

## **The Mineral Revolution (South Africa, late 1800s)**

The Mineral Revolution refers to the major changes in South Africa's economy, society, and politics that began in the 1860s and 1870s with the discovery of diamonds and later gold. It transformed the country from a mostly farming society to a modern, industrialised one.

### **What Started the Mineral Revolution?**

#### **Discovery of Diamonds (1867–1869)**



*The 10.73ct Eureka diamond, South Africa's first diamond. Source: De Beers Group.*

Diamonds were discovered near Kimberley in 1867. Thousands of people rushed to the diamond fields to look for riches. Small diggers were replaced by big mining companies like De Beers. Africans and whites worked together, but conditions were very hard

#### **Discovery of Gold (1886)**



Gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg area). This became one of the richest gold fields in the world. Mining required deep-level mining, which meant: Expensive machinery Skilled workers (Europeans) Lots of cheap labour (mainly African workers)

## Increasing Labour Control Over Black Workers

As diamond and gold mining expanded rapidly in South Africa, mine owners needed a large, cheap, and controlled labour force.

To achieve this, they introduced laws and systems that restricted the movement, freedom, and wages of Black workers. This shaped South Africa's racial and economic structure for decades.

### Why Did Mine Owners Want More Control?

Mine owners wanted to:

- Reduce the cost of labour
- Prevent workers from returning home too early
- Stop diamond and gold theft
- Maintain a constant supply of labour
- Increase profits

Because Black workers were not always willing to work long-term for low wages, employers and the government introduced harsh controls.

### Systems Used to Control Black Labour

#### A. The Migrant Labour System



[www.labour.gov.za](http://www.labour.gov.za)

- African men had to travel far from their homes to work in the mines.
- They were separated from their families and stayed in the cities only to work.
- Women and children remained in rural areas.
- Men signed contracts to work for months or years.

- They travelled from places like the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Lesotho, and Mozambique.
- They could not bring their families with them.
- They were paid very low wages but needed the money for food, tax, and clothing.

### **Why this controlled workers:**

Men became dependent on mining wages, and their families could not easily move to town.

### **The Compound System (Closed Compounds)**



What were closed compounds?

**Closed compounds were secured living areas where African mineworkers had to stay while working on diamond mines.**

**They were surrounded by high fences and tightly controlled.**

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.

Workers lived in fenced, locked compounds at the mines.

- No free movement in or out without permission.
- Daily searches were performed to prevent diamond theft.
- Strict rules-controlled workers' behaviour.

## Why were closed compounds created?



showmesa.co.za

Mine owners wanted to:

- Prevent workers from stealing diamonds
- Control and discipline workers
- Ensure workers completed their contracts
- Stop workers from moving to better-paying jobs

The closed compounds pioneered on the diamond fields, as a means of migrant labour control, were replicated at the gold mines.

### **Impact:**

Workers lost personal freedom and were treated like prisoners.

The preservation of communal areas from which migrants could be drawn had the effect of lowering wages, by denying Africans rights within the urban areas and keeping their families and dependants on subsistence plots in the reserves

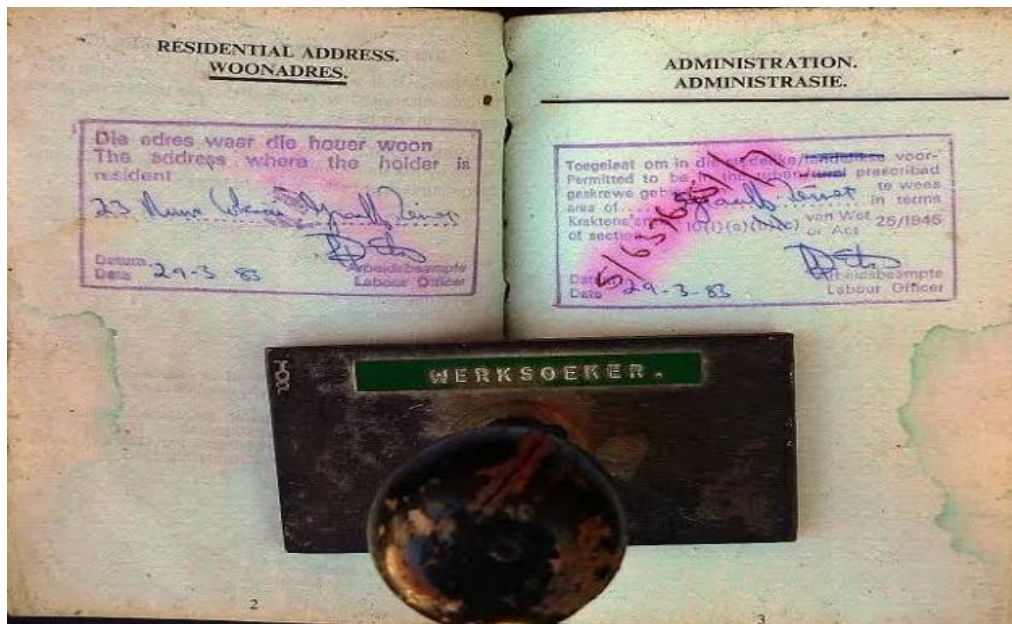
Black workers deemed 'troublesome or turbulent' were expelled, but only after first taking photographs which were pasted into a blacklist kept at the compound entrance.

### **Conditions in the compounds**

- Workers lived in crowded rooms with poor ventilation.
- They ate cheap, basic food.
- They were watched constantly by guards.
- Workers were locked in at night and could not leave freely.
- Disease spread easily due to overcrowding.

- At the end of a contract, workers were kept in detention rooms.
- They were searched thoroughly before being allowed to go home

## Pass Laws



Black workers had to carry passes showing they were employed.

Without a pass, a person could be arrested or fined.

Passes restricted travel and movement.

Purpose:

To force African men into working for wages and stop them from freely moving around the country.

## Taxation (Hut Tax, Poll Tax)

Families had to pay money to the government for every hut or adult male.

The only way to get cash was to work for wages in the mines.

**Result:**

Taxes pushed African men into the migrant labour system, even if they preferred farming.

## How These Systems Increased Labour Control

Both migrant labour and closed compounds helped mine owners control African workers more tightly.

They ensured:

- A steady supply of cheap labour
- Workers could not escape easily
- Workers could be replaced quickly
- Families remained dependent on mine wages
- Africans had fewer economic choices

## Worksheet

### Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Why did mine owners want stronger control over Black workers?
  - A. To improve education
  - B. To increase profits and secure cheap labour
  - C. To reduce migrant labour
  - D. To build more farms
2. What was the purpose of the compound system?
  - A. To give workers freedom of movement
  - B. To teach workers new skills
  - C. To prevent diamond theft and control labour
  - D. To allow workers to bring families
3. Which law forced African families to pay money to the government?
  - A. Land Act
  - B. Hut Tax / Poll Tax
  - C. Pass Laws
  - D. Compound System

4. What restricted Black workers from moving around freely?
- A. Bank loans
  - B. Labour unions
  - C. Pass laws
  - D. Railways

### Short-Answer Questions

- 1.1 Define **migrant labour** in your own words.
- 1.2 Name two reasons why mine owners wanted cheap Black labour.
- 1.3 Give two features of the closed compound system.
- 1.4 Explain how the tax system forced African men into wage labour.
- 1.5 State two dangers Black workers faced in mine

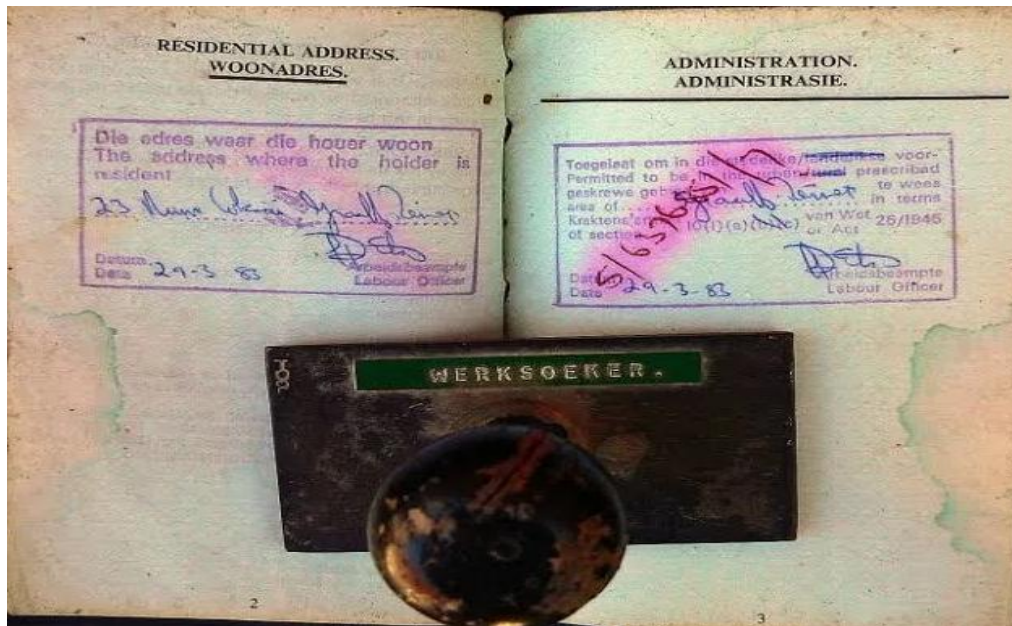
SOURCE A:

Compound System (Extract)

*“African mineworkers were kept in enclosed compounds while employed at the diamond mines. They were searched daily and not allowed to leave until their contracts ended. This system was introduced to prevent theft and maintain strict labour control.”*

- 1.6.1 According to the source, why were workers searched daily?
- 1.6.2 How did the compound system limit workers' freedom?
- 1.6.3 Give one reason mine owners preferred this system.

## SOURCE B: Pass Laws



**The pass laws required all African workers to carry passes showing where they worked, lived, and for how long they were allowed to stay. Anyone without a valid pass could be arrested.**

- 1.7.1 What information did a pass contain?
- 1.7.2 Why were people arrested if they didn't have a pass?
- 1.7.3 How did pass laws support the migrant labour system?

### Paragraph Question

- 1.8 Write a paragraph of 8–10 lines explaining how mine owners and the government increased control over Black labour during the Mineral Revolution.\*\*

Use the following words in your answer: pass laws, migrant labour, compounds, taxes, cheap labour.

## Land Dispossession and Defeat of African Kingdoms (Xhosa, 1878 & Pedi and Zulu, 1879)



During the 1800s, the British expanded their control over South Africa.

One of their main goals was to force African people off their land and make them available as cheap labour for farms and, later, the mines.

To achieve this, they fought a series of wars against African kingdoms that resisted colonial rule.

### **What is Land Dispossession?**

**Land dispossession means taking land away from people by force, law, or unfair means.**

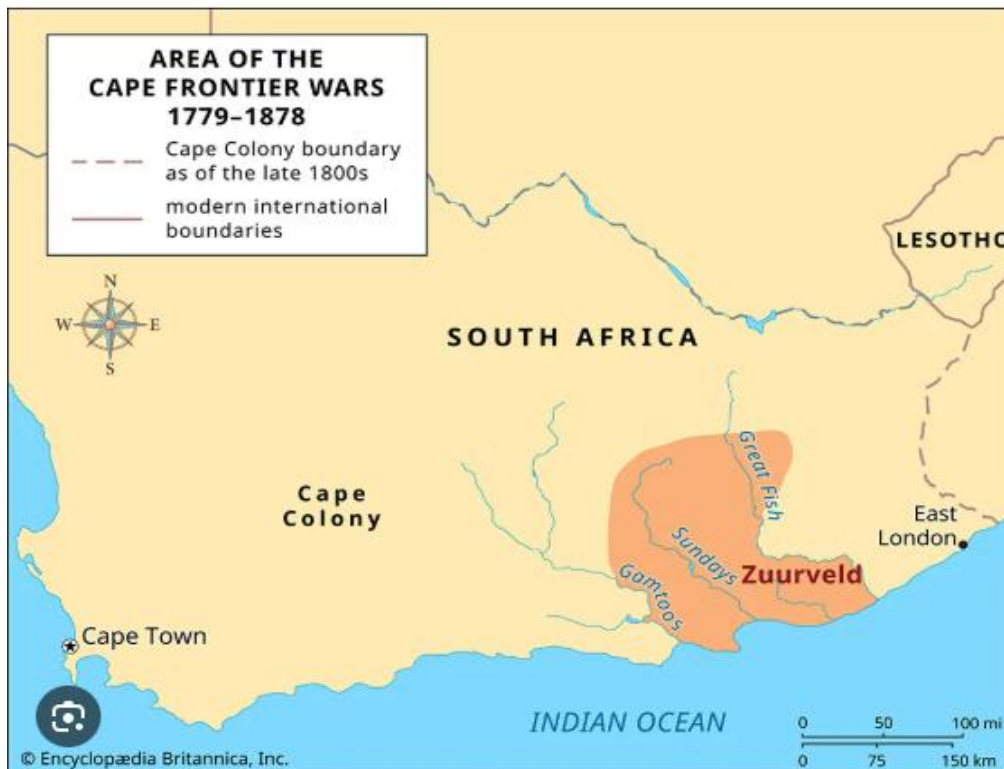
For African societies, land was central to:

- Farming (food security) Cattle keeping
- Cultural and spiritual life
- Community identity

When land was taken, African people lost economic independence.

This weakened the kingdoms and pushed many men into migrant labour to survive.

## The Defeat of the Xhosa Kingdoms (Frontier Wars)



The Frontier Wars were a series of conflicts between the Xhosa kingdoms and the colonial authorities of the Cape (first the Dutch, later the British). They took place over nearly 100 years (1779–1878) along the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony.

These wars eventually led to the defeat of the Xhosa and the loss of their land, cattle, and independence.

### Why Did These Wars Happen?

The main reasons for conflict were:

#### A. Land

- The Xhosa depended on land for grazing and farming.
- Settlers wanted more land for farming and expansion.
- Both sides claimed the area between the Fish River and Kei River.

#### B. Cattle

- The Xhosa valued cattle for wealth and survival.
- Settlers often accused the Xhosa of cattle theft (sometimes unfairly).
- This increased tensions.

### **C. Frontier Pressure**

- As the colony expanded eastwards, the frontier became violently contested.
- The British wanted strict control over the border.

#### **The Frontier Wars (Nine Wars)**

There were nine wars from 1779 to 1878, involving different Xhosa chiefs and British officials. Each war pushed the Xhosa further east.

The 6th, 7th, and 8th Frontier Wars are most important.

These happened between 1834 and 1853 and weakened the Xhosa kingdoms.

#### **The 8th Frontier War (1850–1853)**

Why it started:

- British authorities treated Xhosa people harshly.
- They tried to force Xhosa people to adopt colonial laws.
- The British arrested Chief Sandile, sparking conflict.

Outcome:

- British forces defeated Sandile and other Xhosa chiefs.
- More Xhosa land was confiscated.
- Thousands of cattle were taken by colonial forces.

This war severely weakened the Xhosa political system.

#### **The Cattle-Killing Movement (1856–1857)**

Although not a war, it played a major role in the final defeat.

What happened:

- A young prophet, Nongqawuse, said the ancestors told her that if the Xhosa killed their cattle and destroyed their crops, the ancestors would rise and drive out the British.
- Many Xhosa followed the prophecy.
- ±400 000 cattle were killed; fields left unplanted.

Consequences:

- A devastating famine followed.
- About 40,000 Xhosa died.
- Survivors were forced to work for the British or move off their land.

This made resistance almost impossible.

## The 9th Frontier War (1877–1878)

Also known as the War of Ngcayecibi.

Outcome:

- British forces defeated Gcaleka and Mfengu groups.
- Final loss of independence for the Xhosa kingdoms.
- The region was fully brought under colonial rule.

Why the Xhosa Were Defeated

### **A. Loss of Cattle**

- Wars, raids, and the cattle-killing weakened the economy.

### **B. British Military Strength**

- The British had modern weapons, cannons, and trained soldiers.

### **C. Internal Divisions**

- Sometimes Xhosa groups were not united; the Mfengu often sided with the British.

### **D. Loss of Land**

- Each war resulted in more land being taken, reducing the Xhosa's ability to resist.

## **Effects of the Defeat**

### **A. Loss of Independence**

- Chiefs lost authority, the British imposed new laws and magistrates.

### **B. Land Dispossession**

- Xhosa people lost fertile land and many became labourers.

### **C. Forced Labour**

- Survivors worked on farms, railways, and colonial projects.

### **D. Social Breakdown**

- Families separated; traditional structures weakened.

### **E. Beginning of Segregation**

- The land policies established during this period later helped form the apartheid system.

## The Defeat of the Pedi Kingdom (1879)

### Sekhukhune I



King of the Bapedi

The Pedi Kingdom, under King Sekhukhune I, was one of the strongest African states in the interior of South Africa in the 1800s. It controlled trade routes, fought off European encroachment, and resisted colonial rule for many years.

However, in 1879, the Pedi were finally defeated by British forces, marking a significant moment in the colonisation of the interior.

### Who were the Pedi?

- A powerful Sotho-speaking kingdom in the eastern Transvaal (Limpopo Province).
- Led by the famous ruler Sekhukhune I (r. 1860–1882).
- Controlled land, cattle, iron production, and important trade routes.

### Why did conflicts begin?

- The Boers (Transvaal Republic) wanted control of Pedi land and labour.
- The British also wanted to weaken all African kingdoms to expand their empire.
- The Pedi resisted paying taxes and refused colonial control.

## **Sekhukhune's Early Resistance (1870s)**

Before 1879:

- The Pedi defeated the Boers in several battles between 1876–1877.
- Their stronghold at Thaba Mosega was well-fortified.
- Sekhukhune built alliances with neighbouring groups.
- The Pedi were skilled fighters using firearms obtained through trade.
- The British saw the Pedi as a major obstacle to their expansion.

## **The British Decide to Attack (1879)**

Reasons for the British invasion:

- To break African resistance in the Transvaal.
- To control labour for the mines.
- To assert British authority after annexing the Transvaal in 1877.
- To weaken Sekhukhune, who refused colonial demands.

## **The Anglo-Pedi War (1879)**

The final attack took place in November 1879.

British strategies:

A large force (over 2 000 soldiers) including:

- British infantry
- Boer volunteers
- Swazi warriors (traditional enemies of the Pedi)
- Modern weapons: rifles, cannons, and artillery.
- Surrounding Pedi strongholds to cut off supplies.

## **The Battle of Thaba Mosega**

- The British attacked the Pedi capital and mountain fortress.
- Despite brave resistance, the Pedi were outgunned.
- Many warriors were killed; villages burnt.

Sekhukhune escaped but was captured weeks later.

By December 1879, the Pedi Kingdom had fallen.

## **Why the Pedi Were Defeated**

### **A. British military power**

- Modern rifles and cannons far stronger than Pedi weapons.

### **B. Allies against the Pedi**

- Swazi regiments helped the British attack from the east.
- Boer commandos also joined the invasion.

### **C. Isolation**

- Other African kingdoms could not assist Sekhukhune.

### **D. Attacks on key strongholds**

- Thaba Mosega was surrounded and destroyed.

## **Effects of the Defeat**

### **A. Loss of Independence**

- The Pedi Kingdom was placed under British rule.
- Sekhukhune was imprisoned until 1881.

### **B. Loss of Land**

- Large areas of Pedi land were taken for white settlers.

### **C. Labour Control**

- Many Pedi men were forced to work on farms and in mines.
- This helped strengthen the migrant labour system.

### **D. Weakening of African Resistance**

- The fall of the Pedi opened the way for greater colonial control in the Transvaal

## **The Defeat of the Zulu Kingdom (Anglo-Zulu War, 1879)**

The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 was a major conflict between the British Empire and the Zulu Kingdom, led by King Cetshwayo kaMpande.

It ended with the loss of Zulu independence and full British control over Zululand.



[www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)

### **Causes of the Anglo-Zulu War**

#### **A. British Expansion**

- The British government aimed to create a South African Federation under their control.
- Powerful African kingdoms, especially the Zulu, were seen as threats to this plan.

#### **B. Fear of Zulu Military Power**

- The Zulu army (amabutho system) was strong, disciplined, and well-organised.
- British authorities argued (incorrectly) that the Zulu posed a danger to the colony of Natal.

### **C. The Ultimatum of December 1878**

British High Commissioner Sir Bartle Frere gave Zulu king Cetshwayo an ultimatum demanding:

- Disbanding of the Zulu army
- Acceptance of British rule
- Handing over of chiefs
- Allowing missionaries and British officials full access

### **Key Battles of 1879**

#### **A. Battle of Isandlwana (22 January 1879)**

- Zulu forces defeated a large British army.
- Over 1 300 British soldiers died.
- This was the greatest Indigenous victory against the British in southern Africa.

#### **B. Battle of Rorke's Drift (22–23 January 1879)**

- 150 British soldiers successfully defended a mission station.
- The British celebrated it to restore morale after Isandlwana.

### **C. British Reinforcements**

After their defeat, Britain sent:

- Thousands of soldiers
- Cannons
- Gatling guns (early machine guns)

This changed the war's direction.

#### **D. Final Battle at Ulundi (4 July 1879)**

- British used a square formation, rifles, artillery, and machine guns.
- The Zulu army was defeated.
- Ulundi, the royal capital, was burned.

This marked the military defeat of the Zulu Kingdom.

### **Why the Zulu Were Defeated**

#### **A. British Military Technology**

- The British had rifles, cannons, and machine guns.
- The Zulu used spears (assegai), shields, and a limited number of guns.

## **B. Larger British Forces**

- Reinforcements from Britain outnumbered the Zulu army in later stages.

## **C. Divide-and-Rule**

- The British used allies and divided the Zulu kingdom after the war.

## **D. Limited Zulu Resources**

- No outside allies or supplies.
- Fighting on home soil with few modern weapons.

## **Effects of the Zulu Defeat**

### **A. Loss of Independence**

- Cetshwayo was captured and imprisoned.
- Although later released, he never regained full authority.

### **B. Kingdom Broken into 13 Chiefdoms**

- The British divided Zululand to weaken unity.
- Chiefs loyal to Britain were given power.

### **C. Social and Economic Disruption**

- Thousands killed.
- Homesteads destroyed.
- Cattle seized.
- Loss of land and traditional authority.

### **D. Expansion of British Rule**

- Zululand was eventually absorbed into the colony of Natal.
- Strengthened the British Empire in southern Africa.

## **Overall Impact of these Defeats**

- African kingdoms lost political independence
- Large amounts of land were taken by the British
- Traditional economies were destroyed
- African men were pushed into migrant labour
- The foundation for future land laws (like the 1913 Land Act) was created
- British control extended over most of South Africa by the late 1800s

## ACTIVITY

### Multiple-Choice Questions

Choose the correct answer.

1. The defeat of African kingdoms in the 1800s resulted mainly in:
  - A. More independence for African rulers
  - B. Increased land ownership for African communities
  - C. Large-scale land dispossession by colonial governments
  - D. Stronger African armies
  
2. The Zulu Kingdom was defeated by the British in:
  - A. 1838
  - B. 1876
  - C. 1879
  - D. 1881
  
3. Which African kingdom was ruled by Sekhukhune I?
  - A. Zulu
  - B. Pedi
  - C. Xhosa
  - D. Swazi
  
4. The British burned the Zulu royal capital, Ulundi, during the final battle because:
  - A. They wanted grazing land
  - B. They aimed to destroy the Zulu military system
  - C. They wanted to capture King Cetshwayo
  - D. They needed space for farms

### Short-Answer Questions

5. What is land dispossession?
6. Give two reasons why the British wanted land controlled by African kingdoms.
7. Name the three African kingdoms studied in Grade 8 that were defeated by European colonial powers.
8. How did the defeat of the Pedi Kingdom affect African labour patterns?
9. Why did the Zulu Kingdom refuse the British ultimatum in 1878?

### Source-Based Questions

#### SOURCE A: Land Dispossession

*“By the late 1800s, large areas of African land had been taken by colonial authorities. African communities were forced onto smaller reserves, while settlers and companies controlled the best land.”*

- 10.1 According to the source, who controlled the best land after dispossession?
- 10.2 How would being forced onto reserves affect African farming communities?
- 10.3 Why did settlers want African land? (Give one reason.)

#### SOURCE B: The Defeat of the African Kingdoms

*“In 1879, after defeating the Zulu at Ulundi, the British divided the kingdom into 13 chiefdoms. In the same year, the Pedi under Sekhukhune were also conquered. These events opened the interior for colonial expansion.”*

- 11.1 Why do you think the British divided the Zulu kingdom into 13 chiefdoms?
- 11.2 What was the main result of the Pedi defeat in 1879?
- 11.3 How did these defeats make land dispossession easier for the British?

#### SECTION D: Paragraph Question (8–10 lines)

12. Write a paragraph explaining how the defeat of African kingdoms (Xhosa, Zulu, and Pedi) led to land dispossession and strengthened colonial rule in South Africa.

Include the following words: cattle, land, British, power, kingdoms, labour.

## **Conditions Underground for Miners in the 1800s**

Mining in South Africa during the late 1800s — especially on the diamond fields (Kimberley) and the gold mines (Witwatersrand) — was extremely dangerous and harsh. African workers experienced some of the worst conditions as mine owners focused on maximising profit and controlling labour.

### **Dangerous Working Environment**

- Deep, narrow tunnels
- Mines went hundreds of metres underground.
- Shafts were dark, cramped, and poorly supported.
- Risk of rockfalls and cave-ins
- Weak underground supports often collapsed.
- Many miners were crushed or trapped.

### **Explosions**

- Gunpowder and dynamite were used to break rocks.
- Explosions were often poorly controlled.

### **Poor Air Quality**

- Dust inhalation
- Dust from drilling caused severe lung damage.
- Many miners developed diseases like silicosis and chronic coughing.
- Lack of ventilation
- Tunnels were hot (up to 40°C), humid, and had little fresh air.
- Smoke from explosives filled the air and made breathing difficult.

### **Long Working Hours**

- 12–14 hour shifts
- Workers often spent most of the day underground.
- Very little rest or breaks were allowed.
- Working at night
- Some shifts lasted overnight with minimal lighting.

### **Low Wages and Racial Discrimination**

- Colour Bar system
- Skilled jobs (machine operators, supervisors) reserved for white workers.
- Black workers were given the most dangerous, low-paid tasks.

### **Unequal pay**

- African workers earned a fraction of white wages for the same work.

## **Strict Labour Controls**

- Closed Compound System
- African workers lived in locked compounds to prevent diamond theft.
- Could not leave until contracts ended.
- Daily searches and surveillance.

## **Pass laws**

- Black workers needed passes to work or travel.
- Arrested if found without passes.

## **Contract system**

- Workers signed months-long contracts they could not break.

## **Health Problems**

- Common illnesses
- Lung diseases from dust
- TB (tuberculosis)
- Heatstroke and exhaustion
- Injuries from machinery and falls

## **Poor medical care**

- Few doctors available.
- Injured workers often dismissed with no compensation.

## **Lack of Safety Equipment**

Miners had:

- No helmets
- No gloves
- No safety boots
- Minimal lighting (candles or oil lamps)

Result:

Higher injuries

Frequent accidents

Difficulty seeing hazards underground

## **Harsh Discipline**

- Workers who disobeyed orders were beaten, fined, or imprisoned.
- Speaking out against conditions could lead to dismissal or arrest.

## **Crowded and Poor Living Conditions**

For African miners:

- Compounds were overcrowded, with poor sanitation.
- Diseases spread easily (measles, flu, stomach illnesses).
- Meals were basic and often insufficient.

For white miners:

- Better housing, medical care, and working roles.

## **Transport and Access**

- Workers travelled long distances to get to work.
- Some walked for weeks from rural villages to the mines.
- Once underground, ladders and ropes were the only way in and out before lifts were installed.