

The Watch on the Rhine

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Résumé ou extrait : The Rhineland, scene of European conflict for generations, remained an intensely contentious area following the end of the hostilities of World War I. Under the Treaty of Versailles, the Rhineland remained German but was to be occupied by Allied troops for fifteen years - a controversial and uncomfortable situation that inevitably caused great friction between rival European powers. "The Watch on the Rhine" deals with this eventful period of German history and the actions of the Inter-Allied Rhineland High Commission, which was set up to administer the Allied armies from its headquarters at Koblenz. The victorious allies - Britain, the USA, France and Belgium - were to occupy, respectively, the three bridgeheads of the Rhine at Cologne, Koblenz and Mainz and at Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen), with three High Commissioners, British, Belgian and French, but with no American as the USA had not signed the treaty. The author's father, James Herbertson, after serving with distinction in the trenches on the Western Front, was, as a skilled linguist, appointed to the High Commission as Political Officer to the British High Commissioner, whom he later succeeded. The High Commission was wound up following American withdrawal of support and final Allied evacuation by 1930. The reoccupation of the Rhineland by Hitler in 1936 was only a matter of time - as is foreshadowed in this insightful personal history. Drawing on personal memories of her own years spent in the British zone and on the Annual Reports of the High Commission, in which her father played a prominent part, Margaret Pawley provides a unique insider view of its work up to its disbandment. She vividly evokes the atmosphere of growing resentment at the continuing occupation of German soil and the rise of Hitler that was to lead inexorably to his re-militarisation of the Rhineland in 1936

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