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Social Science : History

Grade 8

NOTES

Focus of Grade 8- Term 2: The Mineral Revolution in South Africa (History Online)

- The Mineral Revolution in South Africa started with the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1867, and intensified with the discovery of deep-level gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886
- By the time that gold was discovered, African kingdoms had lost their independence
- During the gold-mining revolution, patterns of land and labour were established and continued into the 20th century:
 - the changing balance of power in South Africa brought about by gold mining, and the foundations of racial segregation
 - labour control and land

BRITAIN, DIAMOND MINING AND INCREASING LABOUR CONTROL AND LAND EXPANSION

INTRODUCTION:

- The discovery of diamonds in 1869 and of gold in 1886 changed the South African economy
- Up to this point, farming has been the most important way of making money
- International banks and private lenders increased cash and credit available to local farmers, miners, and prospectors, and they, in turn, placed growing demands for land and labour on the local African populations
- The British Empire wanted to have control of the mines
- The whites resorted to violence to defend their economic interests, sometimes clashing with those who refused to surrender their freedom or their land

Rival Dutch and British populations fought for control over the land. South Africa was drawn into the international economy through its

- exports, primarily diamonds and gold, and through its own increasing demand for a variety of agricultural imports
- The cycle of economic growth was stimulated by the continual expansion of the mining industry, and with newfound wealth, consumer demand fueled higher levels of trade
- Government also saw its role as helping to defend white farmers and businessmen from African competition. In 1913 the Natives Land Act reserved most of the land for white ownership, forcing many black farmers to work as wage labourers on land they had previously owned.

CONTROL OVER BLACK WORKERS, CLOSED COMPOUNDS AND MIGRANT LABOUR

- With the discovery of diamonds in South Africa, established forms of labour control such as the compound/ hostel system now emerged
- Exploitative relations now assumed the same racial form as that which already existed in the rural areas

- Migrant labour ensured a supply of cheap wage labour to the mining sector and secondary industry.
- Some Chiefs and heads governed access to land, controlled the allocation of labour and ensured the payment of various forms of tribute.



De Beers Diamond Company & Black Labour (3min10)

- Different ethnic groups were deliberately kept apart from each other to make it difficult for 'natives' to form groups with others to riot against their living conditions
- Black workers deemed 'troublesome or turbulent' were expelled
- When these measures fell short, the compound managers could always call on government, as they did at Wesselton mine in March 1894 when three miners were shot dead by the Kimberley Mounted Police and compound guards
- Migrant Workers and Mining
 - "Migrant labour" in South Africa referred not only to workers coming into South Africa from neighbouring countries, but also to a system of controlling African workers within South Africa
 - Migrant labour provided abundant cheap African labour for white-owned mines and farms (and later factories) and, at the same time, enforced racial segregation of land
 - The mine – owners needed a large, regular and easily controlled flow of mineworkers into and out of the mines, working in shifts
 - Black workers could be dismissed and easily replaced by others from the poor rural communities
 - Male migrants employed by white-owned businesses were forbidden from living permanently in cities and towns designated for whites only.
 - The mining industry was locked into the migrant labour system which gave it a control over the labour force so that there was no question of strikes, which were illegal, and there was dominance of management over labour
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- Compound system
 - They were instructed to live in compounds, which in effect became the compound/ hostel system
 - Workers shopped at the company store and were treated at the company clinic. Escorted by guards armed with clubs, the workers marched from the compound straight to work along walkways covered to prevent any communication with outsiders.
 - This compound/ hostel system, however, had adverse effect on the health and well-being of its occupants
 - Too many people living together in a small space with inadequate ventilation must inevitably increase the spread of disease

LAND DISPOSSESSION AND DEFEAT OF AFRICAN KINGDOMS

- The British fought both the Boer Republics and the various African groups in the battles over land and political control
- Initially, the aim of British policy was to maintain a strict policy of segregation with the Xhosas excluded from the territory of the Colony
- In 1811-1812 Governor Cradock was successful in savagely ejecting the Ndlambe and other Xhosa beyond the Fish River
- In 1819 Somerset annexed the area between the Fish and Keiskamma
- The Zulu were able to consolidate themselves into a powerful highly centralized kingdom between 1816 and 1824
- The British provoked a war with the Zulu Kingdom in 1879, defeated them, and annexed Zululand to the Natal Colony.

ESSAY

RANLORDS AND THE FORMATION OF THE CHAMBER OF MINES

- Within a few years of the discovery of gold in 1886 the gold mines of the Witwatersrand brought riches undreamed of to the government and to the Randlords, a relatively small group of financiers and magnates at the top of the mining industry
- They exercised control of several mining companies by way of the shares they held
- They formed the Chamber of Mines in 1887 to eliminate competition among them for labour
- They also shared technological advances that brought down labour costs
- The Chamber of Mines became a powerful organisation serving the mining companies and getting them to agree to common policies on wages, finding workers and how to deal with the government
- Then the poor working conditions of many Black South Africans
- Another problem with mining in the country is the silica dust which can cause silicosis, a lethal lung disease
- Machines cannot be used in the depths of the mining caves which mean human labour was the only option



Mining Centre Johannesburg (1948) (16min)

IMPACT OF MINING ON WOMEN AND FAMILIES

- The Native Land Act – 1913 and the Glen Grey Act – 1894 pushed black people off their traditional land and forced them into 'reserves'
- Since there was little chance to make a living on the reserves, men were forced to find work, especially on the mines
- They would spend months on the mines and then visit their family in the reserves
- Family life suffered; husbands and their families were separated
- Hundreds of thousands of African men lived in crowded compounds near their jobs and were not allowed to bring their wives and children
- Women were left behind to care for children and perform domestic labour
- Women had to take on a large share of the work at home – farming on the small plots and looking after the children and elderly



Women's right undermined in South Africa (4min59)

FORMS OF LABOUR RESISTANCE

- A form of resistance included to look for better jobs
- After the South African War (1899-1902), thousands of African workers boycotted the gold mines because wages had dropped
- They tried to find jobs on the railways and in the towns instead
- As with indentured labourers, workers on the gold mines also deserted when they were unable to do anything else to improve their jobs
- Where conditions in compounds were the worst, desertion was higher
- Many workers also tried to limit their work by deliberately working badly, breaking their tools and not doing any more work than they had to
- There were very little employers could do to put a stop to many of these 'everyday' forms of resistance
- In 1913, African miners went on strike over wages and conditions in the compounds

- White miners also went on strike over the number of hours they were expected to work on a Saturday
- During 1920, Almost 70 000 African miners went on strike to demand a wage increase. Of the 35 mines, 21 were brought to a standstill during the strike
- After the protest by white miners in 1913, the Chamber of Mines recognised white trade unions in 1914. Production increased between 1911 and 1920
- This was a period of stability and profit for the mine owners. But by 1920 the price of gold was dropping and the mine owners were facing greater resistance from African workers.

QUESTION 1: THE MINERAL REVOLUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

HOW DID THE MINERAL REVOLUTION AFFECT THE LIVES OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN S.A?

Study Sources 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D and answer the questions:

1.1 Study Source 1A

- 1.1.1 Give two reasons why, according to the source, 'migrant labor' is regarded as important for the 'white – owned mines and farms'. (2 x 1) (2)
- 1.1.2 Explain how the migrant labour system broke down black family life? (2 x 2) (4)
- 1.1.3 How, according to the source, did black women become migrant workers?(1 x 1) (1)

1.2 Refer to Source 1B

- 1.2.1 Which type of mines attracted the 'mixture of tribes'? (1 x1) (1)
- 1.2.2 Why, according to the source, did 'a mixture of tribes' go to work on the mines? (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.2.3 Why did they talk with each other in Dutch, Sisulu or Xhosa? (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.2.4 Explain why it was difficult for Reverend Tyamzashe to start his congregation. (2 x 2) (4)

1.3 Study Source 1C

- 1.3.1 How would you describe a 'closed compound'? (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.3.2 When, according to the source, could migrant workers leave the compounds? (2 x 1) (2)
- 1.3.3 Explain how the 'two main reasons' for the building of compounds discriminated against the migrant workers. (2 x 2) (4)

1.4 Paragraph (60 words)

Use your own knowledge and the visual sources in Source 1D and write a paragraph of 60 words in which you explain how the Mineral Revolution affected the lives of migrant workers in S.A. (6)

[30]

1.5 Essay

ADDENDUM

HOW DID THE MINERAL REVOLUTION AFFECT THE LIVES OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN S.A?

Study Sources 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D and answer the questions:

SOURCE 1A

MIGRANT LABOR IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since the mineral revolution of the late 19th century, "migrant labor" in South Africa referred not only to workers coming into South Africa from neighboring countries, but also to a system of controlling African workers within South Africa. Migrant labor provided abundant cheap African labor for white-owned mines and farms (and later factories) and, at the same time, enforced racial segregation of land. Male migrants employed by white-owned businesses were prohibited from living permanently in cities and towns designated for whites only. Hundreds of thousands of African men lived in crowded single-sex hostels near their jobs and were not allowed to bring their wives and children ...

Migrant workers were initially almost all men, who needed to earn a wage to pay hut taxes. Later, women, too, became migrant workers, chiefly doing domestic work for white families.

Describe how the Chamber of Mines had a direct effect on the women in the reserves, erosion of family life and labour resistance. [20]

<http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/multimedia>

SOURCE 1B

THE REVEREND TYAMZASHE, A CLERGYMAN WHO WAS SENT TO KIMBERLEY IN 1872 TO BE THE LEADER OF A CONGREGATION, WROTE THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT.

From the missionary point of view, it is not easy to deal with such a mixture of tribes as we have at the Diamond fields. There are san, Khoikhoi, Griquas, Batlhaping, Damaras, Barolong, Barutse";Bapedi, Baganana, Basutu, Maswazi, Matonga, Matabele, Mabaca, Mampondo, Mamfengu, Batembu, Maxosa etc. many of these (people) can hardly understand each other, and in many cases they have to converse through the medium of either Dutch, Sisutu, or Xhosa. Those coming from far up in the interior such as the Bapedi come with the sole purpose of securing guns. Some of them therefore resolve to stay no longer here than is necessary to get some six or seven pounds for the gun. Hence you will see hundreds of them leaving the fields, and as many arriving from the North almost every day";

From a newspaper article published in the Christian Express in Alice in 1874.

SOURCE 1C

LIVING CONDITIONS AT KIMBERLEY - CLOSED COMPOUNDS

In 1885 mine owners decided to house Africans in barracks or closed compounds. A closed compound was exactly what the name suggests: a number of buildings or living quarters enclosed by high walls, usually of corrugated iron, that shut out the outside world.

African workers passed through a guarded gate, along a fenced walkway to the mine they worked at, and returned the same way. The only difference was that they were searched for diamonds on their return. They could only leave these compounds to go down the mine or to return home at the end of their contracts.

There were two main reasons for the introduction of closed compounds:

From the outset, whites in Kimberley feared that they would be swamped by African workers. They demanded that Africans be 'localised' in their own area of the diggings.

Since diamonds were so easy to steal, mine owners were constantly trying to find ways of preventing theft. They used different methods of searching workers and tried to introduce tighter controls over workers' movements. Closed compounds were designed to control theft.

<http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/all-glitters-rock-which-future-will-be-built-emilia-potenza>

