

The Ndebele state

The Origins of the Ndebele state

The Ndebele were the original Khumalo group who came from Nguniland led by Mzilikazi. Mzilikazi was accorded special treatment by Tshaka. He was Tshaka's most trusted and favorable Induna and general.

He was allowed to have his own army was also allowed full political control of his Khumalo section of the Zulu nation.

He had voluntarily joined the Khumalo chiefdom to Tshaka's Zulu at the time when Tshaka was fighting the Ndwandwe and Zwide.

Mzilikazi's revolt and the journey to Zimbabwe

In 1821 Mzilikazi was sent on a mission to raid the Sotho people. The mission yielded a lot of cattle which Mzilikazi decided to keep for himself instead handing them over to Tshaka.

To worsen the situation he ill-treated the messenger sent by Tshaka to plead with him to surrender

Tshaka viewed this as an rebellion against him and declaration of war on the Zulu.

Tshaka sent a regiment to punish Mzilikazi. In the first attack the Zulu were eaten off and in the second attack Mzilikazi was defeated.

Mzilikazi and many of his fighter who survived decided to leave Nguniland

In 1822 he led the Khumalo group across the Drakensburg, mountains into the highveld.

They had started a journey which finally ended in Zimbabwe.

The Khumalo's more superior military method and strict discipline gave Mzilikazi warriors great advantages over people whose lands they passed during the northward march by 1822 they had reached upper elephant's river where they settled sometime to rest the called the area Ekupuleni.

Why the Ndebele left Ekupumuleni

It was close to Zulu land and Tshaka was still determined to punish Mzilikazi.

Not only the Zulu the Pedi people threatened them

The Ndebele then moved to the west where Pretoria stands today

They build a capital called Mhlahlandlela in that area.

The Ndebele carried raid into communities of central northern Transvaal, Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

Why the Ndebele left Mhlahlandlela

It was the Dingani in 1830 the Zulu attacked the Ndebele being led by Dingani

The Ndebele were threatened by the Kora, Koisson who had guns

The Graqua attacked them and took lots of cattle.

In 1832 the Ndebele moved to the head water of Marico driving the Hurutse people

In 1833 combined Tswana and Griqua force attacked the Ndebele who were aware raiding Mashoeshe Basotho.

In 1834 Kora and the Griqua groups attacked the Ndebele. The Boers from the South also attacked the Ndebele.

Dingani attacked the capital and totally destroy it

Mzilikazi's enemies had increase in 1837

Portuguese's Boers assisted by Griqua, Kora, Tokwa and Rolong struck again Mosega Mzilikazi's capital.

Migration Across the Limpopo

Mzilikazi decided with his group to migrate further North in 1837. They split and moved into two groups

Main group consisted of old people, remain and the children and most of the cattle, sheep and goats under Gundwane

It included most of Mzilikazi's sons e.g. Nkulumane the heir, so was Lobengula

The crossed Macloutse and Shashe rivers and settled near to Matopo hill

The first settlement was establish here called Giixhegu longer route passing through Kalahari desert and then followed a North – East ward route toward the Zambezi.

He attacked the Kobobo and moved to join the other group after they had the second group wanted to appoint Khulumane as the king.

Gundwane Ndiweni and other generals (Indunas) were assassinated by Mzilikazi and Nkulumane fled to South Africa.

Economic Activities

1. It was based on Agriculture. It was practiced especially former members of the society crops grown included maize, rapoko, millet
Each village had a common field for the king whose produce went straight to the King's granary.

2. Keeping of Cattle

It played a major role in the economy. A person's wealthy was measured by the number of cattle, they possessed.
Most cattle belong to the king through the Kuronzera system.
Cattle reviewed as a source of wealth
For paying lobola, sources of food

3. Trade

There was trade with outsiders were ivory, grain, gold, cattle were exchanged for cloth, beads and guns

4. Raiding

There economy was based on raiding neighbouring areas especially the Shona.
Raids yielded wealth such as grain and cattle

5. Tribute

Wealth was also as a result of tribute paid by subjects and subdued state who paid to avoid to be raided.

6. Mining

They mined different mineral i.e. gold ore, iron ore and copper ore.

7. Smithing

They made iron tools such as hoes, spear, arrows, etc.

Social Organization

Zanzi

They were pure Nguni or pure Khumalo groups who came from Nguniland or Zulu land.
Zanzi class provided the ruling class
They formed 15 % of the population of Zimbabwe.

Enhla

These were the Sotho and Tswana elements who were incorporated in South Africa

Hole

These were the elements of shona who were conquered and incorporated into the Ndebele society to form the lowest class

A form of caste was maintained with lower class, men prohibited to marry upper class woman.

Some social structure was maintained in the regimental sector and lower class people were only allowed to rise in the military ranks.

The Ndebele had four regimental towns e.g. Amhlope Makanda, Ninyama Igaba

Did the economic factors strengthen the state

Raids and payments of tribute allowed the Ndebele to maintain their hold over the area. The Ndebele system of leaving some of their riches e.g. cattle in the care of helpers helped to maintain their authority.

The King's control and use of cattle helped to maintain political authorities e.g. cattle for rewarding good sub chiefs to supply the need with food and manure its supply the army with food and for some to pay lobola