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Comprehension story 7

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

We have more than once drawn attention to the baleful influence frequently wielded by the leader. This is due to the fact that the party in certain districts is organized like to gang, with the toughest person in it as its head. The ascendancy of such a leader and his power over others is often mentioned, and people have no hesitation in declaring in a tone of slightly admiring complicity that he strikes terror into his nearest collaborators. In order to avoid these many pitfalls an unceasing battle must be waged, a battle to prevent the party ever becoming a willing tool in the hands of a leader. 'Leader': the word comes from the English verb 'to lead'. But a frequent French translation is 'drive'. The driver, the shepherd of the people no longer exists today. The people are no longer a herd; they do not need to be driven. If the leader drives me on, I want him to realize that at the same time I show him the way; the nation ought not to be something bossed by a Grand Panjandrum. We may understand the panic caused in government circles each time one of these leaders fall ill; they are obsessed by the question of who is to succeed him. What will happen to the country if the leader disappears? The ruling classes who have abdicated in favour of the leader, irresponsible, oblivious of everything and essentially preoccupied with the pleasure of their everyday life, their cocktail parties, their journeys paid for by government money, the profit they can make out of various scheme – from time to time these people discover the spiritual wasteland at the heart of the nation.

A country that really wishes to answer the questions that history puts to it, that wants to develop not only its towns but also the brains of its inhabitants, such a country must possess a trustworthy political party. The party is not a

tool in the hands of the government. Quite on the contrary, the party is a tool 25
in the hands of the people; it is they who decide on the policy that the
government carries out. The party is not, and ought never to be, the only
political bureau, where all the members of the government and the chief
dignitaries of the regime may meet freely together. Only too frequent the 30
political bureau, unfortunately, consist of all party and its members who reside
permanently in the capital. In an under-developed country, the leading
members of the party ought to avoid the capital as if it had the plague. They
ought with some few exceptions, to live in the country districts. The
centralization of all activity in the city ought to be avoided. No excuse of 35
administrative discipline should be taken as legitimizing that excrescence of a
capital which is already overpopulated and over-developed with regard to
nine-tenth of the country. The party should be decentralized in the extreme. It
is the only way to bring life to regions which are dead, these regions which are
not yet awakened to life. 40

In practice, there will be at least one member of the political bureau in each
area and he will deliberately not be appointed as head of that area. He will
have no administrative powers. The regional member of the political bureau is
not expected to hold the highest rank in the regional administrative 45
organization. He ought to not automatically belong to the regional
administrative body. For the people, the party is not an authority, but an
organism through which they as the people exercise their authority and
express their will. The less there is of confusion and duality of powers, the
more the party will play its part of guide and the more surely it will constitute
for the people a decisive guarantee. If the party is mingled with government, 50
the fact of being a party militant means that you take the short cut to gain
private ends, to hold a post in the government, step up the ladder, get
promotion and make a career for yourself.

Questions

(a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)

The leader

(b) What does the author mean by the following expressions

- (i) "... from time to time these people discover the spiritual wasteland at the heart of the nation". (line 20 - 21) (03 marks)
- (ii) "... taken as legitimizing the excrescence of capital which is Already overpopulated and over-developed"? (line 35-36) (03marks)

(c) In not more than 100 words, summarize the qualities that a developed party should have. (12marks)

(d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using you own words wherever possible

- (i) baleful influence (line 01) (02 marks)
 - (ii) ascendancy (line 04) (02 marks)
 - (iii) admiring complicity (line 5-6) (02 marks)
 - (iv) pitfalls (line 7) (02 marks)
 - (v) abdicated (line 17) (02 marks)
 - (vi) oblivion of everything (line 18) (02 marks)
 - (vii) duality of power (line 47) (02 marks)
 - (viii) decisive guarantee (line 48 -49) (02 marks)
 - (ix) gain private ends (line 50) (02 marks)
 - (x) Make a career of yourself. (line 51-52) (02 marks)
- (20 marks)

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

Suggested answers

- (a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)
The leader
Party leadership
- (b) What does the author mean by the following expressions
- (i) "... from time to time these people discover the spiritual wasteland at the heart of the nation". (Lines 20 - 21) (03 marks)
always finding free benefits from the government
- (ii) "... taken as legitimizing the excrescence of capital which is Already overpopulated and over-developed ..."? (Lines 35-36) (03marks)
favor growth capital
- (c) In not more than 100 words, summarize the qualities that a developed party should have. (12marks)

QUALITIES OF A DEVELOPED PARTY

A developed party should have responsible leaders and trustworthy members; the leader of the party should be able to listen and take advice from the party members and general population; the party should be decentralized throughout the country in order to develop both the regions and their inhabitants. Lastly a developed party should have self-seekers, confusion or power struggle from within in order to provide an effective government leadership.

- (d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using you own words wherever possible
- (i) baleful influence (line 01) (02 marks)
powerful impact/threatening effect
- (ii) ascendancy (line 04) (02 marks)
dominance/control
- (iii) admiring complicity (line 5-6) (02 marks)
willing/approving support
- (iv) pitfalls (line 7) (02 marks)
dangers
- (v) abdicated (line 17) (02 marks)

- stepped down
- (vi) oblivion of everything (line 18) (02 marks)
unaware/ignorant of what is happening
- (vii) duality of power (line 47) (02 marks)
opposition/struggle/fight for control
- (viii) decisive guarantee (line 48 -49) (02 marks)
Absolute/overall/complete/effective control
- (ix) gain private ends (line 50) (02 marks)
person benefits
- (x) Make a career of yourself. (line 51-52) (02 marks)
Get yourself a good job out of it
- (20 marks)
(20 marks)

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

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Thanks

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