

The European explorations and their consequences in the valley of Niari XIXth - XXth centuries

Oba Dominique¹, Nzoussi Hilaire Kevin¹

1. Human Sciences department, teacher training College, Marien Ngouabi University, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

Abstract: From the XIXth century, the beginning of French colonization in Congo, African societies in general and especially Congolese were disorganized and weakened, because they were the slave trade which caused consequences harmful. A new period opened, that of colonization which sometimes led to disputes between civilizing powers over territorial occupation. European powers, notably France and Belgium, clashed violently over the occupation of the Niari valley, very strategic in the sense that it was a crossroads for import and export products to the Congo river and the Atlantic coast. . The European (Belgian and French) explorations in the Kouilou Niari region led to the occupation of the territory of the Niari valley by France, which thus created administrative posts in Bouenza with direct repercussions on the lives of the populations.

Keywords: European explorations, colonization, consequences, territorial occupations

Date of Submission: 06-03-2020

Date of Acceptance: 20-04-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the XIXth century, the colonial powers, including France and Belgium came into competition in the occupation of lands in the Congo Basin and Kouilou Niari. France for its part under the impetus of Jules Ferry, president of the French council and supporter of colonization urged Pierre Savorgnan De Brazza to conquer a vast territory in Central Africa. After failing during his first trip, which took place from 1875-1878, De Brazza distributed for Africa where he founded France city in June 1880. He reached Teke territory and signed a treaty of friendship with King Makoko Illo I^{er} September 10, 1880. From 1882 to 1885, Brazza embarked on the mission of West Africa.

From 1878, the Belgian king Leopold II seeking to endow Belgium with a colony, decided before the partisans of his people to acquire a personal territory in his name. In 1878 he organized a geography conference in Brussels, from which the African International Association (AIA) was born. This humanitarian, scientific and civilizing organization was to serve the more directly interested activities of its president, King Leopold II, without having been dissolved. The AIA was replaced in practice by the or the study committee of high Congo (CEHC) which was replaced a few years later by the International Association of Congo (AIC)[1]. The International Association of Congo hired Stanley, who his English compatriots had not wanted to take in their service, to take possession of the Congo basin in general and that of Kouilou-Niari in particular. In 1883, while Stanley and his supporters founded the city of Stephanieville, Brazza and his supporters in turn founded the city of Loudima-Niari or Niari-Loudima in the same locality. It was not until the Berlin conference that this dispute was solved. This article first intends to focus on Belgian explorations, then on that of France in the region. Finally this article deals with the consequences of the colonial occupation in the niari valley.

1 . Belgian explorations

After his first trip organized in 1871 with the aim of finding David Livingstone who was thought to be lost, Stanley returned to the Congo in 1879 with the aim of creating colonization stations, a prelude to the creation of the Congo Free State. Before arriving in the Congo, Stanley had received instructions from the Belgian King Leopold II to arrive first at the Stanley Pool for the occupation of this territory. As soon as he entered the Congo, Stanley received De Brazza on November 7, 1880 on his way to the coast. The meeting between these two explorers, will allow Stanley to change his strategy to reach the Stanley pool, because he had in mind the instruction given by Leopold II to arrive first in this place.

In July 1881, when he took the option of going there to the ‘Canotiers of Djoue’, he encountered Sergeant Malamine preceded with the French flag. Malamine then told him the story of the French installation on the right bank of the Stanley Pool. Stanley won the Teke of Pool because of the International Association by even practicing force, insofar as the Teke resisted him by brandishing the French flags. The left only option was to cross the left bank of the Stanley Pool.

On August 27, 1882, Stanley returned to Belgium where he was received by Léopold II who gave him the instruction to occupy the Kouilou Niari locality to thwart the French expansion in this territory. The instructions received by Stanley from the Belgian king were clear. They were:

To extend the territory of Manyanga (on the Congo downstream of the Pool) and put it in communication with Niari, either by treaties or by a land grant, in order to build a road from the Congo river to Niari, then to the confluence Niari-Kouilou[2].

Stanley organized for this purpose, four columns in Vivi (locality located in Bas-Congo and was the first capital of the Independent State of Congo) for the occupation of the coast and the basin of Kouilou Niari during this time that himself undertook the installation of posts on Haut-Congo. The first column was led by the English captain Grant Elliot, whose mission was to occupy the Kouilou Niari basin.

The English Captain Grant Elliot then took the direction of the Niari Valley, left the Vivi post with his team on January 12, 1883 in the direction of the middle Niari and founded the Stéphanieville post at the northern confluence of Niari and Loudima.

The creation of Stéphanieville, a Belgian station at the confluence of the Niari and the Loudima was confirmed by Lieutenant Van De Velde of the International Association of Congo that :

In 1883, Monsieur Destrain gave the name of Stéphanieville to the first station of upper Kouilou[3].

The very rapid occupation of the Kouilou Niari valley by agents of the International Association of Congo is also recorded in the letter that Strauch addressed to Sanford on April 11, 1884 that :

We continue to make rapid progress on Congo and on Kouilou Niari.

Our possessions are growing and gaining in importance day by day.

Captain Elliot and his agents have concluded sixty (60) new treaties with the natives of Kouilou Niari. The whole basin of this river to the shore of Congo has become our property[4].

Lieutenant Van De Velde Lievin, having taken his side on February 2, 1883, the seaway, leads to the mouth of the Kouilou and creates the post of Rudolfstadt and Baudoinville.

Captain Hanssens reinforced the action of Grant Elliot who received the mission of attaching the post of Manyanga to Haut-Niari and founded the post of Philippeville (Bouansa) to the confluence of Bouenza, April 30, 1883. Lt. Mikic on his part, recognized the pista which connected the mouth of the Kouilou to the confluence of the Loudima.

On the eve of the Berlin conference, the International Association occupied the coast, Kouilou-Niari and Loeme blocking France inside with its stations of Niari-Loudima and Mfoa.

2. The French explorations

After the signature of the treaty of Mbé concluded on September 10, 1880, treaty which grants to France the territories of King Makoko, De Brazza takes leave of the king and settles in the Pool where he recognizes in France the territories going from the Pool to the Djoué . He creates stations and leaves Malamine to monitor his territories. From 1880 to 1882, De Brazza continued his mission by going from the Pool to the Atlantic coast where he crossed the Niari valley. He is also convinced that the Niari valley is a transit area to join the right bank of the Congo to the Atlantic Ocean.

In front of the advance taken by the International Association of Congo in the political occupation of the Kouilou-Niari basin, which had already installed in 1883 a great number of stations on the Kouilou- Niari, Brazza ordered Albert Dolisie to recognize the slaves track and portages, old caravan routes in June 1884. Albert Dolisie reached Loudima on June 24, 1884 where the AIC had founded in 1883 a station called Stéphanieville (name given in memory of Queen Stéphanie, wife of Leopold II) on the northern confluence of the Niari and the Loudima. Albert Dolisie installed his in the southern confluence and called it Loudima-Niari or Niari Loudima following treaties concluded with local chiefs. It was the first French station installed in the Niari valley.

This unique French station in the Niari valley that Albert Dolisie had just created was entrusted to Doctor Gros and Sergeant Cholet, so that they could take care of it. Coquery- Vidrovitch specifies at the creation of Niari-Loudima that this station was not founded by Albert Dolisie[5]. The latter had rather left Cholet and Gros to establish a post there, in order to have rapid communication with Loango. On this subject, Cholet specifies that he was the principal craftsman of the station of Loudima by affirming what follows:

Before the Berlin conference of 1885, we had in this region only one establishment, this Loudima post I founded in 1884[6].

The AIC's superiority in the territorial occupation was so manifest that there could be no question of supplanting it on the ground. It had already installed outside Stéphanieville, Rudolfstadt at the mouth of Kouilou, Francetown (Makabana), Kitadi and Philippeville (Bouansa) at the confluence of the Bouenza, Beaudoinville near Kakamoueka. The junction of the pool with the Atlantic Ocean as planned by de Brazza was therefore not

carried out. It was therefore necessary to resort to diplomacy through negotiations which could lead to the occupation of the territories conquered by the AIC, and which will allow it to link the Pool to the Atlantic Ocean.

3. The colonial delimitation of the Kouilou-Niari valley : the convention of February 5, 1885

The territorial rivalries between France and the AIC found their solutions at the end of the Berlin conference which was held from November 15, 1884 to February 26, 1885 in Berlin. The purpose of the conference was to define:

The most favorable conditions for the development of commerce and civilization in or some regions of Africa, to assure to all peoples the advantages of the free navigation of the two main rivers that empty into the Atlantic ocean and to prevent misunderstandings and challenges that might arise in the future the taking of new possessions on the coasts of Africa[7].

Indeed, as the conference unfolded, other negotiations were held between France and Belgium. The negotiations focused on French claims relating to the confirmation of the right of presumption, the right to sue on the territory of the Association of tribes of which France could complain, the refusal to recognize the stations of the International Association of Congo as a border state¹. They related to the exchange of Kouilou-Niari for the left bank of the Stanley Pool.

The International Association of the Congo demands that France pay compensation of 5,000,000 francs for the cession of the Kouilou-Niari but this has been refused by France. The negotiations started on 1st January 1885 were suspended Jan. 2, 1885 once the French refused to pay compensation of 5 million requested by the Belgian King Leopold II for the sale of Kouilou- Niari.

After a long series of work carried out at the conference, the dispute between France and the International Association of the Congo was settled on January 27, 1885¹. Negotiations between France and the AIC were once again resumed on January 28, 1885 to lead to the signing of a bilateral convention between France and the International Association of Congo, the convention of February 5, 1885. It carried the signatures of Jules Ferry for France and of Count Paul de Borchgrave d'Altena for AIC. She ceded to France the Kouilou-Niari and the Oubangui basin.

This transfer enabled the AIC to keep the southern shore of the Stanley Pool, the right bank of the Congo coveted by Portugal, with the two ports of Boma and Banana.¹ The flag of the Association was finally recognized by France. In exchange for Kouilou-Niari, the Association obtained Katanga so that it was able to control not only the entire course of the Congo, but also the free trade. The AIC also obtained from France the agreement in principle to organize a lottery of 20 million francs in Paris.¹

This delimitation convention enshrined the victory of Pierre Savorgnan De Brazza and paved the way for the signing of the General Act of Berlin on February 26, 1885. The transfer of jurisdiction between France and the Congo Free State, stations that the Association had installed on the coast and the basin of Kouilou-Niari took place on July 31, 1885¹. On the contract concluded between Captain Hanssens and chief Loubanda of the district of Kimbedi, on April 30, 1883, G. Le Marinel who handed over the station of Philippeville to Rouvier, representative of the government of the French Republic, carried the following mention :

I, G. Le Marinel, acting on behalf of the Captain Grant Elliot, Administrator of the Independent State of Congo, presents the rights acquired by this treaty to the Government of the French Republic . Philippeville, October 13, 1885. G. Le Marinel[8].

At the announcement of this news, Cholet, the zone chief of Loudima allowed himself to write in 1886 that *the conference gave us the whole country*[9], Milone, station manager of Stephanieville (Loudima) informed A. Dolisie that the whole country is bought in all directions up to Loango on one side and Philippeville (Bouansa) the other[10]. Albert Dolisie concluded that the country belonged to them. Charles De Chavannes, for his part, the representative of Kouilou and Bas-Congo informed the Minister of the colonies in 1886 that in *the Niari valley all the posts were raised and at present, our agents are opening the way which must link Brazzaville to the coast* [11].

The question of Kouilou-Niari having found a solution in Berlin, the installation of France in the south Congo will no longer raise any challenge from other colonizing powers, especially after the signing of the treaty of May 17, 1885 with Portugal which fixed the border of the Southern Pool (of Pool and Cabinda). Brazza succeeds in his mission to found his colony from Oubangui to the Atlantic Ocean. The convention of February 5, was completed on November 21, 1885 by a protocol delimiting the borders of the Independent State of Congo and the French possessions of Manyanga.

In view of the above, the Berlin conference settled the colonial dispute between France and Belgium over the Niari valley in general and the Bouenza in particular. Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza emerged victorious from this conference. So he affirmed in a letter written to Chavannes in these terms : ' ' *If in Berlin, strangers*

that we are presented, we have become stranglers, it is thanks to you at N'couna and also thanks to this, we were able to repair the delays in the odds and the keelboat. " [12]

4. The impact of the European occupation in the Niari valley

The French colonial administration, in order to establish itself well in the Niari valley in general and in Loudima in particular, had put in place a certain number of mechanisms in order to control the populations subject to its control. The colonists had carried out certain works favoring the evolution of the Middle Congo in general and of the Niari valley in particular from the colonial post of Loudima.

4.1. The means of administrative control of the populations

The colonial actors, taking into account the very limited manpower and faced with the extent of the tasks to be accomplished in a vast space, will find a device for controlling the new subjects of France. The main tool in the hands of the colonists was therefore the code of indigénat. Thus, an identity card for Africans was established, a health passport and tickets justifying that such a native had fulfilled certain obligations vis-à-vis the colonial power.

4.2. The native code

France, to regulate life of the indigenous populations, will establish the code of indigénat. The decree of the governor general of French Equatorial Africa (FEA), dated May 31, 1910 in its first article. The code, instead of regulating the authentic life of Africans, on the contrary, determined the modalities of their subordination to the colonial system.

In fact, the administrator chief of the subdivision, condemned to live permanently in contact with the villagers, had just acquired an instrument of direct action for the suppression of any act contrary to the smooth running of colonial action. The African must therefore, in all circumstances of his life, be convinced:

- Not to disturb the colonial order : in fact he was deprived of freedom of expression, opinion and action. In other words, he no longer had any political rights;
- Not to be in collusion with opponents of the colonial power ;
- Not to constitute obstacles to the movement of colonial authorities ;
- Not to impede the collection of tax or to draw from it once the levy has been made ;
- Not to prevent the smooth running of censuses allowing populations to be controlled quantitatively in terms of their circulation from one constituency to another ;
- Ensure and facilitate the movement of populations in the trafficking trade ;
- To take care of the various sanitary measures and not to hinder the execution of the measures of hygiene and prophylaxis.

The native codified the methods of subordination of the colonized populations. It was therefore a shackles of binding legal provisions, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the system established in the colonies.

4.3. The identity card of native population

As for the identity card, it was created by article 3 for the use of the natives. It was intended to facilitate movement within the colony. It therefore served for the systematic control of the movements of individuals and especially for the verification of the payment of tax.

Article 4 provides that this card must give all the necessary information on the identity of its holder as well as on its situation from a tax point of view. This card also contained the following information : name, profession, village, land or canton, subdivision, department, size, characteristic signs, tax, benefit, issued by the head of subdivision, it should in principle carry a photo of the concerned person.

4.3. The health passport

This document was issued by the doctorchief against trypanosomiasis. The decree of March 9, 1937[13] regulated the issuance of that. If the identity card was used as an administrative pass, the passport was entirely independent of the previous one, because its purpose was different. It stated thus: Article 1st: no native will be allowed to get out of a department, if not with a health passport ... This document, indeed was to be covered by the medical authorities of the places had to go the African and it had to be presented at any requisition.

In its article 3 it is said: follow the particular epidemiological conditions of the various subdivisions of a department, the departmental sanitary can decide that any native is provided with a sanitary passport to go from one subdivision to another within the same of the department.

In conclusion, all offenses concerning the natives were punished in accordance with the regime of indigene according to article 6.

The imposition of the health passport wanted to reduce the risk of contagion, especially in the fight against trypanosomiasis. The holy bodies were needed to accomplish the economic development of the colony. It was repressive legislation which targeted forced labor, uncontrolled and untimely recruitments which, far from home, led to the change of scenery, offered low wages, often evolving in poor living and working conditions.

4.4. The introduction of the capitation and service tax

The capitation and benefits tax was one of the means by which the colonial administration not only had to procure money, but also to obtain abundant free labor for the execution of some essentially manual work.

4.5. The capitation tax

The Middle Congo, like all the other colonies of AE F, had to support its budget. Indeed, article 33 of the finance law of April 13, 1901[14] had established the principles of financial relations between the metropolis and its colonies. Following this financial autonomy of the colonies, stipulating that «the colony must be self-sufficient», the concession companies were set up in order to enhance them. Most of these companies were bankrupt to the point of disappearing for some, without however accomplishing their task. This bankruptcy was largely due to the financial crisis these companies were facing. Thus, to alleviate this crisis, the Minister of the colonies, in perfect agreement with the Congolese French Union (CFU), union of concessionary companies, reflected on the implementation of the tax.

The decrees of September 28, 1897 and February 2, 1900[15] introduced the tax in the most subject areas of the Middle Congo. From 1909, Governor General Martial MERLIN introduced the capitation tax by decree n° 0381 of September 30, 1909[16]

For concessionaires, the capitation tax must be an instrument necessary to start up the system. From this fact,

Their combined action, wrote Catherine CoqueryVidrovitch, was to lead to the economic development of the country: for the concessionaries to draw the benefits from rubber and ivory; for the African, required to pay a tax to the administration, to harvest these products, in order to obtain the necessary sum. Everyone will find their account: the colony received additional resources; the trader would gain labor and products there, he would, therefore, taste the work that he lacked (...) [17].

Thus the tax was encouraged by the central administration. It should be noted that, throughout the colony, the texts were not the same. Some areas excepted the nature of the tax as the rate of it. In the Niari valley and precisely in Loudima, the populations was paying the tax in kind and in cash according to their gain. Tax in kind consisted of products from the soil and the craft industry. Among these retroceded as taxes, it took the ivory and rubber. The retrocession rate for these products was set as follows:

- Ivory : tips weighing less than 6 kg varied between 3 and 8 francs ; peaks of 8 to 10 kg varied between 8 and 12 francs ; spikes greater than 10 kg cost 15 francs ;
- The rubber was retroceded at the rate of 1 franc per kilogram.

The sale of these products enabled the natives to pay the amount of tax. The populations of the posts: Loudima, Sibiti and Moutamba supervised by the police could do nothing but pay their tax amount which had been fixed for them. The post of Sibiti could pay 423, 50 frs while that Loudima had to 1992.85 capitation frs [18].

It should be noted that tax at that time was the main source of funding for social services. It therefore contributed effectively to supplying the Kuni families who no longer had to maintain their lineage economy. A large part of their production was intended to meet tax needs. On this subject, an observer quoted by Pierre Philippe RAY pointed out the following:

If wealth no longer existed in (...) Kuni country, around 1917, it is because it was absorbed by taxes or by the abuses committed by the administration and the militias in its service [19].

This passage shows us that the populations worked a lot to ensure the payment of the tax more than for their own interest. Indeed, such was even the target of capitation tax, that of maintaining the native in a permanent climate of productivity. On this subject, Antoine Mabounou writes:

Thus, the capitation had to keep the rural people in a permanent climate of productivity, this is what explained the perpetual increase in the rate of the capitation. In short, it was the most effective way to get the Congolese out of the barter system while encouraging them and sometimes by radical means to undertake commercial crops intended especially for export to the metropolis.[20].

The decree of August 24, 1923 insisted that henceforth the collection of tax would be made only and entirely in cash throughout the extent of the Middle Congo on the pretext that money now circulated everywhere. However, the methods used to collect this tax were at the origin of the emigration of the populations who, failing to find the money intended for the payments, moved permanently.

From 1928 to 1938, the tax rate had considerably increased in the constituency of the railway of which Loudima was the chief town. It had gone from 10 francs, in 1922, to 20 francs between 1929 and 1938. Thus, becoming a major concern of all the population, the tax appeared an economic constraint aiming to empty the

houses of already ruined populations. Pierre Philippe REY noted that, to pay the tax, the populations practiced agriculture. He writes: *Driven by the need for money to pay the tax, the planters had sold their entire harvest* [21].

The collection of tax, in the subdivision of Loudima, had contributed to ruin the populations, forcing them to abandon their village, to settle elsewhere. However, its perception was nonetheless smooth and no major revolt.

Since 1905, before either introduced the poll tax, a monthly report of the administration of Loango meant the Loudima sector included: *As much as taxpayers Bakuni also manageable populations of the coast* [22].

In fact, no major incident was reported between the Kuni and Kamba populations and the administration concerning the collection of tax. The tax was presented as a means of submission of the natives to colonial authority. It allowed the colonial authorities to circulate the cash. In addition, it has also been a factor in the displacement and desertion of populations far from administrative posts.

Apart from portage, forced labor, taxes have caused famine and the impoverishment of the entire population, in particular the heads of the once powerful lineages. The requisitioned populations requisitioned, obliged to pay the tax and to supply the railway construction sites (CFCO) abandoned the lifestyle. No longer cultivating or no longer having time to protect crops against certain wild animals such as buffaloes, wild boars, antelopes etc., populations were besieged by famine which is gradually taking hold.

To these depredations were added those of the guards who burned villages, ransacked everything in their path, forcing the populations to flee. Hunger grew in villages where the villagers were constantly requisitioned by the auxiliaries of colonization. According to an administration report: *The prolonged stay of the tirailleurs was, in certain territories, a real disaster* [23].

Thus, the tax effectively did not contribute to the impoverishment of the populations who no longer worked for themselves, but, rather, for the colonial administration. It was therefore at the origin of certain crises which raged in the region, in particular the famine and the annihilation of the rich.

In addition to the capitation tax, services were provided to perform certain jobs that required abundant labor.

5 .Economic achievements

5.1. Indigenous provident societies

These companies were created in French Equatorial Africa (AEF) by the decree of January 14, 1937, followed by an implementing the decree of March 26, 1937[24]. It was one of the first instruments of official agricultural policy. In the Middle Congo, there were 32 companies grouping 298,867 members, in 1938 the first two indigenous stations in the Middle Congo were created in May 1937 in the districts of Pool and Niari.

All indigenous provident societies were divided into sections, each of which corresponded to an ethnic group or a territorial division. It was administered by the board of directors comprising a president (district chief or his deputy by delegation), the vice-president (a native elected by the members of the council), members among which the representatives of the French colony of the district, appointed by the head of the region and the elected representatives of the natives. The main resources came from membership fees paid each year by members. The Indigenous Provident Societies of the same territory were grouped in a union, which was directed and controlled by a chief of service whom the Governor General appointed. The objective of the native provident societies was:

Facilitates to their members a better exploitation of the resources of cultivated soil, livestock, forestry, fishing, possibly crafts, and also of their future help if necessary[25].

Once the SIPs were put in place, the administration had created a common fund, the purpose of which was to centralize their orders. The decree of 1937 authorized a repayable advance of 20,000 francs granted in the 1937 fiscal year from the local budget.

From 1938, almost all the SIPs in the Middle Congo had collected the contributions and started to develop their action, namely: purchases of crushers, seeders in Niari etc. on June 15, 1938, there were six sections in Niari and eight sections in Pool. The table below gives us the number of members including the contribution rate for these two sections.

Table n °1: Number of members in Niari and Pool constituencies.

district	Number of sections	Membership	Contribution rate
pool	08	81,000 members	3 frs
Niari	06	72,000 members	2.50 frs

In addition, the native provident societies had set themselves the goal of:

- Developing rural equipment ;
- Increasing production ;

– Improving the living conditions of members, etc.

According to T. Suret-Canal cited by Camara-Laye, the official objective of creating IPS was to:

deal with the improvidence of the native who, without concern for the future, consumed his whole harvest without even saving the seeds necessary for the agricultural campaign of the following year[26].

This short-sightedness, in fact, only reflected, in reality, the situation of permanent famine created by colonial exploitation, because, since colonial times, the peasants kept, in their granaries, not only the seeds of the year next, but also the reserves to face bad years. First experienced in French West Africa (FWA) in 1907 before being applied in French Equatorial Africa (FEA), the Indigenous Provident Societies (SIP), must be recognized, writes Gilles Sautter :

Have not done as useful ; they have lent the flank to the critics of the villagers and their elected officials who only wanted to see in them parasitic organisms, pretexts for the perception in a disguised form of a tax supplement [27].

In spite of the contributions which were fully and easily collected for some easily, and for others by the use of binding force, the IPS " nothing" and appeared to the peasants as a pretext for an additional tax. They therefore exerted a considerable weight on the peasants and explained the shortage of food which continued after 1934.

One of the main features of the IPS was the compulsory chairmanship of the district chief, who often manages the society as he sees fit. It has a board of directors elected by its members. But, in general, this council, completely ignorant of affairs, confines itself to ratifying the decisions of the district chief. Thus, the mixed reputation of IPS, the resistance of traditional farming systems too diluted and often inappropriate action, led to the search for new agricultural management formulas when the development plan was launched.

5.2. Construction work on the Congo-Ocean railway.

De Brazza, during his second trip to Congo in 1882, considered the need to connect the NTamo substation to the ocean. Léon Jacob, engineer was commissioned from 1886 to study the layout. Only De Brazza will not see his project carried out before his eyes, in order to ensure Congolese trade. The first pick was given by Governor Victor AUGAGNEUR on February 6, 1921, on a project studied by the Batignolles construction company, and bringing Pointe-Noire to Brazzaville. The realization of this project had presented enormous difficulties, due to insufficiency of the technical and financial means implemented, and especially the bad use and conservation of the workforce. In reality, on the edge of Mayombe, a mountainous region, the rest of the route did not present any major obstacles. The improper use of labor made the work more arduous, and this, until the end of the work in 1934.

The populations showed peaceful resistance through the displacement of families, hence the displacement of several villages. Indeed, if the first recruitments hardly seemed to raise resistance, the situation changed quickly. From 1925, the villagers soon began to use all the tricks, all the unimaginable loopholes, even force not to be sent to the "machine".

In the Niari valley, we notice that, on the approach of detachments of recruiters or European officials on tour, entire populations flee, thus creating a vacuum around the villages. And yet, a few years before the start of construction of the railway, the natives were numerous and grouped. However, since the start of construction work, the dispersion of populations has started. The villages were falling apart, the families were scattered. The Kuni and Kamba populations abandoned their plantations and then went to live in the bush to flee the militiamen.

Local chiefs Kuni and Kamba chiefs, forced by the militia to provide the labor force, forced the villagers to go to the "machine". The people of the Loudima area, like others elsewhere, have experienced this tragedy. Malnourished, poorly housed and at the mercy of chore chiefs, far from their villages and their parents, many died as a result of hard work without rest and illness.

Andre Louembe[28] explains that, when a man died, he would be immediately put on the spot. There was not any form of funeral ceremony. The family was often informed after days or even weeks by friends, often from the same village. These populations were often employed on the route between Loudima and the entrance to Mayombe.

During this same period of railway construction, various reports of the time pointed to the famine that threatened the villagers who could no longer freely cultivate. The regrouping of the populations along the railroad could not be possible until after 1934, since the villagers flee the recruitment. They prefer to live in the forest to be protected from recruitment than to form large villages which are, at all times, raked by the militiamen; this is why, Daniel MBOYI, in his thesis, declares the following: *Colonization thus becoming a factor of flight and recoiling of populations which were necessary for the launching of the development of the country...* [29]

This situation had serious consequences after 1934, as David Nsonde notes in this term:

This is the price of human life that Congo Ocean has been built. It is a work of death that was built on corpses. Coercion, the supervision it demanded, the social and economic disorganization it provoked had serious consequences after 1934. The villagers quickly opened up to great imperialist capital, particularly under the conditions of economic domination with market penetration of financial capital which demand an increased workload and an extension of wages to work.[30]

Indeed, despite the unfortunate effects caused by the implementation of the Congo-Ocean railway, it also favored the emergence of a form of work at the level of villages in disharmony with the old socio-economic organization. It thus allowed a strong monetary circulation, essential factor of a functioning market economy. Already, at the time of the railway construction work, several buyers or traders had established themselves along the railway route. Between 1925 and 1934, several concessions were granted to traders by the administration. In Loudima, at this period, were installed two buyers whom Joseph Gamanzori cites[31]. It was about the Veiga company installed in Loudima, on March 12, 1931, and had specialized in the trade. He also had TOUCAS who installed Loudima, February 15, 1931, exercised trade between Loudima and Kimbedi.

After the construction of the railroad, the populations cloistered in the bush to flee or escape from the recruiter's net, began to form semi-urban agglomerations along the railway. Mr. TadiakouSédias reports that at the end of the railway construction work, an appeal had been launched to the populations of the most remote hamlets to approach the railway route. Thus many inhabitants moved to settle along the railway.

Indeed, the establishment of the railroad had to be accompanied everywhere by a process of aggregation of the populations in an operation known as of "regrouping of villages". In the Loudima region, the area which is the subject of our study did, does not lack organization of the villages seen by the European it is revealed through this passage:

Before the colonial period and during the first years of colonization, as long as the administration had not carried out forced regroupings, the villages appeared numerous and dispersed to a Western observer; thus Berthelot du Chesnay's description gives the impression of absence of organization [32].

In reality the establishment of the villages depended on the land chiefs, Mfumutsi and on the role of each in the exchanges. For this, the villages seemed to move away from each other according to the boundaries of the land, the places of control and the positioning of the places where the markets were held.

It was therefore about a disorganization. It is a local order that the administration had pushed towards destruction. This grouping was to affect the powers of the Mfumu. They saw their power diminished very appreciably on their subjects, at the same time that they lost control of the life of exchange. The loss of these powers was also due to the appointment of heads of villages that had no traditional power. If the construction of the CFCO and the recruitment had made people flee along the route of the railroad, its exploitation gave the signal of the resumption of the movement of the populations of the villages towards the route of the CFCO

The villages, fixed along the route during construction, become semi-urban agglomerations which will take on new forms linked to the activities grafted onto the railway track. Thus, alongside this voluntary local migration, another administrative activity was juxtaposed. The origin of this transplant attempt to be found in a circular from Governor General Antonetti which was addressed to the head of constituencies in these terms:

It will be advisable to bring your citizens to get closer to the rail and to come and settle in the fertile well-watered areas still unoccupied of the Niari plain ... However, no movement in this direction is reported to me[33]

To this end, the administration had chosen its eccentric regions on the way and whose economic future was considered uncertain. The populations to be transferred had to be robust and industrious [34]. The choice of populations to transfer initially focused on the Bakota, Bandzabis of Bouenza-Louessé and Haut-Ogoué. The execution of the transfer of these populations to the Niari plain was addressed to the heads of subdivisions, in 1932, in these terms:

In view of the arrangements to be made to organize these trips, a long-term operation which will go hand in hand with the territorial reorganization of the railway constituency[35].

At around this point, the administration acknowledged the difficult task ahead, for the transfer of these people meant to destroy the established local order. Thus, an entire society should be destroyed. In Bouenza-Louessé, operations had already started even before the end of the works, in July 1933, preceded by a vigorous seduction companion according to Joseph Gamanzori :

This segregation will succeed perfectly provided that one practices the policy of a full stomach and laissez-faire. The transferred natives must boast, when they return to visit their old villages, the advantages of their new life. They will claim it themselves and decide many others to imitate them.[36].

In addition, the chiefs of land, canton and villages should contribute to the success of the operations by participating personally in the choice of the settlements of their new villages. The plan for these operations was as follows:

1. To uproot them completely from their old environment. For that, it was necessary:

- To let them come with their whole family: women, children, the elderly, the infirm, the sick, so that they no longer have any ties to their country of origin;
- Feed them widely;
- Ask them, for a year, to make an effort only to plant food crops;
- Give them the tools to work...
- Give them complete freedom of movement. Leave them without administrative control, make visits to their old village...[37].

The analysis of these various points which constitute this plan clearly shows the objectives of the administration. Indeed, by transferring these populations, "judged and industrious", the administration wants to bring them to intensify trade related to agricultural activities oriented according to the needs of the metropolis. Not forgetting that trade was one of the fundamental objectives of colonization, no point in this plan provides for temporarily suspending the payment of taxes by these populations, while waiting for them to adapt to the environment and the climate.

In addition to the tax that these populations' must continue to pay, they are by no means immune to the benefits and the code of indigénat which forces them to stay in their new villages. On September 4, 1933, Couillard, administrator of Loudima, estimated 300 the number of Bakota coming from Mossendjo, Zanaga and Sibiti, including the women whom some asked to bring. At the end of September, this figure temporarily increased to 579 displaced or transferred people.[38].

This movement had to continue, the next years not without difficulty, because those who had remained according to Gilles Sauter: *Waited to know if those who had left had found a good place and could well live far from home* [39].

Gilles Sauter estimated 1171 people the total number of transferred. Several Bakota, Bandzabi, and Batéké had established themselves near the line where the land chiefs had chosen locations themselves. The transferred populations had been grouped by tribes in the staggered villages of Nkayi (ex Jacob) to Monzi (ex Les Bandas).

The territory of Loudima quickly sees its population quickly. In 1928, when the rail reaches Loudima, a small city is born that will be called Loudima-station to mark the difference with the position that will become Loudima Loudima stamp. The creation of stations and the putting into operation of the Congo-Ocean railway simultaneously triggers a process of formation of semi-urban agglomerations. In his work, Pierre Vennetier[40] reports of rail towns constituting a form of transition between the companion and the city. Some of these stations like Loudima will benefit from a school, a dispensary and Catholic and Protestant churches.

Some men who have become salaried workers begin to break away from self-subsistence activities in order to turn to more profitable activities. Loudima will quickly gain momentum with the birth of Loudima-station where trucks of logs arrive to evacuate them to Pointe-Noire by the road to Sibiti . The districts are formed according to ethnic groups. Indeed, at Loudima-station, the Kuni are no longer dominant. The Kamba, Bembé, Sundi, Dondo, etc. there are also foreigners who are distributed among them. They are Cameroonians, Central Africans and some traders from Chad, often hawkers.

II. CONCLUSION

This study has shown the European explorations and their consequences in the Niari Valley XIXth - XXth centuries .Several motives had pushed Europeans to the occupation the Niari valley , in that it was a way of Nkuna passage connecting the Atlantic coast . This is why France opposed Belgium over the occupation of this part of the deep Congo. It was not until the Berlin conference (1884-1885) that the colonial disputes were resolved by the mediation of the policy of territorial composition. European explorations have overturned the structures and mentalities of the natives.

REFERENCES..

- [1] General act of the Berlin conference, cited by Voulgre, 1897, The French Congo: The Loango and the Kouilou Niari valley, Paris, African colonial
- [2] National Archives, GG 559 Financial affairs box n ° 2.
- [3] Article 7 of the decree of March 9, 1937 of the official journal of AE F, p.448.
- [4] Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972, The Congo at the time of the big concession companies, Paris, Mouton la Haye
- [5] Coquery-Vidrovitch C., 1969, Brazza and the price of possession of the Congo: Mission of West Africa 1883-1885, Paris, Mouton
- [6] Cholet, The history of the Niari region in reports from the Paris Geographic Society, Cornevin R., 1963, Histoire du Congo (Léopold ville), Paris, Berger, Levrault, p.93-115.
- [7] Decree of January 14, 1937, creating SIPs in AEF; Official Journal, AEF, 193.
- [8] Dolisie A. 277 Mi (1 and 2) pieces 64/66 - National Archives of France, Paris.

- [9] Gabon-Congo III- File 11 (11b), rue Oudinot, Paris.
- [10] Gilles Sautter, 1966, *From the Atlantic to the Congo River, A geography of the under-population*, Paris, Mouton.
- [11] Mabounou A. 1988 , the socio-political structures, customary and economic developments under French colonization in Bouansa (Middle Congo) 1896-1946 , PhD thesis postgraduate His tory
- [12] Mboungou Kiongo B, 2006, socio-economic evolution of Loudima from 1883 to 1956, Master thesis; ENS UMNG .
- [13] Vennetier P., 1968, *Pointe-Noire and the maritime frontage of the Congo Brazzaville*, Paris, ORSTOM.

Footnotes

- [1] R. Cornevin, 1963, *Histoire du Congo (Léopold ville)*, Paris, Berger, Levrault, p.93-115.
- [2] P. Vennetier, 1968, *Pointe-Noire and the maritime facade of the Congo Brazzaville* , Paris, ORSTOM, p.77
- [3] V. De Velde, cited by B. Mboungou Kiongo, 2006, *the socio-economic evolution of Loudima from 1883 to 1956* , Master thesis ; ENS UMNG, p.36
- [4] Strauch, cited by JB Mboungou Kiongo, *op.cit* ., P.37
- [5] C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1969, *Brazza and the price of possession of the Congo : Mission of West Africa 1883-1885*, Paris, Mouton p.405
- [6] B. Mboungou Kiongo, 2006, *op.cit* , p.41
- [7] General act of the Berlin conference, cited by Voulgre, 1897 : *French Congo : Loango and the Kouilou Niari valley*, Paris, African colonial bookshop, p.15
- [8] Gabon-Congo III- File 11 (11b), rue Oudinot, Paris.
- [9] Cholet, The history of the Niari region in *accounts of the Paris Geographic Society* , p.455
- [10] A. Dolisie 277 Mi (1 and 2) parts 64/66 - National Archives of France, Paris.
- [11] Gabon-Congo I- File 30 (30a).
- [12] Catherine Coquery Vidrovitch, 1969, *Brazza and the taking of possession of the Congo* , Paris, Mouton, p.431
- [13] Article 7 of the decree of March 9, 1,937 of the official journal of AE F, p . 448.
- [14] Antoine Mabounou, *op cit* , p . 477.
- [15] Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1969 , *op cit* , p.119.
- [16] National Archives, GG 559 Financial affairs box 2.
- [17] Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972 , *The Congo at the time of the large concessionary companies* , Paris , Mouton la Haye p.117.
- [18] Antoine Mabounou, *op. cit* , p. 486.
- [19] Pierre Philippe RAY, 1971 , *op. cit* , p.83.
- [20] An toine Mabounou, 1988, *op. cit* , p . 529.
- [21] Pierre Philippe Rey, 1971, *op. cit* , p.346.
- [22] Antoine Mab ounou, 1988, *op cit* , p . 487.
- [23] PD Boussou ukouBoumba cited by Mbongo-Kiongo , 2006 , *op cit* , p .94.
- [24] Decree of January 14 , 1937, creating S IPs in AEF ; Official Journal , AEF, 1937, p . 307.
- [25] Camara-Laye, 1978, cited by Mboungou-Kiongo , 2006 , *op cit* , p . 105.
- [26] T. Su ret cited by Camara-Laye, 1978 cited by Mboungou-Kiongo, p . 106.
- [27] Gilles Sautter, 1966, *From the Atlantic to the Congo River* , Paris, Mouton , p . 647.
- [28] André LOUEMBE cited by Mboungou-Kiongo Bienvenu, 2006, *op cit* , p . 117.
- [29] Daniel Mboyi, cited by Mboungou-Kiongo, 2006, *op. ciit* , p . 118.
- [30] David Nsondé , cited by Mboungou-Kiongo, 2006, *op. Cit*, Ibidem.
- [31] Joseph Gamandzori, cited by Mboungou-Kiongo , 2006, *op. Cit*, Ib i dem
- [32] Pierre Philippe Rey, cited by Mboungou-Kiongo, 2006, *op. Cit*, p . 119.
- [33] Gilles Sautter, 1966, *op. cit* , p . 256.
- [34] Joseph Gamandzori, cited by Mboungou-Kiongo Bienvenu, *op cit* , p . 120.
- [35] Ibidem.
- [36] Ibidem.
- [37] Gilles Sautter, cited by Mboungou-Kiongo, *op cit* . P. 121.
- [38] Ibidem.
- [39] Ibidem.
- [40] Pi erre Vennetier, 1968, *op. cit* , p. 256

Oba Dominique. "The European explorations and their consequences in the valley of Niari XIXth - XXth centuries." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 25(4), 2020, pp. 41-50.