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BULLETIN 172

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Parcel Post Service, Etat Indépendant du Congo

Eliane Deneumostier

(first published in *Les Cahiers du Congo*)

After the Congress of Berlin, events moved rapidly regarding the *Etat Indépendant du Congo*, which had been placed under the sovereignty of His Majesty Leopold II, The King of the Belgians. The decisions that had to be taken were many and of the utmost importance for the destiny of an area of Africa coveted by other nations.

Let us look to the one area that we love, philately, and in particular the postal service.

The first postage stamps were issued on the 1st January and the 1st July 1886. The 5, 10, 25 and 50 cents denominations appeared in January, accompanied by a 15 cent postcard. A second card was to follow in July, as well as the 5 francs denomination stamp.

The first Postmarks appeared with the opening of three post offices: BANANA, BOMA and VIVI. (Vivi is of less importance, but it was "The House of Stanley". It was to close soon, in mid-May 1886.)

Very soon, it became apparent that a postal service for letters and postcards alone was insufficient to ensure economic growth in the new State, which was still facing the challenges of expansion in some regions. A decision was taken to create a parcels service to Belgium in the first instance, before expanding the circle of participating countries.

For this, the 5 francs postage stamp (for which use had been very low) would be used, overprinted and surcharged "COLIS POSTAUX / Fr. 3.50".

In 1887, 36 parcels were dispatched abroad and 186 were received from abroad. Note: At this time there was no domestic service for parcels.

Initially, only the BANANA and BOMA offices were responsible for the parcel service. The very rare docketts that are known to exist attest to this, as well as the postmarks on isolated stamps. A question deserves to be asked about the blue labels on these docketts.



Figure 1: This is one of these blue labels, an example that has been removed from its docket. It bears the BOMA etiquette and the cancellation of that office for March 11, 1890.

Here (Figure 2) is the docket for a parcel shipped by L(iévin) Van de Velde, prepaid using a 5 francs overprinted stamp of the 1st issue. The relevant box bears the printed etiquette of BOMA on the blue label with the number 1510. The cancellation, BOMA 18 DECE 1887, corresponds with that on the etiquette. This parcel was intended for another Van de Velde living in Brussels, where it arrived on the 7th March 1888.



Figure 2: Shipping docket for a parcel posted at BOMA on the 18th December 1887 and destined for Brussels. It carries a blue label for the parcel post from Boma, on which the number 1510 is printed. The hexagonal date stamp is that of the railway, Brussels-North, applied on the 7th March, 1888 (with the time blocked).

Note: The sender was “THE” Van de Velde, who was appointed *Résident des Falls* in 1887, a significant position. His experience in the Congo made him the first choice. (Previously, he had occupied the positions of Chief of VIVI and Chief of BOMA.) He sailed from Antwerp on the 23rd October 1887 (on board the SS *La Lys*) to arrive at Boma on the 11th December 1887. Within days he was stuck down with a fever. He could travel no further than Leopoldville, where he died on the 17th February 1888. By the time the parcel arrived, its sender was dead.

Thirty-six parcels were shipped in 1887. Notice that the blue label detached from its docket and shown in Figure 1 bears the number 1653.

The blue label on the second docket (Figure 3), for the shipment sent by Henneuse to

Antwerp on the 18th February 1894, bears a BOMA cachet and the number 1396! Number 1653 in 1890 and number 1396 in 1894?

Perhaps there is an explanation: The blue label of 1894 carries a clear strike, in blue, of Boma but beneath this, Banana is printed in black. Probably, Boma received a number of provisional labels as a trouble-shooting measure from Banana, where the BOMA cachet was applied.

ETAT INDÉPENDANT DU CONGO.

BULLETIN D'EXPÉDITION.

Ci-joint un colis portant l'adresse ci-dessous :

Nombre de déclarations en douane *deux*

M *M. Gurnet*
Lieutenant

Rue *Haingroede, 67*
Lieu de destination *Anvers.*

Acheminement. *Anvers Bg*

Coupons du bulletin d'expédition.

Timbre du bureau d'origine.

Notre et domicile de l'expéditeur :
Hennessy
a
Cinika

Timbre poste ou l'indication de la taxe perçue.

COLIS POSTEAU
Banana

Figure 3: The docket for a parcel sent from BOMA on the 16th February 1894 with 5 francs grey stamp, overprinted and surcharged in black with a framed COLIS POSTEAU Fr 3.50. Destination - ANVERS

Had Banana shipped far fewer parcels than Boma? A question such as this must remain unanswered in the absence of documentary evidence.

Arrêté du 15 Février 1898 deserves to be mentioned in this article. In this, it is stipulated that parcels addressed to persons in locations beyond Matadi or in the Mayumbe area will be accepted, subject to a fee of 10 francs for those in the District of Stanley Pool, 5 francs for those in locations below that district and 5 francs for those in the area of Mayumbe. This fee is independent of that provided for by Art. 8 in the *Arrêté du 22 Mars 1887*.

The First Parcel Post Stamp

The docket has a box for the postage stamp, marked "postage stamp or the indication of the tax collected" (i.e. *timbre-poste ou l'indication de la taxe perçue*). For a parcel shipped

from the E.I.C. to Belgium the tariff was set at 3,50 Fr, in total. (see Convention du 28 Février 1887, below). Therefore, a rubber stamp was made to overprint some of the 5 Fr postage stamps that had been issued in July 1886, the inscription being on two lines:

COLIS POSTAUX

Fr. 3.50

Overprint tests were conducted on a stock of the 50 c *réséda* of January 1886. These test stamps are very rare.



A pair 50 c stamps, one of which is overprinted with the inscription COLIS POSTAUX / Fr. 3.50



BANANA 31 AOUT 1887
inverted overprint



An amusing error by a postman, that confuses the reference to "stamp of the office of origin" with "the postage stamp or indication of tax collected"



BOMA 15 NOVE 1888
overprint in blue

Official texts

In the following pages, you will find extracts from the Convention establishing the service as well as subsequent decrees, these being the more important elements.

1. Convention du 28 Février 1887 (B.O. 1887 p.33)

Article 1 – under the category of postal parcel, parcels of undeclared value, free of disbursements and repayments, and a weight of 5 kg or less can be shipped from the Independent State of the Congo (*I.E.C*) to the Belgium and vice versa,.

Article 3 - The tax for the Belgian territorial route and the sea leg is fixed uniformly at 2,50 Fr per package.... It must be paid on departure. African territorial tax is collected from the sender on departure from the Congo and the recipient for shipments to the Congo. It is fixed to 1 franc per package¹.

The franking of postal parcels is done by means of the regular stamps of Congo.

Article 11 - This agreement will be implemented 1st March 1887 and will remain

¹ The total being 3,50Fr

binding until one of the contracting parties announces to the other, three months in advance, its intention to withdraw from the service.

2. Arrêté du 22 mars 1887: (B.O. 1887 p. 42)

The Deputy Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs,
Having regard to articles 2 and 23 of the Decree of September 16, 1885.

Decree

Article 1 - Post offices are authorized to accept, destined for inland offices, for Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark (including the Faroe Islands and Iceland), Continental France, Norway, The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, postal parcels not insured, free of disbursements and repayments, with a maximum weight of 5 kg. These parcels may not exceed 20 cubic decimetres in volume, or 60 centimetres in dimension on any one side.

However, parcels destined for Denmark, Continental France, Italy and Sweden cannot exceed 3 kilograms.

Article 2 - Postage fees are fixed as follows:

	Total <u>Fees</u>	Number of declarations <u>to attach to each package</u>
Inland	1,00	--
Germany	4,00	2
Austria-Hungary	4,50	3
Belgium	3,50	2
Denmark (including Faroe Islands and Iceland)	4,50	3
Continental France	4,00	2
Italy	4,75	3
Norway	5,25	2
The Netherlands	4,00	3
Sweden	5,50	3
Switzerland	4,50	3
The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland		
parcels of 1 kg. or less	4,50	2
parcels from 1 to 3 kg.	5,00	2
parcels from 3 to 5 kg.	5,65	2

Article 6 - The postage fee must be paid when the parcel is posted. To this end, ordinary postage stamps are to be used. These stamps are affixed, to a value of the full amount due on the docket that accompanies each parcel.

Article 8 - A territorial tax of one franc is to be collected from the consignee against delivery of any parcel with a destination in the Lower Congo. Postage stamps to this value are to be affixed to the docket and cancelled. This tax does not apply to parcels originating from the interior.

Additional notices

Arrêté du 5 juillet 1887 (B.O. 1887 p.185)

The carriage of parcels destined for the localities in Upper Congo beyond Matadi and Vivi has been regulated by the following provisions, dated from 5th July 1887.

Article 1 - Parcels addressed to persons residing in the localities beyond Matadi and Vivi will be transported without charge by the State mail service or the Transport Administration under the following conditions:

A- five francs per parcel tax must be paid in advance by the agent to collect the parcel in the Boma or Banana post offices; this fee is independent of that provided for in Article 8 of the Decree of 22nd March 1887; postage stamps to this value are affixed to the consignment docket and cancelled.

B- The Postal Administration being discharged from liability by the delivery of the parcel to the agent, in one of the local post offices of the Lower Congo (Art. 18 of the Decree of 22nd March 1887), postal parcels destined for localities beyond Matadi and Vivi are shipped at the recipient's own risk and without being able to claim any compensation from the head (*of the office*) for any delay, or for loss or damage to the parcel addressed to them.

Article 2 - Parcels will be delivered by the heads of post offices either by the regular mail using the service between Léopoldville and Matadi, or the Transport Administration, depending on the number or size of parcels for shipment and following specific instructions given to them.

Article 3 - The commissioners of districts situated beyond Matadi and Vivi who receive postal parcels will hand them over to the addressees against a receipt in duplicate; they will retain one and send the second to the head of the post office at Boma. No reservations shall be stated on the receipts of the head (*of the post office*) about damage or spoilage.

Arrêté du 2 janvier 1895 (B.O. 1895 p. 2)

The Governor General,

Whereas it is necessary to regulate the carriage of parcels destined for localities beyond Matadi:

Having regard to the powers conferred on us by the fundamental Decree of the 16th April 1887:

Revise the order of the 5th July 1887 (Bull Off. 1887, p. 185).

Decree:

Article 1- Postal parcels addressed to persons residing in localities beyond Matadi, will be carried without the State (in the form of the person in charge) assuming any obligation, by the transport service under the following conditions:

A. - A fee of 10 Francs per parcel tax must be paid in advance by the sender or by the agent, in one of the post offices in the Lower Congo. This charge is

independent of that provided for in Article 8 of the Decree of the 22nd March 1887 (Bull. Off. 1887, no.3, p.45); postage stamps to this value are affixed to the consignment docket and cancelled.

B. - Postal parcels destined for localities beyond Matadi, are shipped at the recipient's own risk and without being able to claim any compensation from the head (*of the office*) for any delay, or for loss or damage to the parcel addressed to them.

Article 2 - Parcels will be handed over, against a receipt, by the postal service to the transportation forming loads of 35 kilos and consider these as ordinary loads; the parcel post service will be entrusted only to collectors of the post for regular mail.

Article 3 - Commissioners of districts beyond Matadi who receive parcels, will deliver them to recipients only against a receipt in duplicate; they will retain one and send the other to the inspector of posts at Boma. No reservations shall be stated on the receipts of the head (*of the post office*) about damage or spoilage.

Article 4 - This order shall enter into force on 1st February next; that of 5th July 1887 is repealed.

Wahis

Boma, 2nd January 1895

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1. Arrêtés et Ordonnances concernant le service des colis postaux au Congo Belge et au Ruanda-Urundi – R. Gallant et Ch. Stockmans, Bruxelles 1987
2. Bulletin Officiel du Congo
3. Congo Belge – Cinquante ans d'Histoire Postale – J. Du Four, Bruxelles 1962
4. Personal collection.

Membership News

New member

We extend a warm welcome to the following recently joined member and trust he will enjoy and benefit from his association with us.

AUSTRALIA

Ian HARRY

P.O. Box 1130,
Naracoorte SA 5271,
Australia

harryi@adam.com.au

Ian's main interest is in German East Africa which led him to the Belgian occupation and Ruanda Urundi, and after that to the Congo itself.

Change of Address

France

Bruce Lockhart

10 Route de Mirabel,
84110 Villedieu

Belgian Congo Private Wrappers: the Social Backstories: Part 2

John K. Courtis FRPSL & Charles Lloyd

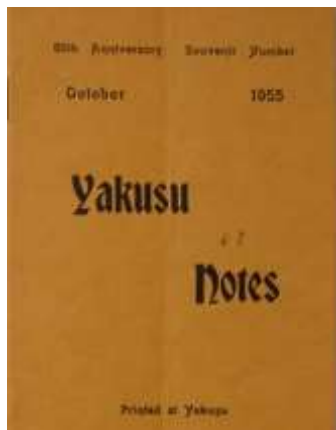
[Part 1 appeared in Bulletin 170 (December 2015) pages 14-19]

The Baptist Missionary Society

This wrapper is inscribed YAKUSU QUARTERLY NOTES with Périodique Imprimé and was sent to “David S. Tatum, YONKERS, New York, USA”.



The postage paid was 50c, for which a 50c Palms stamp (COB 234) was used. It was cancelled by a (H&K) Type 8A STANLEYVILLE postmark dated 11 -5 43 with the time unreadable. For this franking to be a correct, the item would weigh between 50g and 100g (2 x 50g @ 25c). The American censor inspected the content, passing it and applying a purple inked circular handstamp “US CENSORSHIP PASSED” which was then hand initialed. (Was it read because the name Yakusu sounds very Japanese?).



A Baptist Missionary Society mission station was established in 1896 at the highest navigable point of the Congo River, just below the Stanley Falls. During the colonial era Yakusu was a center of missionary and medical activity. Nurses were trained as both evangelists and health assistants.

Yakusu Notes was a quarterly newsletter for the hospital staff of the BMS's hospital at Yakusu. This magazine contained articles, poems, etc. written by various members of the medical and religious staff. Often it was illustrated and had a map on the back of each issue.

Mission (des Églises) Libre Suédoise (MLS)

The Pentecostal Church was established in Norway and Sweden at the start of the 20th century. Its first missionaries were sent to the Belgian Congo in 1919 to work at pre-existing Swedish Protestant missions. Separation from these (for theological reasons) was inevitable and The Mission Libre Suédoise was created in 1923. MLS concentrated its evangelism in Kivu and Urundi. In common with other missionary movements, they provided health care and education as well as salvation. This work still continues, though

local people play a leading role now. Today, BP266 Bukavu (see wrapper) is the postbox for several hospitals, at least one of which is supported by the Community of Pentecostal Churches in Central Africa.



This wrapper was used to send a periodical to the Philadelphia Church at Tenhult, a small town in central southern Sweden. “Shahidi La Kweli” is Swahili and translates to “Witness of the Truth” which could well be the title of the periodical being sent. The (airmail) postage paid was 13Fr, for which a 10Fr Belgian Congo Flowers stamp overprinted CONGO (COB396) and a 3Fr Protected Birds (COB 487) stamp were used. These were cancelled by a (H&K) Type 10(-G)- BUKAVU-1-G postmark dated 26-9-64 and timed at -8:(00). This date is 6 months after the ordonnance specifying postal tariffs in place at and after independence was abrogated. We do not have access to the tariff that replaced the 1959 tariff for printed matter sent by air to Europe. (Nevertheless, it is interesting to calculate what it might have been according to Ordonnance 69/77 1959. If the item weighed 31g to 40g the charge would have been 2 x 20g @ 5,50Fr + 1 x 50g @ 60c = 11,60Fr. Clearly, prices had been raised.)

Congo-Balolo Mission

This red wrapper appears to have been torn open roughly, causing partial loss of the left side. It carries the mission’s name and address “??? de la Congo Balolo Mission, Bongandanga, Basankusu // Congo Belge” It is addressed to “Mr Buckeridge. Westcliffe on Sea, Essex, England”, typed on a perforated white label. Above and to the left of this is the instruction (P)ERIODIQUE.

The postage paid was 70c, for which stamps of the Palms issue were used, a 10c (COB229) and a 60c (COB 255). These were cancelled by a (H&K) Type 8A BASANKUSU postmark dated 27 8 ???. (The year and time cannot be read.) Assuming the franking is correct there are two possibilities for when it was posted. If posted between 15th December 1945 and 31st June 1948 the weight of the item would have been between 50g and 100g (i.e. 2 x 50g @ 35c). If posted after this but before 1st July 1949 it had to be 50g or less (i.e. 1 x 50g @ 70c).



Photo by] Mr. Gilchrist.

A Congo Family.
 A Native Evangelist and his wife and children at the Congo Balolo Mission Station of Yuli, Upper Congo.
 REGIONS BEYOND MISSIONARY UNION,
 HARLEY HOUSE, BOW, LONDON, E.

The Congo-Balolo Mission (CBM) was a station of a British Baptist missionary society active in the Belgian Congo from 1889 to 1915. It was the predecessor of the "Regions Beyond Missionary Union" (RBMU), established in 1900 and which today is called "World Team". The leading figure in its establishment was Henry ("Harry") Grattan Guinness II. He wanted to extent the field of missionary activity further upstream into the tributaries of the Congo in what is now Equateur. The new mission, called The Congo-Balolo Mission, had plans to operate on six southern tributaries of the Congo River.

Their missionaries arrived at a time of great stress. Brutal methods were being used to coerce the local population into harvesting wild rubber. Slavery continued and epidemics were causing considerable loss of life. This disruption to native life and the apparent failure of the old systems may have made the people more receptive to the

new message brought by the missionaries. They taught local people to spread the word and these evangelists communicated their understanding of the bible in their own words.

The Salvation Army

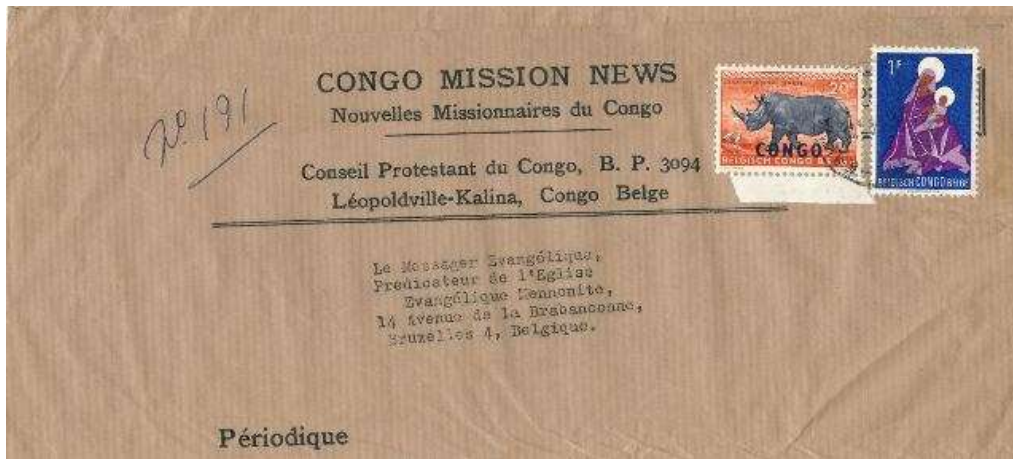
The Salvation Army was founded by William and Catherine Booth in London in 1865 and as the name implies is organized along quazi-military lines. It is derived from Methodism and seeks to bring salvation to the poor, destitute and hungry by meeting both physical and spiritual needs. Soon, it grew to become a major international Christian church and charity. Traditionally, the Salvationists have a vocation to work in urban areas. In September 1934, Adjutant Henri Becquet of the Belgian Salvation Army and his wife Paula arrived in Leopoldville to undertake the work of this movement in the capital. The Salvationists focused their charitable work on education. *(The Salvation Army's arrival coincided with both the Catholic Scheut and the Protestant BMS missions establishing churches in the Cité Indigène to serve the growing African urban population.)*



LE MESSAGER DU SALUT headlines this wrapper with the added information that it is the “Official Journal of the Salvation Army of the Belgian Congo and in French Equatorial Africa” and that it is “Published by Salvation Army Headquarters, Leopoldville”. The Francophone version of Salvation Army logo is present. The postage paid was 25c, for which two of the Native Arts issue were used, a 10c (COB 277) and a 15c (COB 278). They were cancelled by a (H&K) Type 8A LÉOPOLDVILLE postmark dated -9 -6 -53 and timed at 12:(00). The wrapper is addressed to “The Editor, Salvation Army, 25 Dorp Street, Cape Town, South Africa”. Being in the African Postal Union, the cost of sending printed matter to South Africa was then 25c for the first 50g. The franking is correct. *Le Messager du Salut* is the Congo equivalent of the *War Cry* newspaper that is published in English and the wrapper might have contained a complimentary copy of *Le Messager* from one editor to another.

Protestant Council of the Congo (publication - Congo Mission News)

This wrapper image has been captured from eBay. Consequently, the dimensions, gum, paper gauge and any markings that might appear on the reverse cannot be reported. The two-line bilingual inscription, CONGO MISSION NEWS and its translation into French is followed by the name of the publishing organization (Conseil Protestant du Congo) and its post box number at Léopoldville-Kalina. The paper used for the wrapper is vertical weave brown. The recipient is of interest, being the Mennonite Church in Belgium. The Congo was a major area of Mennonite evangelism, concentrated in West Kasai. Faced with competition from Roman Catholicism, the Mennonite Congo Inland Mission became affiliated to the Conseil Protestant du Congo. Thus, the recipient may well have subscribed to the Congo Mission News.



The *Congo Mission News* was an inter-denominational quarterly newspaper for Protestant missionaries. In 1948 they cooperated to build a new Bookshop and installed a modern press. Congo Mission News, schoolbooks, and many other items were printed there. Such centralized and modern printing led to a decline and cessation of individual mission printing presses.

The postage paid was 1,20Fr, for which a 1Fr Christmas (COB 363) and a 20c Protected Animals with the CONGO overprint (COB 401) were used. Unfortunately the post mark is very faint and unreadable. However, the date is most likely to be in the early part of the 1960s. Stockmans and Gallant state that the tariffs set in 1959 remained unchanged after independence until the 14th April 1964. Because the wrapper contained a *Périodique* the charge for delivery to Belgium was 40c per 50 g, which implies the weight of the item was more than 100g, but less than 150 g.

Documentation & Information Africaines (DIA)

The Documentation and Information Africaines (DIA) was the official Catholic news agency, the press organ for the Roman Catholic Church in the Congo. Its mission statement was to promote a just and human democratic society with a Christian perspective.



This wrapper (in the author's collection) shows a rather crudely drawn DIA in relief within a hatched box, 41x70mm. DOCUMENTATION et INFORMATION AFRICAINES // // BUREAU DE PRESSE LEOPOLDVILLE appear to be typed along with the instruction PAR AVION. The paper used has a gauge of 0.08mm and the wrapper is 217 x 329mm in size. It is un gummed. The postage paid was 18Fr, for which a Belgian Congo 8Fr Flowers stamp overprinted CONGO (COB 395) and a 10Fr Protected Birds stamp (COB 493) were used. They were cancelled by a (H&K) Type 12C LEOPOLDVILLE 1 / LEOPOLDSTAD 1 postmark, dated 23-2-64 and timed 10(:00). It is addressed to The "Editor, N.C.W.C News Service, Washington DC, USA" (NB not shown on the image). The printed matter / newspaper postal rate to the USA was, at this date, 60c per 50g with an airmail surcharge of 5,50Fr per 20g. If the item weighed 51g to 60g the charge would have been 3 x 20g @ 5,50Fr + 2 x 50g @ 60c = 17,70Fr, which is close enough to the franking to make little difference.

Secular Newspapers & Periodicals

Le Courrier D'Afrique



This horizontal weave brown paper wrapper has a white address label headed "LE COURRIER D'AFRIQUE". PAR AVION is instructed. The destination is Belgium, to "Monsieur Edm. KONINGS at BRUXELLES". Perhaps Edmond Konings was an ex-colonist keeping up to date with news and events. However, there is another possibility. In its annual reports for the early 1950s The Banque National de Belgique lists Edmond Konings as a senior officer (Member, Consiel de Régence). As a banker, was he monitoring the situation in the colony through its press?

The postage paid was 5,25Fr, for which the 10c and 5Fr stamps of the Native Arts issue (COB 277 and COB 290) and the 15c stamp of the Palms issue (COB 250) were used. These were cancelled by a (H&K) Type 10(.B.)- LEOPOLDVILLE 1.B. postmark, dated - 2-10-50 and timed at 17(:00).

Interpreting the franking presents a problem. We assume that the publisher would know the correct amount to apply. Our interpretation of the information presented in Stockmans and Gallant suggests that the airmail charge for objects other than letters (AO) in table 2 of Ordonnance 259/PT 1947 is still a surcharge. Perhaps another member can confirm this?

At this date, the postal tariff for newspapers and periodicals by surface mail to Belgium was 25c per 50g (set 1st August 1949). The AO surcharge required for delivery by air was 1,25Fr per 5g. Consequently, if the weight of the item was between 16g and 20g the charge should be $1 \times 50g @ 25c + 4 \times 5g @ 1,25Fr = 5,50Fr$. This might seem remarkably light for a newspaper. However, it is sufficient for a brief newspaper. Old newsprint is about 50% heavier than today's newsprint. Belgium adopted SI paper sizes for newsprint in 1924. If we assume the paper was A3 size (i.e. twice the page area of this bulletin) 4 sheets (or 8 pages) would weigh 18 to 20g.



Le Courrier d'Afrique was a French medium newspaper published by the Societe d'Imprimerie du Courrier d'Afrique, in Leopoldville from 1930 to 1972. Founded by Scheutist (CICM) missionaries, at first it was conservative and elitist. This changed in 1946 when the paper was taken over by the Confederation of Christian Trades Unions and the editorial policy became more radical, with an emphasis on social issues. As independence of the Congo approached the number of management and newsroom staff who were indigenous Congolese gradually increased.

La Voix Du Congolais

Sensing the atmosphere of change at the end of World War II, the colonial administration created the first national African newspaper, the monthly La Voix du Congolais to serve an emerging Congolese elite. Appearing first in January 1945, it offered news and literature with a Congolese perspective which marked the beginning of Congolese literature. Contributors were attracted from across the Congo and the content demonstrated a political and cultural awareness on the part of the Congolese with a desire to transform the colonial society. It offered the Congolese elite an opportunity to raise awareness of their own identity and membership of a social group. With independence in prospect, its objective was in sight and publication ceased in 1959.



This wrapper was used to send an American subscriber her copy of LA VOIX DU CONGOLAIS, Revue Mensuelle (The Congolese Voice – Monthly Review). This 248 x 445mm wrapper is made using vertical weave 0.07mm gauge craft paper and has a gum line varying in width from 26 to 31mm.

The postage paid was 1,60Fr, for which the 20c and 40c denominations of the Native Arts issue (COB 279 and COB 281) and the 1Fr of the Flowers definitive (COB 310) were used. These were cancelled by a (H&K) Type 10(.E.)- LEOPOLDVILLE KALINA E postmark dated 8-7-52 and timed at 19(:00). The stamps are applied over a default printed PORT PAYÉ, which presumably applied only to internal mail. At this date, the rate for printed matter (newspapers) to the USA was 80c for the first 50g and 40c for each successive 50g. Consequently, franking is correct for an item weighing between 101g and 150g.

Concluding remarks and observations

The wrapper for printed matter has been a neglected subject, in general. We suspect that most were destroyed or at best only the stamps were saved. Yet, in the colonial era regular news from home was considered important for morale and colonists wanted to keep abreast of national and world affairs in addition to letters from loved ones. Of course, internal distribution was as important. Also, the delivery of catalogues allowed the colonist and administrator to order goods not available locally. To make this mail affordable a concessionary printed matter tariff (imprimés) was allowed. It is an aspect of postal history that deserves further study. In addition, wrappers allow the social aspects to be uncovered (as has been shown). This was extremely difficult before the advent of the World Wide Web, which puts an increasing archive of information in the hands of the philatelist at home.

The Belgian Congo is a great country for this aspect of social philately / postal history. The presence of a network of missions for different Christian denominations and even duplication within these has produced the largest number of (surviving) wrappers from mailings of newsletters / pamphlets to benefactors in America and Europe. (The drive to maintain charitable giving for good work existed long before the television era!)

We ask members to examine their collections and hunt-out wrappers and report these for a fuller picture. No doubt further examples of wrappers with a connection to a Belgian Congo mission will be found. A cursory reading of the literature about mission schools and churches indicates that they existed in surprisingly large numbers - many thousands and several Christian denominations. The Society of Red Hill Missionaries is but one additional example.

References

- C Stockmans and R Gallant (1997) *Arretes et Ordinnances Concernant les tarifs postaux au Congo Belge et Ruanda Urundi*.
- A I Heim and R H Keach 3rd Ed. (2004) *The Cancellations of the Normal Post Offices of Belgian Congo 1886 – 1960 and Ruanda-Urundi 1917 – 1962, Including the Telegraphic Cancellations*. BCSC

My favourite cover Gerald Gettel

This is, perhaps, my favourite post card from the Belgian Congo. It appears to be a watercolour.



The writing on the front was in pencil originally then overwritten in ink, “28.6.99 (cannot be read) *Matadi*”. The initials in red ink on the left are perhaps those of the artist, “*C.M ret*” (retired?) and those on the right, also in red ink, “*Cul de Boma*”, a view².



It is addressed to “Herrn. Capitain, August Deppen, Wömannlinie (Woermann Shipping Line), Hamburg. Allemagne” This was also written in pencil, then overwritten in black ink. The postmark is too faint to read, other than “BO”, but the receiving postmark appears to be Hamburg 1, -7.8.99.

The franking is 50 centimes because at this date (1899) this post card was considered to be a PRIVATE postal card, attracting such a tariff. After the 1st May 1902 the tariff was reduced to 15 centimes.

² Editorial note: This might be the view looking across the Congo River from Boma towards Angola, between islands in the river and towards prominent twin peaks in Angola a few km to the south. They rise to more than 150m (500 ft) above the surrounding hills that are about 100m (300ft) in height.

Westphila 2016

Results for displays entered by members in the National Exhibition

Postal History	Walter Deijnckens	Mandaatgebied Ruanda - Urundi	87%	G. Vermeil
Postal History	Charles Hénuzet	Histoire Postale du Bureau de Boma	83%	Vermeil
Aerophilately	Filip Van Der Haegen	L'évolution de la Poste Aérienne en A.E.F. (1925 – 1936)	95%	Great Gold
Aerophilately	Jean-pierre Flamand	La Poste Aérienne du Congo Belge (1939 – 1945)	90%	Gold
Traditional	Thierry Frennet	Cachets Officiels Sans Date de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo	90%	Gold
Traditional	Charles Hénuzet	Le Timbre Stanley Deux Formats!	78%	G. Silver
Literature	Walter Deijnckens	Studiegroep Belgisch Kongo	80%	Vermeil
Literature	Thierry Frennet	Les Cahiers du Congo	78%	G. Silver

Hearty congratulations go to these individuals for their achievements!

Postal Auction Sale 2016 - 1

Prices Realised

This table gives the prices realised for those lots that were sold. The lots that were not sold are not listed in this table.

Lot	€	Lot	€	Lot	€	Lot	€
2	14,00	47	14,50	79	31,00	90	7,00
5	100,00	48	13,00	80	11,00	91	9,25
38	15,00	49	9,50	81	3,00	92	7,00
40	15,50	52	8,50	82	4,00	93	9,00
41	10,25	54	3,00	83	4,00	94	100,00
42	10,25	56	7,50	86	4,00	95	23,00
43	23,00	57	2,00	88	1,50	96	31,00
45	10,00	59	3,00	89	5,00		

From the editor



Reminder

You are invited to, and will be welcome at our joint meeting with the East Africa Study Circle at the Union Jack Club, London on the 17th September from 2pm until 5pm.
(See Bulletin 171 for more details)

Please remember that this is your bulletin and we need your help, in the form of articles. A single page or more are welcome.

There is no auction accompanying this edition of The Bulletin. We anticipate that Auction 2016 – 2 will be included in Bulletin 173.