

Colonial Empires and Armies 1815-1960



The empire builders of the 19th and 20th centuries conquered in the name of civilisation, and of bringing modernity and stability to the benighted peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. In reality, these empires were built through force and naked terror, and left behind bitter legacies which continue to plague the descendents of both colonisers and the colonised. In this now classic study, Victor Kiernan provides an overarching account of the many conflicts which shaped Europe's empires. Beginning in 1815 with the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, Kiernan's wide-ranging book stretches from the Indian mutiny and the scramble for Africa to the World Wars and the struggles of the post-war era. Fascinating sketches of colonial life are interwoven with an incisive analysis of the ideology of imperialism and its civilising mission, as well as a riveting account of how changes in the balance of power allowed anti-colonial liberation movements to seize the initiative in the wake of the Second World War. Colonial Empires and Armies remains an indispensable study of how these imperial conflicts continue to shape our world.

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