Issues of Decolonization:
(3) Local Issues: settler colonies
“Settler Colonies”:

- all colonial powers controlled colonies with large populations of white settlers

- most in Central, East and Southern Africa

- exception France: North African colony of Algeria
Local Issues: Settler Societies

Britain:
- Northern, Southern Rhodesia
- Nyasaland
- Kenya

Portugal:
- Angola, Mozambique

Belgium:
- Congo
Local Issues: Settler Societies

Issues shaped both by Settler Presence and Economy:

- presence of Europeans ensured frustrations not only ‘legal’ and ‘administrative’ (West Africa) but personal, immediate

- ‘demands’ articulated in context of strongly felt racial discrimination
Local Issues: Settler Societies

Economy:
- most settler colonies, economy based on exploitation commercial agriculture: required alienating Africans from the land
- Congo exception: resources largely mineral, agriculture supported business
- all required forcing Africans to work in European enterprises
Local Issues: Settler Societies

“Issues”:

- return of land
- right to ‘freedom’ (as elsewhere)
- education
- overcoming racial discrimination
Local Issues: Settler Societies

Problem:

- ‘colonizer’ was not only colonial power but local white settlers

- colonial powers facing demands of settlers as well as Africans

- even as Britain, France moved towards decolonization in West African colonies (see Monday lecture), listening to Settlers not Africans elsewhere
Local Issues: Settler Societies

- Belgium, Portugal: not considering reforms to colonies at all

- post-war era knew ‘second colonisation’

- exacerbated issues faced in other settler colonies
Local Issues: Settler Societies

Video Presentation:

Basil Davidson
“Africa: Rise of Nationalism”

[YouTube, ‘Additional Readings’
Kenya 16:00 – 22:00; Rhodesia 43:40 – 47:30]
Local Issues: Portuguese Colonies

Portugal was itself poor and underdeveloped; 40% of the population was illiterate, the result of over twenty years of fascist dictatorship.

The regime could not afford to be flexible, nor did it have the power to force compromise from African nationalists.
Local Issues: Portuguese Colonies

Regime had Nazi-like Youth movement, to which Church closely allied through State.
Local Issues: Portuguese Colonies

Portuguese policy Post-WWII opposite to decolonization everywhere (except South Africa):

- colonial policies intensified
- large emigration movement encouraged
- settlers provided with land through program land alienation (as earlier in Rhodesia, Kenya)
Local Issues: Portuguese Colonies

Complicated ‘issues’ further:
- African peasants lost extensive land
- population local *mulattoes* and *assimilados* affected

*Mulattoes*: descendants generations of Portuguese-African ‘mixed’ marriages

*Assimilados*: Africans adopting Catholicism, speaking Portuguese, moving into middle social ranks
Local Issues: Portuguese Colonies

- older ‘settlers’ (those who had come in the interwar years), local elite: both lost social, economic position vis-à-vis newest settlers

- new ‘settler regime’ created (again, like early 20th century Rhodesia, Kenya)

- strongly racist: rejected ‘mixing’ with Africans, discriminated against assimilados, enacted repressive policies
Forced labour continued to underpin the settler economy under new emigration of the 1950s. Not until the early 1970s was the system reformed.
Local Issues: Portuguese Colonies

Picture from 1960s could have been taken 30 or even 40 years earlier!
Under the circumstances:
- resistance to be expected
- Africans being ‘re-colonized’
- local settler society ‘displaced’ and disadvantaged

Between 1961-63, struggle became armed warfare in Mozambique; also in Angola (and West African Guinea Bissau, though not ‘settler regime’).
Belgium:

- “King Leopold’s Ghost”: title of recent book articulating history of Congo

- harkens back to Conference of Berlin (1884-5), importance of King of Belgium in pushing ‘Scramble for Africa’
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

Colony ‘unique’ in Africa:

- ‘feudal fief’ first of King, then of Government-sanctioned companies

- looked like ‘settler colonies’ elsewhere in that settler community was attracted to manage companies, commercial agriculture

- post-WWII colonization evident
## Local Issues: Settler Societies

### White European Settlers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>3,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>17,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>17,536</td>
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</table>

### Post War Influx:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>39,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>69,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>88,913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

- similar in complexity: ‘local settler’ government vs ‘imperial/metropole’ government

- sense that ‘decolonization’ not on horizon

- low level of educational/training provided for Africans
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

- spatial segregation (living, working)
- ‘domestic servant’ situation
- all positions of power in ‘settler’ hands
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

As ‘settler colony”, how well developed was Congo?

- Human Resources very underdeveloped:
  - no African army officers
  - 3 African managers in civil service
  - 30 University Graduates
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

- first Congolese in Belgian universities: 1950s

- first universities in Congo:
  - 1954 (Catholic)
  - 1956 (lay), graduating 16 by the time of independence
Local Issues: Settler Societies

Catholic Cathedral of Jesuit Mission (Lower Congo)
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

Mineral resource industries, well developed:

- copper, gold, tin, cobalt, diamonds, manganese, zinc

- all attracted massive investments from West

- economy dominated by mining:
  70% controlled by Belgian Societe Generale
  (also controlled river and rail transport)
Copper in Katanga

Local Issues: Belgium Congo

Cash crops almost as much product of Western investment as mining:

- 35%-40% commercial agriculture: controlled by Huileries du Congo Belges (subsidiary Anglo-Dutch Unilever Co. – also active in West Africa)

- dominated palm-oil production
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

Cash crops almost as much product of Western investment as mining: i.e. Cotton

-ran plantations covering hundreds of thousands of acres

-labour varied from poorly paid wage to forced
Local Issues: Settler Societies

African Farmers with Cotton Crop -- 1950s
Local Issues: Settler Societies

African Farmers with Cotton Crop -- 1950s
Local Issues: Settler Societies

African Workers in Belgian Cotton Factory – 1950s
Urban Growth: dramatic even by post-war African standards

- mostly workers, many of them migrants

- growth African urban associations, ethnically based

- African newspapers flourished
Overall:

- adjunct to western industrial system

- lacked any indigenous capital or internal capital generating market
Settlers did not demand semi-autonomy of neighbouring colonies (e.g. Southern Rhodesia): colonialism ‘works’!

- ‘intense’: number white officials, para-military forces, agricultural officers enforcing drastic programmes of compulsory cultivation
Anachronistic rhetoric about ‘paternalism’: 

- aim to create Middle Class who would eventually attain full citizenship in some form of Belgo-Congolese community

“Cartes de merite civile”: so rarely given out that they became yet another source of grievance
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

Education:
- primary education in hands of Christian Missionaries

- Evangelism successful: 600 Congolese priests, 500 ministers c.1956

- 16 million Congolese: 3 ½ million Catholics; 1 ¾ millions Protestants
Education:

- 1950s: more secular education policies, missionaries rallying converts in support of church

[Excellent novel “Poisonwood Bible”, based on this ‘moment’.]
Local Issues: Belgium Congo

1957 Paper announcing Need for ‘independence plan’ in 30 years:

- hailed in Catholic journal, *Conscience Africaine*

- followed by handful educated Congolese

- included young postal worker, Patrice Lumumba
- (he) responded by deferentially requesting that Congolese elite be consulted in drafting of plan

- first of Congolese University graduates also emerging 1957/58, engaging with idea
The process of ‘decolonization’ as we know it simply did not exist in Belgian Congo.

- 1957 Belgian academic proclaimed independence would have to be prepared for – in 30 years

- 1959 saw riots spread throughout colony

- Announcement made by Belgian King that independence would be granted some 18 months hence

… and it was.