

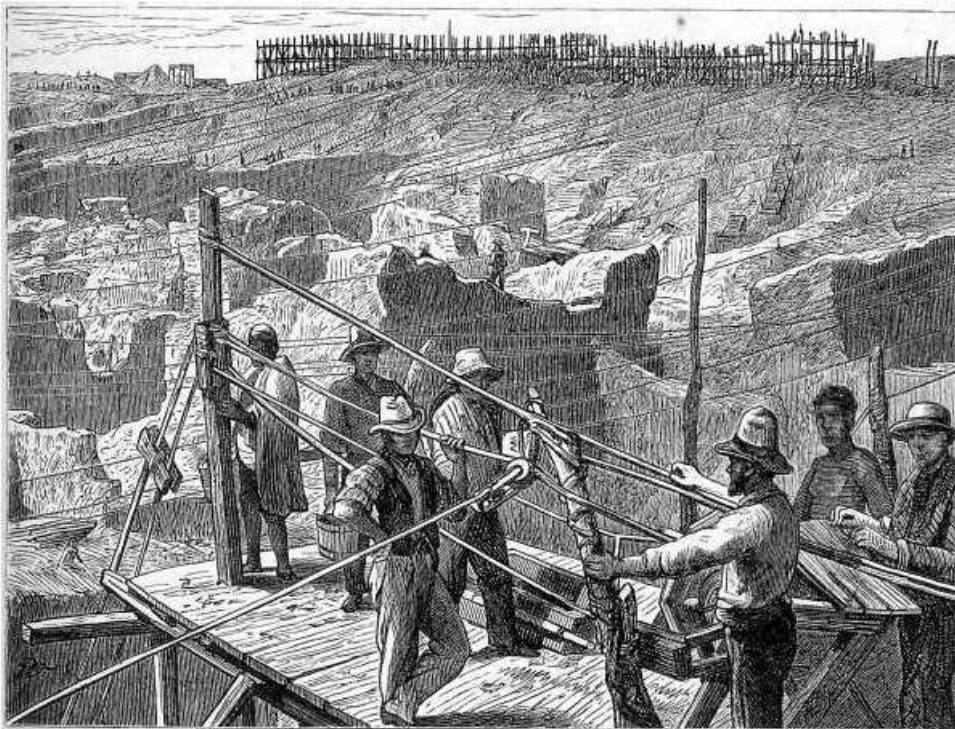
Excerpt from: Ben Magubane, *Social Construction of Race and Citizenship in South Africa* (Durban 2001)

The 'revolution' that the mineral discoveries caused, led to an ideological shift. Instead of 'pessimistic' talk about "native extinction" there was now talk about the importance of labour as a civilizing agent. Anthony Trollope (1973:368), the British novelist, who witnessed what he called these "black ants" (i.e. black miners hard at work in the Big Hole in Kimberley), was hypnotized by what he saw. The prospect of future use of African labour power in the mines and other industries that the exploitation of the minerals generally spawned he now saw as key to the future of Southern Africa. Waxing eloquent about the virtues of work as a civilizing agent, he wrote:

10 Who can doubt that work is the great civilizer of the world — work and the growing desire for those good things which work will only bring? If there be one who does, he should come here to see now those dusky troops of labourers, who ten years since were living in the wildest state of unalloyed savagery, whose only occupation was slaughter of each other in tribal wars, each of whom was the slave of his Chief, who were subject to domination of most brutalizing and cruel superstitions, have already put themselves on the path towards civilization. They are thieves, no doubt — that is, they steal diamonds though not often other things. They do not yet care much about breeches. They do not go to school. But
15 they are orderly. They come to work at six in the morning and go away at six in the evening.

These observations prefigure the arguments to be made later by Wimot (1898) and John Buchan (1903) on the importance of 'civilizing' and 'developing' the natives through sweated labour. In a paragraph before the above, Trollope, after criticizing the slowness of "philanthropy and religion in civilizing the savages," makes the point that "the seeker after diamonds is determined to have them [natives] because the making of his
20 fortune depends on them; and the Kaffir himself is determined to come to Kimberley because he has learned the loveliness of 10s. a week, paid regularly into his hand every Saturday night." (Ibid.).

The rapid development of diamond-mining industry required the final defeat of African kingdoms and chiefdoms. And this was achieved in a series of brutal wars that culminated in the crushing of the tax revolt 1906-8 by the Bambata [Zulu tribe]. With the crushing of the Bambatha Rebellion white supremacy became
25 an established fact throughout the four provinces. Following the defeat of the Boer Republics in 1899-1902, British hegemony was now a fact. It was reinforced by the "doctrine of white supremacy as a governing race" principle. This doctrine emphasized the fitness of Britons to rule inferior races by virtue of their "moral superiority" and their understanding of the rule of law. An institutionalized philosophical racialism became increasingly important as a rationale for constituting the 'native' as a subject race. And "Empire became a
30 necessary component of British nationalism in a way that it had never been central to English patriotism." (Bayly 1989:109)



Die Kimberley-Kopje im Jahre 1872 (Gutenberg.org)

Assignment: List the reasons for the emergence of racism in South Africa and draw conclusions from the given hints about the working conditions of black labourers. (Do not forget to work with your dictionary in your first approach to the text.)