



ROYAL ACADEMY FOR OVERSEAS SCIENCES

First Announcement and Call for Papers/Posters

Conference

The Belgian Congo between the two World Wars

(Brussels, November 2015)

Aims of the Conference

The period between the signature of the Versailles Treaty and the establishment of the League of Nations on the one hand and the start of the Second World War on the other (1919-1939) is a most interesting and often neglected one. Before the First World War, during the 10 years or so which followed the take-over of the Congo Free State by Belgium, Belgian colonial policy was in its infancy. Most of the personnel in charge of its application was for some time that of the former state and, within six years, the war had started in Europe and also in Africa. Consequently, 1919 appears an appropriate starting time for a period of twenty years at the end of which Belgium was not formally engaged in the new conflict, but was already getting ready for it in some spheres of activity.

The Conference has a broad thematic focus: developments in the Congo itself will of course be examined extensively, but also the impact of colonialism in the metropolis (including colonial policy) on the general background of declared Belgian governmental policy. It aims to assess the situation and problems arising on the ground for the African population when confronted with that policy becoming operational, but collateral effects on the local population of the presence of Europeans in the country are not excluded from the conference. We will take into account local, both African and European, dimensions as well as external developments. These include not only the interplay between Belgian interests and policies in the Congo and their feedback on Belgium itself, but the interplay between the metropolis, Belgian colonial circles and “foreign” influences as well. Our purpose is to provide the widest possible view of the development of the country during that period, while, at the same time, accepting that its complete history will not be written at the end of our meeting. But perhaps it will be the first of many others either going deeper or examining new ones.

The Academy invites scholars from both the Southern and the Northern hemisphere to contribute to the Conference with full original contributions providing new material and/or insights into the period; it will also accept posters presentations. All participants will be asked to deliver a draft version of their contribution one month ahead, so that it can be circulated to all people interested before the start of the conference. There will be no extensive formal presentation of the papers or posters submitted during the meeting, in order to give an absolute priority to discussion.

The two day-conference will be divided into six sessions (two on each morning and on the afternoon of the first day) devoted each to one theme (still to be determined), the last afternoon being allocated to a summing-up of the whole. Each session will be introduced by a moderator who is a member of the Academy, opening in 10 minutes or so themes for discussion on the basis of papers submitted by participants and authors of posters. A short presentation (4 minutes) of five selected posters by their authors will follow. The short time limit imposed for these poster presentations will be strictly enforced. A one hour discussion will follow; this procedure will allow for a lively and focused exchange of ideas among the participants and authors of posters. Further remarks will then be asked from the floor under the strict supervision of the moderator.

Timing:

- submission of proposals before June, 30th, 2014 (English — length: max. one A4 page-12 point font + short CV)
- reply from the organizing committee by the middle of July 2014: it will then be clear which papers or posters were selected for presentation.
- submission of extensive preliminary drafts of the papers in September 2015. These will be circulated among the participants before the conference starts.
- conference meeting in November 2015.
- submission of final version of the papers on February, 28th, 2016 (subject to review by the organizing committee).
- publication of the full version of the papers by the middle of 2016 (volume to be published by the RAOS).

Travel and Accommodation: participants are encouraged to find their own financial support.

Send to :

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