

TOPIC: DEVELOPMENT OF ZIMBABWEAN SOCIETIES

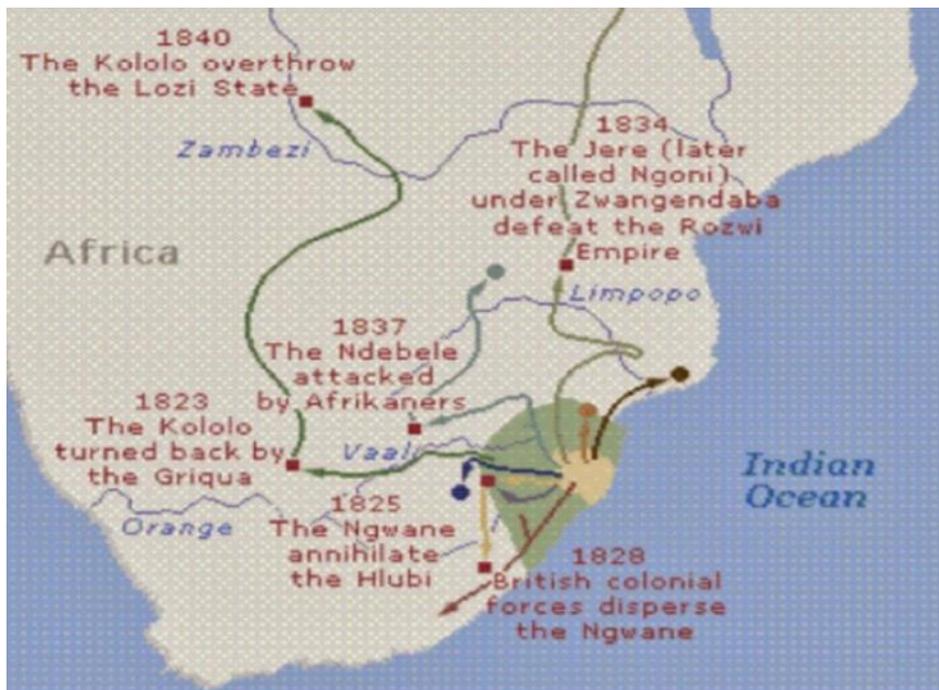
SUBTOPIC: NGUNI MIGRATIONS - MFECANE

OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THE SUBTOPIC LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO

- ✓ Explain what is meant by Mfecane.
- ✓ Outline the main causes of the Mfecane.
- ✓ Name the Mfecane states in Southern Africa.
- ✓ Describe the events of the Mfecane.
- ✓ Evaluate the results of the Mfecane in Southern Africa.

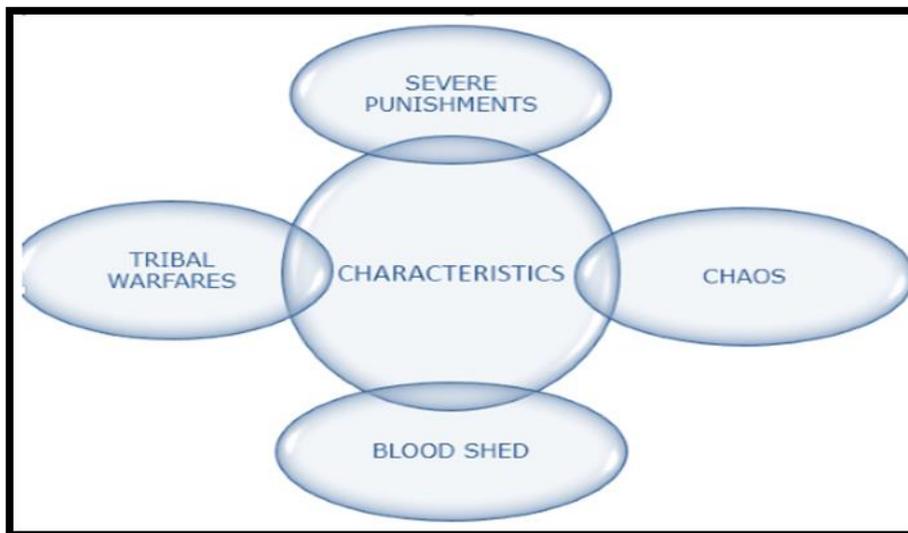
Background



Nguni incursions

- The Nguni migration northwards and the establishment of the Ndebele, Shangaan, and Kololo states had a profound impact on pre-existing societies.
- These different Northern Nguni groups fought for supremacy and destroyed much as they moved away from Nguniland.

- A number of local factors such as population growth, depletion of resources and famine diode to chaos; these factors led to drastically modification of the economic, political and social lifetime of the Bantu people.
- These upheavals led to the Mfecane a Zulu word describing the days of hassle faced by the Bantu individuals.
- This resulted in extensive damage to society and therefore the environment as well as great suffering for ordinary men, women and children.
- Mfecane is defined as the period of widespread warfare, plundering, disturbances, destruction and migrations in Zululand and in and in some parts of South Africa.
- Defeated clans were forced to scatter throughout the region whereas others were forced to migrate to safer components of the region.
- This happened between 1816 and 1856 (the half of the nineteenth century).



Characteristics of Mfecane

Causes of the Mfecane

- There are many theories that trace and explain the causes of the Mfecane in the 1820^s, these theories are political, economic and social.
- The roots of the Mfecane falls under two categories which are long term/ remote causes and immediate causes.
 - (a) Over population
 - There was population increase as so many people migrated into the area due to good fertile farming soils.
 - The population growth led to the shortage of land, people could not fit on the land that was available. Moreover, there was competition between live stocks and people for both grazing and farming lands.
 - The population growth that was experienced was triggered by food supplies that were derived by the introduction of new crops such as maize.
 - The population growth led to fights and conquests.
 - (b) The age grade military system
 - The evolution of the age grade military system also led to the Mfecane.
 - By the introduction of this new military system, neighbouring communities had to escape from their original homestead for the safe life.
 - Moreover, to get land, people had to fight for it which led to the creation of age regiments (amabutho) who fought for the land.
 - The defeated ones had to migrate to other places in search of new lands.
 - (c) Trade
 - The rise of long distance trade also led to the Mfecane.
 - During the 16th century, trade had developed along the east coast of Africa with the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay.

- Trade in ivory through the Mozambican port of Delagoa had increased to new heights and the demands for ivory also increased on the side of traders.
- The desire to control trade, some Nguni tribes began to attack other tribes in order to control and acquire more tribute.
- The Portuguese wanted to trade with organized groups under powerful leaders.

(d) Influence of the Boers

- The Eastern Expansion by the Cape Whites was also a caused of the Mfecane.
- Towards the end of the 18th century, there was a great desire by whites at the cape to expand in the eastern direction in order to acquire more land.
- The advancement of Boers to South Africa led to the Mfecane. Their movement into South Africa instigated shortage of land and increased population in the south east that resulted in tribal wars.
- The Boers were determined to control fertile soils in the interior and this caused more trouble in South Africa.

(e) The rise of Tshaka



Picture of Tshaka

- The rise of Tshaka and his expansion policy led to the intensification of the Mfecane.
- The Zulu state under Tshaka organized instant wars of expansion against the Pondo, Mthethwa, Swazi, Zwide Ndwandwe and the Sotho.
- His coming into power increased the rate of the Mfecane as he was so interested in wars and hence defeated other tribes.
- The role played by Dingiswayo and Tshaka as the leaders of the states forced people to migrate in fear of these cruel leaders.

(f) Environmental factors

- Geographical barriers (features) such as the Drakensberg Mountains and the Indian Ocean made it impossible for people to expand to the west and east.
- This contributed to population increase resulting in wars to secure land.

Other factors

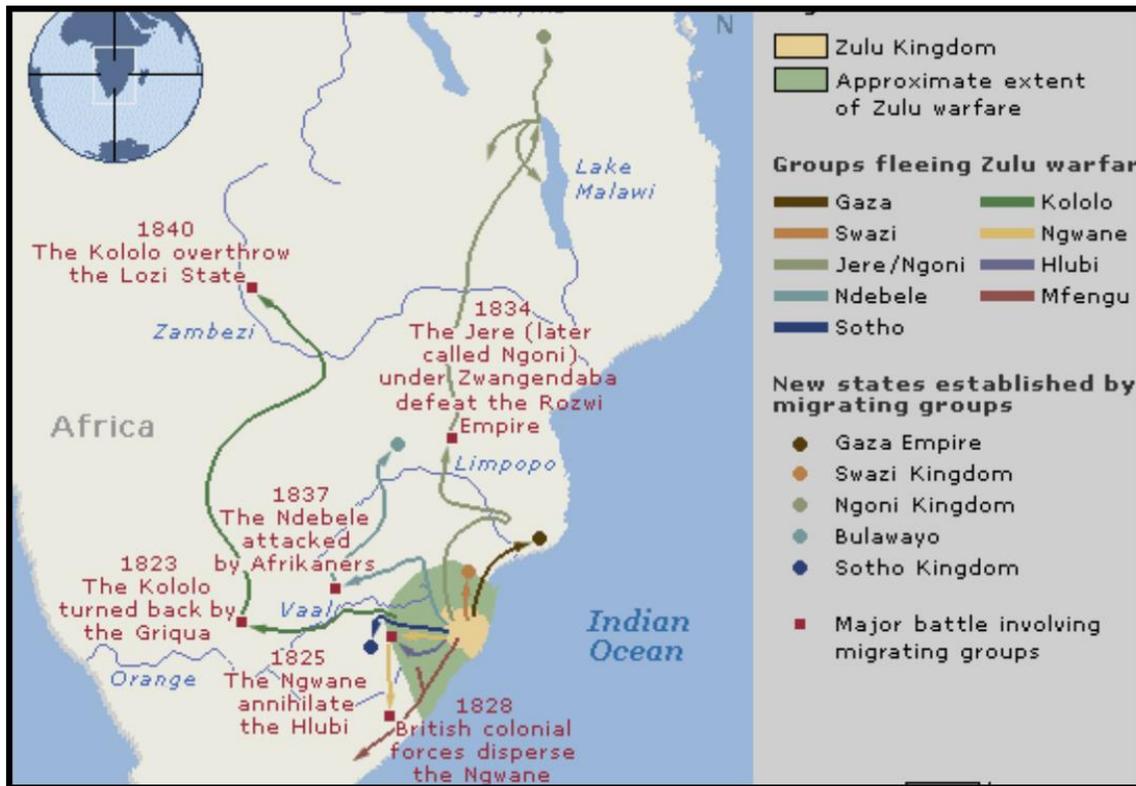
- The increase of slave demand by the Portuguese at Delagoa led to clashes among the Nguni people.
- The Madlathule famine/drought led to starvation in Nguniland and it resulted to fights over resources.

The course of the Mfecane

- The war took place between the Ndwandwe, Ngwane under Sobhuza.
- The Mfecane wars can be looked at in view of three powerful groups that rose in Nguniland and started fighting each other. These groups are as follows;

Groups	Leaders
Ndwandwe	Zwide
Ngwane	Sobhuza
Mthethwa	Dingiswayo

- Zwide and Sobhuza were the first ones to start fighting over land on the Pongola River in 1816.
- Sobhuza was defeated and fled to the north where he founded the Swazi Nation after conquering the local tribes in 1816.
- Dingiswayo was not happy with Zwide and he attacked him in 1817.
- Unfortunately, Dingiswayo was defeated and even killed.
- Later, Zwide was not happy to hear that the defeated Mthethwa People had gone to live under the protection of a new and little known Tshaka by then.
- So, Zwide attacked Tshaka at the battle of Gqokoli hill in 1818, but Tshaka managed to repel him.
- In December 1818, Zwide sent his whole army to Tshaka.
- Zwide was defeated on Christmas of 1818 at the battle of Mlatuze River.
- After the death of Zwide in 1825, his son by the name of Sikonyela reorganized the Ndwandwe and attacked Tshaka's forces in 1826.
- The Ndwandwe were decisively defeated.
- The increased fighting in the Northern Nguni land and the rise and expansion of Tshaka Zulu's kingdom affected the neighbouring chiefdoms in profound ways.



Mfecane migration routes

Impacts of the Mfecane

Social impacts

- (1) Depopulation - south east of South Africa became the land of death, misery and acute hardship the land interfered with human corpses and skeleton.
- (2) Migration of people from South Africa to other areas. People moved from insecurity places to security places, for example, Ndwandwe and Ngwane moved towards the north of South Africa.



Nguni Migration

- (3) De- centralization and separation of families - Relatives, customs, and traditions were ruined because people of the same humanity never met due to demise and others moved to new areas.
- (4) Intermarriage among the societies - when groups moved to other places they married each other for example Hehe and Mbuga intermarried with the central societies.

Political impacts

- (5) The formation of Boer settlements at Natal in South Africa – many people left the Natal area during the war, hence the Boers occupied the area and established their own settlements in 1800.
- (6) The rise of strong leadership - The states that survived until the period of the European colonization of some of the leadership had created outstanding armies the put up stiff resistances to European conquest.
- (7) The collapse of some states in central Africa and East Africa- the Lozi, Rozwi and Tumbu were badly destroyed. The Nguni

migration in east Africa demolished states like Yao, Mwenamtapa, Thongo, Sanga and Hehe.

- (8) The formation of new empires - these includes empires of Gaza, Sena Empire.
- (9) Political reorganization - political unity was created in such way that power was never absolute. They discouraged force of disruption because these units also created the crosscutting alliance.
- (10) Military organization - many states used the same method of fighting, for example, Nguni Kololo and Ndebele copied Tshaka's method of fighting.



Zulu soldiers

Economic impacts

- (11) Increased slave activities - Ngoni and Ndebele took the captives of the war as slaves. African coastal traders were easily raided and captured people and sold them into slavery.

(12) Disruption of trade along the coast of Africa.