



Dr. Blosa Science

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Comprehension story 10

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow, using your own words wherever possible.

The argument so far has been aimed at showing that benefits from colonialism were small and were not gifts from colonialism. But rather fruits of African labour and resources for the most part. Indeed, what was called “the development of Africa” by the colonialists was a cynical shorthand expression for “the intensification of colonial exploitation in Africa to develop capitalistic Europe”. The analysis has gone beyond that to demonstrate that numerous false claims are made purporting to show that Europe developed Africa in the sense of bringing about social order, Nationalism and economic modernization. However, all of that would still not permit the conclusion that colonialism had negative impact on Africa’s development. In offering the view that colonialism was negative, the aim is to draw attention to the way that previous African development was blunted, halted and turned back. In place of that interruption and blockade, nothing of compensatory value was introduced.

The colonization of Africa lasted for just over 70 years in most part of the continent. That is extremely short period within the context of universal historical development. Yet, it was precisely in those years that in other parts of the world the rate of change were greater than ever before. As has been illustrated, capitalist countries revolutionized their technology to enter the nuclear age. Meanwhile, socialism was inaugurated, lifting semi-feudal semi-capitalist Russia to a level of sustained economic growth higher than that ever experienced in a capitalist country. Socialism did the

same for China and North Korea – guaranteeing the well-being and independence of the state as well as re-organizing the internal social arrangements in a far more just manner than ever before. It is against those decisive changes that events in Africa have to be measured. To mark time or even to move slowly while others leap a head is virtually equivalent to going backwards. Certainly, in relevant terms, Africa’s position vis-à-vis its colonizers become more disadvantageous in the political, economic and military spheres.

The decisiveness of the short period of colonialism and its negative consequences for Africa spring mainly from the fact that Africa lost power. Power is the ultimate determinant in human society, being basic to the relations within any group and between groups. It implies the ability to defend one’s interests and if necessary to impose ones will by any means available. In relation between peoples, the question of power determines maneuverability in bargaining, the extent to which one people respect the interests of another, and eventually the extent to which a people survive as a physical and cultural entity. When one society finds itself forced to relinquish power entirely to another society that in itself is a form of under-development.

During the centuries of pre-colonial trade, some control over social, political and economic life was retained in Africa, in spite of the disadvantageous commerce with Europeans. That little control over internal matter disappeared under colonialism. Colonialism went much farther than trade. It meant a tendency towards direct appropriation by European of the social institution within Africa. Africans ceased to set indigenous cultural goals and standards, and lost full command of training young members of the society. Those were undoubtedly major steps backwards.

The Tunisian, Albert Memmi, puts forward the following proposition:

“The most serious blow suffered by the colonized is being removed from history and from the community. Colonialism usurps any free role in either ware or peace, every decision contributing to the destiny and that of the world, and all cultural and social responsibility.”

Sweeping as that statement may initially appear, it is entirely true. 55
The removal from history follows logically from loss of power which
colonialism represented. The power to act independently is the guarantee
to participate actively and consciously in history. To be colonized is to be
removed from history, except in the most passive sense. A striking
illustration of the fact that colonial Africa was a passive object is seen in its 60
attraction for white anthropologists, who came to study “primitive
society.” Colonialism determined that African were no more makers of
history than were beetles – objects to be looked under a microscope and
examined for unusual features.

The negative impact of colonialism in political terms was quite 65
dramatic. Overnight, Africa political states lost their power, independence
and meaning – irrespective of whether they were big empires or small
polities. Certain traditional rulers were kept in office, and the formal
structure of some kingdoms was partially retained, but the substance of
political life was quite different. Political power had been passed into the 70
hands of foreign overlords. Of course, numerous African states in previous
centuries had passed through the cycle of growth and decline. But colonial
rule was different. So long as it lasted, not a single African state could
flourish.

Questions

- (a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)
- (a) What, according to the colonialists, was the positive of colonialism on Africa?
- (b) According to the passage, summarize in not more than 100 words, the difference that existed between the development of Africa and other parts of the world.
- (c) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using your own words wherever possible
- (i) Cynical short-hand (line 4-5) (02 marks)
 - (ii) blunted (line 13) (02 marks)
 - (iii) compensatory value (line 14) (02 marks)
 - (iv) decisive changes (line 26) (02 marks)
 - (v) mark time (line 26) (02 marks)
 - (vi) maneuverability (line 34) (02 marks)
 - (vii) cultural entity (line 39) (02 marks)
 - (viii) relinquish (line 40) (02 marks)
 - (ix) direct appropriation (line 46) (02 marks)
 - (x) cycle of growth (line 72) (02 marks)
- (20 marks)

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

Suggests answers

- (a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)
Benefits of colonialism of Africa
Colonialism
- (d) What, according to the colonialists, was the positive of colonialism on Africa?
Colonialists claim to have developed Africa in the sense of bringing about social order, Nationalism and economic modernization
- (e) According to the passage, summarize in not more than 100 words, the difference that existed between the development of Africa and other parts of the world.
THE DIFFERENCE THAT EXISTED BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA AND OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD
Pre-colonialism of course, Africa was less developed compared to other parts of the world but was able to defend its political, economic and social interests. During colonialism, Africa was not only far less developed compared to capitalistic countries like those of Europe and socialist countries such China, Russia and North Korea but also lost the power to protect, preserve, control and/or promote it political, economic and social welfares.
- (f) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using you own words wherever possible
- (i) Cynical short-hand (line 4-5) (02 marks)
Skeptical/mockery/sarcastic
- (ii) blunted (line 13) (02 marks)
reduced
- (iii) compensatory value (line 14) (02 marks)
rewards/payments to offset losses
- (iv) decisive changes (line 26) (02 marks)
significant/fundamental occurrence
- (v) mark time (line 26) (02 marks)
pass time
- (vi) maneuverability (line 34) (02 marks)
command /tactical control
- (vii) cultural entity (line 39) (02 marks)
A group people or organization or community that shares common values, traditions, and practices

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| (viii) | relinquish (line 40)
give up/surrender | (02 marks) |
| (ix) | direct appropriation (line 46)
uninterrupted seizure
unstoppable capture
irresistible capture | (02 marks) |
| (x) | cycle of growth (line 72)
series of development/advance/progress | (02 marks) |
| | | (20 marks) |

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

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Thanks

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