

## The Colonial Way of War

The violence of colonial wars between 1890 and 1914 is often thought to have been uniquely shaped by the nature of each of the European empires. This book argues instead that these wars' extreme violence was part of a shared 'colonial way of war'. Through detailed study of British, German and Dutch colonial wars, Tom Menger reveals the transimperial connectivity of *fin-de-siècle* colonial violence, including practices of scorched earth and extermination, such as the Herero Genocide (1904–1908). He explores how shared thought and practices arose from exchanges and transfers between actors of different empires, both Europeans and non-Europeans. These transfers can be traced in military manuals and other literature, but most notably in the transimperial mobility of military attachés, regular soldiers, settlers and 'adventurers'. Pioneering in its scope, Menger's work rethinks the supposed exceptionality of standout cases of colonial violence and more broadly challenges conceptions we have of imperial connectivity.

Tom Menger is a postdoctoral researcher at Ludwig Maximilians University Munich and a historian of empire, transimperiality and colonial violence in the period between c.1870 and 1914.

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# The Colonial Way of War

*Violence and Colonial Warfare in the British,  
German and Dutch Empires, c.1890–1914*

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Tom Menger

*Ludwig Maximilians University Munich*



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## A Note on Language

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Writing about the British, German and Dutch Empires in English represents, in a way, another instance of ‘centring’ the British Empire. Nevertheless, I have tried to be attentive to the slightly different meanings and connotations that comparable words might have in their respective languages. Some terms, after a discussion of their meaning, I have also chosen to continue to use untranslated. In translations of quotes, I have generally opted to privilege closeness to the original over ease of reading. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

Geographical names are another difficulty. Colonial sources mostly demonstrate an erratic and highly variable spelling of indigenous place names. Generally I use the modern, postcolonial spellings of these place names. I also do this in quotes I translated; in untranslated quotes, however, I have opted to keep the original, as long as it is clear what place it refers to. Where I was unable to determine the reference, I was forced to keep the original spelling. In a few cases where geographical indications have changed not just their spelling but their complete name, I stick to the colonial-era indication for the sake of congruence with the sources quoted.

As with geographical names, where I translate non-European words that are used in quotes stemming from Europeans, I also use their modern, indigenised spelling. The reader should be aware, however, that the meaning Europeans ascribed to these words was not always congruent with their meaning(s) in the language of origin.

Finally, perhaps unnecessarily, I want to point out that quotes in this book reflect *fin-de-siècle* racial discourse and racism. In an argument that revolves so much around several historical forms of racialisation and racial denigration, this is also bound to be reflected in a considerable number of the (translated) quotes. Nevertheless, it might not be out of place here to warn that these quotes might be experienced as offensive and hurtful.

## Abbreviations

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ÄOS	<i>Ältester Offizier der ostafrikanischen Station</i> , senior officer of the German East African naval station
BSAC	British South Africa Company
BSAP	British South Africa Police, Rhodesia
CO	Colonial Office, Great Britain
CR I/II	Commissioner Sir David Chalmers's reports on the Sierra Leone Protectorate 1898, see Bibliography, Parliamentary Papers
CS	Colonial Secretary (in Sierra Leone, the highest official after the Governor)
DC	(Imperial) Deputy Commissioner (Rhodesia)
DiC	District Commissioner (Sierra Leone)
FO	Foreign Office, Great Britain
F.P.	Frontier Police, Sierra Leone
FSR	<i>Field Service Regulations</i> (official printed regulations of the British Army)
GEA	German East Africa
GSWA	German South West Africa
HC	High Commissioner for South Africa
IMT	<i>Indisch Militair Tijdschrift</i> , (Netherlands) Indies Military Journal
KA	<i>Kolonial-Abteilung</i> , Colonial Department of the German Foreign Office; upgraded in 1907 to an autonomous department as <i>Reichskolonialamt</i> (RKA)
KNIL	<i>Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger</i> , Royal Netherlands Indies Army
M.R.F.	Matabeleland Relief Force
MWB	<i>Militär-Wochenblatt</i> , German military weekly
n.a.	no author
O.C.T.	Officer Commanding Troops
RKA	See KA above
RUSI	Royal United Service Institution, Great Britain
WO	War Office, Great Britain