with the Liverpool traders' monopoly. This resulted in the creation of the African Association Limited; as Gertzel has observed, Holt was willing to 'compete or combine, according to which offered the greater profit.'[22]

Yet it was also during this time that Holt developed a respect for African traders and their role in helping build up his business. He acknowledged that, 'they made me what I am; their labour, their muscle, their enterprise, have given me everything I possess. I am bound to try and protect them against outrage and injustice.'[23] This concern for what Holt perceived as fair treatment for Africans would partly fuel his Congo reform activism. Before he met Morel, Holt had remained relatively quiet when criticising government colonial policy. Morel had begun to write articles championing Holt's cause against the concessionaires and the confiscation of

[22] Gertzel, 'John Holt,' pp.14-15, 557.
[23] John Holt in the *African Mail*, as quoted in Nworah, 'Liverpool Sect,' p.354.

Holt's goods in the French Congo, which placed Morel firmly on Holt's radar, and from there they struck up a friendship that would last until Holt's death.

Holt's business interests were affected by the French concessionaire system in place in the French Congo. In the 1890s, France began to hand over large tracts of land to private companies so that it was they who would develop the land, not the French government, and subsequently reap the rewards of the produce, mirroring the system that Leopold had implemented in the Congo Free State. By 1899, forty concession companies had been formed, all with exclusive rights to trade in the area. As a result, Holt's business there was excluded; his agents were followed and seized, and their produce confiscated.[24] Both Holt and the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce protested this to the British government, citing infringement of the free trade principles enshrined in the Berlin Act, but their pleas fell on deaf ears as the British government declared that any issues they faced there were a private matter and not in the national interest.[25] Holt had a history of opposition to monopolies such as this; he had previously tried, and failed, to acquire a share of the monopoly held by the Royal Niger Company over trade in West Africa, yet by the turn of the century had changed his view to one that believed monopolies were dangerous for both free trade, and, crucially, the rights of Africans.[26]

Holt laid the credit for this development in viewpoint regarding the welfare of Africans with Kingsley. When she died in 1900, Holt described Kingsley as his 'spiritual mother' and acknowledged her influence in getting him to think 'on the right lines and to work for the good of the African people', later stating that 'Mary Kingsley discovered me and made me think;

[24] Gertzel, 'John Holt,' pp.587-88.
[25] Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.79.
[26] Gertzel, 'John Holt,' p.592.

Morel carried on her work and kept me thinking.'[27] He believed that Kingsley made him think beyond his business interests in West Africa and to consider the wider issues of colonial government and the welfare and development of the West African people. Holt said of Kingsley that she possessed, and hoped for, a 'longing for patience, honesty, fair dealing, justice, firm but humane treatment and a just recognition of human rights among those we govern, no matter what their colour, intelligence or degree of natural mental ability.'[28]

Yet Holt's views on Africans also reflected the limitations of the period in which he campaigned for free trade in the Congo. Holt firmly believed that Africans welcomed British rule and made no reference to African independence, rights and self-determination; all of which were emerging issues at the beginning of the twentieth century.[29] Within the historiography, Holt has been given credit for his humanitarian concern for the Congolese; that 'humanity, not commerce, was his *raison d'être*' and praise for how he had been a 'genuine humanitarian'.[30] Yet, undoubtedly, free trade was the central issue for Holt and not the immediate welfare of Africans. He did share a concern for the welfare of the Congolese and was genuinely horrified by their treatment under the system in place in the Congo Free State. However, commercial interests superseded this mistreatment, as, in Holt's view, both free trade and humanity were inextricably linked. The former was a prerequisite for the achievement of native rights in the Congo and the only way to ensure the rights and welfare of the African people. Those best placed to achieve this were the European merchants who had a long history of trade with West Africa and a better understanding of the natives and their culture.

[27] Nworah, 'Liverpool Sect,' p.359.
[28] Holt to Morel, 20 June 1900, as quoted in Gertzel, 'John Holt,' p.570.
[29] *Ibid*, p.582.
[30] Nworah, 'Liverpool Sect,' p.352; Pakenham, *Scramble*, p.592.

The belief that traders, and not governments, were best placed to oversee colonial development was also linked to the reformer's free trade ideology. Holt had initially been reluctant to speak out against the government's colonial policy for fear of his business interests suffering as a consequence of being considered an outspoken critic of government policy.[31] He told Morel that he believed that his 'destiny arranged by Providence is to be a distributor of merchandise.'[32] Yet, he would soon become a vocal critic of the British government's colonial policy of taxation and use of force in the colonies. To Holt, the African would only acquiesce in British rule if it was just and peaceful. He stated that, '[I]f the West African be fairly treated by us he is more disposed to welcome than kill us. We consider it the worst of policies which seeks to kill off people who are our willing customers'.[33] If government of the colonies was to be successful, Holt believed that this would only be achievable through a fair trading relationship with the West African; not necessarily a wholly equal one, but one borne out of respect for the principle of free trade.

Holt believed that depriving the Congolese of the right to free trade was another example of how a government would 'interfere with a man's liberty,' as it favoured monopolies and concessions instead.[34] Morel shared this opinion. He also believed that business, rather than government, would lead the development of Africa, delivering benefits to metropole and colony.[35] Morel contended that the most important factors in the development of the colonies were along commercial lines, and specifically,

> [T]he maintenance of the right of the native to trade, not with the Englishman only, but with all men; the right of the native to sell his labour and the fruits of his hand,

[31] Gertzel, 'John Holt,' p.574.
[32] Holt to Morel, 31 December 1901, MP, F8/83:170; Cookey, *Great Britain*, p.61.
[33] Gertzel, 'John Holt,' p.579.
[34] Holt to Morel, 27 June 1903, MP, F8/85:316.
[35] E. D. Morel, *Affairs of West Africa* (Affairs of West Africa. 1902. Reprint, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968), pp.188-200.

> which his labour can alone gather and reap...to use the word TRADE, lest we be accused of interested motives; lest humanitarianism be described as utilitarianism.[36]

To Morel and Holt, free trade was the best way to develop an empire without costly government intervention. This highlights that there was a marked difference in ideology between the British merchants involved in trade in West Africa, who were keen on defending their personal commercial interests there, and the British consular authorities who sought to preserve British influence and prestige on the West African coast.

Both Holt and Morel's views on free trade and native rights were in harmony with one another and provided a solid foundation for their friendship during the Congo reform campaign. Using the argument of free trade and native rights, Morel's work often delivered scathing attacks against Leopold's system in the Congo Free State and the absence of free trade in the region. In Holt's opinion, the absence of free trade was the reason for the atrocities being committed in the Congo Free State. When the idea was mooted that the Belgian government annex the territory and take responsibility for its government, he stated that,

> [T]he Congo has been exploited by force because there has been no real trade. If commerce had been at work in the Congo Free State I repeat that there would have been no need for all this misery. There would have been a progressive Government, well able to pay its way, and a just government for the people. If Belgium were to take over the Congo State to-day she would take a country in which there is no natural revenue. Therefore, if Belgium were to take over the Congo to-morrow she would have to face the cost of administration altogether.[37]

For Morel, what was of paramount importance was '[T]he maintenance of the commercial relationship between the European and the African [as] the bedrock of the legitimate development of tropical Africa by the European, and...the destruction of that relationship must, of necessity, be accompanied...by occurrences similar to those which for ten shameful years

[36] *West African Mail*, 10 August 1906, MP, F4/29. Capitalisation in original.
[37] *Official Organ of the Congo Reform Association*, April 1907, p.16, MP, F4/33.

have been reported from the Congo.'[38] Essentially, Holt and Morel advocated that Africans would become 'civilised' through the exchange of goods and ideas, to the benefit of both African and European parties involved in trade. 'He is a very shrewd man, the African', Morel stated, as his 'marked characteristics' were,

> [T]he capacity for barter, the keenness to bargain...he will go to the store of white man No. 1 and look at it, and the store of white man No. 2 and look at that, and gradually out of the earlier relationship will develop ruling market prices, and commerce will have taken a place in the black man's mind and the black man's life, which is for his good; for the good of the European merchant, who risks his health and his capital on the commercial instincts of the Negro – for no one but the Negro can gather the produce of the soil the European desires; for the good of the European Administrator, who levies customs dues on his countryman's goods in order that he may bring improvements into the black man's country and give facilities to the European merchant; for the good of the Europeans in the far-off Western world, who handle the product of the black man's labour. Thus, and thus alone, can tropical Africa be legitimately developed by the white man.[39]

In addition, both Holt and Morel not only believed that the Congo Free State system was unique to any other colonial system elsewhere, but they also believed that the British colonial system was morally unique to others. To Herbert Samuel, Morel wrote that, '[D]on't you think it is a great pity (mind, I am opposed to Chinese labour, and always have been, although the word. 'slavery' was an abuse of terms in that connection) that the suggestion of a parallel should be drawn between the Congo business and anything else in the world.'[40] The hypocrisy of the Congo reformers on insisting that the Congo issue was unique and different to British transgressions in their African and Australian colonies prompted Keir Hardie, MP and founder of the Labour Party in Britain, to observe that 'we [the International Socialist Bureau] support [the CRA] because it says what is true, but still we think that its members are rather

[38] *Official Organ to the Congo Reform Association: Supplement to the West African Mail*, May 1904, p.146, MP, F4/29.
[39] Morel, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa*, p.36.
[40] Morel to Samuel, 5 September 1905, as quoted in Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.109. This was in reference to the Chinese 'slavery' issue in South Africa. As Grant has observed, this was not an issue that Leopold would use that often when criticising the moral authority of the British, as Jones had imported Chinese indentured labourers into Sierra Leone. See, Grant, *Civilised Savagery*, Ch.3.

hypocritical.'[41] For Holt and Morel, the key difference between British colonies and the Congo Free State was the treatment of the natives. Where British rule had been imposed in West Africa, the natives had been left in possession of their land and were allowed to trade freely. By contrast, in the Congo Free State, the Congolese had their land stolen from them by Leopold and were denied the right to free trade. Only the restoration of their land and the reinstitution of free trade would end the atrocities.

The free trade principle permeated the CRA's rhetoric throughout the first decade of the twentieth century. However, the issue of free trade was also an important, but secondary, issue to the American reformers. As discussed in chapter two, the ACRA frequently reminded the United States government of its role and the role of individual Americans in the creation of the Congo Free State, especially regarding the issue of free trade, having been the first country to recognise Leopold's IAA rule in the Congo. Referring to the 'open door' policy that had been established with the birth of the Congo Free State, Senator John Tyler Morgan stated that,

> [A]ll the great commercial nations at once began to look earnestly in that direction for a new and most inviting field of commerce, and with the high and noble purpose of opening it freely to the equal enjoyment of all nations alike. The merchants of Europe and America insist upon this equal and universal right of free trade with that country, and their chambers of commerce have earnestly pressed upon their respective governments the duty and necessity of such international agreements as would secure these blessings to the people of Africa and of the entire commercial world.[42]

Several members of the ACRA were fully subscribed to the ideology of free trade. In particular, Dr David Starr Jordan, a leading academic who was also vice president of the Anti-Imperialist League and a member of the International Free Trade League, and one of the ACRA's chief

[41] Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.110.
[42] Reports of Committees: 30th Congress, 1st Session - 48th Congress, 2nd Session, 26 March 1884. "To Enter Africa from America": The United States, Africa, and the New Imperialism, 1862-1919. Accessed November 12, 2018. <http://greystoke.unl.edu/doc/llg.con.001.01.html.>

officers, was probably the most well-known of the members of the Cobden Club. As Palen has stated, 'Anglo-American Cobdenites...primarily advocated anti-imperial, non-coercive, commercial expansionism through international free trade'. Such individuals were also Anglophiles that advocated a liberalisation of international trade.[43] Yet those involved with the ACRA did not consider the imperialism issue as prominent as the issue of free trade. Indeed, the ACRA argued that if the American government would not intervene in the name of humanity and philanthropy, then it should do so based on the removal of free trade by Leopold in the Congo Free State.[44] On the issue of free trade, the ACRA faced more opposition from the American government. Both Roosevelt and Lodge had previously been advocates of free trade and members of the Cobden Club. However, by the turn of the century, both had made a protectionist turn and became hostile towards their former Cobdenite colleagues and free traders.[45] The argument for the absence of free trade in the Congo Free State largely fell on deaf ears when petitioning the American government and meant that the ACRA would have to seek an alternative message in order to receive support for their cause, providing another barrier for the Anglo-American activists and their transnational collaboration on the Congo issue.

The Influence of Big Business

The largest personal donor to the CRA and Morel was William A. Cadbury, cocoa manufacturer and Quaker. As Pavlakis has noted, Cadbury's total donations of £1,241 were over ten per cent of the CRA's total funds and his personal subsidies to Morel was at least £2,800 – worth over £250,000 today.[46] Other members of the Cadbury family also donated, totalling nearly five per cent of the total donations to the CRA, but it was William Cadbury's donations which made the

[43] Marc Palen, *The "Conspiracy" of Free Trade: The Anglo-American Struggle over Empire and Economic Globalisation, 1846-1896* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp.xxviii-xxxiii.
[44] 'Humanity and the Open Door,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1906, p.7.
[45] Palen, *Conspiracy*, pp.112-113.
[46] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.111.

most impact. This was following in a long history of Quaker involvement in antislavery campaigns, and the more recent activism of his uncle George Cadbury and his public opposition to the British government's imperialist policies regarding the Boer War and its proposal to import Chinese indentured labour into the Transvaal to save the colony's gold mines.[47]

Yet, Cadbury's motives for his involvement in the Congo reform campaign have been questioned. At the turn of the century, Cadbury Brothers had been involved in a scandal regarding working practices in the Portuguese colony of São Tomé. The firm had bought its cocoa from São Tomé for a decade after first learning of the existence of slavery in the colony. This inevitably attracted some criticism, especially after the visit to São Tomé of the journalist Henry Nevinson, who serialised his findings between August 1905 and February 1906, later publishing a book on the subject, and who brought the spotlight onto the suspect business practices of the Cadburys.[48] This led to condemnation from several British newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, which criticised 'large Quaker houses who largely advertise their preparations of cocoa but singularly enough never mention that the main ingredient is obtained by slave labour.'[49] Morel had publicly belittled the cocoa slavery scandal, in defence of his friend, Cadbury. As Burroughs has observed, in a review of Nevinson's book, Morel called the author's character into question by stating that 'unlike Mr. Nevinson, I put my faith in the English people', as well as describing the book as being 'marked throughout by wonderful self-restraint, which only breaks down here and there in passages of mordant bitterness.'[50]

Despite having corresponded with Morel since 1903 and Cadbury contributing to the creation of the CRA in 1904, the two did not meet each other in person until 26 June 1905.

[47] Grant, *Civilised Savagery*, p.110.
[48] *Ibid*, p.111.
[49] *Daily Mail*, 26 July 1906, as cited in *ibid*.
[50] Burroughs, *Travel Writing*, p.112; Lowell J. Satre, *Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics, and the Ethics of Business* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), pp.53-54.

Cadbury had been instrumental in introducing Morel to important contacts with the Society of Friends and helped to promote the first coverage of the atrocities in the Congo Free State in the Quaker journal *The Friend*.[51] On the occasion of their first meeting, Cadbury donated £1000 to the CRA, a stunning amount given the CRA's financial plight at this time; Morel had been lamenting the state of the CRA's finances to Cadbury over several letter exchanges, noting that it would require £500 to maintain the organisation for that fiscal year and sustain its campaign for Congo reform. However, this donation was a timely one as this was shortly before the release of Nevinson's serialised story of slavery in São Tomé.[52] This relationship was advantageous for both Morel and Cadbury; by expressing his concerns regarding the plight of the CRA's finances to a wealthy benefactor like Cadbury, Morel must have known that there was a real possibility of receiving more money towards the Congo reform cause and for his own personal benefit. Soon after their first meeting, Cadbury also funded Morel in his role as the editor of the *West African Mail*, paying him £250 over a period of two and half years and asking Morel to keep the arrangement private.[53] Later, Cadbury donated money to help with the education of Morel's eldest son, and encouraged Morel to run for parliament, promising a donation of £400 for each election campaign and a personal income of £800 a year for Morel. In addition, Cadbury also promised to take care of Morel's family in the event of the latter's death, providing an annual income of £500 until their youngest son turned twenty-one, dropping to £300 a year after that.[54] Although always away from the spotlight and remaining in the background in the Congo reform movement, at the height of the criticism following Nevinson's

[51] Grant, *Civilised Savagery*, p.124.
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] *Ibid*.
[54] Louis, 'Critical Notes,' in Morel, Louis, Stengers, *E. D. Morel*, pp.258-260.

articles, in agreement with Morel, Cadbury quietly disassociated himself formally from the CRA and resigned from its committee.[55]

Although their friendship was genuine, the relationship served both Morel and Cadbury's aims well. Morel was now the public mouthpiece for Cadbury as well as Holt, publicly defending the Cadbury Brothers business practices in São Tomé, as well as pressuring his fellow humanitarians in Fox Bourne and Harris to not publicly criticise Cadbury Brothers.[56] For Morel, the main concern was that the cocoa slavery issue would distract from the campaign for Congo reform, and this was not as important an issue as it was not comparable to the system in place in the Congo Free State. Cadbury agreed, as he also did not see that the two were the same, considering the labour in São Tomé to be different to the other forms of slavery that existed in Africa.[57] This seems to be a selective viewing of the system in place in São Tomé, but what this example does highlight is not only the divisions between humanitarians in Britain – Fox Bourne's call to boycott the cocoa plantations was in contrast to Morel's support of Cadbury's decision to continue to purchase cocoa grown by slaves – but also the priorities of those involved.

The cocoa slavery question was not the only one where Morel displayed a selective morality. In 1911, the soap manufacturer Lever Brothers was granted a concession in the Congo Free State by the Belgian government in a deal that resembled the concessions which existed under Leopold's rule in the Congo region. Morel and Sir William Lever had been in

[55] Grant, *Civilised Savagery*, p.112.
[56] *Ibid*, p.125.
[57] Satre, *Chocolate on Trial*, p.19. As Satre has observed, in Cadbury's early letters regarding the issue of labour in São Tomé, he viewed it as quite different to that of the system of labour used in gold or diamond mining, and that the work involved in cultivating cocoa provided 'labour of the very best kind to be found in the tropics.' Satre also draws attention to an example of Cadbury's cognitive dissonance regarding the issue. Cadbury stated that he was reluctant to publish the bill of sale from the plantation as its wording was not clear and could be misinterpreted as fact. Yet, Satre points out that this does not make sense as the bill clearly shows 'human beings as property.'

correspondence since July 1910 when Lever had asked Morel if he had been involved in the government's decision to refuse Lever Brothers application for grants in land based in Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Lever was very much of the view that, if the land was left to Africans to develop, then it 'would remain undeveloped for centuries'. He informed Morel that, '[T]he very deplorable fact is that superior human intelligence in the white man has often not only in the Congo but in Tasmania, Australia, New Zealand, Kentucky, Virginia, New England and Canada abused its ability and illtreated and murdered the Native races', and that '[T]his awful fact has not raised the black man to a position to do without intelligent guidance from the white man.' He added that, 'I do not think you are likely to achieve the happiness of the black man unless you study his capabilities.…[T]he land of the world, in any part of the world ought to be in the possession of those people who can develop it and its resources.'[58] This view differed from Morel's own, but Lever's reputation and his success in business led Morel and others within the CRA to trust that he would treat the Congolese fairly if his business interests were tied to the Congo Free State.

Morel denied any involvement in the government's decision, stating that, on the contrary, he thought Lever's proposal – which he believed would not compel the Congolese to sell through Lever Brothers and, subsequently, not affect their rights – was a sound idea that was 'full of the greatest possibilities'. Morel then wrote to his contacts in the Colonial Office on Lever's behalf. He believed that Lever could become 'a great power in West African affairs.'[59] This example is an interesting one in that Lever's proposal would have meant that he would have obtained a monopoly in the area, something Morel would usually have opposed. In addition, both Lever and Morel had very different views on Africans and the land issue. Lever

[58] Brian Lewis, *So Clean: Lord Leverhulme, Soap and Civilisation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp.168-169. For more on Lever and the Congo Free State, see, Lewis, *So Clean*, Ch.4.
[59] Porter, *Critics*, pp.280-281; Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.264.

believed that the land should be occupied by those in the best position to reap its rewards for 'the advancement of civilisation', and that developing land in that way was a 'congenial occupation of the black man', stating that he thought Morel's 'advocacy of the black man's interest' would be more helpful to the African if he did not put a 'halo around the black man and convert him into a kind of being which it will take him hundreds of years of intercourse with the white man to become.'[60] This view was in contrast to Morel's on the issue of land rights. Yet, Morel was able to overcome this conflict in viewpoints. Despite his appeals to Lever's altruism being ignored, Morel remained silent on Lever's concession in the Congo Free State. In addition, Lever made a donation to the CRA of £100 around this time – after having previously donated £100 to Morel personally – and, as Nworah argues, Morel was beginning to cast his eye towards standing for parliament and having someone as powerful as Lever as an ally would help his cause.[61] In Porter's view, that Lever donated money both personally to Morel and the CRA does not suggest that Morel was corrupted by this in any way. Yet what it does show is a recurring trend in Morel's relationship with big business donors – that of remaining silent on their suspect business practices in exchange for personal donations or funding for the Congo reform campaign. Porter has speculated that, in the case of his silence on Lever's concession, it was more Morel's pragmatism than corruption that led him to remain tight-lipped.[62] Yet, as we have seen, this was not an isolated incident, nor one that reflects well on Morel's altruism and motives for his activism in the Congo reform campaign.

Big Business Opposition

One of the more formidable obstacles that the Congo reformers in Britain faced was that from big business interests involved in West African trade, and the Congo reformers were often met

[60] Lever to Morel, 18 April 1911, as cited in *ibid*, pp.266-267; *Ibid*, p.283.
[61] Nworah, 'Humanitarian Pressure Groups,' p.528.
[62] Porter, *Critics*, p.285.

with staunch opposition to their plans. This was not the case in the United States, however. Within the historiography, it has been argued by both McStallworth and Jerome Sternstein that the United States manoeuvred to claim an economic foothold in the Congo region. McStallworth has argued that the concessions granted by Leopold to a group of American businessmen influenced the Roosevelt administration's decision to not get involved in the Congo issue.[63] Sternstein expanded this argument later, citing one individual, Senator Nelson Aldrich, who was a leading Republican Senator and close friend of Roosevelt, as being responsible for both Roosevelt and Root's unwillingness to act.[64] He concluded that relationships between influential politicians and vested business interests can 'often serve as a countervailing force' to foreign policy decision-making; essentiality, that interests such as this would prove to be huge obstacles for the reformers to overcome, and the withdrawal of their business interests from the Congo Free State influenced the American government's decision-making on the issue far more than the 'moral suasion and determination' of the Congo activists.[65] Yet, the American business interests involved did not attempt to influence Roosevelt and his administration's policy towards the Congo Free State, and, as a result, were not a significant obstacle for the American reformers.

As a way of trying to dissuade the American government in working with its British counterpart in pursuing the 'Belgian solution', Leopold attempted to attract American business interests into investing in the Congo Free State. Henry Wellington Wack, one of Leopold's American agents, advised the king of the Belgians to deflect mounting criticism of the Congo Free State system in the United States to,

> Open up a strip of territory clear across the Congo State from east to west for benefit of American capital. Take the present concessionaires by the throat if necessary and

[63] McStallworth, 'United States'.
[64] Sternstein, 'Leopold, Aldrich'.
[65] *Ibid*, p.203.

> compel them to share their privileges with the Americans. In this manner, you will create an American vested interest in the Congo which will render the yelping of the English agitators and Belgian Socialists futile.[66]

American interest in Congolese rubber dated back to 1892 and the formation of the United States Rubber Company, whose representative, Charles Flint, visited Leopold to discuss a potential deal. However, due to the king's excessive demands – he sought a fee that equated to twenty times the annual income from Congo rubber exports – the deal fell through.[67] However, Leopold did not give up on striking a deal with American business interests and in 1906 contacted Thomas Ryan, an American business magnate, who, together with the Guggenheim family, Edwin B. Aldrich (brother of Senator Aldrich), J. P. Morgan, and John D. Rockefeller Jr, formed the American Congo Company.

However, this business venture was ill-timed. Soon after it was formed, the *New York American* ran its exposé in which the claim was made that Secretary Root was influenced by this group of businessmen not to involve the United States government in the affairs of the Congo Free State, as Root had previously represented Ryan as his lawyer several years earlier. In addition, it was also alleged that the Assistant Secretary of State, Robert Bacon, was a former partner in Morgan's banking firm and that he had acted as a financial agent for Leopold.[68] Even so, there is no evidence of a conflict of interest or any influence on decision-making within government as a result of the formation of the American Congo Company.[69] The timing of the formation of this company also meant that, if big business was to get involved in the Congo issue and influence the Roosevelt administration to not intervene, then the time frame to do so was limited. The American Congo Company and its deal with Leopold for concessions was not

[66] *New York American*, 14 December 1906, as cited in McStallworth, 'United States,' p.254; 'King Leopold's Trick,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1907, p.19.
[67] McStallworth, 'United States,' p.255.
[68] *Ibid*, p.288.
[69] Root's biographer stated that there was nothing in his private letters or government archives that supported this claim. See, Jessup, *Elihu Root*, p.63.

finalised until November 1906; the exposé ran in mid-December, meaning that there was very little time to influence the American government at all regarding the Congo Free State. The significant consequence of the exposé of the American Congo Company's deal with Leopold was that it provided the American government with a legitimate reason to investigate the situation in the Congo Free State and to also be apprehensive of Leopold's intentions. The American business interests in the Congo Free State were not a significant obstacle to overcome for the American Congo activists, primarily due to the interests of the American Congo Company being short-lived, but also due to the negative press attention it received soon after the deal was made with Leopold.

In Britain, the story was very different, again emphasising the different national frameworks within which the reform movement had to operate on each side of the Atlantic. Almost all of the trade of British West Africa was controlled by the Chambers of Commerce within Britain. Three of the most powerful Chambers of Commerce in Britain were in the cities of Liverpool, London and Manchester. It was these Chambers that had agitated in favour of Leopold's humanitarian project at the Berlin Conference in 1884-85, and that proved to be the biggest obstacles to overcome. The chairman of the Manchester Chambers of Commerce's Africa section was head of a firm that sold cotton to the government of the Congo Free State and whose business partner was also the Belgian consul in the city. The president of the London Chamber of Commerce was a Knight Commander of the Order of Leopold. However, the main opposition came from the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.

Liverpool had played a prominent role in the development of trade with West Africa. The port city had grown exponentially on the barter of manufactured goods for slaves and its ships and merchants dominated the transatlantic slave trade in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The vast amount of civic and personal wealth derived from the slave trade by the city

and its merchants helped to lay the foundations for its later growth into one of the major shipping ports in the world during the nineteenth century. By 1857, Liverpool was responsible for almost half of exports from the United Kingdom and a third of imports with Africa and, in particular, West Africa. This 'legitimate' African trade played a significant role in Liverpool's rise as a global port.[70] Sir Alfred Jones was the central figure of opposition in Britain for Morel. Based in Liverpool, Elder Dempster and Company was one of the largest shipping firms in the United Kingdom and was controlled by Jones. His shipping company, along with the Woermann Line of Hamburg, dominated West African shipping and, having signed a contract with Leopold II to ship goods to and from the Congo in 1895, Jones had managed to turn this line into a monopoly by 1901.[71] Given that both Casement and Morel were at one point in time employed by Elder Dempster, Jones would invariably play some role in the Congo reform movement. Not only was Jones Morel's former employer and mentor, he was also the President of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, and chairman of its African section. Jones was also Consul in Liverpool of the Congo Free State. Clearly the King of the Belgians' influence reached the very top of British business.[72]

Morel had once been a rising star within the ranks at Elder Dempster but, through his criticism of the system that existed in the Congo Free State, had slowly become Jones' nemesis. Morel had begun work with the shipping firm in 1891 as a clerk and was later appointed head of its Congo department. It was in this role that Morel began to notice that there were discrepancies between the statistics on goods shipped in from the Congo Free State collated by Elder Dempster and those published by the Congo government. Much of the ivory and rubber

[70] Martin Lynn, 'Liverpool and Africa in the Nineteenth Century: The Continuing Connection,' *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol.147 (1997), p.27.
[71] Peter N. Davies, *The Trade Makers: Elder Dempster in West Africa, 1852-1972, 1973-1989* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980), p.95; Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' pp.47-48.
[72] *Ibid*.

arriving on Elder Dempster ships was not included in the trade information issued by the Congo government. Moreover, the returning ships were carrying huge quantities of arms and ammunition. Morel also discovered that some of the companies associated with Leopold that controlled vast areas of the domaine privé were also generating huge profits. The shares in those companies were worth as much as 13,730 francs at one point, often being sold for what today would be worth as much as £800-1000 a share. Shareholders were also receiving dividends of up to 800 percent on their investments, leading Morel to rightly conclude that vast fortunes were being made for those with business interests in the Congo Free State, including Leopold, with little to no profit being reinvested in the region or the Congolese workers receiving much monetary compensation for their labour and commodities.[73] Morel resigned his post at Elder Dempster in 1901, despite Jones' attempts at persuading him to stay by offering another post abroad with an increase in pay. Morel became a paid journalist instead.[74]

Interestingly, Jones was instrumental in the creation of Morel's *West African Mail*, a weekly journal set up to discuss issues in West and Central Africa and to promote the rights of Africans. Jones took five hundred of the £1 preferential shares, with Morel taking another five hundred for himself.[75] Jones also later offered Morel a loan of £1000 to expand the business, which he refused, as well as agreeing to take, at Morel's request, a guaranteed number of copies per week of the *West African Mail*. For Jones, now Consul in Liverpool for the Congo Free State, this financial investment was more than likely one final attempt to exert some level of control over his former employee's journalistic endeavours, ensuring he was able to wield some influence over what was published in order to protect his reputation.

[73] Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, pp.332-333; Mitchell, *Politics of Dissent*, p.22.
[74] *Ibid*, p.24.
[75] Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.33.

One example of Jones's concern for his own reputation came in mid-1903 when Dr Edward Wilmot Blyden, a Liberian politician, educator and writer, was due to give a lecture which contained criticism of the Congo Free State. However, at the last minute Blyden 'struck out all his references to the Congo in his lecture' as 'he allowed himself to be practically bought over by Jones'.[76] This was a blow to Morel and the reform movement as Blyden was expected to be critical of the Congo Free State, providing a boost to their efforts. However, Blyden was also a close personal friend of Jones and his motive for omitting the Congo Free State material may have to been to protect his friend's reputation, more than anything else. Indeed, when Morel later asked Jones why he made Blyden 'leave out the portion of his speech referring to the Congo', Jones replied, although not attempting to deny that he had, that it was 'because I thought it could do me harm', explaining that 'you know…that I pay all of Blyden's expenses when he comes to this country'.[77] In his role as both friend and financial supporter of Blyden, Jones could exert a great deal of influence over him and ensure that his own reputation was not damaged in any way as a result.

Jones and Morel

Despite his departure from Elder Dempster, Morel and Jones were in frequent contact with each other at this time and, although their relationship was slowly deteriorating, Jones still offered the occasional glimmer of hope to Morel that he could be persuaded to change his position on the Congo Free State. By early 1903, Jones was still not convinced by the criticisms of the Congo Free State. Morel reached out to him, desperately trying to convince Jones that the system that existed there was strikingly similar to that which existed in the French Congo and the Niger; a similar monopoly that Jones had previously objected to.[78] Jones's response

[76] Morel to Fox Bourne, 18 June 1903, MP, F10/7:100.
[77] *Ibid*.
[78] Morel to Jones, 19 March 1903, MP, F10/5:75.

was to obstruct the reformist activism of Morel and others as much as he could over the next few years.

In May 1903, a proposal, which had been drawn up by Morel, recommending that the British government confer with other signatory powers to the Berlin Act to adopt measures to bring an end to the wrongdoing in the Congo Free State, was put forward in the House of Commons. However, a few days before the debate occurred, Jones made an attempt to silence Morel and the reform movement; almost certainly at the behest of Leopold. He invited Morel to join him for dinner, with several English and Belgian diplomats also in attendance. The main topics of discussion, as Morel reported, were the Berlin Act, the legality of the Congo government's actions, the stories of those actions in the press and the reluctance of the Congolese people to work. Jones then suggested to Morel that he join one of the members of the Belgian party alone to continue the debate, urging him to 'come to an understanding' on the matters discussed and telling Morel that his [Jones's] own position was becoming 'increasingly unpleasant.'[79] Jones had told Morel that he thought 'nothing but good' would come from the organising of a conference between the signatory powers (although it is not clear whether or not he genuinely believed this or whether he was trying to persuade Morel of the authenticity of his interest in the matter).

Jones's Propaganda Efforts

As the Casement Report was about to be published and Leopold learnt of the impending indictment of his rule in the Congo Free State, the King of the Belgians despatched Jones to visit Lord Lansdowne, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to try and prevent the release of the Report. The veiled threat was that its publication would intensify the quarrel with the Congo Free State and could prove fatal to British interests. More specifically, Jones would lose his

[79] Morel, Louis, and Stengers, *E. D. Morel*, pp.127-128.

shipping contract with Leopold and German shipping lines would benefit from his loss.[80] Later that year, Leopold issued a similar threat to Jones, threatening to take away his shipping contract if he did not do more to dampen criticism of the Congo Free State in Britain. The contract was due to expire at the end of 1904 and Leopold would have wanted to use this as leverage over Jones. However, this threat did not carry any real weight as Jones and Elder Dempster were already in partnership with the Woermann Line in trading down the West Coast of Africa, and the other two leading firms in the running, the North Deutsche Line and the Hamburg-America Line, were not interested in stepping in to fill any potential void.[81] In addition, as Peter Davies has stated, Jones did not receive enormous profits from this arrangement and it was a minor route in his business empire.[82] Therefore, it is questionable as to how weighty this threat was to Jones. The perceived threat was not so much a financial one, but more of a strategic threat to Jones's wider business interests in West Africa. The Congo trade, Jones believed, was not of great importance in itself, but whoever controlled that trade held an advantage over their rivals. Jones had long been an important figure in the history of British trade with West Africa. By 1895, he had created the West African Shipping Conference, alongside Woermann, in order to control and regulate the competition amongst the companies who had interests in trading in West Africa.[83] Later, in 1901, Jones also formed the Liverpool West Africa Syndicate Limited, which had interests in mines, quarries, mills, timber, factories, railways and tramlines, further strengthening his position in West African trade.[84] His view on the importance of control of the West African trade would have factored into his thinking when prompted by Leopold to lobby the British government to suppress the Casement Report, or, at

[80] Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.63.
[81] *Ibid*, pp.63-64.
[82] Peter N. Davies, *Sir Alfred Jones: Shipping Entrepreneur par Excellence* (London: Europa Publishing, 1978), pp.66-121.
[83] Martin Lynn, *Commerce and Economic Change in West Africa: The Palm Oil Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.108.
[84] Davies, *The Trade Makers*, pp.88-89.

least, allow Leopold to write a letter denouncing the failings of the system and promising future reforms.[85] Nevertheless, he still acted on orders given by the King of the Belgians, which goes some way in reinforcing Morel's opinion of Jones that he was reluctant to break from Leopold 'partly by the material interests of the shipping line…and by that flattery from the highly-placed to which…he was peculiarly accessible.'[86]

As well as lobbying government officials on Leopold's behalf, Jones also influenced several newspapers and magazines in an attempt to undermine the reform movement. In one particularly sneaky move designed to discredit Morel, he bought and distributed ten thousand copies of an issue of the *Liverpool Daily Post* which included an article critical of Morel and the reform movement.[87] To combat the criticism he received and to prove to the reform activists that the conditions in the Congo had been greatly exaggerated, Jones financed a trip for May French Sheldon, an American author and explorer, Lord Mountmorres, a friend of Jones, and Marcus Dorman, a historian, who had met Jones prior to his departure for the Congo region, all at a cost to Jones of £3000 to conduct investigations there. Although they repeatedly denied that Jones 'had anything to do with sending them out to the Congo', all three still returned as Congo Free State apologists.[88] This is not surprising, given that Jones ordered his marine superintendent in the area to make sure that the visitors 'see everything which is to the credit of the Congo' and to 'write about the Congo from the Congo State part.'[89]

[85] Cookey, *Britain and the Congo,* pp.95-96.
[86] E. D. Morel, 'Sir Alfred Jones,' *African Mail*, 17 December 1909, as cited in Davies, *Sir Alfred Jones*, p.122. Early in the CRA's existence, the *West African Mail* experienced severe financial difficulties and, post-bankruptcy, changed its name to the *African Mail*.
[87] Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.85.
[88] Henry Grattan Guinness to Morel, 3 November 1905, MP, F8/74; Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism,* p.50; Robert Burroughs, 'The Travelling Apologist: May French Sheldon in the Congo Free State (1903-4),' *Studies in Travel Writing*, Vol.14, No.2 (June 2010), p.139; Marcus R. P. Dorman, *A Journal of a Tour in the Congo Free State* (Brussels: J. Lebegue & Co.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd, 1905), p.5.
[89] Jones to Captain Tubbs, 3 October 1903, MP, F8/96/122; Jones to Tubbs, 10 June 1903, MP, F8/96:121.

It was during this period that Jones withdrew Elder Dempster advertising from the *West African Mail*, which would have played a role in the financial crisis the newspaper experienced in its early stages.[90] Jones also distributed 'with Elder Dempster and Co.'s compliments…together with other literature issued in connection with the Congo' a translation of an article that had appeared in *Indépendence Belge*, a pro-Leopold newspaper based in Belgium.[91] Within the article, accusations were levelled at the motives of the reform activists, stating that they were 'largely a question of satisfying, if not the secret political ambitions of the English government, at least the thinly-veiled covetousness of the merchants of Liverpool.'[92] These 'gross and wicked libels' directed at the Congo activists infuriated them, to the point where they 'publicly exposed and refuted' the accusations via protest letters written to the local and national press.[93] Given that the attack on Liverpool merchants was also an assault on Jones, due to his role as Chairman of the West African Section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Morel tried to appeal to Jones's reason. Morel stated that, as the Chamber was 'composed of Liverpool merchants trading with West Africa', Jones should know 'how…unwarrantable these accusations are.'[94] Despite his efforts, these pleas seemed to have been ignored. It is interesting that the spreading of the stories of the Liverpool merchants' ulterior motives by Leopold does not seem to have particularly deterred Jones, who was considered to be one of the most important members of Leopold's team of ship owners. In 1895, encouraged by the increase in trade between Antwerp and the Congo Free State, Elder Dempster formed the Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo, which, alongside the creation of the Société Maritime du Congo by the Woermann Line, sought to tighten its stranglehold and

[90] By December 1904, the *West African Mail* was operating at a loss of £798 – approximately £77,540 in today's money, which is a large deficit for any newspaper. See, Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.90.
[91] Morel and Holt to Jones, 15 December 1904, F/10:757-758.
[92] *Ibid*.
[93] *Ibid*.
[94] *Ibid*.

dominate West African Trade, elevating Jones's importance to Leopold in the process. Later, in 1905 the Joint West Africa Committee of the United Kingdom Chambers of Commerce was formed and exerted significant influence over the Colonial Office and legislation. Jones, in his role as president of both the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and its West African Trade Section, dominated the most important chamber in Britain in West African trade, cementing his place as a key figure in Leopold's colonial project.[95] However, the role of Liverpool merchants, specifically Holt's influence over Morel and the reform movement, meant that the accusations contained within the article were not completely unfounded in regards to the vested interests in Congo reform activism. Morel's *West African Mail* was heavily supported by Liverpool merchants, especially Holt, who had helped the newspaper get off the ground in its early days through his initial financial contribution of £500 to help set it up. Holt later offered to underwrite the extra printing costs, reassuring Morel to not 'let a fear of a few pounds stand in the way [of wide distribution]…let me know what you want to do and how much it will cost and…go ahead with the printing of the extra thousands you see your way to make good use of at once.'[96] The issue of the covetousness of the Liverpool merchants in the Congo reform campaign would be an accusation that would linger for some time.

Liverpool Business Rivalry

Holt was an important actor in the Congo reform movement. Both his financial support towards the CRA and the personal donations made to Morel, as well as his role as mentor, enabled Morel to sustain his reform activities and strengthened the cause of the campaign. Yet, Holt's business rivalry with Jones was to be played out through the reform campaign and, subsequently, raises a question mark about the former's motives for becoming involved in the movement. Holt had tried for several years to undermine Jones's dominance of West African

[95] Davies, *Trade Makers*, p.95.
[96] Holt to Morel, 16 July 1903, MP, F8/85:323.

trade, perceiving the shipping monopoly held by Jones to be the main threat to the prosperity of his own business with John Holt and Company.[97]

Holt and Jones had been on friendly terms for many years during the late nineteenth century. Holt was instrumental in the organisation of a banquet to celebrate Jones's fiftieth birthday in 1895. Jones returned the goodwill by employing Holt's son, posting him to Elder Dempster's Hamburg office.[98] However, their relationship deteriorated rapidly soon afterwards. In June 1896, both Holt, in his position as Chairman of the African Association, and Jones had reached a verbal agreement whereby Elder Dempster would purchase the African Association's fleet of ships at a cost of £70,000. Holt notified his Board of the deal and confirmed the verbal arrangements in a letter to Elder Dempster in November of that year. The ownership of the fleet of ships was transferred from the African Association to Elder Dempster, but, remarkably, without the legal representatives from both sides having met to arrange the formalisation of the deal. Jones now owned the entire fleet based solely on a verbal agreement. Because of this error, Holt felt compelled to resign his position as Chairman of the African Association. He personally appealed to Jones to rectify the situation and revert back to the terms originally agreed between the two parties, but to no avail. Jones later dealt directly with the African Association and the original terms proposed were subsequently adhered to, with the exception of a clause regarding minimum freight. However, now that he had managed to discredit Holt, his allies in the African Association assumed power and, subsequently, strengthened Jones's position in the West African shipping trade.[99] The two continued their business rivalry throughout the following years. Holt was opposed to the British Cotton Growers Association (BCGA), of which Jones was president, believing the organisation to be

[97] Gertzel, 'John Holt,' pp.562-565.
[98] Davies, *Trade Makers*, p.103.
[99] Davies, *Sir Alfred Jones*, pp.50-51.

a front that shielded Jones's self-aggrandizement and that of his 'bandwagon of flashy imperial patriots.'[100] The Congo reform movement would provide Holt with a platform that enabled him to sustain well-publicised criticism of Jones's business dealings, using Morel as a conduit to disseminate the anti-Jones propaganda, attacking his rival's reputation and questioning the motivations for Jones's involvement in trade with the Congo.

In September 1905, Holt believed that, as a result of the persuasive arguments the Congo reformers were making, Jones was beginning to move towards their viewpoint over the Congo Free State. 'He will be a tower of strength to us in Liverpool', Holt declared, aware that Jones had almost complete control of the Chamber of Commerce and exercised a lot of influence over its members.[101] However, this optimism regarding Jones's position did not last long. Five days later, Holt accused Jones of deliberately misleading people on the issue of the Congo Free State and the atrocities being committed there. Holt was perplexed about the doubt people still had regarding the authenticity of the claims that atrocities were being committed, saying that the 'action of such men as Jones…do influence the opinions of people who do not know the interest they [Jones] have in pleasing Leopold.'[102] He expressed his dislike of the Consul's rhetoric at meetings when discussing the Congo Free State, describing it as 'a lot of nonsense' and stated 'how badly his words compare…with those of the American Consul'. Holt hoped that recent highlighting of faults with the British Nigerian colonising expeditions would 'make the men who are doing these things feel that they are found out.'[103] Holt was aware that Jones valued his own public image and had been successful in projecting himself as an honest businessman. After one Congo reform meeting held in Liverpool, Holt noted the crowd's cold response to whenever Jones's name was mentioned, stating that 'It would have done Jones

[100] Nworah, 'Humanitarian Pressure Groups,' p.481.
[101] Holt to Morel, 13 September 1905, MP, F8/85:400.
[102] Holt to Morel, 18 September 1905, MP, F8/85:392.
[103] Holt to Morel, 13 October 1905, MP, F8/85:400; Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.115.

good to know that his name was received with groans and hisses. He has been so long used to adulation that this outburst of feeling against his…acts would be a good moral tonic for him.'[104] Holt's sentiment was accurate in this case; as discussed previously, Jones was concerned about his reputation and this would have more than likely provoked a response from him. As Davies tells us, Jones 'feared adverse press criticism and would go to great lengths to prevent hostile comment', which was apparent in his efforts to undermine the reform campaign in the press and influence figures within the movement.[105]

One way of influencing these individuals was inviting them to join Jones for dinner, as we have seen previously. He entertained privately on numerous occasions, although such hospitality often had an ulterior purpose linked in some way to his commercial activities, arranging many extravagant evening meals for his guests.[106] On one occasion, Jones invited Morel to dinner again, which aroused Holt's suspicions. He suspected that Jones would try and 'bamboozle' Morel, warning that once Jones,

> [S]ees that the game is up he will round upon Leopold without a doubt and if you don't mind he will get all the credit for any reform that your efforts and those of your helpers may achieve. You have defied him and shown him up. Don't let him play the cuckoo with you. I have always told you that he understands a big stick more than verbal argument. He is not necessary to you either as negotiator or anything else. No doubt he has been posing both to Leopold and Lord Lansdowne, but surely the latter could do better through his own ambassador than through a man who is interested with King Leopold and therefore found to be a partisan of his, as long as his material interests lie in that direction.[107]

Suspicion of Jones's activities was prevalent throughout this period of reform activism. Holt questioned Jones's motives behind Lord Lansdowne's visit to Liverpool, at the invitation of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, stating that 'Jones does not do a thing of that kind

[104] Holt to Morel, 27 October 1905, MP, F8/85:408.
[105] Davies, *Sir Alfred Jones*, p.90.
[106] *Ibid*, p.103.
[107] Holt to Morel, 28 October 1905, MP, F8/85:409.

without a purpose.'[108] This came at a time when Holt was increasingly appalled by the state of the system in place in the Congo Free State, and the subsequent horrors it facilitated. In a letter to Morel, Holt expressed his shock at more stories of atrocities coming out of the Congo, warning that any promises of reform made by Leopold would be a 'sham', and advocated the use of force to resolve the issue, saying that,

> To one it seems that force alone, the power of the strong – not merely in morals but in guns – must be applied before these horrors can be stopped. To which nation has God given such a mission if he has given it? Time will show. One would like to see peace reign in the world, but peace is incompatible with the continuation of such inhumanity as we are now witnessing in Congoland.[109]

This is an intriguing contradiction in Holt's position on the Congo Free State. Whilst he was against violence perpetuated against the Congolese people by the system that existed there, he would readily advocate the use of violence and gunboat diplomacy in order to bring peace in the region. The moral argument alone would not be enough to enforce the reform that the activists were pursuing. Later, Holt's concern for the welfare of the Congolese continued and he became increasingly frustrated with the lack of action on the part of the British government and, in particular, Edward Grey. When voicing his concerns to Morel, Holt stated, 'I feel the horror and suffering that is going on…if we had the spirit of our ancestors we should long ago have finished this iniquity by the mouth of the Cannon and the rifle…look at those poor wretches not having even a trade…to protect them from wild beasts.'[110] Again, Holt was not averse to advocating the use of force in implementing what he perceived to be the necessary reforms in the Congo Free State – namely the re-establishment of the Congolese rights to the land and free trade.

[108] Holt to Morel, 22 October 1905, MP, F8/85:403.
[109] Holt to Morel, 23 October 1905, MP, F8/85:406.
[110] Holt to Morel, 25 October 1907, MP, F8/86:517.

The ABIR Controversy

In September 1905, Jones raised the possibility to the Foreign Office of turning the Anglo-Belgian Indian Rubber Company (ABIR) concession over to an English company, formed by Jones, which would allow British merchants and interests in the region to operate on the principles of humanitarianism and free trade.[111] In addition, once an annual sum had been paid to the Congo government and the ABIR's shareholders received a share of the profits, any surplus returns were to be reinvested into infrastructure in the Congo Free State, meaning that the Congolese people would benefit too.[112] The logic behind this manoeuvre was two-fold. Firstly, it was a clever ploy by Leopold to turn over the most controversial concession company, whose unscrupulous actions in the Congo Free State had been brought into the spotlight by the Casement Report, into the hands of the British. Specifically, this would be a company which Jones would form, which meant that there would be British interests in the region, dragging the British government into the controversy. Secondly, it was also a tactical move to try and appease the reform movement; British control of the notorious ABIR concession would meet the criticisms of a large swathe of the reform movement, which advocated for government control of the region.[113]

However, Holt thought the whole thing was a 'nefarious business', stating that Jones 'will claim credit for all kind of things he is trying to do for the good of Africa' and that he had,

> [B]een badly shown up over this Congo exposure, he having exposed the part of the thing and thrown doubt on all the statements of Casement and the missionaries well knowing all the time that they were reporting the truth and he was backing up a pack of lies. How can anybody have faith in such a man, capable of such duplicity, whilst the lives of a lot of helpless creatures were being sacrificed? He has condoned and excused this horrible business and gone out of his way to spread lies manufactured for the express purpose of misleading the public.[114]

[111] Wuliger, *Economic Imperialism*, pp.118-119.
[112] Cookey, *Britain and the Congo*, p.141.
[113] *Ibid*, p.142.
[114] Holt to Morel, 5 November 1905, MP, F8/85:414-416.

Despite Holt's hostility, other members of the reform movement did not possess the same dislike for Jones and saw this ABIR proposal as a way of undermining Jones's position on the Congo Free State issue. Alfred Emmott, Liberal MP and Executive Committee member of the CRA, wrote to Morel, who also disliked Jones intensely. Emmott advised Morel to let Jones go ahead with his plan of investing capital in the ABIR scheme, asking 'what can be better if you want to ruin any reputation he has got?', and advising his fellow reformers to 'play…the man and he will either break off in disgust or make the most damaging admissions.'[115] Emmott did not hold Jones in the highest regard, stating that he did not think Jones was 'very clever' or that he had 'any great power of consecutive thought or of mastering a subject', and also thought that Morel, and possibly Holt, attributed too much credit to Jones and exaggerated his impact on the reform movement, saying 'he is too much of a bad fetish to you, I think.'[116] This is almost certainly true. Throughout the Congo reform campaign until Jones' death in 1909, Morel was vitriolic in his attacks on Jones. Although he was often prompted by Holt, his contempt was also driven by his deteriorating relationship with Jones; a man who had previously been his mentor but subsequently rejected him when Morel turned his attention to the Congo Free State.

Jones was also wary of the power of missionary accounts of the conditions that existed in the Congo Free State and also sought to influence their judgement whenever possible, as well as to promote his own record of philanthropy in Africa, notably in the creation of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in 1898.[117] One possible reason for this was that it

[115] Emmott to Morel, 2 November 1905, MP, F8/55:193.
[116] *Ibid.*
[117] Jones's 'altruism' had been displayed in his creation of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, which did a lot of work to reduce the mortality rate from disease in West Africa, although his relationship with the King of the Belgians proved useful in this venture; Leopold gave £2600 to help start the School up, with Jones contributing £350 per annum for the first three years, in addition to raising no less than £120,000 from the business community in the following years up until his death to help sustain the school. How altruistic this endeavour was is questionable, as the School's research helped to reduce mortality rates amongst Jones's seafarers. See, Davies, *Sir Alfred Jones*, p.107; Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.57.

provided Jones with a way of justifying his position as Congo Consul and his constant defence of Leopold's regime, but most likely it was a way of protecting his own reputation. Holt described Jones as being 'frightened' about these missionary reports, highlighting as proof his behaviour when at lunch with a missionary named Berney, observing that,

> Jones is badly alarmed by exposures in the press…explaining to him [Berney] how much he had done for Africa, how much he had spent on philanthropy, how little importance money was to him, how he spent freely over Mountmorres and others in the Congo, Tropical School, cotton etc. etc. How his steamers were losing £150,000 a year…would send him out to the Congo and give him £5000 to publish a book on what he saw there...he pumped Berney for all he was worth as to who he was, where he got his information from, did Holt give it to him, etc. etc.[118]

This grilling of a missionary provides a useful insight into Jones' thinking. His role as Consul of the Congo Free State was bringing him unwanted attention and increasing scrutiny of his actions. Justifying his role through the promotion of the work he had done in West Africa to a largely irrelevant figure such as Berney, highlights the fragility of his relationship with Leopold and how anxious he was to protect his reputation. The paranoia displayed in suspecting Holt of supplying Berney with negative information on the Congo Free State also highlights Jones's distrust of the methods of the reformers, particularly Holt. It also provides an insight into the state of the relationship between the two Liverpool businessmen at this point. These fears, of course, were not completely unfounded. To ensure that *Red Rubber*, Morel's latest and most successful attack on the Congo Free State, would be published, Holt purchased three thousand copies, ensuring that the attack was sustained.[119]

On 20 November 1906, Grey met with a deputation of 'representative and influential' people, which, at Grey's request, had to include prominent businessman. Naturally, Holt was included in this deputation and it urged the Foreign Secretary to organise an international

[118] Holt to Morel, 29 November 1906, MP, F8/86:487.
[119] Morel to Reverend Thomas Law, 13 November 1906, MP, F8/98:2, as cited in Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.150.

conference, comprised of the signatories of the Berlin Act, to push for Belgian guarantees of 'good conduct' as a condition of annexation of the Congo Free State, and 'positive British action.' Holt voiced his concerns, saying,

> We had great promises given us by the International Association and by King Leopold…The commercial interests…have been outraged in the Congo. We were promised freedom of trade there, and what have we got? We have absolutely no trade in the Congo at all…Under the pretext of putting down the slave trade, Europe was soon asked to consent to the imposition of duties on imports, and she consented. The import of arms and ammunition, by which the natives might have been able to protect their rights and liberties, was suppressed, and the natives of the Congo were left a helpless prey to a handful of designing financiers and company promoters, supplied with every provision by which to exact dividends. Our commercial rights have been ruthlessly swept aside. A great region in Central Africa, solemnly guaranteed as open to the trade of the world, has been closed to the trade of all nations. Trade does not exist in the great Congo Basin over which King Leopold rules; a great prospective market for our trade has been closed to us. We have the right to ask our government to safeguard our rights under the Act of Berlin, to insist upon the principle of the open door being respected. In safeguarding those rights, the most efficacious means exist for breaking down the hideous system of spoliation, oppression and cruelty which now exist in the Congo – worse than slavery…I have said in Liverpool we are unanimous on this point. We are unanimous in Liverpool with the exception of one man, who stands alone. Twenty years ago he was with me here, and he is today on the side of the King of the Belgians. I allude to Sir Alfred Jones; he is a Consul for the King of the Belgians. He stands absolutely alone in Liverpool amongst the principal citizens in regard to this matter. He represents no one but himself; I speak of what I know.[120]

With this statement, Holt reaffirmed his position on free trade holding the key to the liberation of the Congolese from slavery, and he pressed the British government on its position regarding the absence of free trade in the Congo Free State; as discussed in chapter two, both British and American activists believed that the British government had adopted a humanitarian position on the Congo Free State, as opposed to focusing on its, and British traders', exclusion from free trade in the region. Holt's statement that Jones was alone in his support in Liverpool may have been a deliberate misrepresentation of the feeling, especially within the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, that existed on the matter, in an attempt to convince Grey that opinion was very

[120] 'The Deputation to Sir E. Grey,' *Official Organ of the Congo Reform Association*, December 1906, pp.2-3.

much in favour of annexation and reform in the Congo Free State; Jones actually exerted a lot of influence in the Chamber and enjoyed almost complete support throughout this period. Jones, according to Sir Ernest Blake, a senior official in the Crown Agents, had become, by 1907, the 'predominant power in West Africa by a long way'; or, as W. T. Stead once said, 'the uncrowned King of West Africa'.[121] Holt advised Morel to keep running the *West African Mail*, knowing that it was a useful vehicle in keeping the spotlight on the situation in the Congo Free State, despite having previously been critical of its content focusing solely on the Congo Free State and not being critical enough of other issues in West Africa (namely trader's interests, the rights of Africans and better administration throughout the colonies).[122]

The Chamber of Commerce Clash

In September 1907, the rivalry between Holt and Jones over the issue of the Congo Free State came to a head in the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce. During a conversation regarding the recruitment of the indigenous population for the Portuguese islands of São Tomé and Principe, Holt decided to use the opportunity to voice his feelings on Jones' role in the Congo affair, stating,

> I am of the opinion that a great commercial body like ours may on occasion go outside its normal functions when its members find their hearts moved by the miseries of the oppressed, and may make its voice heard in questions affecting human rights and freedom…how can we pose…as philanthropists…when our president, Sir Alfred Jones, is not ashamed to exercise the functions of Consul for the Congo State in this city – when our president…is not ashamed to represent in an official capacity the most iniquitous government of modern times, when his steamers are employed in carrying the blood-stained rubber of the Congo to Antwerp, and when his influence and power have been secretly and openly used at every step to hinder the progress of the movement in this country for the freedom of trade in accordance with the Act of Berlin and for the rights and liberties of the Congo natives?...[W]e cannot pose as philanthropists…whilst we are willing to

[121] Marika Sherwood, 'Elder Dempster and West Africa 1891-C.1940: The Genesis of Underdevelopment?,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1997), p.256; Morel, Louis, and Stengers, *E. D. Morel*, p.262.
[122] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.85.

> condone…evil in the Congo State, where…we have treaty rights and obligations which we can enforce respect for whenever we choose to do so.[123]

However, whilst Holt had almost immediately communicated his statement to the press, most likely via Morel, in order to gain support and publicly criticise Jones, he was to find little support for his position within the Chamber. *The Times*, which had printed Holt's denunciation of Jones, also published Jones's rebuttal. In the view of the foreign editor of *The Times* , Valentine Chirol, Jones had the better of the exchange. The Chamber voted to back him, which consequently made Holt's comments look like a personal attack (as indeed they were).[124] At the October meeting, Jones defended his role as Consul of the Congo Free State, saying,

> Mr Holt went out of his way to attack me because I occupy an official position as Consul in Liverpool of the Congo Free State, and because some Belgian steamers for which my firm are agents run from Antwerp to the Congo. Mr Holt has attacked me before…he says what is absolutely untrue. I have no sympathy whatever in any way with any wrong-doing in the Congo or elsewhere…I have worked for a long time to develop these new countries for the benefit of the natives just as for the benefits of any interest I possess, and also to the best interests of our own country and its commerce. For years I tried to get the British government to annex the Congo…and I am sorry to have reason to believe that the natives have been improperly treated. I have the greatest consideration for these unfortunate people, and the reports of any cases of ill treatment have always met with my keenest regret; in fact, with a view to finding out the exact truth of the many statements made, I invited the *Times* and *Globe* newspapers some time ago to send out representatives, at my own expense, to go out and fully report the exact circumstances. The *Globe* accepted my offer, and introduced me to their chosen delegate, Lord Mountmorres…He proceeded to the Congo, and has written a book of his experiences…when any allegations have been brought to me I have investigated them; but it is only fair to state that, as the Consul for the Congo Free State in this city, I have never had a single statement of fact brought under my notice.[125]

Jones was probably right in his suspicion that Holt's attack on him was primarily based on his position in the West African shipping trade, and professional jealousy of his near-monopoly of it. However, how authentic Jones's concern was for the Congolese is certainly in question. In a not-so-veiled defence of Leopold's regime in the Congo Free State, he also added that,

---

[123] 'Sir Alfred Jones, K.C.M.G., and the Congo,' *Official Organ*, November 1907, p.62.
[124] Valentine Chirol to Morel, 31 October 1907, MP, F8/30:53.
[125] 'Sir Alfred Jones, K.C.M.G., and the Congo,' *Official Organ*, November 1907, pp.62-63.

> [I]t must not be forgotten that the Congo Free State is an immense country, and to expect the highest state of civilisation in so short a period of time is rather an unreasonable demand. I do not require these criticisms – friendly or otherwise – to bring me to the conclusion that something more might be done at the present time, and therefore I propose to go again to the Foreign Office and the King of the Belgians to continue my efforts…[O]ne word more in regard to my holding the office of Consul. I hoped by accepting it I would be in a stronger position to promote the interests of civilisation, good government, sanitation, and the development of British commercial interests than I could possibly be without occupying that position. I want to make it quite clear that I do resent most strongly these unworthy imputations upon my way of conducting these affairs.[126]

Jones later again defended his position against the mounting criticism he received over his decision to continue to hold the position of Consul of the Congo Free State. He addressed a meeting of the members of the African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce to clarify his position on the matter. In attendance were members of the press, who had been invited personally by Jones, and not as a result of a vote of the committee on whom to invite – the usual practice for deciding such issues. In front of a large audience, Jones stated that he hoped 'nobody who knew him would believe him to be callous or cruel or capable of indifference to human suffering in the world' and proof of this was that he had spent 'an enormous amount of money and time in bringing about…a better state of things' in West Africa. In his defence, Jones cited the good work that had been done by the Belgians, such as the building of the Congo railway, but conceded that 'there have been cruelties in the Congo, which I have never denied', admitting that he 'may have taken a wrong line in the course I have pursued…in holding a consulship for the Congo Free State…as to the consulship, I will not retain this one day beyond the time when I discover that I cannot use it again for the good interests of humanity in that region.' A resolution was passed stating that no arrangement with regard to the Congo Free State would be satisfactory unless it confirmed the provisions of the Berlin Act and provided for the restoration of the rights of traders and fair treatment of the natives, and that it was a 'great mistake to allege against the Liverpool Chamber a want of

[126] *Ibid.*

sympathy with the movement for Congo reform.'[127] However, despite this being the closest Jones ever came to admitting to the atrocities in the Congo Free State, his statement conflicted with the fact that, up until that point, neither the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, nor any other Chamber, had 'taken steps', as Morel put it, in helping to destroy the monopoly that existed in the Congo Free State.[128]

In addition to the resolution passed, a vote of thanks to Jones as chairman was seconded by Holt, who was keen to clarify that there was no personal spite between himself and Jones regarding the situation in the Congo Free State, possibly as a result of the war of words that he had lost in the press the previous month. Holt stated that he believed 'nobody had higher or nobler feelings than he [Jones], but it was Sir Alfred's misfortune that he had held duel offices of President of that Chamber and Consul for the Congo State, which…made it impossible for Sir Alfred to exercise those humane feelings that he possessed.'[129] Holt's claim that he had no personal spite with Jones was simply untrue. His dislike of Jones was regularly voiced in his correspondence to Morel and others throughout this period. However, there was also a begrudging respect on behalf of Holt towards Jones for his success as a businessman. This was no more evident than in his letter to Morel when Jones died in 1909, which expressed genuine sorrow.[130]

Belgian Annexation Approaches

Holt was becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of progress that the Congo reform movement was making, observing that 'the Congo people are still without liberty or the common rights of men. They are still a people "scattered and spoiled", robbed of their own,

[127] 'Congo Reform: Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Sir Alfred's Position,' *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 November 1907, p.8.
[128] Morel, Louis, and Stengers, *E. D. Morel*, pp.95-96.
[129]'Congo Reform: Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Sir Alfred's Position,' *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 November 1907, p.8.
[130] Holt to Morel, 14 December 1909, MP, F8/87:625.

disinherited, a prey to an economic savagery worse than their own. Alas for cowardly Christian Europe!'[131] After the Treaty of Cession and Colonial Law passed the Belgian Chamber, Holt advised Morel to bring to an end the CRA and to move on to something else, stating that the *West African Mail* could become a force for good if he would give up the CRA.[132] Annexation of the Congo Free State by the Belgian government was, for Holt, the end of the road for the Congo reform campaign. He felt that the reform movement would be fighting on too many fronts now; in addition to challenging the Belgian government, the CRA would also have to go up against the British government and what Holt perceived to be floundering press and public support for the cause.[133] However, Holt was soon campaigning once more against British recognition of the Congo but was not overly optimistic of the chances of success. 'The Congo has no chance', he declared, 'what with German Emperor, Lord Roberts, Austria, Turkey, and the licensing and education questions', urging Morel to be more patient and advising him to 'wait until politics all around become calmer.'[134]

Around this time, Holt was invited by the Belgian government to return to trading in the Congo. He declined, however, primarily on moral grounds but also because he suspected now the rubber boom was over, the Belgian government was seeking to make its new colony 'attractive to outside capital.'[135] Holt was suspicious of the Belgian government's reform pledges, stating that he 'didn't trust the scoundrels a bit' and added that Morel and the reform movement 'should do all that we can to make the position of the present rogues impossible as rulers…in Belgium in order to see if that country has any honest men to produce for the task of Congo government.'[136]

[131] *Ibid*, 5 August 1908, MP, F8/87:537.
[132] *Ibid*, 12 October 1909, MP, F8/87:607.
[133] Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' pp.206-207.
[134] *Ibid*, p.211.
[135] *Ibid*, p.220.
[136] Holt to Morel, 11 November 1909, MP, F8/87/618.

Conclusion

The issue of free trade was the central argument for the British activists throughout the Congo reform campaign. Its absence was the reason for the plight of the Congolese, and only through its restoration would the Congo issue be resolved. This was a recurring argument through the campaign. For Morel, the Congo issue was not 'moral' but 'economic.' He warned the Foreign Secretary that '[U]ntil the native communities of the Congo are reinstated in the rights secured to them under the Berlin Act...their position will not be altered one iota from that which prevails today; and meanwhile they are fast being extirpated.'[137] The doctrine of 'Morelism', as Porter has observed, 'originated in a non-partisan reaction against the impatient, monopoly-capitalistic exploitation of tropical countries revealed in the Congo and elsewhere at the turn of the century.'[138] Morel and Holt advocated for free trade as a way of freeing the Congolese from their enslavement, implemented along African lines, in order to raise them up to a higher level of 'civilisation'. Yet the return of free trade was the primary concern, and the welfare of the Congolese a secondary issue.

The motivations behind humanitarian involvement in causes such as the Congo reform movement can be hard to unpack. Yet a closer examination of the central figures involved reveals a complicated picture of relationships built on shared ideals and mutually beneficial interests. Morel's activism was certainly ideological, especially in its earliest incarnation, but it was also pragmatic in that he ensured his career would benefit from his involvement in the reform campaign. Morel's selective criticism of business practices in Africa reveals that he also possessed a high degree of self-interest in becoming involved in the reform movement. His criticism of Jones and lack of public condemnation of the business practices of two men he both admired and respected, Cadbury and Lever, meant that Morel was flexible in his position

[137] Morel to Grey, 9 January 1907, as cited in Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.159.
[138] Porter, *Critics*, p.287.

against this New Imperialism. Lever is an interesting case in point, in that he does not figure in the top twenty-five donors to the CRA.[139] Yet, his timely donations to Morel's personal coffers, and his powerful position within the business world, meant that, to Morel, he was far more useful as an ally than as an enemy. Pavlakis has stated that Cadbury's support of Morel and the Congo reform movement was sincere, whereas Grant takes the opposite position and has noted that Cadbury 'deftly exploited the humanitarian campaign against the Congo Free State to distract attention from his own company's slavery scandal in West Africa', and this would certainly appear to be the case.[140] Cadbury's timely donations effectively meant that he bought Morel's support on the cocoa scandal and Morel's concern that it would distract people from the Congo issue meant that he could be selective in his morality.

The relationship between humanitarian and human rights organisations and big business interests can often be a complicated one, and, in the case of the CRA, it was no different. Organisations such as the CRA relied heavily on donations from the business community to sustain their activism, far more than the CRA's American counterpart. In America, the ACRA received its funding through pledges, membership fees, collections at public meetings, voluntary contributions, and income from the sale of literature. Unfortunately, there are no financial records in existence for the ACRA to determine if any influential figures in particular made sizeable contributions to the campaign. From what evidence there is, it seems that the ACRA was not able to raise as much money during its early years in existence as its British counterpart. Between the years 1904-1906, the ACRA raised $6000 – approximately $169,000 or £133,000 today – in campaign funds; by 1907, the CRA had managed to raise approximately £4647 – approximately £467,000 today. Therefore, it may be safe to assume that, in contrast to

[139] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, pp.110-111.
[140] *Ibid*, p.112; Grant, *Civilised Savagery*, p.111.

the CRA, the ACRA mainly relied on small donations as opposed to large sums donated sporadically by wealthy contributors.[141]

Despite allegations from Leopold's propaganda campaign that the Congo reform movement was driven by business interests, particularly Liverpool merchants, the CRA received little support from the wider commercial community of Liverpool. Holt, confidante to Morel throughout the reform campaign and one of the Executive Committee members of the CRA, was ninth overall in the list of the twenty-five largest donors to the organisation, falling someway short in comparison to other big businessman, such as Cadbury, William A. Albright and Joseph Rowntree.[142] However, it was Holt's personal donations to sustain Morel's activism, coupled with his constant advice throughout the campaign, that meant he played a significant role within the Congo reform movement. Given that Morel frequently complained of having little to no money with which to support himself, his family and his reform activity, if Holt had not provided the financial safety net and platform that allowed Morel to launch and sustain the reform movement, there is every chance it would have been severely weakened as a result. Indeed, Holt's role in the history of the Congo reform movement has not been given enough credit within the historiography. Too often Morel is placed firmly at the centre in the story of the Congo reform movement, alongside other factors, such as the role of the Foreign Office or the missionaries in the Congo Free State, which have relegated Holt to a bit-part player; someone whose role has been acknowledged but who has made way for other, more prominent characters. Whilst he was not the largest donor to the CRA itself, his financial support was crucial in sustaining Morel's activism, which, in turn, was vital to sustain the reform movement itself.

[141] *Ibid*, p.88, n.109; 'A Word about Finances,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1906, p.15.
[142] *Ibid*, p.110.

Jones and Holt were both allies and rivals in business, and, in particular, West African trade, before the Congo reform campaign had begun. However, given their prominent roles within the Congo Free State controversy, any cordial relations that still existed soon dissipated and it was natural that their rivalry would also be played out in this arena too. Whilst at times they were amicable to each other in public, their words and actions behind the scenes tell a different story. Jones has often been cast as the 'bad guy' in the story of Congo reform campaign. It is understandable why this is so; his role as Consul of the Congo Free State and his business interests there naturally drew the attention of the reform activists. As Louis has stated, in the eyes of the reformers, he was the British equivalent to King Leopold II, just on a lesser scale;[143] quite a charge, given Leopold's crime sheet. One reason for this, as Davies has noted, is because it is impossible to separate Jones' altruism from his self-interest due to his belief in the virtues of imperialism. Both were quite sincere but, nevertheless, profit always superseded ideology.[144] Jones's 'altruism' had been displayed in his creation of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and he also donated £10,000 towards the building of a new cathedral in Liverpool, possibly as a way of engendering support within the city and countering the criticism he was receiving for his involvement with Leopold and the Congo Free State. Morel believed that Jones had a very low opinion of human nature and that, ultimately, everyone had a price.[145] Nonetheless, it is entirely plausible that Jones believed in Leopold's professions of humanitarianism in the Congo Free State initially and, once the stories of the atrocities started to emerge, Jones then worked hard to prevent his own reputation from being damaged as a result. Of course, one way in which to do this would have been to cancel his business dealings with Leopold and the Congo government. However, the success of Leopold's counter-propaganda campaign ensured that the level of suspicion regarding the authenticity of

[143] Morel, Louis, and Stengers, *E. D. Morel*, p.263.
[144] Davies, *Sir Alfred Jones*, p.121.
[145] *African Mail*, 17 December 1909, obituary of Jones by Morel, as cited in Davies, *Sir Alfred Jones*, p.115.

the atrocity reports continued well into the 1900s, right up until Belgian annexation in 1908 and beyond. That suspicion, coupled with Jones's susceptibility to flattery that Morel observed, meant that Jones made an error in judgement in not sacrificing his trade with the Congo government, but by no means indicates a lack of sympathy or insensitivity to the Congolese people. He was not a fervent defender of the Congo Free State or Leopold in public and on separate occasions behind closed doors, and his prominence within the reform movement came primarily because two of the main driving forces in that movement, Morel and Holt, both had an intense dislike of Jones and directed a large portion of their efforts towards destroying his reputation.

That a rivalry existed between both Holt and Jones is no secret. However, when examined through the prism of the Congo reform movement, it is clear that their relationship was coloured further by mutual suspicion of each other's role within the campaign. Holt seems to have used the reform movement, and Morel in particular, to attack Jones as often as he could throughout this period. They had worked together for many years, despite differing and sometimes conflicting business interests, yet due to their clashes within the Congo reform campaign, their relationship never really recovered. Holt's dislike of Jones stemmed from an incident regarding the purchase of a ship from the African Association and it is evident that some resentment lingered on throughout the period of reform agitation.[146] Revealingly, when Holt and Morel met for the first time, the Liverpool merchant suspected that Jones had deployed Morel in an industrial espionage role to procure commercial intelligence.[147] Despite public declarations of admiration for Jones as a businessman, privately Holt was unrestrained in his

[146] See Davies, *Sir Alfred Jones*, pp.49-53.
[147] Holt to Morel, 31 August 1910, as cited in Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.14.

dislike for his fellow Liverpool businessman and whose venom towards Jones, at times, like Morel's, knew no bounds.

With regards to motivations, Jones was almost driven purely by a single-minded dedication to his business interests and making a profit. It seemed to have dictated his thinking throughout the entire period of the Congo reform campaign. Given his prominent position within West African trade, he was better placed than most to ascertain the truth of the accusations levelled at Leopold and the Congo government. However, that he chose to ignore the stories of atrocities reveals a certain level of cognitive dissonance on Jones's part. Holt, on the other hand, had changed his views on Africans by the turn of the twentieth century. This was quite a shift from his position in the early 1890s when he was clearly a self-interested businessman who possessed a great personal sympathy for Africans but who was not essentially that philanthropic. Holt earned his living from West Africa but his role in the Congo reform movement was dictated by more than commercial considerations. However, despite the fact that he was genuinely concerned with the plight of the Congolese, he also certainly used the Congo reform movement as a way of attacking Jones, who he regarded as one of the primary figures in undermining the reformer's activism. As discussed, it was Holt's intense dislike of Jones, coupled with similar feelings Morel had towards his former mentor, that have given Sir Alfred a more central position within the story of the reform movement that is probably warranted. Business support and business rivalry both helped and hindered the reform campaign at different junctures. The movement would not have been sustained in Britain without the money donated by Holt and Cadbury, specifically their personal donations to Morel. Yet the distraction of Holt's business rivalry, and Morel's personal feelings, towards Jones meant that time and resources were wasted on an individual who really had very little negative impact on the reform movement's activism. The time spent arguing with Jones tarred

the movement, showing that humanitarian endeavours such as the Congo reform movement can also become tools for those with vested interests in its activism.

Conclusion

The CRA held its final meeting at London's Westminster Palace on 16 June 1913. In attendance were high-ranking religious figures, MPs, newspaper editors, former government officials, and philanthropists, revealing the societal reach that the movement had achieved in Britain. At this meeting, the attendees declared that the organisation's goals had been achieved and that the campaign had been a success. In addition, Morel's role within the movement was lauded by those in attendance, and he was the recipient of most of the praise for the organisation's success. Roger Casement added his views, stating that,

> [T]he work you have done and the way you have done it, entitles you and the movement you have led and directed to the gratitude of the whole world…I think first of the Black peoples of the Congo Basin…and…the Belgian people. For your work has been no less for them, their ultimate good and their fair name in the world, than for the material welfare of the Congo natives. I am convinced that…the Belgian people will feel that the work of the Congo Reform Association was a work of friendship and enlightenment in their behalf no less than a struggle in the interest of those distant Africans whose welfare had been committed to their trust.[1]

John Holt continued in a similar vein, writing that,

> [W]e found the "Gates of Mercy" closed in the Congo. They are now opened…as for the Congo people themselves, in years to come they will bless our Association [CRA] and all who have taken a part in helping to remove the oppression and cruelties by which their forefathers were so terribly burdened. I look forward to a happy and prosperous Congo in God's good time.[2]

Morel agreed that the CRA had been a huge success, adding that '[U]nder the providence of God, we have struck a blow for human justice that cannot and will not pass away.'[3]

Much has been written about the Congo reform movement in Britain, with the CRA taking centre stage, highlighting its impact on British humanitarianism, commerce and the

[1] *Official Organ*, July 1913, MP, F4/40:1009.
[2] *Ibid*, MP, F4/40:1010.
[3] *Ibid*, MP, F4/40:1021; Cookey, *Great Britain*, p.304.

foreign policy of the British government. Yet, within this body of work, the transnational dimensions of the reform movement generally, and the ACRA's role within this movement more specifically, has received limited coverage. By examining the impact of the ACRA's campaigning, its relationship with its British counterpart, and the influence of both organisations on the relationship between, and foreign policy agendas of, the British and American governments, this thesis adds another chapter to the history of the Congo reform movement. By bringing to the fore the work done by the ACRA, stressing both its independence and the occasional interdependence of both the British and American associations, its successes and limitations, and the role of key individuals involved, this thesis has shown that the movement in the United States deserves more credit than previously afforded to it by the Congo reform historiography. Furthermore, that it also faced significant, if different, obstacles specific to the national contexts within which they operated in pursuit of its aims, this thesis has sought to help better understand any success that the ACRA achieved in more depth.

The Antislavery Tradition

The Congo activists in Britain and the United States saw themselves as "descendants" of the abolitionists who campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade a century earlier. As Grant has stated, this era – the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – was a 'political bridge between the Victorian age of emancipation and the twentieth-century age of human rights activism' and that the activists involved perceived themselves to be both 'inheritors of the mantle of legendary abolitionists' who had campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade and 'defenders of the Victorian principle of free trade'.[4] In relation to the British and American CRAs, this thesis supports this assessment, albeit with some caveats.

[4] Grant, *Civilised Savagery*, p.36.

Chapter one explored the continuities and changes in humanitarianism during the nineteenth century, in order to better understand where to situate the CRA and ACRA in the longer history of humanitarianism and human rights movements and organisations. It showed that the Congo activists were not unique for their time, nor were they more of the same in terms of humanitarian activism. The Congo reform movement was arguably the largest sustained humanitarian movement of the twentieth century prior to the outbreak of the First World War. This was largely due to the organisational skills of those involved in the movement, enabling the focus of their activism to be narrow, specific and focused on a singular issue. They achieved this through the creation of an organisation whose primary aim was to force Leopold into relinquishing his hold over the Congo Free State, enabling reform of the brutal system of government in place there and opening the way for the liberation of the Congolese from slavery.

Yet, whilst it was sustained, the wider Congo reform movement, and the CRA and ACRA in particular, were not unique. Both organisations were a continuation of previous humanitarian movements and campaigns, evident in their deployment of the tactics used by the slave trade abolitionists, such as information gathering, exposure and the mobilisation of public outrage to create pressure for change – tactics still deployed by modern human rights NGOs. This is evident in their use of images to fuel public outrage, the secularisation of its activism, detailed reporting on the situation they were campaigning against, public lectures, rallies and mass meetings to disseminate their views, the public identification of individuals and governments that had done something wrong in order to persuade and/or pressure them to change their policies, and the use of celebrity endorsements – specifically Twain and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – on their campaign to raise awareness and garner support.

Morel, the CRA, and ACRA began an expansion of human rights talk and contributed to an emerging human rights vision. The language of humanitarianism and human rights is fluid

and has meant many different things throughout history. Furthermore, it is important to attend to its different uses and to locate them in local, national and international contexts. With regards to the British and American CRAs, theirs was very much a two-tier system of rights where Africans were entitled to one specific set of rights and Europeans a much broader set; all of the British reformers believed in the colonial project and that it could be a force for good in Africa. Despite the ACRA counting leading anti-imperialists and members of the Anti-Imperialist Leagues in the United States as prominent figures within its organisation, the activists advocated transfer of the Congo Free State from Leopold's sole ownership to the Belgian government – still an imperialist outcome, which would seemingly contradict their anti-imperialist values. The activists viewed human society as hierarchical and this is where they made sense of their rights talk. Yet, despite this hierarchical approach, it is still arguable that they had a sense of a common set of rights for all humanity, regardless of their colour or geographical location; just that some races were entitled to more of these rights as they were at a higher stage of civilisation than others. Indeed, the idea of a minimal subset of a contemporary understanding of human rights is quite powerful throughout Morel's work, and this is important when assessing the modernity of the CRA and ACRA.

Morel is a key figure in the story of the Congo reform movement. He is often lauded as being the innovative force in the reform movement but, rather than emerging as a pioneer, he is better described as someone who astutely responded to both the existing intellectual currents of his age and the popular distrust of colonialism that was emerging at the time. The usage of the term 'human rights' by the British and American CRAs and its activists and donors – Morel, Casement and the ACRA through its literature deployed the term at different junctures throughout this period – raises an interesting question as to whether their use of the term can be compared to contemporary understandings of its meaning. The British and American CRAs

had an understanding of the term that differed from contemporary interpretations of the phrase. Yet, they also used it to draw attention to the plight of the Congolese and advocated rights for a people who were in a distant land and who they viewed as being racially and culturally inferior. Morel, the CRA, and its American counterpart may not have understood the term 'human rights' in the same way as we do today, but their deployment of the term meant that they possessed an awareness of the notion of basic, universal human rights, even for people who they viewed as culturally inferior. As Moyn and others have essentially argued, to be considered as a human rights movement or, in this case, a human rights organisation, then it has to be everything that we understand human rights to be in the present day. However, the argument that this thesis is forwarding is that this does not have to be the case. It would be a flawed approach to the history of humanitarianism and human rights to try and identify one single origin of these terms, and the argument here is not that the Congo reform movement was the beginning of the history of human rights, but rather that the CRA and ACRA were a key development in our understanding of what constitutes a contemporary human rights organisation. They achieved this through their embrace and use of modern methods of activism that are still deployed by humanitarian and human rights activists today. In the history of humanitarian movements and human rights organisations, the CRA and ACRA were a progressive step towards a more modern understanding of what we mean when we discuss humanitarian movements and human rights. The Congo reform movement was not the first human rights movement, nor were the British and American CRAs the first human rights organisations. They were, however, key junctures in the move towards the contemporary understanding of human rights that we have in the present day.

The field of American humanitarianism is seemingly understudied. Ian Tyrrell has observed that 'it has not been fashionable for several decades to focus on American

humanitarianism as a key element of American foreign relations' during the period in which the Congo reform movement existed.[5] In contrast, much has been written about British humanitarianism that, by the late nineteenth century, largely consisted of two strains; one which motivated and expressed itself in religious terms, and the other one that built on an evolving understanding of human rights which was secular in nature, as it was separate from religious doctrine. As Andrew Porter has stated, Morel and the CRA were successful in marrying together the two sides of British humanitarianism – those activists who 'needed…wider support to provide finance and vital information' and the 'broader range of supporters' who 'always needed those who could focus their outrage on government in ways which would secure effective action' – who were coming together 'in the context of renewed concern over European activities…and a less ethnocentric approach to the needs and qualities of indigenous societies' into an effective campaign. Porter has also observed that the solution proposed by the CRA and ACRA – the transfer of the Congo Free State from Leopold's sole ownership to the Belgian government – was a trusteeship that was essentially a 'hybrid' which ensured the issue of free trade retained its place in the debate, 'albeit more as a buttress to indigenous status than the moral agent of social transformation'.[6] This change of direction offered future human rights activists a platform to build on. Future work on the impact of American humanitarianism on foreign policy decision-making and its international relations during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era periods may help shed further light on the relationship between humanitarian activism and national and transnational relationships between state and non-state actors.

[5] Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, p.42.
[6] Porter, 'Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism,' in Porter and W.R. Louis, eds. *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.220.

Legal arguments and frameworks

Using legal frameworks was a stick with which the CRA and ACRA would beat the British and American governments on a regular basis. The call for Leopold to be hauled in front of a Hague tribunal came from several quarters of the reform movement, and the issue was proposed to Morel, but he was not keen. He believed that such a tribunal would only allow Leopold to legally wriggle out of the gridlocked position that he found himself in.[7] Leopold's violation of the principles of the Berlin Act, Morel and other activists believed, meant that it was only a matter of time before he would be forced by international pressure exerted to relinquish his hold over the Congo Free State. By 1906, the CRA had clarified further what its aims were: British rights under the Treaty of 1884, pressure for a conference of the powers, to clarify and enforce the Berlin Act, and mobilisation of public opinion, to bring about such a conference, by demonstrating to a sceptical Europe that Britain meant business.[8] Morel expressed his views on the issue of free trade in the Congo Free State to the Foreign Secretary Grey, stating that he believed the crux of the whole debate rested solely on the 'right of the Congo native to buy and to sell, upon which all else hangs', later adding that he believed the Congo Free State issue was 'fundamentally an economic one and that constructive reform desired for humanitarian ends, and with absolutely unselfish motives, can only operate along economic lines.'[9] Morel believed that the Congo reform movement would grow to be as big as the anti-slave trade movement and was a question that would be easier to navigate on the international stage than other similar issues at the time. Morel described the Congo Free State as a 'bigger wickedness by far and a bigger question [than the slave trade] but one that does not present the great international difficulties which retard a solution of the Armenian and Macedonian questions';[10] both

[7] Stead to Morel, 19 May 1903, MP, F8/133:33, as cited in Wuliger, *Economic Imperialism,* p.42.
[8] Morel to Ronald Hodgkin, 28 January 1906, MP, F10/13:335.
[9] Morel to Grey, 28 December 1906, MP, F10/14:885-938; Morel to Grey, 9 January 1907, MP, F10/14:969.
[10] Morel to Emmott, 28 January 1904, MP, F10/9:23.

questions referred to the complications when several powers were involved in another country's affairs, which contrasted with the Congo Free State, which was owned by an individual. This view was evident in Morel's correspondence to the ACRA throughout the period of reform agitation, believing that it would not take long for both governments to come to their senses and pressure Leopold to relinquish his grasp over the Congo Free State.

The paternalist sentiment, along with its imperialist motives and methods, has tainted the Congo reform movement. Yet, as Barnett has argued, humanitarianism and paternalism share similar traits, and in some instances, paternalism is not necessarily 'a bad thing'.[11] Critical to this, he argues, is who the recipient is of this paternalism. In the case of the Congo Free State, it is inevitable that, given the time within which the organisation existed, there would be a paternalistic tone to the rhetoric and motives of the reform activists. However, this should not be a criticism of the organisation itself. Paternalism and humanitarianism went hand-in-hand during this period and, as Devin O'Pendas observes, both are not 'unheard of among human rights activists today.'[12]

The views held by the activists, in particular by Morel and Holt, both influenced by Mary Kingsley – considered to be key figures within the 'Liverpool School' and its resistance to New Imperialism – were very much in line with other radicals at the time. To the reformers, Leopold's regime was uniquely evil as it deprived the Congolese the right to free trade and to reap the produce of their land. They argued that Leopold had not adhered to the agreements that had been reached at the Berlin Conference, specifically on the issue of free trade and the 'civilising' of the natives. Another international conference was required to decide on how to

[11] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, pp.34-37.
[12] Devin O'Pendas, 'Toward a New Politics? On the Recent Historiography of Human Rights,' *Contemporary European History*, Vol.21, No.1 (2012), p.107.

deal with this reneging on international agreements. However, the frequency of rights talk and what the activists defined it as was not always so obvious.

In his early activism, Morel rarely mentioned the rights of the natives at all; not, at least, in the articles he wrote for the *Speaker*. In the articles, Morel did discuss the violation of the Berlin Act but not in the sense of violating the rights of the natives. Later, in his 1902 book *Affairs of West Africa*, Morel again said nothing about the rights of natives, instead discussing the rights of the Belgian-owned Thys companies under the Berlin Act.[13] Throughout this period, even where the precise word 'right' is not used, the sense of a minimum set of human rights does not come across. Yet as time went on, Morel's words, and the rhetoric of his fellow activists, became more and more rights-orientated, no doubt as a result of Kingsley's influence, and, later Holt's belief in free trade influencing Morel. It was only later, after the formation of the CRA, that Morel began to increasingly call for a set of rights to land, trade, commerce, justice and personal liberty for the Congolese; Casement had described Leopold's regime in the Congo Free State as an 'extraordinary invasion…of fundamental human rights of the Congo peoples.'[14] From the formation of the CRA up until the organisation disbanded in 1913, Morel and his fellow activists used the terms 'rights' more and more frequently, in reference to the plight of the Congolese. However, it is important to understand what the activists meant when they used the term 'rights' and how that evolved over the course of the campaign for reform.

Theirs was not a criticism of colonialism itself but more of a concern that Leopold's actions would damage the colonial project and 'civilising mission' in Africa overall. This is typified by Sir Harry Johnston, a British explorer and colonial administrator, in his introduction

[13] Morel stated that the Thys companies, which had built their business on the 'sacredness of free trade and native rights' had these rights infringed by Leopold. See, Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, pp.324-326. For more on Thys and his links to the Congo Free State, see, Stanard, *Selling the Congo*, pp.34-39.
[14] Casement to Dilke, 1 February 1904, as cited in Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism*, p.145.

to Morel's *Red Rubber* when he wrote that 'the danger in this state of affairs lies in the ferment of hatred which is being created against the white race in general by the agents of the King of the Belgians in the mind of the Congo Negroes.'[15] This is one area in which Morel differed from both his fellow Congo reform activists and ACRA counterparts. For Morel, it was not that imperialism *per se* was wicked, just that Leopold's version of it was, saying,

> The Congo evil was a special and extraordinary evil calling for special means of attack. To treat it...as only a degree worse than the treatment of the South African native...was to show a complete lack of perspective. It was the unique character of the Congo wickedness; its abnormal justice, and wholesale invasion of human rights, which called for the formation of...a very special appeal to the humane of England.[16]

Both the CRA and ACRA were major pressure groups that were part of an emerging moral conscience regarding the treatment of the colonised, and an international humanitarian 'society' school of thought – namely trusteeship – which proved to be a significant factor in the later development of a League of Nations and other diplomatic and international norms. The Congo reform campaigners did exchange ideas and strategies across the Atlantic, as well as resources, in order to coordinate their campaign. Yet, both the CRA and ACRA were also aware that their activism would be limited by the national frameworks that they operated in. However, this limitation does not mean that this was not a transnational movement, just not a movement that we would recognise as one today. Rather, it highlights that it was possible to enjoy a transnational relationship with shared goals in its activism, but be limited by local, national and international factors. The transnational activists were not conscious that their campaigning meant they were internationalists, but by sharing strategies, campaigning in a coordinated fashion, petitioning foreign leaders directly, and sharing resources, the Congo

[15] Morel, *Red Rubber*, p.xvi.
[16] Morel, Louis, and Stengers, *E.D. Morel*, p.164.

reform movement, and the CRA and ACRA, were the beginning of what would today be considered a transnational movement.

Transnational Dimensions

Chapter two explored the extent the CRA and ACRA were transnational in their activism, and, ultimately, as they were the leading organisations involved in the Congo reform movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, how transnational the wider reform movement was. In addition, the role of the ACRA within the Congo reform movement was examined in greater detail than the historiography has afforded it to date, with the role of Barbour, in particular, brought to the fore. This chapter highlighted the role of key individuals – in the case of the ACRA, working for an often unorganised and complex organisation – in sustaining the transatlantic movement. As chapter two demonstrated, there was not only a history of transatlantic activism that preceded the Congo reform movement, but by the first decade of the twentieth century, this had matured into a coordinated effort on both sides of the Atlantic in bringing an end to Leopold's hold over the Congo Free State. Anglo-American cooperation was perceived by the British and American activists as vital to both launching and sustaining a successful reform campaign. The third chapter also examined the impact of Morel's visit to the United States in September 1904, highlighting his belief that Anglo-American cooperation was the only way to solve the Congo issue, stating that 'the antislavery spirit is the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon peoples.'[17] This idea of Anglo-Saxonism was espoused more frequently by the British activists than their American counterparts. Yet, this theme was very much an intellectual construct that provided the rationale for the Congo activists to work together on the reform issue. The idea of a natural affinity between British and American people was prevalent in the minds of the leading activists involved with the CRA and ACRA, especially so in Britain.

[17] Morel interview in the *Morning Post*, 22 May 1909, as cited in Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.223.

This was a theme throughout the early period of Anglo-American activism over the Congo issue. The significant problems the reformers encountered within their own movement, specifically Anglophobia, were surmounted – at least enough to push the agenda significantly. As this thesis explored, suspicions regarding British motives still lingered towards the end of the reform campaign but had dissipated enough to allow for a coordination of strategy to be implemented. To achieve this, the activists had to tread carefully in order to present the joint venture as being an independent undertaking on both sides of the Atlantic; that the British and American CRAs were independent organisations. This aim was achieved, possibly because both associations were constricted to a certain extent by their national frameworks. Yet, particularly for the ACRA members, to gain support for their cause, suspicions regarding the motives of foreigners was a more important obstacle to overcome than it was for their British counterparts.

Both British and American reformers shared ideas and strategies on how best to propagate their message in a coordinated effort to maximise its impact. Yet they were also limited by their national frameworks and existing tensions between some of the activists involved, particularly those Anglophobes within the American movement who questioned British motives in the campaign. Furthermore, the lack of real organisation in the ACRA in comparison to its British counterpart meant that the limited success that it enjoyed was even more remarkable when these factors are taken into account. The British and American Congo reform activists were transnational humanitarian actors that cooperated with each other but were still confined to their national and imperial contexts. Whilst the activism was transnational to some extent – in its shared strategy and pooling of some resources to help sustain the movement – it also heavily relied on domestic networks and resources to implement this activism, subsequently connecting the local, national, and the global.

Ultimately, both the CRA and ACRA only enjoyed limited success, and when measured against the initial aims of both organisations – the reconvening of an international conference on the Congo issue – they fell short. However, whilst this primary aim was not achieved, both the British and American CRAs did enjoy a certain degree of success in campaigning for reform. They were able to raise public opinion to a significant level on both sides of the Atlantic, leading Grey to remark about Britain in 1908 that 'no external question for at least thirty years has moved this country so strongly and so vehemently as this in regard to the Congo.'[18] The question of how successful the CRA and ACRA were has divided opinion within the historiography. For some, the CRA in particular was successful in achieving its aims, and proved to be a model organisation that laid out a blueprint for future humanitarian and human rights organisations in the correct methods to deploy when campaigning for a particular goal or set of goals.[19] For others, the CRA was largely a failure, due to the political situation in Europe taking precedent in government policy, as well as citing the Belgian government's perpetuation of the Leopoldian system in the Congo Free State post annexation as proof that reform was not achieved, and the departure of several missionary societies from the cause of Congo reform as evidence of the CRA's failure.[20]

Hochschild has stated that the Congo Free State was an easy target for the reformers and that the system there was not unique in any way, observing that 'what happened in the Congo was no worse than what happened in neighbouring colonies…outrage over the Congo did not involve British or American misdeeds, nor did it entail the diplomatic, trade, or military consequences of taking on a major power like France or Germany.'[21] Yet this singular focus

[18] Hansard Papers, HC Debate, 26 February 1908, Vol. 184, c.1871, as cited in Morel, Louis, Stengers, *E. D. Morel*, p.xiv.
[19] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p.2; Sliwinski, 'The Childhood of Human Rights,' pp.333-363.
[20] Grant, *Civilised Savagery*, p.77; Thomas, 'Anglo-Belgian,' pp.157-165.
[21] Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp.280-282.

of the Congo reform movement was also a factor in its relative success. Neither the CRA nor the ACRA were as unique in their methods of activism, nor were they as anti-imperial, as historians of the movement have claimed. Their reform agitation was located within a framework of free trade and a 'new imperialism', one that believed in the colonial project as a way of 'civilising' its subjects but also allowing for their development along their own lines.[22] Although the majority of the Congo activists abhorred the cruel treatment that the Congolese were subjected to, their views on Africans were paternalistic and their central concern was not the violence that the Congolese were being subjected to, but the defining of a more moral and ethical foreign policy towards the Congolese specifically, and the 'natives' in Africa more generally. For the British activists especially, alongside this was also the aim of regenerating Britain's colonial reputation in the wake of the disastrous Boer War.

Humanitarianism and Foreign Policy

Cookey described the final meeting of the CRA in Britain in 1913 as the 'last echo of the great humanitarian agitations which had punctuated British history throughout the nineteenth century and so strongly influenced British foreign policy.'[23] Yet, as chapter three has shown, the influence of the CRA on British foreign policy was limited. Whilst there was some influence in decision-making early on in the CRA's existence, British foreign policy formulation was

[22] Parallels with this school of thought can be drawn with the emergence of the policy of Indirect Rule in Africa, which called for the governing of protectorates through native rulers, ensuring that traditional hierarchies and structures were retained once the country or region was occupied. The idea of a trusteeship permeated the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and led to the creation of the League of Nations and its mandate providing the legal status for certain territories transferred from the control of one country to another following the end of the First World War, or the administration of those territories on behalf of the League of Nations. Some of those remaining mandates after the League of Nations had been dissolved later became United Nations Trust Territories after the Second World War. Therefore, the idea of trusteeship espoused by the Congo reform activists endured well into the twentieth century. Frederick Lugard, in particular, was a celebrated British colonial administrator in Nigeria and a strong advocate of Indirect Rule through native chiefs who were responsible to the British government. For more on Indirect Rule in Nigeria, as well as some of the historiographical debate regarding Lugard's role in its development, see: John M. Carland, *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), pp.66-79; Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp.128-154.

[23] Cookey, *Great Britain*, p.304.

largely dictated by geopolitical concerns regarding international relations; the ACRA enjoying more success on this front than their British counterparts.

The 1906 election victory for the Liberals in Britain was timely for the CRA, as it was a victory for free trade and anti-imperialism. Yet its activists were not able to take much advantage of this development, despite several members of the new government – including Grey – being sympathetic to its cause, and the impact on Congo reform activism from the CRA on British foreign policy was not as significant as some of the historiography has claimed it to be. The conclusions drawn in chapter three demonstrate that, despite the success of the CRA in raising awareness of the Congo issue and applying pressure to both the British government and Leopold's position as owner and ruler of the Congo Free State, the impact of this activism was secondary in comparison to the geopolitical concerns that Grey and the Foreign Office had to take into consideration. Whilst certain historians have explored the decision-making process of Grey and the Foreign Office when formulating foreign policy regarding the Congo issue during this period, rightly crediting both as having an impact on Leopold's subsequent decision to cede the Congo Free State to the Belgian government, there has been less focus in the historiography on the impact of the Anglo-American relationship on the reform movement. Instead, too often, Grey and the Foreign Office are credited with being the determining factor in the relative success of the pressure brought to bear on Leopold. Grey was sympathetic to the cause of the reformers, yet he was able to set aside his personal feelings and adopt a more pragmatic approach to the issue, taking into consideration the balance of power in Europe.

Yet, in the wake of the Boer War, Grey was also wary of jeopardising Britain's reputation on the world stage and was desperately trying to avoid a situation in which Britain was the only major power to press for reform in the Congo Free State. The Foreign Office finally recognised Belgian annexation in June 1913. However, by that stage, the American government had

retreated from the issue, still trying to remain politically distant from the problems in Africa. However, without the cooperation of the United States government up until annexation in 1909, it is highly unlikely that Grey would have taken the course of action that he did within that particular timeframe; it is not implausible that Grey would have continued to dither and even relegate the Congo issue further down his list of priorities with the looming prospect of a world war. Leopold's death in 1909 may have eventually triggered the process of annexation by the Belgian government anyway, although the First World War would surely have slowed that process down considerably. Yet Grey's cautious approach to the Congo issue and maintaining the European balance of power inevitably led to tension between himself and the Foreign Office, and Morel and the CRA.

The breakdown of the relationship between Morel, Grey and the Foreign Office by 1909 was the result of Morel's increasing insistence that a show of force, via the despatching of British or American warships, be used in the Congo Free State to show that Britain meant business. In addition, he believed that Grey opposed reform and had deliberately adopted a sluggish policy towards the Congo issue. This, Morel believed, was directly linked to Grey's fear of Germany, lamenting to his American counterparts that only Anglo-American cooperation could allay the Foreign Secretary's 'insane fear of Germany...brought about by Grey's mishandling of foreign affairs and his clumsy attempts to isolate Germany', adding that he was now 'desperately in need of encouragement from your side.'[24] As Pavlakis notes, in turn, the Foreign Office stopped using the CRA's advice and recommendations, as it could now use its 'consuls and its in-house expertise' to gather information on the Congo issue, and the CRA's name began to disappear from the Foreign Office's Congo reports as a result.[25] This

[24] Morel to Daniels, 3 July 1909, as cited in Wuliger, 'Economic Imperialism,' p.227.
[25] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p.228.

was in contrast to the early period of the CRA's existence when the Foreign Office had often acted on information supplied by the CRA.

Chapter three redresses the balance somewhat within the historiography of the Congo reform movement by situating this thesis in the centre-ground between the Morel-centred narrative that hails Morel as the hero of the movement, and the body of work that credits Grey and the Foreign Office for the eventual annexation of the Congo Free State by the Belgian government. Within the historiography, this heroic narrative that placed Morel at the centre of the perceived success of the movement began during the CRA's existence and throughout the twentieth century. 'Morel has never had an equal as organiser and leader of a Dissenting movement,' wrote A.J.P. Taylor, whilst Bernard Porter also credits Morel, stating that 'by means of Morel's indefatigable efforts to secure the support of influential men and organisations for his cause' the 'Belgian solution' proposed by Congo reformers was able to be implemented.[26] The Morel-centred narrative found a new lease of life in Hochschild and Mitchell's work respectively at the end of the twentieth and in the early twenty-first centuries. The arguments that the Foreign Office and Grey were the real driving forces behind both the reform in the Congo Free State and Belgian annexation place too much emphasis on the role of individual and institutional agency in shaping events. As this thesis has shown, the complex relationship between the activists on both sides of the Atlantic and the British and American governments indicate that, at different stages, all played an important role in annexation, despite external factors hampering activism or the formulation of government foreign policy.

The CRA and ACRA achieved limited success in influencing the British and American governments, and that success, moreover, did not translate into wholly directing the foreign

[26] A. J. P. Taylor, *Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), p.121; Porter, *Critics*, p.271.

policy of the Foreign Office and United States government. In addition, the activism of the ACRA had a greater impact in influencing the American government than its British counterpart was able to achieve, for several reasons. One was the geopolitical position that the United States occupied during this period, as well as the impact of domestic and international concerns – primarily Roosevelt's upcoming election in 1904 and the Russo-Japanese War. These took precedence over the Congo Free State issue, and the reluctance of individuals in the American government to entangle the United States in European colonial affairs. Hay, in particular, was against this, and as he largely dictated American foreign policy during the Roosevelt administration, he was a significant obstacle for the activists in achieving their goals; his death in 1905 was a turning point for the Congo reform movement in the United States. Hay was the architect of the Open Door policy, a vital component of American foreign policy from its inception in 1899 and throughout the early part of the twentieth century that advocated the idea that equal access to markets would reduce the competitiveness that existed between the leading world powers. Therefore, his opposition to the Congo reform movement and its argument regarding the denial of free trade in the Congo region may seem a conflicting position to occupy. Hay's approach to the Open Door policy was his attempt to 'align longstanding anti-imperialistic and anti-militaristic sentiments with a balance of power politics that facilitated collaboration with empires.'[27] It would seem logical for Hay to have adopted a similar position on the Congo issue and this may have given the Congo activists hope that they could influence American foreign policy. Yet, as chapter three has shown, during Hay's tenure as Secretary of State, this was not the case. As Cullinane and Goodall have observed, enforcement of the Open Door policy was a problem, highlighted by the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, showing the limitations of a 'policy based on mutual respect and imperial good will, especially given

[27] Michael P. Cullinane and Alex Goodall, *The Open Door Era: United States Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p.3.

the United States had neither the desire nor the military capacity to enforce its aims at the time.'[28] This would have likely factored into Hay's thinking when approaching the Congo issue. As highlighted in chapter three, the almost impotent position that the United States held militarily to enforce its foreign policy decisions on the Congo was also cited as a reason for non-intervention by Roosevelt.

The ACRA did enjoy more success in influencing the United States government than its British counterparts did in pushing for Anglo-American cooperation on the Congo issue. This was primarily achieved through the direct lobbying of the local representatives of the activists themselves, and their supporters within the wider movement. The process of directly petitioning one's local Senator or Congressman in the United States was an effective tool in pressuring the American government into taking action. Throughout the period of reform agitation in the United States, the ACRA made repeated calls to its members and wider audience to write to their Senators and representatives in Congress voicing their concerns. As shown in chapter two, a huge percentage of the letters received on the Congo issue by the State Department highlights the important role that public support for the intervention of the United States government in the Congo issue played, and that it was the preferred course of action for many Americans. The dynamic between humanitarian values and imperial and foreign-policy interests resulted in powerful words but cautious action from both the British and American governments. The ACRA had to contend with an American government still not yet sure of its role in the world. Whilst it advocated sticking to the principles of the Monroe Doctrine and, later, the Roosevelt Corollary, the United States was an emerging power on the world stage. Its indecisiveness regarding the Congo issue was reflective of the American government not really knowing what position it should take in imperial and colonial matters in a part of the

[28] *Ibid*, p.5.

world where it had no previous interests. In contrast, Britain was an old imperial power that had very clear ideas on what it wanted to defend with regards to its empire. Its wider geopolitical strategic position was different to that of its American counterpart, having to consider other imperial powers on its doorstep; the rise of Germany and growing hostilities, in particular, were a concern for the British government at this time.

Motivations and Ideology

As chapter four has shown, the motivations of those involved in the Congo reform movement on both sides of the Atlantic were largely ideologically driven. For the leading British activists, especially Morel and Holt, free trade was central to their beliefs in how best to heal the 'open festering sore of the world' that was the Congo Free State.[29] Morel firmly believed that 'commerce…is the greatest civilising agent. The steps upward in the ethical development of the human race have been synonymous with the spread of commercial relations.'[30] Yet not all of his American counterparts held the same view.

Despite the more well-known proponents of anti-imperialism involved in the ACRA, for the American activists, 'liberty' and 'humanity' – and their absence in the Congo Free State – were the primary ideological reasons for campaigning for reform and these terms were often deployed by the American activists in their reform propaganda. This was the basis of their argument against Leopold and his system of government, and not the argument of free trade, as espoused so frequently throughout the reform campaign by their British counterparts. Washington Williams had deployed the term in his criticism of Leopold's system of government, referring to events in the Congo Free State as a 'crime against humanity.'[31] More

[29] 'A Vigorous Discussion,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1906, p.4.
[30] Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, as cited in Porter, *Critics*, p.258.
[31] Williams to James G. Blaine, United States Secretary of State, 15 September 1890, as quoted in Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p.112.

recently to the Congo reform campaign, regarding the Spanish-American War, President McKinley stated that American intervention in Cuba was in the 'interests of humanity'.[32] Senator John C. Spooner, who later helped in securing the adoption of a resolution in the Senate that authorised Roosevelt to intervene in the Congo Free State, also stated that intervention in Cuba was 'not for conquest, not for aggrandisement, not because of the Monroe Doctrine; we intervene for humanity's sake…to aid a people who have suffered every form of tyranny and who have made a desperate struggle to be free.'[33]

The term 'liberty', in particular, had anti-slavery connotations. As Forth has observed, Congo activists displayed a degree of self-consciousness when expressing terms such as this.[34] The idea of philanthropy was also prominent in the reform movement, being vocalised early on the campaign when an editor of the *Boston Transcript* wrote that '[T]he situation [in the Congo] appeals strongly to the public spirit and philanthropy of our people.'[35] Forth has stated that this rhetoric 'evoked something transcendent…an Anglo-American civilisation defined and distinguished by its philanthropy', linking the Congo issue to wider beliefs about Britain and the United States as countries, and their empires, as philanthropic – all tying in again to the view held by many British and American citizens of the perceived exceptionalism of both countries.[36] The ACRA also questioned American ignorance of the Congo issue, asking whether the appeals from reform activists were 'in vain to a people who have laid down as inalienable rights of every man "life, liberty, and…the pursuit of happiness?"'[37] The ACRA campaigners were operating very much in the tradition of the antislavery activism of a century previous, that

[32] 'Message of the President,' 5 December 1898, http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1898/reference/frus.frus1898.wmckinley.pdf (accessed 5 January 2019).
[33] Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p.111.
[34] Forth, 'The Politics of Philanthropy,' p.84.
[35] *Ibid*, p.70.
[36] *Ibid*.
[37] 'Weighty Utterances,' *The Congo News Letter*, April 1906, p.15.

based its ideology in 'humanity' and 'liberty', fighting against any violations of this in places where their influence extended.

The difference in approach to the argument for reform in the Congo by the British and American activists – the British free trade argument and the American concern regarding liberty and humanity – also reinforces the argument that both associations were operating within their own national frameworks. Free trade was a key issue in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century, whereas for the Americans, the denial of free trade in the Congo Free State was not a primary concern. This is most likely due to the lack of an American economic presence in the Congo Free State.

As chapter four explored, personal rivalries also played a role in the motivations of certain leading figures in the CRA and the wider movement to get involved in the Congo issue. For businessmen like Cadbury, it provided a welcome distraction from his suspect business practices in the cocoa industry, during a period when Cadbury Brothers was under scrutiny for its involvement in slavery in the Portuguese colony of São Tomé. Holt's regular donations to both the CRA and Morel enabled the reform movement in Britain to be sustained. Whilst on the surface, this looks like philanthropy in action from Holt, his motivations were not completely altruistic. There is no doubt that Holt felt a certain degree of affinity with West Africans, having spent time in Africa and enjoying success in trade there. It is also true that, after meeting Mary Kingsley, his views on Africans and the imperial project changed, with his religiosity deepening during this period, too. However, what was also a driving factor in his involvement in the Congo reform movement, and his moral and financial support to both Morel and the CRA, was his rivalry with Jones. For Holt, and to a lesser extent, Morel, the Congo issue provided a platform from Jones could be attacked. Yet, the need for the amount of finance required to sustain a campaign the size of the one that the reformers engaged in meant that the

activists were susceptible to the influence of their donors. For Morel, Jones's position on the Congo issue was bitterly disappointing, and this made him susceptible to Holt's influence regarding Jones and his relationship with Leopold and the Congo Free State, and he was more than willing to voice his criticism publicly. In Morel, Holt had found a willing mouthpiece for his attacks on Jones. The relationship between Jones and Holt was one of mutual respect in the business world, albeit a begrudging one. Yet, that respect did not extend outside of the shipping business. Possibly envious of the success of Elder Dempster and its monopoly on West African trade, and still aggrieved from a business deal that went wrong, the Congo reform movement afforded Holt plenty of opportunities to criticise Jones, which he often took.

Key questions examined in chapter four were on how much impact did the business support for Morel and the CRA, and the rivalries between the competing business interests, have on the reform campaign, and to what extent did they help or hinder the movement? As the chapter demonstrates, the money donated by prominent businessmen such as Holt and Cadbury was vital in sustaining the movement. Even with their large donations, the CRA still experienced financial hardship during its existence. There was a clear gap between rhetorical and financial support for the Congo reform movement on both sides of the Atlantic, reflected in the financial difficulties experienced by both the CRA and ACRA. Yet, undoubtedly, Holt and Cadbury used their influence to benefit their own business interests and cast aspersions on business rivals. The rivalry between Holt and Jones tarred the reform movement. Time spent arguing with Jones, who was essentially a peripheral figure where the reform movement was concerned in Britain, distracted the focus away from the Congo campaign to some extent. As a result, Jones's role within the Congo reform story has received more attention than is probably warranted, and this is due to Holt's and Morel's rivalry with him. The reform agenda that the CRA was pushing was complicated by the role of these proto-multinational corporations pulling

the organisation in different directions and using the organisation and wider Congo issue as a way of competing against each other. For Holt and Jones, the Congo reform movement was essentially an extension of their business rivalry, and another forum within which they could air their grievances concerning each other's business interests and practices.

Modern Facets of the CRAs

The secularisation of the CRA and ACRA was a progressive aspect of the organisations and a move away from activism that was solely driven by religious beliefs or whose rhetoric was loaded with religious overtones; previously, for example, organisations such as the BFASS and APS, which were both dominated by Quakers, and other Christian missionary lobbies, had provided the backbone for campaigns against the slave trade a century earlier. The CRA represented a departure from these overtly-religious organisations. From the outset, Morel was insistent that the meetings held by the CRA were to be free from religious influence; a message he also carried across the Atlantic in order to ensure a consistent message was propagated. However, religion and its role in both the British and American reform associations would vary in degree. Most historians, to date, have argued that the ACRA was similar in nature to its British counterpart, namely that it was a secular organisation led by non-religious anti-imperialists.[38]

Whilst it is true that there was a religious feel to the Congo reform meetings – to the extent that Congo hymns were sung at the Lantern Lectures – as Pavlakis has noted, this was a case of 'religious tone used for secular purpose'.[39] This was very much in keeping with Morel's drive to keep the CRA free from being perceived as a religious movement, in order to counter criticism by predominantly Catholic Belgium that it was a Protestant movement against them,

[38] See Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism*, pp.167-179; Cullinane, 'Transatlantic Dimensions,' p.301; Hawkins, 'Mark Twain,' pp.147-175; Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*.
[39] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, p. 189.

and to ensure that they could lobby governments and appeal to the general public in terms that challenged the sovereign rights of nations under international law. Grant has discussed the prominence of the missionaries involved in the Congo reform campaign, and the CRA itself, but has overstated their role in its success in agitating for reform. He counters the Morel-dominated narrative by arguing that it was the missionaries involved in the campaign that were key to turning around a seemingly-stagnant and failing movement, generating the outrage in the court of public opinion that was needed to drive and sustain the movement. Where this thesis departs from Grant's argument, and slightly differs from Pavlakis' work, is that, whilst religious elements were involved in the CRA and played an important role in its activism, they adhered to the overall secular reform mission. However, this is not necessarily the case with regards to the ACRA. Whilst it is true that there were members of the ACRA who were secular, the driving force of reform agitation in the United States was led by religious leaders and organisations. Figures such as Barbour and Herbert S. Johnson, who viewed the atrocities in the Congo Free State as a threat to the spread of Protestantism, were key players within the American organisation. Morel had insisted that they maintain a secular message and to keep clear of any religious overtones to their public meetings and literature, advice which was largely heeded in its early period of existence, organising figures of the ACRA would come and go and the only activists to stay the course throughout were primarily the religious figures involved, and the responsibility of agitation for reform fell on their shoulders.

The British and American CRAs were one of the first NGOs in the history of humanitarianism and human rights to use atrocity photographs as a central tool to mobilise public opinion into a consistent, international protest against the atrocities being committed in the Congo Free State. They also developed a women's branch of the CRA in Britain. Established in April 1909, the women's branch held meetings to discuss the atrocities being

committed against Congolese women, the reason being that, as Alice Harris stated, 'the effects could only be appreciated by women.'[40] These facets of the reform movement have led historians to regard the CRA and ACRA as modern-day human rights organisations. Whilst the use of photographs as a propaganda tool was nothing new when the CRA and ACRA deployed them, they were central to the propaganda campaign. The role of women in the reform movement can also be seen as another example of the Congo activists as inheritors of the antislavery tradition, as women played a prominent role in the antislavery movement in the early nineteenth century. Yet, as Pavlakis has observed, whilst women did play a significant, if undervalued, role within the Congo reform movement, the main realms within which the Congo activists operated were almost exclusively male: 'Parliament, church leadership, missionary society leadership, and commerce.'[41] Therefore, the CRA was not as progressive as it seems to be, judging by the modern standards that historians have applied. In the case of the ACRA, based on the little existing historical evidence regarding the association, its Executive Committee was almost exclusively male, as was its membership.

The long-term significance of the CRA and ACRA, and their influence on international norms and ideology leading into the interwar period and beyond has not received as much historiographical coverage as is probably warranted. In particular, the idea of trusteeship that they regularly espoused throughout the period of reform agitation is important when analysing the roots of colonial development by imperial powers such as Britain and the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. The idea of trusteeship was used by Leopold when petitioning for international approval for his Congo project at the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. Leopold would 'civilise' the Congolese by bringing Christianity to the region and drive out the Arab slave traders. Yet, the Congo activists would also be proponents of trusteeship in

[40] *Official Organ of the Congo Reform Association*, April 1909, p.275.
[41] Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, pp.113-123.

Africa, just along different lines. For Morel and the Congo reformers, Leopold's rule and mistreatment of the natives in the Congo Free State was evidence that the old colonial format of indirect rule no longer worked. Instead, they argued for an internationalisation of trusteeship, one that would see international administration of colonies replace the existing system of administration by colonial empires. This would lead to a protectorate that would secure the economic freedom of Africans, thus allowing them to develop along their own line, as Kinglsey had advocated at the end of the nineteenth century (as explored in chapter four). The Congo activists perceived the Europeanisation of Africa as harmful to Africans, and although their desired outcome was still paternalistic, it represents a departure from the thinking of colonial governments at this time, who were still fully subscribed to the method of colonial rule by individual colonial powers. The key difference was that the Congo activists were proponents of an internationalisation of trusteeship, whereas the colonial powers saw the responsibility belonging to national governments.

Once the 'Belgian solution' was proposed, which both the CRA and ACRA and the British and American governments subscribed to, then the possibility of international arbitration became less likely. Yet, because the Congo activists and the Anglo-American governments used the Berlin Act, and, in particular, Article VI, as a way of holding the Congo government accountable for its mistreatment of the Congolese, it allowed the rectification of the principles ascribed at the Berlin Conference to be implemented. Crucially, this constant reference to Article VI legitimised the idea of trusteeship. When Belgium agreed to reform the Congo Free State based on the violation of Article VI of the Berlin Act argued by the British and American governments, the Belgian government essentially validated the authority and responsibilities of trusteeship.

As this thesis has shown, the Congo reformers were not successful in achieving this outcome. Yet, where they were successful was formulating the idea of international trusteeship – a message echoed by both the CRA and ACRA throughout their existence – and one that would return after the First World War. That they were also able to internationalise the Congo issue meant that, whilst the Congo activists eventually stopped pressing for international arbitration of the issue, their ideas on international trusteeship paved the way for later international institutionalised forms of trusteeship. Leopold's endeavours in the Congo Free State did not discredit trusteeship, as it returned in the guise of the League of Nations, which essentially established the idea of trusteeship into international institutional form.

This study has sought to deconstruct some of the central aspects of the reform movement that have been explored in its historiography. By doing so, it has allowed for a better understanding of where the organisations central to the movement – the CRA and ACRA – sit within the history of humanitarian and human rights organisations and movements. Specifically, by adopting a comparative approach to both organisations, the thesis has demonstrated that the ACRA deserves to be more central to the Congo reform story. It has been shown that the British CRA was actually more complicated than it appears in some areas of the literature on its existence and campaign activities. It was far more susceptible to the influence of business interests in guiding its campaign than its American counterpart. Despite being more organised and better funded than the ACRA, the CRA was ultimately less successful in the political sphere when attempting to influence government foreign policy on the Congo issue. This thesis has offered a more sceptical take on the CRA in particular, by highlighting its fluidity in principles regarding the welfare of the Congolese through Morel's acquiescence to Lever's plans in the Congo, his receipt of timely personal donations from Lever, Cadbury, and Holt. In particular, Holt's use of Morel as a way to attack a business rival shows that

humanitarian conscience was not always the driving force behind the movement for reform in Britain. This thesis has demonstrated the impact of this relationship between Morel and Holt on the effectiveness of the CRA's campaigning, showing that the complicated business interests involved limited the organisation's success.

Finally, some questions remain on the Congo Free State and the subsequent reform movement. What, for example, was the impact of Leopold's counter propaganda on the reform movement and did it contribute significantly to its limited success? Further work on the role of propaganda discourses in the Congo reform movement, especially from the side of Leopold, would help develop the historiography further and shed light on the barriers to reform that the activists and governments faced. The historiography on the Congo Free State and the reform movement has also recently entered a new phase with a publication that adds the voice of the Congolese people to the story.[42] This development, and further work on the subaltern voice in the Congo Free State, could mean that the historiography is reaching a maturity. Indeed, further exploration of the Congolese voice and agency in the atrocities debate could add significantly to the debates regarding the relationship between imperialism and humanitarianism.

[42] Robert Burroughs, *African Testimony in the Movement for Congo Reform: The Burden of Proof* (London; New York: Routledge, 2019).

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Collections

E.D. Morel Papers, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics, London, UK.

The National Archives of the UK, Kew.

Foreign Office (FO) 367 - African Department: General Correspondence from 1906.

Foreign Office (FO) 881 - Confidential Print (Numerical Series).

Foreign Office (FO) 10 - Political and Other Departments: General Correspondence before 1906, Belgium.

John Holt papers, Merseyside Maritime Museum Archives, Liverpool, UK.

Papers of John Holt & Company (Liverpool) Ltd., University of Oxford, UK.

Hansard Online, 1803-2005 (http://hansard.millbanksystems.com)

Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) Series, 1861-1958/1960 [375 vols.]

- 1901 collection
- 1906 collection
- 1907 collection
- 1908 collection

HathiTrust Digital Library, *The Congo News Letter*. April 1906 – September 1908. Available at https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000009365752;view=1up;seq=1

G. Stanley Hall Papers, Clark University, Worcester, MA.

Robert E. Park Papers, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress.

Books and Articles

Canisius, E. 'A Campaign against Cannibals.' In Burrows, G. *The Curse of Central Africa*. London: R.A. Everett & Co., 1903.

Conrad, J. *Heart of Darkness*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Boston, MA.: Bedford St. Martin's, 2011.

Daniels, J. 'The Congo Question and the Belgian Solution.' *North American Review*, Vol. 188, No. 637 (December 1908), pp. 891-902.

Dorman, M. R. P. *A Journal of a Tour in the Congo Free State*. Brussels: J. Lebegue & Co.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd, 1905.

Grey, E. *Twenty Five Years: 1892 – 1916, Vol. I*. London, 1925.

Morel, E. D. *Affairs of West Africa*. 1902. Reprint, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968.

Morel, E. D. *King Leopold's Rule in Africa*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1904.

Morel, E. D. *Nigeria: Its People and its Problems*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911.

Morel, E. D. *Red Rubber: The Story of the Rubber Slave Trade flourishing on the Congo in the Year of Grace 1906*. London: T. F. Unwin, 1906.

Roosevelt, T. *American Ideals, and Other Essays, Social and Political*. New York; London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897.

Starr, F. *The Truth about the Congo*. Chicago: Forbes and Company, 1907.

Twain, M. *King Leopold's Soliloquy*. Boston: The P.R. Warren Co., 1905.

Washington, B. T. 'Cruelty in the Congo Country.' *Outlook*, Vol.78, No.6 (8 October 1904), pp.375-377.

Newspapers and Periodicals

The Aborigines' Friend

The African Mail

The Baptist Times

The Boston Evening Transcript

The Boston Globe

The Chicago Daily Tribune

The Daily Mail

The Manchester Guardian

The Morning Post

The New York American

The New York Times

The New York Tribune

The Official Organ of the Congo Reform Association

The Outlook

The Washington Post

The Washington Times

The West African Mail

The Baptist Times

The Times

Secondary Sources

Books and Articles

Armitage, D. *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Ascherson, N. *The King Incorporated: Leopold the Second and the Congo*. London: Granta, 1999.

Barnett, M. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Bass, G. J. *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*. New York: Vintage Books, 2008.

Bayly, C. A. *The Birth of the Modern World 1780 – 1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009.

Benedetto, R. *Presbyterian Reformers in Central Africa: A Documentary Account of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission and the Human Rights Struggle in the Congo, 1890-1918*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.

Brown, C. L. *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Budd, L. J. *Mark Twain: The Contemporary Reviews*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Burroughs, R. *African Testimony in the Movement for Congo Reform: The Burden of Proof* London; New York: Routledge, 2019.

Burroughs, R. *Travel Writing and Atrocities: Eyewitness Accounts of Colonialism in the Congo, Angola, and the Putumayo*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Burroughs, R. 'The Travelling Apologist: May French Sheldon in the Congo Free State (1903-4).' *Studies in Travel Writing*, Vol.14, No.2 (June 2010), pp.135-157.

Carland, J. M. *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1985.

Casement, R. *The Eyes of Another Race*: *Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary*. Edited by O'Siochain, S. & O'Sullivan, M. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003.

Clavin, P. 'Introduction: Conceptualising Internationalism between the World Wars.' In Laqua, D. (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2011.

Clay, D. 'Transnational Dimensions of the Congo Reform Movement, 1904-1908.' *English Studies in Africa*, Vol.59 (2016), pp.18-28.

Cline, C. A. *E.D. Morel, 1873-1924: The Strategies of Protest*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1980.

Cline, C. A. 'E.D. Morel and the Crusade against the Foreign Office.' *The Journal of Modern History,* Vol.39, No.2 (1997), pp.126-137.

Cline, C. A. 'The Church and the Movement for Congo Reform.' *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture,* Vol.32, No.1 (1963), pp.46-56.

Cmiel, K. 'The Recent History of Human Rights.' *American Historical Review,* Vol. 109, Issue 1 (2004), pp.117-135.

Cocks, F. S. *E. D. Morel: The Man and his Work*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1920.

Cookey, S. J. S. *Britain and the Congo Question*. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd, 1968.

Crossland, J. *War, Law and Humanity: The Campaign to Control Warfare, 1853-1914*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018.

Cullinane, M. P. *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism, 1898–1909*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Cullinane, M. P. 'Transatlantic Dimensions of the American Anti-Imperialist Movement, 1899-1909.' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol.8, Issue 4 (2010), pp.301-314.

Cullinane, M. P. and Goodall, A. *The Open Door Era: United States Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017.

Cutts, M. 'Politics and Humanitarianism.' *Refugee Slavery Quarterly,* Vol. 17, No.1 (1998), pp.1-15.

Davis, B. D. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. Oxford, England; New York, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Davies, P. N. *Sir Alfred Jones: Shipping Entrepreneur par Excellence*. London: Europa Publishing, 1978.

Davies, P. N. *The Trade Makers: Elder Dempster in West Africa, 1852-1972, 1973-1989*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1980.

Demoor, M. 'When the King Becomes your Personal Enemy: W. T. Stead, King Leopold II, and the Congo Free State.' *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Vol.19, No.16 (23 April 2013).

Dobson, A. P. *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict, and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers*. London; New York: Routledge, 2002.

Donini, A. 'The Far Side: The Meta Functions of Humanitarianism in a Globalised World.' *Disasters*, Vol.34, Issue S2 (April 2010), pp.S220-237.

Dromi, S. M. 'For Good and Country: Nationalism and the Diffusion of Humanitarianism in the Late Nineteenth Century.' *The Sociological Review Monographs*, Vol. 64, Issue 2 (March 2016), pp.79-97.

Duignan, P. and Gann, L. H. *The United States and Africa: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Dunn, K. C. *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Dworkin, I. *Congo Love Song: African American Culture and the Crisis of the Colonial State*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Edgerton, R. B. *The Troubled Heart of Africa: A History of the Congo*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002.

Emerson, B. *Leopold II of the Belgians: King of Colonialism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979.

Ewans, M. *European Atrocity, African Catastrophe: Leopold II, the Congo Free State and its Aftermath*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Flint, J. E. 'Mary Kingsley – A Reassessment.' *The Journal of African History*, Vol.4, Issue 1 (1963), pp.95-104.

Forsythe, D. P. *Human Rights in International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Franklin, J. H. *George Washington Williams: A Biography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Gibbons, H. A. *The New Map of Africa (1900-1916): A History of European Expansion and Colonial Diplomacy*. New York, The Century Company, 1916.

Gondola, C.D. *The History of Congo*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2002

Grant, K. *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slaveries in Africa, 1884-1926*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Grant, K. 'Christian Critics of Empire: Missionaries, Lantern Lectures, and the Congo Reform Campaign in Britain.' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol.29, No.2 (2001), pp.27-58.

Green, A. ‘Humanitarianism in Nineteenth-Century Context: Religious, Gendered, National.’ *The Historical Journal*, Vol.57, No. 4 (2014), pp.1157-1175.

Harlan, L. R. and Smock, R. W. (eds.). *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 8: 1904-1906*. Urbana; Chicago; London: University of Illinois Press, 1979.

Harlan, L. R. ‘Booker T. Washington and the White Man’s Burden.’ *The American Historical Review*, Vol.71, No.2 (January 1966), pp.441-467.

Harms, R. ‘The End of Red Rubber: A Reassessment.’ *The Journal of African History*, Vol.16, No.1 (1975), pp.73-88.

Haskell, T. ‘Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1.’ *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (April 1985), p.339-361.

Hawkins, H. ‘Mark Twain’s Involvement with the Congo Reform Movement: A Fury of Generous Indignation.’ *The New England Quarterly*, Vol.51, No.2 (1978), pp.147-175.

Heraclides, A. and Dialla, A. *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015.

Hilton, R. *Worldwide Mission: The Story of the United States Foreign Service*. New York: World Publishing, 1971.

Hochschild, A. *Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery*. London: Pan, 2012.

Hochschild, A. *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa.* London: Pan Macmillan, 1998.

Hunt, L. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York and London; W. W. Norton, 2008.

Iriye, A. *Global Community: The Role of International Organisations in the Making of the Contemporary World*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006.

Iriye, A. Akira Iriye, 'A Century of NGOs.' *Diplomatic History*, Vol.23, No.3 (Summer 1999), pp.421-435.

Iriye, A. 'Transnational History.' *Contemporary European History*, Vol.13, Issue 2 (2004), pp.211-222.

Ishay, M. R. *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2009.

Jacobsen, O. *Daniel J. Danielsen and the Congo: Missionary Campaigns and Atrocity Photographs*. Brethren Activists and Historians Network, 2014.

Jessup, P. C. *Elihu Root: Volume II, 1905-1937*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1938.

Jones, J. E. *In Search of Brightest Africa: Reimagining the Dark Continent in American Culture, 1884-1936*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010.

Kaplan, J. *Mr Clemens and Mark Twain.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966.

Kennedy, D. *The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Kennedy, T. C. *British Quakerism, 1860-1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Kramer, P. A. 'Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910.' *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (March 2002), pp.1315-1353

Laderman, C. ‘The Invasion of the United States by an Englishman: E. D. Morel and the Anglo-American Intervention in the Congo.’ In Mulligan, W. and Bric, M. (eds). *A Global History of Anti-slavery Politics in the Nineteenth Century*. Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2013.

LaFeber, W. *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1994.

Lagergren, D. *Mission and State in the Congo: A Study of the Relations between Protestant Missions and the Congo Independent State Authorities with Special Reference to the Equator District, 1885-1903*. Uppsala: Almqvist and Wikshells, 1970.

Laqua, D. *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880-1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013.

Laqua, D. ‘Inside the Humanitarian Cloud: Causes and Motivations to Help Friends and Strangers.’ *Journal of Modern European History*, Vol.12, No. 2 (2014), pp.175-184.

Laqua, D. ‘The Tensions of Internationalism: Transnational Antislavery in the 1880s and 1890s.’ *The International History Review*, Vol.33, Issue 4 (2011), pp.705-726.

Lauren, P. G. *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Lester, A. *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Lester, A. ‘Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire.’ *History Compass*, Vol.4, No.1, (2006), pp.124-141.

Lewis, B. *So Clean: Lord Leverhulme, Soap and Civilisation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008.

Louis, W. R. *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization: Collected Essays*. London: Tauris, 2006.

Louis, W. R. 'Roger Casement and the Congo.' *The Journal of African History*, Vol.5 (1964), pp.99-120

Louis, W. R. 'Sir John Harris and "Colonial Trusteeship."' *The Bulletin of A.R.S.O.M. (Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer) for 1965 and 1966*, Part 6, pp.832-856.

Louis, W. R. 'The Philosophical Diplomatist: Sir Arthur Hardinge and King Leopold's Congo, 1906-1911.' *The Bulletin of A.R.S.O.M. (Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer) for 1968*, pp.1402-1430.

Louis, W. R. 'The Stokes Affair and the Origins of the Anti-Congo Campaign, 1895-1896.' *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, Vol. 43, No.2 (January 1965), pp.572-584.

Louis, W. R. 'The Triumph of the Congo Reform Movement, 1905-1908.' In Butler, J. et al (eds.). *Boston University Papers on Africa: Transition in Politics Vol. 2*. Boston, Boston University Press, 1966.

Lynn, M. *Commerce and Economic Change in West Africa: The Palm Oil Trade in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Lynn, M. 'Liverpool and Africa in the Nineteenth Century: The Continuing Connection.' *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol.147 (1997), pp.27-54.

Macdonald, M. S. 'Lord Vivian's Tears.' In Klose, F. (eds), *The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas and Practice from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Marchal, J. ‘Roger Casement in the Congo: Reactions in Belgium.’ In Daly, M. E. (eds), *Roger Casement in Irish and World History*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2005.

Matysik, T. ‘Internationalist Activism and Global Civil Society at the High Point of Nationalism: The Challenge of the Universal Races Congress, 1911.’ In Hopkins, A. G. (eds.), *Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

McDougall, W. A. *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Miers, S. *Slavery and Antislavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem*. Lanham, MD; Oxford, England: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

Mitchell, A. *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*. London: Anaconda Editions, 1997.

Mitchell, A. ‘Reviews.’ Review of King Leopold’s Ghost, by Adam Hochschild, *History Today*, Vol. 49, Issue 8 (August 1999).

Mitchell, D. *The Politics of Dissent: A Biography of E.D. Morel*. Bristol: Silverwood Books, 2014.

Morel, E. D., Louis, W. R. and Stengers, J. *E. D. Morel’s History of the Congo Reform Movement*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Moniz, A. *From Empire to Humanity: The American Revolution and the Origins of Humanitarianism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Morison, E. E. *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Volume IV: The Square Deal: 1903–1905*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951.

Morrison, E. E. *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt: Volume V: The Big Stick, 1905–1907*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952.

Moyn, S. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Cambridge, MA.; London: Harvard University Press, 2012.

N'Daywel, I. *Histoire Générale du Congo*. Paris, Brussels: De Boeck & Larcier, 1998.

Neier, A. *The International Human Rights Movement: A History*. Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 2012.

Nworah, K. D. 'The Liverpool "Sect" and British West African Policy, 1895-1915.' *African Affairs*, Vol.70, No.281 (October 1971), pp.349-364.

Nzongola-Ntalaja, G. *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*. London: Zed Books, 2002.

O'Pendas, D. 'Toward a New Politics? On the Recent Historiography of Human Rights.' *Contemporary European History*, Vol.21, No.1 (2012), pp.95-111.

Ó Síocháin, S. *Roger Casement: Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary*. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2008.

Ó Síocháin, S. and O' Sullivan, M. (eds.). *The Eyes of Another Race: Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003.

Osborne Jr., J. B. 'Wilfred G. Thesiger, Sir Edward Grey, and the British Campaign to Reform the Congo, 1905-9.' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Jan 1999), pp.59-80.

Pakenham, T. *The Scramble for Africa*. New York: Random House, 1991.

Palen, M. *The "Conspiracy" of Free Trade: The Anglo-American Struggle over Empire and Economic Globalisation, 1846-1896*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Pavlakis, D. *British Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Movement, 1896-1913*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015.

Pavlakis, D. 'The Development of British Overseas Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Campaign.' *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol.11, No.1 (Spring 2010).

Pavlakis, D. 'To Reform an Imagined Congo: Novelists Tackle the Congo Rubber Scandals.' *English Studies in Africa*, Issue 1 (2016), pp.29-39.

Peffer, P. 'Snap of the Whip/Crossroads of Shame: Flogging, Photography, and the Representation of Atrocity in the Congo Reform Campaign.' *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol.21, No.1 (Spring 2008), pp.55-77.

Phipps, W. E. *William Sheppard: Congo's African American Livingstone*. Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2002.

Plasman, P. and Thewissen, C. 'The Three Lives of the Casement Report: Its Impact on Official Reactions and Popular Opinion in Belgium.' *Breac: A Digital Journal of Irish Studies*, 1 April 2016.

Porter, A. 'Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism.' In Porter, A. and Louis, W.R. (eds.). *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Porter, B. *Critics of Empire: British Radicals and the Imperial Challenge*. London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008.

Rodogno, D. Ag*ainst Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Rodogno, D. Struck, B. and Vogel, J. (eds.). *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks, and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2015.

Russell, B. *Freedom and Organization, 1814-1914*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934.

Satre, L. J. *Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics, and the Ethics of Business*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006.

Schlick, Y. 'The "French Kipling": Pierre Mille's Popular Colonial Fiction.' *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1997), pp. 226-241.

Shaloff, S. *Reform in Leopold's Congo*. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1970.

Sherwood, M. 'Elder Dempster and West Africa 1891-C.1940: The Genesis of Underdevelopment?' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1997), pp.253-276.

Skinner, E. P. *African Americans and U.S. Policy Toward Africa, 1850-1924: In Defense of Black Nationality*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1992.

Skinner, R. and Lester, A. 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas.' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol.40, Issue 5 (2012), pp.729-747.

Slade, R. *English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State*. Brussels: Academie Royale des Sciences Coloniales, 1959.

Slade, R. *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Congo Independent State*. London: Oxford University press, 1962.

Slade, R. ‘English Missionaries and the Beginning of the Anti-Congolese Campaign in England.’ *Revue Belge de Philologie d'Histoire*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1955), pp.37-73.

Slade, R. ‘King Leopold II and the Attitude of English and American Catholics towards the Anti-Congolese Campaign.’ *Zaire*, Vol.11 (June 1957), pp.593-612.

Sliwinski, S. ‘The Childhood of Human Rights: The Kodak on the Congo.’ *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol.5, No.3 (January 2006), pp.333-363.

Stamatov, P. *The Origins of Global Humanitarianism: Religion, Empires, and Advocacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Stanard, M. G. *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the making of Belgian Imperialism*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011.

Sternstein, J. L. ‘King Leopold II, Nelson W. Aldrich, and the Strange Beginnings of American Economic Penetration of the Congo.’ *African Historical Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2 (1969), pp.189-204.

Táíwò, O. *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Taylor, A. J. P. *Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959.

Thayer, W. R. *The Life and Letters of John Hay, Vol. II*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915.

Thomas, M. E. ‘Anglo-Belgian Military Relations and the Congo Question, 1911-1913.’ *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (June 1953), pp.157-165.

Trevelyan, G. M. *Grey of Falloden*. London: Longmans Green, 1937.

Twomey, C. 'Framing Atrocity: Photography and Humanitarianism.' *History of Photography*, Vol.36, No.3 (August 2012), pp.255-264.

Twomey, C. 'Severed Hands: Authenticating Atrocity in the Congo, 1903-14.' In Batchen, G., Gidley, M., Miller, N.K., and Prosser, J. *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*. London: Raktion Books, 2012.

Tyrrell, I. *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Tyrrell, I. 'Reflections on the transnational turn in United States history: theory and practice.' *Journal of Global History*, Vol.4, Issue 3 (2009), pp.453-474.

Van Hove, J. *Congoism: Congo Discourses in the United States from 1800 to the Present*. Transcript Verlag: Bielefeld, 2018.

Vertovec, S. 'Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism.' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.22, Issue 2 (1999), pp.445-462.

Weisbord, R. G. 'The King, the Cardinal, and the Pope: Leopold II's Genocide in the Congo and the Vatican.' *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol.5, No.1 (2003), pp.35-45.

Wolf, H. and Wolf, R. *Rubber: A Story of Glory and Greed*. New York: Covici-Friede, 1936.

Wuliger, R. 'Mark Twain on King Leopold's Soliloquy.' *American Literature*¸Vol.25, No.2 (May 1953), p.234-237.

Wynne, C. *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic*. London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002.

Vanthemsche, G. *Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1908.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Vanthemsche, G. 'The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo.' In Lévai, C. (eds), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*. Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006.

Vought, H. P. *The Bully Pulpit and the Melting Pot: American Presidents and the Immigrant, 1897-1933*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004.

Wilson, R. A. and Brown, R. D. (eds.). *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilisation of Empathy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Unpublished Dissertations

Echenberg, M. 'The British Attitude toward the Congo Question, with particular reference to the work of E. D. Morel and the CRA, 1903-1913.' MA dissertation, McGill University, 1964.

Forth, A. "The Politics of Philanthropy: the Congo Terror Regime and the British Public Sphere, 1884-1914." MA dissertation, Queen's University Kingston, 2006.

Gertzel, C. 'John Holt: A British Merchant in West Africa in the Era of Imperialism.' PhD dissertation, University of Oxford, 1959.

McStallworth, P. 'The United States and the Congo Question, 1884-1914.' PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 1954.

Nworah, K. D. 'Humanitarian Pressure Groups and British Attitudes to West Africa, 1895-1914.' Unpublished PhD thesis, King's College London, 1966.

Osborne Jr., J. B. ‘Sir Edward Grey, the British Consular Staff, and the Congo Reform Campaign.’ PhD dissertation, Rutgers University, 1971.

Wuliger, R. ‘The Idea of Economic Imperialism with Special Reference to the Life and Work of E. D. Morel.' Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1953.

Conference Papers

Nault, D. M. ‘“At the Bar of Public Sentiment”: The Congo Free State Controversy, Atrocity Tales, and Human Rights History’ (paper presented at the Humanity and Humanitarianism in CrisisAAGS Conference, International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan, 2012).

Websites and Online Archives of Sources

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx

www.archive.org