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Project D Questions

The Source of Truth

'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa' by Walter Rodney.

Using Chapter 2, 'How Africa was Developed before the coming of the Europeans – up to the fifteenth century'

Thesis

Slavery, colonialism, wars brought by the Western World to Africa did not bring any good to Africa's agricultural production and other sectors. Many European and (American) scholars tweak slavery, colonialism and wars narrative by admitting that these are morally evil acts, but argue that it developed Africa in some ways such as the introduction of new crops.

Questions

1. According to Rodney, How was Africa before the coming of Europeans?
Before the onset of transatlantic slavetrade in the 15th century, Africa was a continent that was undergoing consistent civilizations and cultural advancements. It was evident in Africa's rich heritage embedded in their culture, manufacturing, and the societal frameworks in which the African Empires operated. Africa was a cradle of civilization, with great achievements in various areas such as art, mathematics, engineering, medicine, architecture, etc. Notable civilization artistry and products that are still incomparable are the Bronze art in Benin, arts in Ethiopia and Sudan, red leather or 'Moroccan leather' from North Africa, Egyptian pyramids, the Egyptian discovery of languages, etc(Rodney, 62)
2. Socially, What changed as Europeans came into Africa?
When Europeans came into Africa, it disbanded its pre established culture that was deeply oriented in a cooperative setting where every Africa was a neighbor to another Africa. But due to slavery, Europeans introduced divisionism and distrust between Africans. Vivid examples of this are constant wars in Africa, Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda that was caused by Germans and Belgians.
3. How did the coming of Europeans affect Africa's development economically?
First and foremost, Europeans captured Africans to their continent as slaves robbed Africa of 20 million people who were in their productive age. If these slaves did what enormous work they did in the US, imagine how Africa would look like, if these people are still there? Europeans also disintegrated the work principles of Africans by introducing division and trust.

4. Is it true that even though slavery is immoral, it brought positive outcomes to Africa?
Absolutely NOT! The agricultural crops that Europeans brought in Africa didn't carry anything special. In Rodney's words, he said, "In neither case were Europeans enslaved before they could receive a benefit that was the logical heritage of all mankind, but Africans are to be told that the European slave trade developed us by bringing us maize and cassava." (Walter, 129)
5. Why do **some** American and European scholars think that slavery, wars, and colonialism bring positive outcomes to Africa?
Some of the crops that Europeans brought in Africa like maize and cassava became the staples of the agricultural industry in Africa. That's why they think that it has some significance.
6. What crops do Europeans claim to have brought in Africa?
Maize and cassava
7. According to Rodney, what's the reality of this narrative?
The reality is that even though the agricultural crops were shipped, there is nothing special about it. And even if this narrative would be true, its negative consequences of war outbreak came with more negative values that would outweigh the positive values.