GRADE 10 - HISTORY P1&P2 NOVEMBER ESSAY 2025

P2 – THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR AND UNION - THE NATIVES LAND ACT OF 1913

The statement is true that……..because……..This essay will critically discuss the background of the Act, its impact on African land ownership, and the role of SANNC in resisting the Act.

Undoubtedly, the Natives Land Act of 1913 was a pivotal moment in South African history that sparked widespread suffering and resistance. Before the Act, Africans lived and worked on reserves or white-owned land as wage labourers or tenants, but the Act drastically changed this dynamic.

It is clear that the Act was a deliberate attempt to restrict African land ownership and create a system of segregation. The government, under pressure from powerful white farmers, set aside less than 7.5% of South Africa's land as reserves for Africans. This move was nothing short of a land grab, forcing Africans off their ancestral lands and into poverty.

The economic and social impact of the Act was catastrophic. Thousands of African sharecroppers and cash tenants were evicted from their land and forced to become low-paid farm labourers. The reserves were overcrowded, and the land was poor, making it impossible for Africans to survive on subsistence farming. This led to a cheap labour market, where Africans were exploited and marginalised.

Moreover, the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was right to oppose the Act, and their efforts were instrumental in highlighting the injustices of the legislation. Sol Plaatje, together with other SANNC members, travelled to rural areas to investigate the hardships created by the Act and witnessed first-hand the suffering of Africans. They called repeatedly for the repeal of the Act, but their voices were ignored.

Furthermore, Sol Plaatje's book, "Native Life in South Africa," was a powerful indictment of the Act and its impact on African communities. Plaatje's advocacy work in Britain, America, and Canada helped to raise awareness about the injustices of the Act and mobilize international support for the African cause. His efforts were a testament to the power of resistance and activism.

In addition, the Natives Land Act of 1913 laid the foundations for the apartheid policies of the 1950s, including the Bantustans policy. The Act created a system of segregation that would be further entrenched by subsequent apartheid laws, leading to decades of oppression and violence. The legacy of the Act can still be seen today, with many Africans continuing to suffer from land dispossession and poverty.

In conclusion, this essay has presented overwhelming evidence that proved that …

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