

The White Settlement of Southern Africa 1652 - 1850
MARCH OF THE TITANS -
A HISTORY OF THE WHITE RACE

Chapter 56 : The White Man's Burden -
South Africa and Rhodesia

Part 1: The White Settlement of Southern Africa 1652 - 1850

The establishment of White settlements in what later became South Africa and Rhodesia were different from those outposts established elsewhere in Africa during the colonial period, because it was only in Southern Africa that White numbers ever reached a large enough total for them to establish large scale settlements which seriously affected the balance of power.

The histories of South Africa and Rhodesia - the two largest White settlements, and the interrelated Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola - all serve as valuable lessons in racial dynamics and as such are well worth looking at in some detail. In South Africa, a large White population had the chance to create their own state, but failed to do so due to their reliance on Black labor, which ultimately led to their submersion and downfall; while in Rhodesia, Mozambique and Angola, no serious efforts were ever made to establish majority White occupation in any particular area, with these states only surviving as long as they did through brute force and one of the most protracted and violent race wars since the invasion of Europe by Asians and Turks nearly 1000 years earlier.

South Africa - FIRST WHITE SETTLEMENT 1652

The first major permanent White settlement in Africa came in 1652, when a Dutch trading company, the Dutch East India Company sent one of its officials, Jan van Riebeeck, to what is now called Cape Town, to build a resupply station for company ships traveling to and from Asia. Around this station the first White settlement spread - and met the first non-Whites, tribes of Hottentots and Bushmen who were happy to trade cattle with the new settlers.

Above: A view of the first White settlement at the southern most point of Africa: Cape Town in the year 1679. Dutch ships stop for re-supply purposes on their way round Africa to the Far East. Ironically, the Dutch never intended to establish a proper colony, only a re-supply station.

First Farmers

By 1657, it became evident that the company's farming efforts were inadequate, so a small number of company employees were released from their contracts and given land to work as independent farmers supplying the company's needs. The first White farmers in Southern Africa - called Free Citizens - were created. Between 1680 and 1700, the Dutch encouraged White immigration in ever increasing numbers: Dutch, Germans and French Huguenots (Protestants escaping religious persecution by Catholics in France) all started arriving, quickly filling up the region surrounding Cape Town.

Bushmen Immigrate North

Relations with the native Hottentots and Bushmen were rocky from the start. First, their numbers were decimated by the introduction of European diseases to which they had no resistance, and then they were slowly squeezed out of the area surrounding Cape Town. As the Hottentots and Bushmen were nomads, there was no claimed land for the White settlers to seize, but as the number of White farms increased, so the roaming space of the natives grew smaller.

The White settlers soon began complaining about stock thefts and petty crimes committed by the Hottentots and Bushmen: short and one-sided armed clashes then took place during which the Bushmen, who were never united, moved in large numbers north to what later became known as South West Africa, where their remnants have remained till modern times.

Slaves

During the second half of the 17th Century, Malay slaves were imported from Dutch colonies in Asia to work in Cape Town, while during the same period a

number of Black slaves were brought in from other parts of Africa (the nearest Black tribes at this stage were still some 1,000 kilometers from the Cape, slowly wandering southwards).

Mixed Marriages Prohibited

In 1682, the Dutch East India Company formally issued written instructions to the governor of the Cape colony at the time, one Simon van der Stel, to officially forbid all racial intermarriage following a number of marriages between early White settlers and freed slaves.

In 1685, the first law prohibiting interracial marriages in the Cape was formally proclaimed, and a Whites only school had been established for the children of colonists. Eventually the remnants of the Hottentot population, the Malays and Black slaves and a number of Whites, mixed together to produce a mixed race group which later was to be called Cape Coloreds. Some of these mixed racial types did however "pass over" into the officially classified White group, and modern estimates are that about 6 percent of Afrikaners who claim to be White, are actually of mixed ancestry.

Boers

As the number of White settlers grew, so did the first inklings of a sense of national identity - exactly as had happened in all the other major White settlements in the new lands. Dutch was still the dominant language, and the Dutch word for farmer is boer. After many years the Whites who moved into the interior of the country who spoke a form of Old Dutch, began to be called Boers, and by this name they won world renown.

First Encounter with Blacks

The farming community began to push evermore eastward from Cape Town, crossing what is the Southern Cape and finally encountering the first major Black tribe, the Xhosa, in the present day Eastern Cape - some 1,000 kilometers from Cape Town - around 1770, some 120 years after the first White settlement was started.

The farmers who moved were called "Trek Boers" (trek meaning move) and they pushed further and further into the interior of the country, motivated partly by a desire to obtain new land but also by an increasing dissatisfaction with Dutch colonial rule at Cape Town.

After meeting the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape, both the eastward migration of the White Trek Boers and the southwards migrating Blacks came to a halt: on the Fish River border between the two racial groups, a series of nine racial wars took place over a space of nearly 70 years (starting in 1781 and only grinding to a halt in 1857), becoming known as the "Kaffir Wars". (Although the term "kaffir" has of course come to be derogatory, the actual word itself is of Arabic origin, "khufir", meaning non Muslim, and thus equally applicable to Whites or any other racial group).

Race Wars and the Self Destruction of Xhosa Power

These race wars severely tested the resolve of the Trek Boers, and later the British settlers in the area, with many atrocities being committed by both sides, mostly in retaliation for earlier attacks, and often sparked off by cattle thefts.

Eventually the wars came to an end in 1857, after a Xhosa prophetess convinced virtually her entire tribe that a spirit had spoken to her and had instructed all the Xhosa to kill their cattle and destroy all their supplies.

On a certain day - 18 February 1857 - the sun would arise blood red in color and all the dead Xhosa warriors would rise from the dead and sweep all the Whites into the sea - a violently anti-White outpouring which was not unusual for the time.

In what turned out to be a major disaster for the Xhosa, they followed this prophetess' advice, destroyed their stores, killed virtually all their livestock and settled down to wait for their dead warriors to arise. Fortunately for the Whites, this was where the plan went wrong: on the appointed day nothing

happened, and after several weeks, Xhosa power was broken by a combination of starvation and disillusionment.

The British in the Cape

The start of the conflict between Britain and France at the end of the 18th Century saw Britain taking the strategically important step of militarily occupying the Cape: for fear that the Dutch would turn it over to the French and thereby cut the British sea route to the East.

The British occupied the Cape twice: once in 1795 (they withdrew a short while after) and the second time in 1806 (they stayed on that time). At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, Britain formally purchased the Cape from the Dutch for six million pounds and another colony was added to the growing British Empire. In 1806, the Cape Colony had a White population of some 26,000 - and a slave population of some 30,000, with an estimated Cape Colored population of 20,000.

Mass British Settlement

The British takeover of the Cape saw several changes: the most important of which was the arrival in 1820 of over 3,000 British settlers in the Eastern Cape, recruited especially with British government financial aid to bolster the White population on the eastern border with the Xhosa, where the intermittent race wars were continually threatening to overwhelm the isolated White towns. This influx of such a large number of English speakers - a near enough 12 percent increase in the total White population within a matter of weeks - soon caused a general Anglicization in the Cape which antagonized the still Dutch speaking Trek Boer population, although many who had stayed close to Cape Town did not object as vociferously as those out on the frontiers.

The Anglicization process also extended to the introduction of English laws: in 1822, English became the sole official language; in the same year, the Cape Colored population were included in the first labor laws and finally slavery itself was abolished in 1833. The British government offered compensation for the 35,000 slaves in the Cape Colony, as it was called then, to the Trek Boers - but this was only paid out in London, making it practically impossible for the majority of slave owners to collect their compensation.

The Great Trek

A combination of factors: the Anglicization policy, the introduction of English law and the then seemingly unending wars with the Xhosas created the dynamo which became known as the Great Trek.

From 1836 onwards, some 15,000 Trek Boer families packed up their goods into canvass covered wagons and set off for the interior, away from British rule.

This Great Trek was the final catalyst for the formation of the people who became known as the Boers (the word Afrikaners was only developed late in the 19th century once the language spoken by the White non-English speakers had crystallized).

By the time the Great Trek was over, the Boers had been formed into a distinct national identity of their own, fiercely independent and strongly Calvinistic in religion.

The dangers and epic of the great Trek alone have filled many a book: the effort of having to cross the highest mountain range in Southern Africa, called the Drakensberg (the Dragon Mountains - a deserved name) in ox wagons; the necessity of having to create much of their raw material and many supplies along the way; and the trials and tribulations of doing all of this with entire families in tow, was a truly remarkable achievement, and the trek itself came to assume almost superhuman status and symbolism in the White Boer psyche.

A small group of Trekkers moved into the interior, into what became the Orange Free State and Transvaal, while a larger group crossed the Drakensberg mountains and decided to settle in what was to become Natal.

First Expeditions a Failure

Leaving their jumping off points in the central and eastern Cape, small groups

of Whites set off for the interior, with only covered wagons, horses and their ingenuity to guide them as they trekked into the wild, untamed, unknown and dangerous interior.

The first small expedition, started in 1835, ended in complete failure. Jan van Rensburg's small party was ambushed and exterminated by Blacks on the Highveld. Yet another party, led by Louis Trichardt, barely survived attacks by Blacks and was then decimated by malaria, with a few desperately ill survivors finally struggling through to the Portuguese base at Lorenzo Marques (today Maputo). The first two expeditions were therefore disastrous, producing a fatality rate of well over 80 per cent. Nonetheless, the issues forcing the Boers on did not diminish, and slowly over the next two years support for a new migration grew.

Piet Retief

In 1837, the Port Elizabeth based Boer, Piet Retief, organized an expedition from Grahamstown, after issuing a manifesto outlining his reasons for undertaking the Trek into the interior. After joining with an expedition led by Andries Potgieter for the initial trek north, Retief and his party turned eastwards over the Drakensberg mountains (the Dragon Mountains) in a virtually superhuman effort of unparalleled endeavor and hardship. Little wonder then, that when they reached the apex of the Drakensberg, and the green lands of Natal stretched out before their eyes, they called the land Blydevooruitzicht, or Happy Prospects.

Dingaan

There was however one serious issue: the fierce and warlike Zulu tribe under the leadership of their ferocious chief, Dingaan already occupied the new land.

While the bulk of Retief's party - which consisted mainly of women, children and aged men - encamped along the Blaukraans River, Retief led a party of 70 men and teenage boys on a peace mission to Dingaan at the latter's chief settlement, or kraal, called Umgungundlovu. The purpose of the mission was to try and peacefully negotiate land for the Trek party from the Zulus.

Dingaan however accused the Trekkers of stealing cattle from him; only after several weeks searching did Retief's party manage to locate the missing cattle (they had been stolen by a local chief called Siyonkella).

On 2 February 1837, the Boers returned to Umgungundlovu with the missing cattle: on 5 February, Dingaan and Retief signed a treaty (Dingaan signed it with a "X", as he was illiterate) giving the Boers land in Natal. After the signing of the agreement, the Zulus put on a dancing show and celebration.

In turn the White Boers gave a shooting and horse riding demonstration to the Blacks: confirming the reports Dingaan had already received about these White men who had sticks which could kill at a distance and who had magic beasts which could carry a rider at great speed.

"KILL The White Wizards"

On the following day, 6 February, the 70 White men were up before daybreak. As they prepared to leave to return to their camp where their women and children were waiting, a Zulu messenger arrived. He carried with him a message from Dingaan asking that Retief and his men meet one more time inside the Zulu king's enclosure where the two parties would toast their successful negotiations and future friendship. The Whites agreed.

Retief and his men made their way to the Zulu king's inner enclosure. Before they entered the final ring of mud huts and reed walls, they were asked to leave their firearms stacked in a pile outside as a mark of respect to the king: foolishly they agreed, not suspecting that it was all an elaborate trap and that the Zulus had no intention of honoring their word. The treaty between Retief and Dingaan was still in the pouch the former was carrying.

As the White men entered the inner enclosure, the gate was closed behind them. Dingaan greeted the White men, and bid them sit before him. They then drank the crude sorghum beer offered to them, still unsuspecting and full of trust. In the inner enclosure were nearly two thousand Zulus in full combat gear: shields,

spears and wooden clubs. Now they had the White men unarmed and outnumbered. At Dingaan's command they began dancing, shouting and waving their Stone Age weapons in the air. The White men watched and listened. The Blacks then slowly started moving back and forth: each time advancing three steps and retreating two: gradually they crept closer and closer. At the point where they nearly touched the seated White men, Dingaan jumped up and shouted out "Kill the White Wizards!"

The Murder

Too late the Whites realized the treachery which had been played out upon them: a few jumped up and tried to defend themselves with their small hunting knives, but they were no match for the two thousand heavily armed Zulus. Some of them were strangled to death on the spot by crude ropes made of cut up animal skins: the rest were seized, and along with the bodies of their dead comrades, were dragged outside the royal camp to a hill next to Umgungundlovu, called Hlomo Amabuta, the Hill of Execution.

Above: The Zulu king Dingaan, chants over the body of the dead White peace maker, Piet Retief. The Trekker leader's liver was cut out of his body and presented as a gift to Dingaan.

There the Blacks cruelly executed the remaining Whites, one by one, by clubbing and spearing them to death. Last to be killed was Retief himself, after having been forced to watch his own teenage son be clubbed to death.

Once dead, Retief's heart and liver were cut out of his body and ceremoniously presented to Dingaan as proof that the chief White wizard was dead.

The White Christian missionary, Francis Owen, whose mission station was situated on a hill overlooking Hlomo Amabuta, witnessed all these events. Despite the tragedy being played out before his eyes, the Christian Owen made no effort to warn Retief's party, encamped as they were only a few hours' ride away. Instead Owen fled to the British trading settlement at Port Natal (Durban) a few days later.

Whites Massacred

So it was that no news reached the Voortrekker camp of women, children and old men along the Blaaukraans river for ten days: the last word they had received was that Retief had been successful in negotiating land from the Zulus and that everything was in order. An atmosphere of joviality prevailed in the camp: the Trek had paid off.

However, the reality was different: during the night of 16 February 1838, the Zulus struck. The Boers' camps were small, scattered and poorly defended. Filled with a false sense of security, they were easy targets for the 10,000 strong Zulu army sent to annihilate them. Attacking at 1:00 am in the morning, the Zulus fell upon the largely sleeping White camps.

The small camp of the Liebenberg family was quickly overrun and all of its inhabitants murdered as they slept. Next the Zulus made their way to the Bezuidenhout camp: Daniel Peter Bezuidenhout saw his wife, mother and sisters slaughtered by the Zulu spears and although badly wounded himself, he managed to escape and riding his horse, warn some of the neighboring settlements.

Still the Blacks pressed home the attack: entire families were killed, with one man grabbing his baby daughter and running for miles through the bush clutching his child to his chest, only to find that she was already dead, killed so efficiently by a spear that she had not even cried out. Finally some of the larger camps managed to draw their wagons into a defensive circle, or laager, and the Zulus were warded off.

But the cost had been frightful: nearly 300 Whites had been killed, including 41 men, 56 women and 185 children. Added to the 70 men killed with Retief, the Blacks had killed more than half of all the Whites in the entire Great Trek in Natal.

Above: Zulus massacre White women, children and old men, Weenen, 1838.

Weenen

The scenes greeting the survivors as daylight broke on the 16 February were horrendous: where the Zulus had overwhelmed the White camps, entire wagons were drenched with gore. Johanna van der Merwe was found dead with 21 spear wounds; Catherina Prinsloo with 17. Elizabeth Smit lay dead, her breast hacked off, with her three-day-old baby beside her.

Anna Elizabeth Steenkamp described in her diary a wagon filled with 50 corpses, most of them children, drowned in their own blood. The site was thereafter called Weenen, or weeping, a name it has retained to this day.

For a while the entire Great Trek faltered: the Boers grimly held onto their camps, too weak to move on and too weak to stay. The Zulus then turned their attention towards the British trading settlement of Port Natal, besieging the Whites there in what had become an obvious racial war of anti-White extermination. The British garrison, although heavily outnumbered, held onto what would later become Durban, with equally fierce determination, and the Zulus did not manage to break the defenses, despite great efforts in this regard.

The Boer Women

After this massacre, the whole Great Trek teetered on the brink of disaster: many wanted to give up and return to the comparative safety of the British ruled Cape, while others then turned their attentions further north even deeper into the interior, into what became the Transvaal and Orange Free State. There, the first piece of land occupied by Whites there was obtained by treaty from the Bataung tribe, and the town of Winburg was established in this region.

The remaining men in the Boer camps in Natal then came to the conclusion that the trek should be abandoned: the trepidations they had suffered in Natal had been far worse than anything they had endured during their stay in the Cape Province, the Kaffir Wars included. At this crucial junction, the brave Boer women stepped forward and insisted of the men that the Trek continue: too many sacrifices had been made for them to give up now. By cajoling, mocking and in many instances physically taking the lead, the women won the day: the men gave up their plans to return to the Cape and once again drew new strength to carry on.

Piet Uys

However, further setbacks waited: a new commando under Piet Uys tried to avenge the massacre of the White women and children: they were defeated by the Zulus at the Battle of Italeni, which cost the life of Uys and his teenage son. Once again the threat of total defeat loomed along with a loss of White life.

Andries Pretorius

News of the plight of the Trekkers had by now reached the Cape: a wave of support came flooding for the Whites, culminating in the arrival of hundreds of new Trek volunteers. Amongst them was a farmer from Graaff Reinett, Andries Pretorius, a dynamic natural leader who was elected Commandant General by the till then still leaderless Boers in November 1838.

Within a week, Pretorius had organized a Boer commando of 451 men, including three British people - Scotsmen actually, defenders of Port Natal who wanted to avenge the bloody Zulu attacks on the British settlements. So it was that a combined White Boer and White English speaking commando, armed with two cannons, set off in search of the Zulus.

After six days of running battles with Zulu patrols, Pretorius chose his camp: covered on the one side by the Ncome River and on the other by a deep ditch, or donga, the Boers arranged their 64 wagons in an almost triangular shape, with the longest part of the triangle running across the side of the laager which had no natural defense.

Ever the improvisers, the White party then cut down masses of thorn bushes and placed them in the donga and underneath and between the wagons themselves, a highly effective early barbed wire.

They also hung lanterns on the end of their long oxen whips, which then protruded out over the outside perimeter of the wagons, providing illumination to prevent a surprise nighttime attack by the Zulus. Later the Blacks would tell that they had been petrified of the magic of the White wizards, in particular the "ghosts" which hanged above the wagons during the night.

The Vow

Then the Boers prayed to their Christian god that if they were granted victory, they and their descendants would celebrate the day for ever more as a sacred day and celebrate it as if it "were a Sabbath". This vow gave rise the day being called in later times the "Day of the Vow", although in fact the actual battle, which was celebrated on 16 December, was not the same day upon which the Vow was taken.

The Battle of Blood River

At dawn on 16 December 1838, the Zulus finally attacked. Each Zulu regiment was led by its commander, the younger men in the vanguard, the older veterans making up the rear. As they moved forward, estimates of their numbers varied from between 10,000 and 30,000. They chanted and stamped their feet in unison; a frightening sight by any account.

The 451 Whites had little illusion of what their fate would be if the tens of thousands of Blacks overwhelmed their tiny position. Pretorius ordered his men not to fire until they were absolutely sure of making a kill: exercising iron self control, the Whites waited until the Zulu battle line had advanced to within ten paces of the wagons: then the White guns opened up on the Black masses, and the Zulu attackers were cut down by their hundreds.

The few primitive spears thrown by the Zulus hardly even reached the wagons. The Zulus fell back, struck down by the White Wizards' magic killing sticks to which they had no answer. On the river side of the laager, the Zulus at first tried to attack through the water: bringing one of the cannons to bear, the Whites blasted the Black ranks at virtual point blank range, each shot killing dozens of Zulus.

Finally the Whites had fired so many rounds they ran out of cannon shot: once again, they had considered this possibility, and had pre-selected and stored suitably shaped stones, which they now loaded into the cannons, continuing to rain a merciless fire upon the Blacks.

These cannon were unquestionably decisive: the Blacks had never seen such weapons before, and it must have seemed as if the White Wizards now had fire spitting dragons on their side as well. Again and again the Zulus tried to attack: each time they were driven off by the combined White artillery and musket fire.

At no stage did the Blacks even get close enough to stab any White: only two Whites (one was Pretorius himself) were nicked by spears thrown by the Zulus, but that was all. By now, several thousand Blacks had been killed by the White Wizardry.

The Attack

As the Black line wavered once more, Pretorius gave the order to attack. Leading a detachment of 150 mounted men, one wagon was pulled aside and the commando galloped out to ride straight into the foremost Zulu regiment of over 2,000. Dumb struck with terror at the guns, the cannon and now the White Wizards on their huge hooped beasts, the Zulu line broke in fright and turned tail and fled.

The Blacks tried to outrun the horses: dozens could not and were trampled underfoot. Hundreds tried to dodge the horses and guns by jumping into the Ncome River, which took them above their heads. This was to no avail. The accurate musket fire and the cannons blasted them as they struggled in the river, and the water quite literally turned red with their blood: hence the river became known to this day as Blood River.

The Black attack was broken: the Whites pursued the fleeing Blacks until dark,

exacting a violent and bloody revenge for the massacre of the White women and children at Blaukraans. Zulu dead at the battlefield itself totaled over 3,000 - but this does not include those killed off site or who died of wounds elsewhere.

Above: The Battle of Blood River, 1838: White technological superiority defeats a massive non-White army and the river turns red with the blood of the dead.

The highly Calvinistic Trekkers took their victory as a sign from the Christian god that they were meant to win (instead of acknowledging the superiority of their weapons, which had actually won the day) and the belief in a divine mission in Africa was born into Boer consciousness, with the battle later assuming virtual mythical proportions, being celebrated every year thereafter with church services of thanks.

First Boer Republic

The defeat of the Zulu army at Blood River spelt the end of the Zulu threat to the White settlement of Natal for the moment, and an independent Boer Republic of Natalia was formally established. However, the British interest in the area had increased with the defeat of the Zulus, and a pattern was set which was to dog White history in Southern Africa for the next 60 years: as soon as the Boers achieved independence, the British moved in and annexed the new territory. By 1843 increasing British encroachment from the Eastern Cape led to a localized war between Boer forces and the British, with a British outpost in southern Natal, Congella, being besieged by Boers. The British managed to lift the siege and disperse the Boers: by 1845 the British had formally annexed the Republic of Natalia.

The Boer Republics of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic
A few Boers remained in Natal: most left, engaging in a second Great Trek over the Drakensberg mountains into the fledgling settlements in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. There two new independent Boer Republics were created, known officially as the Orange Free State and the South African Republic, the latter also being known colloquially as the Transvaal Republic.

Although the British governor of the Cape Colony tried briefly to annex the Orange Free State in 1848, this attempt was rejected by the British government at the time and the independence of the two Boer republics was recognized by Britain at two conventions in 1852 and 1854.

The White settlement of the Transvaal and Orange Free State had not been without incident: although large parts of the territory had been cleared of their original Black inhabitants by an inter-Black war known as the Difequane, there were still a substantial number of Blacks living in the far north and the west: by penetrating up the central parts of the Transvaal the Boers effectively divided the Black tribes into three regions: the Zulus in the east, the Tswanas in the West and the Matabele in the north.

The Battle of Vegkop

It was the Matabele who moved first: attacking a trekker outpost without warning in 1836 at a place called Vegkop ("fighting hill"), they nearly overran the small laager, but superior White technology saved the day and guns overpowered spears. The Boers also had the advantage of horses, which they used to pursue the defeated Matabele (in one engagement, a local Black tribe tried to use cattle as steeds, but this ended disastrously when the cattle broke rank and panicked at the sound of the first Boer gunshots: more Blacks were killed in this engagement by being trampled to death by their "cavalry" then by Boer marksmanship).

The Matabele were then pursued across the Limpopo River, settling in the territory now known as Zimbabwe, where they are to the present day.

Above: Boers fight off the Black Matabele, Vegkop, 1836. Note the Black

servant, far left. From the earliest times, Whites in Southern Africa made wide use of Black labor - and this eventually led to their downfall.

After 1854, the Whites in the Orange Free State fought a number of racial wars with a Black tribe called the Basotho - fighting which eventually led to the British formally annexing the Basotho territory to protect the area from further incursions by the Boers. This land became the protectorate of Basutoland in 1868 and in the 20th century was given independence and became the state of Lesotho.

Racial Attitudes

While always having had non-White servants - even taking them with on the Great Trek - the Boers never believed in racial equality, just like the Whites in America, Europe and everywhere else at the time - and adopted a paternalistic approach to almost all non-Whites with whom they came into contact.

This attitude was translated into official state policy in the Transvaal and Orange Free State Republics, where an advanced system of voting for leaders and an early parliament were the norm - but voting was restricted to Whites only.

Indians in South Africa

The British occupation of the Natal saw the creation of large sugarcane plantations in the ideally suited subtropical regions. At first trying to employ local Black labor to harvest the crops, the British turned to importing thousands of Indian laborers directly from India to do the work. The huge influx of Indians into Natal created the Indian population of South Africa, which to this day is still centered in the former province of Natal.

The Republic of the Orange Free State viewed the influx of Indians into Natal with alarm and brought in a law forbidding any Indian settlement inside its borders. This law remained in force in the Orange Free State until the middle 1980's.

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