SOCIAL SCIENCES  GRADE 8

THE MINERAL REVOLUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Britain, Diamond mining and increasing labour control and land expansionism

- The discovery of diamond in 1967 and gold in 1886 changed South Africa from an agricultural country and the rural economy to a modern industrial economy.
- It created wealthy and immigration and intensified the oppression of African people.
- It caused conflicts between the Dutch and the British.
- The mineral revolution led to the spread of British colonialism into the interior of South Africa.
- People in South Africa went to Kimberly and Johannesburg to try and make their fortune (looking for jobs)
- Britain governed two colonies of Natal and The Cape and main interest was to the control of labour in these two colonies.
- The discovery of diamonds in Kimberly made Britain realize that they could control considerable wealth.
- Between 1870 and 1902, Britain completed the conquest of the rest of South Africa.

Increased control over black workers (migrant labour)

- Before the discovery of diamonds, migrant labour was very important in the cape colony.
- When diamond mining started in Kimberly, a number of black African men went to work in the mines to earn money to buy cattle to pay lobola for their brides.
- In order to control supply in the Cape colony, the government placed restrictions on the movement of black Africans into cities.
- The introduced the pass system, so without a pass, black Africans would be arrested and imprisoned for up to three months.

Closed compounds

- Mine owners in Kimberly introduced closed compounds or barracks in order to have complete control over workers.
- Mine owners used compounds to control diamond theft.
- The easiest way to take diamonds was to swallow it but mine owners would give an extra week after contract time ended in order to excrete all that they had swallowed.

Land dispossession and defeat of African kingdoms

- Land dispossession refers to depriving people of land without their agreement and without giving them a choice.
Land dispossession meant that men could not rely living on the produce of their land but had no choice but to work on mines for money.

This was the start of complete conquest of black African chiefdoms in Southern Africa, which pushed a number of black Africans off their land and into the colonial economy.

Mine owners had political power and laws were introduced by both the Boer and the colonial government

The Xhosa

The Xhosa were involved in a series of wars on the Cape’s Eastern frontier and this war destroyed their independence in 1875.

Many Xhosa after the defeat were forced to seek employment to pay the taxes that were imposed on them and sold their land to white farmers.

The Zulu

The Zulu possessed the strongest African military force in Southern Africa.

The British high commissioner believed that the Zulu stood in the way of peace and stability in Southern Africa and believed the defeat of the Zulu will force them to enter into the labour market.

The Zulu delivered a huge blow to the British by wiping a number of troops at the battle of Isandlwana.

The British burnt the royal homestead at Ulundi and took the Zulu king Cetshwayo captive.

After the defeat of the Zulu kingdom they immediately imposed taxes on the defeated Zulu kingdom.

Activity 1

1.1 Source 1A

Land Act of 1913

The Natives Land Act was passed in 1913. This resulted in over 80% of the land being owned by White people, who made up less than 20% of the population. The Act created ‘reserves’ which were rural areas set aside for black people. The Act said that black African people could live outside the reserves only if they could prove that White people employed them.

Source: Adapted from Viva Social Sciences Learners’ Book, Grade 8

Read Source 1A

1.1.1 Explain the term reserves. (1X2) (2)

1.1.2 Say whether the following statement is true or false.
The Natives Land Act gave most of South Africa’s land for black ownership. (1X1) (1)

1.1.3 What condition was given by the Act for blacks to live outside the reserves (1X2) (2)

1.1.4 In a paragraph of 15 lines, explain the impact (effect) that the 1913 Land Act had on black South Africans. Use the Source and your own knowledge. (10)

Total (15)