

xhosa cattle killing movement definition ap world history

xhosa cattle killing movement definition ap world history is a significant topic within the study of African history and colonial interactions in the 19th century. This movement represents a unique socio-political and religious phenomenon that had profound effects on the Xhosa people of South Africa and is frequently examined in AP World History courses. Understanding the xhosa cattle killing movement definition ap world history involves exploring its origins, motivations, cultural and political contexts, and its long-lasting consequences. The movement was triggered by prophetic visions that led to a mass slaughter of cattle and destruction of crops, intended to bring about the resurrection of ancestors and the expulsion of colonial settlers. This article delves into the historical background, key figures, events, and the impact of the movement, providing a comprehensive overview for students and enthusiasts of world history. The discussion will cover the causes, the progression of the movement, its aftermath, and its significance within the broader narrative of colonial resistance in Africa.

- Historical Background of the Xhosa People
- Origins and Causes of the Cattle Killing Movement
- Prophecy and Religious Dimensions
- Events and Actions Taken During the Movement
- Consequences and Impact on the Xhosa Society
- Significance in AP World History and Global Context

Historical Background of the Xhosa People

The Xhosa are a Bantu-speaking ethnic group primarily located in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa. Their society was traditionally organized around cattle herding, agriculture, and a complex system of chieftaincy. The Xhosa people had a rich cultural heritage, with strong spiritual beliefs tied to ancestors and natural elements. By the early 19th century, the Xhosa were experiencing increasing pressure from European colonial expansion, particularly from British settlers and the Cape Colony government. This period was marked by intermittent conflicts known as the Cape Frontier Wars, which strained the economic and social stability of the Xhosa communities. The loss of land, disruption of traditional livelihoods, and introduction of new political structures created an atmosphere of uncertainty and hardship

that set the stage for the cattle killing movement.

Origins and Causes of the Cattle Killing Movement

The Xhosa cattle killing movement definition in world history is deeply rooted in the socio-political crises facing the Xhosa people in the mid-19th century. Several factors contributed to the emergence of this movement:

- **Colonial Encroachment:** Continuous land seizures and military conflicts with British colonists undermined Xhosa autonomy and disrupted their economic base.
- **Economic Hardship:** The destruction wrought by war, drought, and disease led to widespread famine and loss of livestock, weakening the Xhosa society.
- **Spiritual Crisis:** The traditional belief system was challenged by the rapid changes and suffering, leading to a search for new religious explanations and solutions.
- **Prophetic Leadership:** The rise of prophecies promising renewal and restoration through specific rituals became a catalyst for collective action.

These causes combined to create a desperate situation in which the Xhosa turned to a radical religious movement as a means of resistance and hope.

Prophecy and Religious Dimensions

The cattle killing movement was largely inspired by the prophetic visions of a young girl named Nongqawuse in 1856. She claimed to have received messages from the ancestors instructing the Xhosa people to kill their cattle and destroy their crops. According to the prophecy, if the Xhosa complied, their ancestors would rise, the colonial settlers would be driven away, and a new era of prosperity would begin. This prophecy gained widespread acceptance among the Xhosa, fueled by the prevailing conditions of despair and the deep-rooted belief in ancestral intervention. The religious aspect of the movement reflects a millenarian belief system, where a dramatic transformation of society is expected through supernatural means.

Events and Actions Taken During the Movement

Following Nongqawuse's prophecy, the Xhosa began to carry out the prescribed

actions with remarkable unity:

1. **Mass slaughter of cattle:** Tens of thousands of cattle were killed, despite their importance to the community's wealth and survival.
2. **Destruction of crops:** Fields were left unplanted or deliberately destroyed to fulfill the prophecy's conditions.
3. **Rejection of colonial goods and customs:** The movement fostered a rejection of European influence and a return to traditional ways.
4. **Social upheaval:** The movement caused divisions within Xhosa society, with some leaders and individuals opposing the prophecy.

This radical course of action was unprecedented and demonstrated the powerful influence of spiritual beliefs in the face of colonial oppression.

Consequences and Impact on the Xhosa Society

The aftermath of the cattle killing movement was devastating for the Xhosa people. When the prophesied resurrection and liberation did not occur, the community faced severe famine and social disintegration:

- **Mass starvation:** The destruction of food sources led to widespread hunger and death, with estimates of tens of thousands perishing.
- **Economic collapse:** The loss of cattle, which were central to wealth and status, resulted in long-term economic hardship.
- **Political destabilization:** The movement weakened traditional leadership structures and made the Xhosa more vulnerable to colonial domination.
- **Colonial consolidation:** British authorities exploited the crisis to tighten control over the Xhosa territories.

The cattle killing movement thus had irreversible effects on the social fabric and autonomy of the Xhosa people.

Significance in AP World History and Global Context

In the context of AP World History, the Xhosa cattle killing movement serves as a case study in indigenous resistance, millenarian movements, and the impacts of colonialism. It illustrates how traditional societies responded to external pressures through spiritual and

cultural means, and how these responses could lead to both tragic consequences and shifts in power dynamics. The movement also highlights themes of colonialism, cultural conflict, and the interaction between religion and politics. Globally, it parallels other millenarian and prophetic movements among colonized peoples who sought to reclaim autonomy and identity in the face of imperial expansion. Understanding this event enriches the broader narrative of 19th-century global history, emphasizing the complexity of colonial encounters and indigenous agency.

Frequently Asked Questions

What was the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement in AP World History?

The Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement was a millenarian movement in 1856-1857 among the Xhosa people of South Africa, where they believed that killing their cattle and destroying crops would bring about the resurrection of ancestors and the expulsion of British colonizers.

Why did the Xhosa people start the Cattle Killing Movement?

The Xhosa people began the Cattle Killing Movement due to social, economic, and spiritual distress caused by British colonial expansion, cattle diseases, and famine, leading them to believe that a prophetic ritual would restore their land and prosperity.

What role did the prophetess Nongqawuse play in the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement?

Nongqawuse was a young Xhosa prophetess who claimed that ancestors instructed her that killing cattle and crops would lead to a spiritual renewal, resurrection of the dead, and the removal of British settlers, inspiring the mass participation in the movement.

How did the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement impact the Xhosa society?

The movement led to the widespread slaughter of cattle and destruction of crops, resulting in a devastating famine that caused the death of tens of thousands of Xhosa people and severely weakened their society.

What was the British colonial response to the Xhosa

Cattle Killing Movement?

The British colonial authorities took advantage of the weakened state of the Xhosa after the famine, further consolidating control over their territory and diminishing Xhosa resistance in the region.

How is the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement significant in AP World History?

The movement is significant as an example of indigenous resistance and millenarian movements in response to colonial oppression, illustrating the cultural and social impacts of European imperialism in Africa during the 19th century.

What lessons does the Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement teach about colonial encounters?

The movement highlights the complex interactions between indigenous beliefs and colonial pressures, showing how desperation and cultural responses to oppression can lead to tragic outcomes, and emphasizing the human cost of colonial expansion.

Additional Resources

1. *The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement: Prophecy, Politics, and Social Change*
This book explores the origins and consequences of the Xhosa cattle-killing movement of 1856-1857. It analyzes the role of prophetic visions in mobilizing the Xhosa people and the devastating social and economic impacts that followed. The author places the event within the broader context of colonial South Africa and indigenous resistance.

2. *Colonial Encounters and Indigenous Resistance: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856–1857*

Focusing on the interplay between colonial pressures and indigenous responses, this work examines how the cattle-killing movement served as both a spiritual and political act of defiance. It discusses the devastating famine and societal upheaval that resulted and situates the movement within global patterns of resistance in the 19th century.

3. *Prophecy and Power: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement in Historical Perspective*

This book delves into the prophetic leadership behind the cattle-killing movement and how religious belief merged with political crisis. It offers a detailed account of the cultural and historical factors that influenced the Xhosa community and shaped their decision to engage in the mass killing of cattle as a means of purification and renewal.

4. *Famine and Faith: The Impact of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement on South*

African Society

Examining the aftermath of the cattle-killing movement, this text highlights the famine and demographic collapse that followed. It also considers the movement's long-term effects on Xhosa society, colonial policy, and the broader history of South Africa in the context of 19th-century world history.

5. Resistance and Ritual: Understanding the Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement

This book provides an anthropological and historical analysis of the cattle-killing movement, emphasizing its ritualistic elements and social significance. It frames the event as a form of indigenous resistance to colonial encroachment and explores how prophecy and communal action intertwined to shape the movement.

6. The Cattle-Killing Movement and Its Place in Global Indigenous Resistance

Positioning the Xhosa cattle-killing movement within a global framework, this work compares it to other indigenous uprisings and millenarian movements worldwide. It sheds light on common themes such as prophecy, economic hardship, and colonial oppression that fueled similar movements across different cultures.

7. Voices of the Xhosa: Oral Histories and the Cattle-Killing Movement

This collection focuses on oral testimonies and traditional narratives that preserve the memory of the cattle-killing movement among the Xhosa people. It provides valuable insight into indigenous perspectives often overlooked in colonial records, enriching the understanding of the event's cultural and historical significance.

8. AP World History and the Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement: A Teaching Resource

Designed specifically for educators, this book offers a comprehensive overview of the cattle-killing movement tailored for AP World History curricula. It includes primary sources, discussion questions, and contextual analysis to help students grasp the movement's importance within themes of colonialism, resistance, and cultural transformation.

9. The Collapse of a Nation: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement and Its Aftermath

This work traces the sociopolitical collapse precipitated by the cattle-killing movement, detailing how the mass deaths and famine weakened Xhosa society. It also examines the colonial exploitation that followed and reflects on the movement's legacy in shaping South African history and identity.

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