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Governor-General Louis-Gabriel Angoulvant, general instructions to civilian administrators of the Ivory Coast, November 26, 1908

in *France and West Africa*, ed. John Hargreaves (London, 1969), pp. 205-6. Translated by Hargreaves

LOUIS-GABRIEL ANGOULVANT (1872-1935?) was one of the French colonial executives most closely associated with the policy of pacification. Born near Paris, he studied at the Ecole coloniale before entering military service. After twelve years in Vietnam, China, French Somaliland, the French Congo, and Martinique, he obtained his first executive position as governor of French India, where he served from 1906 to 1908. Following his departure from India, he became governor of the Ivory Coast, where he distinguished himself through the development of the colony's cash economy. The methods he used to obtain African labor, however, were far from distinguished. He did not shrink from the use of terror to enforce labor recruitment and tax collection. He then became governor of French Equatorial Africa and served for a brief period as governor-general of both the French West African and French Equatorial African federations. Upon his retirement in 1919, he served on the boards of directors of a number of colonial companies which operated in territories formerly under his jurisdiction.

Not that I have the slightest notion of attempting here any experiment in indirect administration. Except in a few northern districts the Ivory Coast does not have, among its own natives, any subjects capable of even roughly discharging the role of native officials, of holding even the slightest fragment of public authority. Long years will be needed before we can find individuals who are at once relatively well educated, energetic, active, honest, loyal, ready to face the dangers involved for a native in exercising of power in his own country, and sufficiently disinterested to serve us as administrative auxiliaries, even at the price of close and continuing control.

We must thus confine ourselves to practising direct administration, which is in any case the most moral system in Negro coun-

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tries, for it involves far fewer of those excesses which are the undeniable consequence of any participation by natives in public affairs. . . .

Some will doubtless think that innovations of the sort which I have outlined and will enlarge on later would gravely jeopardise an existing social order for which they do not believe we can safely substitute an organisation made out of nothing.

On the contrary, I believe that we are in this country precisely in order to change the social order of the people now submitted to our laws. What this social order amounts to, among the forest-dwellers and the Baoule, is permanent and general anarchy, resulting from the absence of any authority and obstructing the realisation of any useful reform. . . . It is our mission to bring civilisation, moral and social progress, economic prosperity. We shall never succeed in this if we think ourselves obliged to preserve a deplorable situation where the weight of the past prevents any reform; or if we do succeed it will be at a speed out of keeping with the importance of the sacrifices we have made and the interests which are involved.

In colonial politics nothing is more dangerous than a conservative policy. Why make firm resolutions if they are to weaken in face of a situation which it was their very purpose to bring to an end? Why make such efforts if we doom them to failure in advance, condemning them to remain platonic on the pretext of respecting the customs and instincts of the natives?



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Decree of Leopold II, King of the Belgians, regarding settlements for African children, July 21, 1890

in H. W. Wack, *The Story of the Congo Free State* (New York, 1905), pp. 561-62. Translation by the British Embassy in Brussels

UNDER THE peculiar constitutional arrangement which prevailed in the Congo Free State, all laws emanated from the king, Leopold II of the Belgians. Thus, although Leopold II was a constitutional monarch in Europe, his word was supreme in his African possessions, which he never visited. The legislation quoted below seems as much concerned with the creation of a cheap labor force as with the plight of African orphans.

Louis-Gabriel Angoulvant, "Instructions to Civilian Administrators" Colonial Rule in Africa, B. Fetter (ed) University of Wisconsin, 1979.