

Why was king leopold
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29 March, Q: Why was King Leopold so Successful in suppressing information about his Congo ventures? Ans. It has been no more than about 90 years that King Leopold II of Belgium got ten million Africans massacred by his agents in Congo. Today, the whole rubber terror created by King Leopold has been forgotten altogether, and is not discussed at all. In the book, King Leopold's Ghost, the author Adam Hochschild refers to this fact as "the great forgetting." The book sufficiently offers a well researched account of the brutality, greed and exploitation that Africans were offered by the King Leopold. Through this book, the author has made an attempt to revive all events of primary importance that speak of the long forgotten brutality that King Leopold displayed in Congo. Throughout the book, the concept of Leopold has been shown as larger than life. Paradoxically, the title of the book refers to the ghost of King Leopold, and not his physical being which raises many questions in the mind of the reader. The last chapter of the book named the "great forgetting" answers all of these questions and also talks about the biggest tragedy among all that have been talked about in the preceding chapters. King Leopold made a lot of wealth from Congo and his operation made the Congolese incur a lot of cost in all respects. However, all of it suddenly came to an end after the independence of Congo in 1971. Belgium became a part of the European Union. Since then, no one remembered the reign any more. It was quite unexpected to happen but it did! Congolese had for long remained under the load of injustice and their rights had been completely subdued by King Leopold, but the opposition got blown away with the wind and public no more retained the tragic images in its imagination. Soon after the independence of Congo, its history became remote and the opposition against King Leopold did not attract any attention.

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“ Even Apocalypse Now, Francis Ford Coppola’s big-screen version of Heart of Darkness was stripped of its context, and smashed into Vietnam instead” (Grant). Much of this can be attributed to the well developed strategy of King Leopold which he used to make the world forget about his brutality. In 1908, King Leopold burnt all records that he had of the State of Congo. After the colony’s turn over,, furnaces in the vicinity of the palace where King Leopold lived were lit up, and they continued to burn for 8 whole days. This way, King Leopold became successful in transforming the entire state records about Congo into ash. The King said, “ I will give them my Congo but they have no right to know what I did there” (Hochschild cited in “ Books Of The Times” 2). Even today, Congolese have not managed to completely come out of the trauma of King Leopold’s reign. The ghost of King Leopold still haunts the whole region. Although the world has largely forgotten about it, but the central Africa has seen no great forgetting. Works Cited: “ Books Of The Times; Genocide With Spin Control: Kurtz Wasn't Fiction.” The New York Times. 1 Sep. 1998. Web. 29 Feb. 2011. . Grant, Paul. “ Missions Resources - Bibliography.” n. d. Web. 29 Feb. 2011. . Hochschild, Adam. King Leopold's Ghost. Mariner Books, 1998. Print.