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**Section A: Question 1**

*“Colonialism was a never-ending succession of African peoples taking up arms and fighting against imperialists.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?*

The term colonialism carries significant weight, invoking feelings of hostility, anger, and pain in those who were oppressed by this brutal system. The Scramble for Africa showcased quite possibly the worst fatal flaws of colonialism, while highlighting just how much the colonized suffered under imposed control. A common misconception about this time period is that African peoples consistently took up arms against their colonizers- the imperialists. But this is wrong for two reasons: European technological advancement left African peoples at a massive disadvantage, and European powers introduced benefits to working for the system, which resulted in the adoption of imperialist ideals among African people themselves. These two things seem to both work toward dissuading armed conflict by indoctrinating African individuals by incentivizing them to become imperialists, and those who were not sympathetic to the system were killed with ease.

In the 1880’s, Africa suffered a whirlwind of European intervention in the form of colonialism, because European powers groveled over natural resources on the continent that they lacked in their own. Due to this, many African peoples were often displaced and used as laborers simply because they were in the way and/or a cheap labor resource. These factors contribute to extremely negative feelings felt by African peoples directed at colonizers, and certainly had the potential to invoke violence. However, Europe’s advancements in technology and weaponry left African peoples largely overpowered, leaving them little opportunity to consistently rebel against imperialists. Because, if they were to rebel, their advances were thwarted with ease due to European weaponry. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Europeans viewed themselves as having achieved the pinnacle of a civilized people, and part of this claim was constantly advancing society and industry. European society was constantly evolving to invite the first and second industrial revolutions, and part of this adaptation included introducing new military weaponry. For example, in the 1800’s, wooden ships were the most popular mode of transport overseas (Osborne, Lecture 21). These ships were susceptible to rotting and breakage, and what’s more is that they did not carry very many men. This led to the creation of iron ships in the 1850’s, which made transport very effective. Along with these advancements came the introduction of firearms like the maxim gun- introduced in 1884- that was able to fire off eleven bullets per second (Osborne, lecture 25). With these two examples of advancement in military technology, it is clear that Europeans had a big advantage over African peoples due to the sheer amount of men that were brought over to the continent with modern firearms. Even more of a kicker, Europeans did not trade weapons with African peoples, so Africans were left defenseless. This ultimately led to countless defeats of African peoples on the battlefield, because firepower and rawhide shields are not on a level playing field. For example, during the Battle of Omdurman in 1898, close to 11,000 Mahdi died, while only 40 British and Egyptian soldiers were lost (Ibid). The number of British and Egyptian lives lost pales in comparison to that of the Mahdi that were slaughtered. The same was true for many other battles during this time in Africa due to the disadvantage of traditional weapons to modern weapons. Of course, each battle is unique in terms of its purpose and location- but, generally when a massive amount of lives are lost, low morale is a result. This furthers an increased incentive to surrender to the imposer and even to assimilate to a dangerous system that one is powerless to fight against.

In opposition to the battlefield, the traditional elitist classroom taught imperialist ideals to black elites, who seemed to assimilate into the ideal “European man.” The combination of African men and western ideals shows that not every African person wanted to fight against imperialism, and in fact embraced it as their own due to the benefits that came with it. The Amakholwa are a prime example of this, as they were black Christian elites. In the 1880’s, among the Zulu people in what is now Southern Africa, the formation of the African National Congress was formed. The ANC was quintessentially what Europeans had hoped for in the region. This congress was erected because African men were aligning with British values and wanted to become political elites, in addition to being rewarded with a respectable income and education (Osborne, lecture 10). Many Amakholwa believed that traditional customs were backwards, which was exactly what colonialist ideologies taught. This entire scenario seemed to pit African peoples against African peoples. So, certainly African peoples who aligned with these beliefs did not want to take up arms with colonizers or the imperialist cause. Furthermore, in 1852 cape liberalism was becoming prominent and gave rights to educated and wealthy Africans. As a result, black elites were given political power to carry out British “merits of civilization” and were given more rights than poor Africans (Osborne, lecture 37). Because Africans who were submissive to the imperialist motive were rewarded, more young men were encouraged to become part of the system, creating a vicious cycle. The lives led by the majority of young African men varied drastically from the Amakholwa, as many were sent to do hard labor to satisfy European supply and demand. Usually, young men were working in mines or doing other laborious duties for colonial powers, and the thought of being successful instead of subject to the system were appealing. In this way, colonialism was able to exert its influence upon African people from within, creating rifts in society and dissuading large amounts of recurring violence.

Consequently, advancements in technology working in tandem with African elites becoming sympathetic to imperialism results in the conclusion that colonialism was not just a never-ending succession of African peoples taking up arms to fight against imperialists. In fact, there were African men that saw imperialism as a way to work their way up the economic ladder and find their place in the political system. These African elites made more money than they ever had and did not condone imperialism. Additionally, poor or middle-class African peoples were dissuaded from creating conflict on a recurring, large level due to the overpowered advances in technology that Europeans had over them. Because the colonial system allowed for unprecedented brutality against African peoples via weaponry and intellectual movements, African peoples seemed to be at the whim of imperialism because of their massive disadvantage. The period of colonialism in Africa cannot solely be classified as a time of constant conflict among African peoples and colonizers, because conflict was dissuaded by massive loss of life, and many black African elites benefited from the colonial system, showcasing that more than fighting went on amidst colonial society.

**Section B: Question 2**

*What have proved the most significant legacies of the colonial system in Africa? Why?*

African peoples endured the dark, ominous cloud of colonialism from the end of the 19th century up until the late 20th century. Surely, this is a very long time to be constantly yanked around between colonial powers and ever-changing economic and social systems. The strain that a constantly changing political landscape had on the African people was extreme, and the stench of colonialism was all to present in daily life. Due to this, there are many lasting effects that colonialism has left on the African continent, but the most significant legacies are how African societal and spiritual structures have been forever altered by colonial scientific racism and religious institutions.

During the early 19th century, pseudoscience was at the forefront of the European scientific movement. This pseudoscience began with Johann Blumenbach, who claimed that people should be separated based on race because he believed that certain races were more intelligent than others (Osborne, lecture 4). As a result, the general European populace inherited these ideals due to Blumenbach’s status as a craniometrist. Not only does this toxic narrative invite racism and hate still present today, but the way that the colonial system was laid out seemed to stem from this very mindset. Europeans viewed Africans as “backward” and “uncivilized” simply due to their race- before even setting foot on African land. Historians at the time even remarked that Africa had no history due to the intellect that African people apparently lacked (Ibid). With this framework, those who set the colonial system in motion paved the way for African people to be viewed as lesser than intruders on their own soil. So, when Europeans made their way to Africa, they began to try to restructure all of the traditional societal and spiritual systems put in place by African peoples because they were deemed not civilized enough to have their own proper systems.

The restructuring of African spiritual and societal structure was a direct result of missionaries and European governance exerting their influence by providing incentives and using force. Within small African communities, traditional spirituality, dances, meals, and practices were common. This was all uprooted when missionaries moved through preaching Catholicism, because some African people were forced to comply either by force or social incentives, such as education or respect by the colonizer. *The Poor Christ of Bomba* by Mongo Beti*,* highlights these points as the narrator recollects atrocities committed by governing officials and religious workers alike. In the novel, women are raped by church officials, and governing officials used African peoples for cheap labor and monetary gain. The way that missionaries and officials treated African peoples in this context was deplorable, but the sad truth is that many in the west still view Africa in this light. Big corporations often exploit poor Africans by using them as a labor force with little pay, and mission workers frequent the continent in hopes of making change.

In the 1800’s the fight for evangelization in Africa was a big one, especially amongst the Protestant and Catholic communities. In an excerpt from “Colonialism and Christianity in West Africa” by Felix Ekechi, he states that Catholics seemed to overpower Protestants in Nigeria by opening up mission schools at a very fast rate in order to spread their religion quickly (114). Mission schools were key in order to evangelize quickly and effectively, because education was provided and sought after. And, because there were no other options for education, sending children to the mission schools seemed to be the only education option. However, by sending children to these schools, they were indoctrinated to believe Christian values instead of their own traditional values- all while learning English. Due to this, more and more children were pushed from their traditional beliefs into a European, Christian and capitalist mindset. The erasure of the language and spirituality practiced in African regions by Christianity lent itself to a complete shift in African societal structure where Christian institutions were most common. And, because mission schools became such an important part of society due to the education provided, more and more children were less reliant on their own beliefs and more reliant on a foreign religion. Due to this introduction of westernized religion, it is clear why many traditional African practices were lost. What’s more is that Africa still is reliant on the west for many things, like education. As stated previously, many African peoples have been converted to Christianity in countless countries in Africa, which is why mission groups still travel over to Africa every year in order to “help them” by preaching, evangelizing, and building schools. These actions further the loss of culture by African peoples due to the imposition of a foreign religion. And, if schools and houses are constantly erected by religious groups, this keeps African peoples reliant on the west, which does not actually help their own communities.

In conclusion, scientific racism was the stem to which the uprooting of African society and spiritual beliefs is to blame. This scientific racism was put in motion by colonial systems, especially missionaries and governments that staunchly supported mission work in particular regions. Catholicism is a major religion in Africa today, which would not be the case were it not for the colonial system and evangelization. There are countless African traditions that have been lost amongst this transition because of the brutality that African people faced if they did not convert, and even the loss of opportunity they faced if they did not send their children to mission schools. Many missionaries went to Africa in hopes of civilizing the region in a humanitarian light. Because of this, during the 1880’s, the west thought of Africa as a poor, uncivilized continent that needed western intervention. Now, westerners view Africa as a poor, uncivilized continent that needs western aid and religious resources. The upheaval of traditional African practices is evident in predominantly Christian areas of places like Nigeria, because prior to missionaries coming to the region, Christianity was not commonplace. This is a sad fact, and unfortunately the loss of culture and tradition cannot be restored easily due to ongoing western religious work throughout the continent.

Works Cited

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