

Colonial Concentration Camps In Southern Africa 1900-1908: War And Genocide



A Sad Fiasco: Colonial Concentration Camps in Southern Africa, 1900–1908 (War and Genocide Book 29) by Jonas Kreienbaum

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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The early 20th century witnessed one of the darkest chapters in the history of Southern Africa: the Boer War and the establishment of colonial concentration camps. These camps, designed to control and suppress the Boer population, subjected civilians, especially women and children, to inhumane and deplorable conditions.

The Boer War and British Policy

The Boer War (1899-1902) was a conflict between the British Empire and Boer republics in South Africa. As the war intensified, the British, under Lord Kitchener's command, adopted a scorched-earth policy, systematically destroying Boer farms and rounding up civilians into concentration camps.

Concentration Camps: A System of Control

Initially intended as temporary shelters, the concentration camps evolved into permanent sites of confinement. They were overcrowded, unsanitary, lacked adequate food and medical care, and were often overcrowded. The conditions were particularly devastating for women and children, who constituted the majority of the camp inmates.

Horrific Living Conditions

Inmates in the concentration camps endured unimaginable suffering. Disease spread rampant, with typhoid, dysentery, measles, and other illnesses claiming countless lives. Food was scarce and of poor quality, leading to widespread malnutrition. Sanitation was appalling, resulting in deplorable hygienic conditions.

Death and Devastation

The death toll in the concentration camps was staggering. In the largest camp in Bloemfontein, for example, over 4,000 children died. Women were subjected to sexual abuse and forced labor. The camps became symbols of British brutality and the horrors of war.

Aftermath and Legacy

The Boer War and the concentration camps left an enduring legacy on Southern Africa. The camps fueled anti-British sentiment and contributed to the growth of Afrikaner nationalism. The experience of women and children in the camps also had a profound impact on the development of women's rights movements.

The existence of colonial concentration camps in Southern Africa was a dark stain on the history of the British Empire. The camps were a cruel form of collective punishment that resulted in the suffering and deaths of countless civilians. This chapter of history serves as a grim reminder of the horrors of war and the enduring impact of colonialism.

Image Sources

1. Image 1
2. Image 2
3. Image 3



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