

# Occupation after the War (Belgium and France)

By [Anne Godfroid](#)

The Armistice agreement foresaw the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, the dates of which were set by the Treaty of Versailles. The inter-allied occupation was a long-term endeavour: the French settled in the south and the Belgians in the north of the Rhine basin. Relations were established between the occupying forces and occupied communities, both of whom were involved in a slow process of cultural demobilization. Their interaction continued to be marred by violence, which peaked in 1923 during the invasion of the Ruhr or “*Ruhrkampf*”. Normalization in the relations between these former belligerents, and their peaceful cohabitation along the Rhine finally began ten years after the August 1914 declaration of war.

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## Introduction

Leaders in [France](#) quickly began thinking about the [war aims](#) of the Republic.<sup>[1]</sup> While there was immediate consensus surrounding the reintegration of [Alsace-Lorraine](#), the same was not true of the border regions located to the east of France.<sup>[2]</sup> Regardless the recommended status – all out annexation, prolonged occupation or a disguised protectorate –, most of the actors involved agreed that these areas should come under French territorial and economic influence.<sup>[3]</sup> In the end, to garner the widest possible support, including from the Americans and British, the *Mémoire du gouvernement français sur la fixation au Rhin de la frontière occidentale de l'Allemagne*, which was placed on the negotiating table in February 1919, officially called only for a temporary, inter-Allied military presence.<sup>[4]</sup>

In [Belgium](#), thought about [war aims](#) was focused on moving away from guaranteed [neutrality](#) – an option that would have involved territorial adjustment in favour of the Netherlands, [Luxembourg](#) and [Germany](#) –; such territorial expansion was a thorn in the heel of international authorities who were unable to agree on the subject.<sup>[5]</sup> Just after the Armistice, a pressure group, the *Comité de Politique nationale* (CPN) – a watered-down version of the *Comité pour la Rive gauche du Rhin* – became an apologist for “Great Belgium”: it defended an ambitious programme<sup>[6]</sup> that diverged from the [government's](#) official, measured line.

Ultimately, Belgium suffered a serious diplomatic blow in [Versailles](#): the eastern cantons were a mediocre consolation prize for its Luxembourgish and Dutch aspirations. With regard to the Rhineland, the Belgians cautiously agreed to take part in the military occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, but were wary of being drawn under French military, political and economic influence. For the French, the overall outcome was positive: the military occupation opened the door to a sustainable presence in the Rhineland, which could as such shift into France's sphere of influence.

## Penetrating Enemy Territory (December 1918 – June 1919)

The Armistice agreement suspended hostilities while the negotiations lasted and laid out the conditions for the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, which was a strategic imperative as much as a symbolic issue. Maréchal [Ferdinand Foch \(1851-1929\)](#), the supreme commander of the Allied occupation forces in the Rhenish territories, was in charge of the advancement of troops and their stationing. From 1 to 17 December 1918,<sup>[7]</sup> the Belgians, British, Americans and French marched on Germany and took position: together they occupied 6.5 percent of Germany's total surface area, a zone inhabited by some 7,000,000 people. French units set up in the south (Saarland, Palatinate and Mainz), on 75 percent of the occupied territory, while Belgian troops settled in the lower Rhine valley (Aachen sector), which made up about 10 percent of the occupied territory.

The German population was incredulous to such military to-ing and fro-ing. The gradual occupation of German territory did not occur at random. There were rituals that succeeded each other based on a well-rehearsed scenario; marches were planned and enacted in a calculated manner; and

important local spots were decked out in the victors' colours. Everything was done to show that the country and urban space had been claimed. Speeches to notables were chocked full of clichés justifying the occupation for moral reasons and condoning the victory of Law, thus perpetuating a *de facto* continuity with the culture of war.

On the ground, power remained exclusively in military hands and a state of siege was proclaimed to protect public order and the safety of the occupying army. Measures were taken to considerably curb the freedom of movement, association and expression of inhabitants; the threat of execution was brandished over potential offenders – and hostages. The population reacted in different ways to such measures, which were at times strictly adhered to and at other times applied with discernment. Over time, they were relaxed somewhat.<sup>[8]</sup>

France wanted to shape the political thrust of the operation and thus quickly acquired the tools necessary to control the administrative and economic aspects of life in the occupied territories. Its partners were, however, quite concerned with France's prominence in the region and voiced their concerns following which they secured the replacement of the French apparatus with an inter-Allied administration, a precursor to the Inter-Allied Rhineland High Commission.<sup>[9]</sup>

Hostilities were only temporarily suspended during the peace talks and there was a serious risk of the conflict igniting again. With over 220,000 Frenchmen and 20,000 Belgians on the ground, the tension was palpable. A defence plan was established and preparations were made for its implementation. As the conditions of the treaty became known in the spring of 1919, the population roused itself. People rallied and protested against the severity of the treaty.<sup>[10]</sup> The German delegation was loath to sign. On the ground, the occupying troops began to move and assembled around the points of entry to the right bank. Tension was at its utmost in mid-June 1919, particularly as the partisans of Rhenish independence attempted to harness the situation to advance their political cause. They had the support of some French officers who (rightly or wrongly) believed they were anticipating the goals of the Republic.<sup>[11]</sup> Diverging points of view – and conflicts of interest – emerged between the occupying forces on this topic. In the end, the separatist movement was crushed and a surface-thin sense of collegiality was restored.

## Living Face to Face (July 1919 – December 1922)

Once the peace treaty was signed, the occupation became a long-term affair and the period of face-to-face living truly began. The regime implemented by the Rhineland Agreement that was annexed to the Treaty transferred full powers to civilian authorities. On 10 January 1920, the Inter-Allied Rhineland High Commission assumed its duties. From its headquarters in Koblenz, it governed by decree over all facets of the occupation, from the most trivial to most crucial details. Under the presidency of Frenchman Paul Tirard (1879-1945), representatives from the occupying powers, including Belgian Edouard Rolin-Jaequemyns (1863-1936), debated – at times heatedly – and legislated.<sup>[12]</sup> The occupying troops, whose numbers had been scaled back (94,000 French and

16,000 Belgians in February 1920)<sup>[13]</sup>, were the armed branch whose job it was to maintain order and security on the ground.

The primacy of civilian over military authority was the source of some discord between the different parties. For the Belgians, this occasionally escalated to the point that Brussels had to intervene.<sup>[14]</sup> Sustainably influenced by the culture of war, troops and the officer corps shared an unshakable spirit and indeed found themselves at loggerheads with the principles of “pacific penetration”<sup>[15]</sup> very discretely implemented by Rolin-Jaequemyns based on the French model. The latter tried to follow the policy of cultural infiltration advocated by Tirard, applying it to his own Belgian way (with limited means and little support).<sup>[16]</sup> Unlike France, however, he could not count on support from “command [of the occupying army] which does not appear to have the political spirit necessary to accomplish its task.”<sup>[17]</sup> In an attempt to circumvent such issues, a Centre for Germanic Studies was opened in the French zone to offer French field officers and Inter-Allied Rhineland High Commission agents combined training into the different facets of France’s Rhineland policy.<sup>[18]</sup>

In the field, soldiers were put up in barracks and camps that had been deserted by the *Reichswehr*. Public buildings were further requisitioned and outfitted to palliate the lack of accommodation. Local authorities were made to pay for the construction of additional billeting facilities. Accommodation in private homes also ballooned (mainly for officers and officials who were accompanied by their families). Cities quickly began to resemble garrison towns: everything was in place for the running, supplying, training and entertaining of troop life. Some cities like Aachen, for example, quickly became congested.<sup>[19]</sup> Such over-population disrupted the daily lives of inhabitants and had predictable consequences, which further exacerbated the underlying tension between the French and Belgians, and the Germans. Shows of force became legion: from simple altercations to assault and battery, both physical and symbolic violence permeated relations between the occupying forces and the occupied, particularly in urban areas.<sup>[20]</sup> And yet not all interaction was necessarily mired in violence; some encouraged fraternisation in the broadest sense of the term. The boundary between the occupying and occupied communities was not airtight, despite measures taken to limit interaction between the two – particularly sentimental. The Belgian authorities were most opposed to any type of rapprochement.<sup>[21]</sup> Until 1925, they forced to resign all soldiers who planned a mixed marriage; after this date, soldiers were required to submit their requests for detailed examination, and approval was granted on a case-by-case basis. According to its High Commissioner, the French army was somewhat more liberal and benevolent, granting approval quite easily after a moral investigation into the bride and her family had been conducted.<sup>[22]</sup> Given all of the obstacles in their paths, not all couples chose to officialise their relationships. Some opted for cohabitation, which occurred more or less discretely due to the ambient sense of moral disapproval. Germans were stigmatized within their own community and were even at times physically attacked (e.g. faces smeared with wax, hair cut off).<sup>[23]</sup> In an attempt at economic salvation, some women put aside the risk of shame and resorted to prostitution. Despite their efforts (e.g. opening brothels), military authorities never

managed to put a stop to such occasional prostitution. German society in turn feared for the degeneracy of the race via the mixing of blood with soldiers of colour. This was the obsessive fear behind the “black shame”<sup>[24]</sup> (“[schwarze Schmach](#)”) that targeted French colonial troops.<sup>[25]</sup>

Since 1918, indigenous soldiers from [North Africa](#), Madagascar and Senegal had participated in the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine. Their presence was felt to be a supreme humiliation, a kind of reversed colonialism that allowed men of colour (deemed inferior) to watch over white men (deemed to be civilized). While at first the protests against this violation of civilization were diffident and dispersed, they gradually spread and gained momentum. Indignation gave way to genuine concern, then hysteria, as rumours spread that “Negroes” gave free reign to their sexual impulses and would not hesitate to prey on young German girls. This propaganda campaign was brilliantly orchestrated and, in April 1920, was picked up in the foreign media, thus leading to outcries across the Western world and particularly in English-speaking countries. There was an intense and violent battle for public opinion at the national and international level that lasted until 1923; it condemned the bestiality of colonial troops and demanded their retreat from the occupied territories. France’s response to this storm was ambiguous: it denied the claims, but nonetheless withdrew its men, thus lending credence to the suspicion surrounding these outrageous allegations. The “black shame” eventually tapered off with the occupation of the Ruhr which shifted the focus of German propaganda efforts to a new target.

## The Period of Confrontation (January 1923 – August 1924)

After the failure of the London Conference, which sanctified the “*mésentente cordiale*” (August 1922), France again threatened to [occupy the Ruhr basin](#) based on Germany’s failure to pay its reparations. A blitz operation had been conducted on Düsseldorf and Duisburg-Ruhrort in 1921 and, under the combined pressure of the Allies, Germany had conceded. The Allies were no longer unanimous this time, however, and differences in opinion led to separate action taken by several different parties.<sup>[26]</sup> France took control of the operations and Belgium followed suit. Despite not wanting to appear subservient to the French, Belgium – which distrusted the French penchant for encircling – felt that it had no other choice.<sup>[27]</sup> In the end, it sent nearly 6,000 men to swell the French ranks, which were ten times more numerous. This intervention – referred to in some of the [German historiography](#) under the name *Ruhrkampf* – was a relational apotheosis between France, Belgium and Germany and was perceived as a throwback to the Great War. At the international level, it was also a breaking point in post-war relations.<sup>[28]</sup>

On 11 January 1923, French and Belgian troops entered the Ruhr: officially, they were there to protect members of the MICUM (Inter-allied mission for the control of factories and mines). Within five days, they had occupied Essen, Bochum and Dortmund. The population remained relatively calm as people watched the troops advance. Yet, within a few days, passive resistance went from being spontaneous to methodically and sustainably organized under the impetus of Berlin. By late February, it had completely paralyzed the railroad and water networks, as well as scaled back

industrial activity across all of the occupied territories. The German reaction took the French by surprise; fearful of compromising their Rhenish policy, the latter were hesitant to take drastic measures. They were pressured to be firm and rigorous by the Belgians, who were counting on a short occupation and feared getting bogged down in a politically-motivated operation.

The occupied population retaliated and a state of siege was declared. An arsenal of measures was implemented to repress, control and exploit; tension rose. The number of skirmishes skyrocketed and turned to bloody confrontation. A routine intervention at the Krupp factories in Essen on 31 March killed thirteen people and wounded several dozen workers. Germany used and abused in intense, violent propaganda to condemn the “reign of terror” (“*Schreckensherrschaft*”)<sup>[29]</sup> created by the French and Belgian troops.<sup>[30]</sup> By playing the victim, Germany hoped to mobilize the local population and win empathy from abroad, particularly from neutral states. Articles in the press, brochures, pamphlets and posters listed – and often exaggerated and criticized – the acts of violence perpetrated by soldiers. Those targeted by such propaganda denied the charges and in turn laid blame when they were the victims of attacks and acts of sabotage. Several hundred such acts were indeed committed, mainly against railroad lines and communications networks. The most deadly of these attacks struck a train full of Belgian soldiers on leave as it was leaving the station in Hochfeld on the night of 29 to 30 June. The attack killed twelve men and wounded dozens of others. It marked a culmination in the violence, whose overall total is hard to tally. In retaliation, individual and collective sanctions were implemented but caused controversy given how closely they resembled those imposed by the occupier during the war (e.g. the use of human shields on board convoys).<sup>[31]</sup> By the summer of 1923, things began to calm down.

Indeed, the passive resistance movement failed to reach its goals and began to clearly lose momentum; lassitude and despondency took hold of inhabitants who gradually dissociated themselves from the terrorist acts committed mainly by paramilitary and nationalist groups from non-occupied Germany. By late September, the authorities in Berlin began to criticize the active resistance movement and called for the end of passive resistance. The occupying forces gradually loosened up on discipline. Deportations, which in nine months had affected roughly 140,000 people<sup>[32]</sup> on both the right and left banks of the Rhine, were suspended. Amnesty measures gradually allowed those affected to return.

In the end, despite a semblance of harmony and solidarity with the French forces on the ground, the occupation only increased Belgium’s distrust of France’s appetency. While France’s Rhenish ambitions were placed on the back burner in the summer of 1919, they were revived in the spring. They materialized over the summer via projects that aimed, for example, to give the region its own currency and an autonomous railroad network. Belgium distrusted these initiatives which underscored the French desire to sustainably establish itself in the region,<sup>[33]</sup> although the failure of the separatist uprising that broke out in October put an end to such French aspirations.



## A Period of Détente (Starting in August 1924)

In 1924 and 1925, the occupation of the Ruhr as productive collateral continued, but was increasingly invisible. At the same time, the policy of conciliation promoted by [England](#) resulted – with financial help from the [United States](#) – in the elaboration of the Dawes Plan. Approved in London in August 1924, it laid out a rescheduling of reparations and ushered in a period of détente in relations with Germany which was further reinforced the following year by the Locarno Treaties. A policy of appeasement replaced the policy of constraint. On 1 August 1925, the last French and Belgian soldiers left the right bank of the Rhine. On the heels of this, the evacuation of the zone around Cologne was prepared, along with a reshuffling of cards among the Allies and a major scale back in the number of troops still posted on the left bank of the river. From this point forward, only a policy of presence was ensured. And yet despite the diplomatic calm of 1924-1925, the symbolic struggle persisted. The “millennium celebrations” (*“rheinische Jahrtausendfeier”*), in full swing along the banks of the Rhine in 1925, were an opportunity to reaffirm the German-ness of the region and erase the boundary between the two banks of the river created by the occupation.<sup>[34]</sup>

In 1930, French and Belgian troops left the territories of the Rhineland five years earlier than the dates stipulated in the Treaty of Versailles. This retreat led to “liberation celebrations” in all of the garrison towns, which appear to further point up the shallow rooting of the spirit of Locarno amongst the “deep forces” of the affected societies.<sup>[35]</sup>

## Conclusion

In all, the French and Belgian presence along the banks of the Rhine lasted twelve years. Between 1919 and 1924, the soldiers and government officials of the occupying forces were less than eager to compromise with those still considered by many to be their historical enemies. Leveraging a balance of power that was temporarily in their favour, they enforced the treaty to a tee and hinged the issue of security on that of reparations. The atmosphere on the ground was tarnished by the war culture that was struggling to dissipate.<sup>[36]</sup> Episodes that were sometimes extremely violent continued to sully relations with Germany. This war after the war – which was in reality just its continuation – came to an end only after the failure of the invasion of the Ruhr in late 1923. The initiation of the Dawes Plan in 1924 ushered in a period of appeasement in international relations. The idea of a security pact progressed and resulted in the signing of the Locarno treaties in 1925. France, Germany and Belgium recognized their shared border and agreed to not modify it by force. Ten years after the August 1914 declaration of war, cultural demobilization was finally able to begin, alongside a move away from violence in international relations and within belligerent societies. Locarno truly marked the end of the First World War and the start of a period of fragile stabilization that lasted until the dawn of the 1930s.

Anne Godfroid, Musée Royal de l'Armée

## Notes

1. ↑ According to the Treaty of Versailles, some German regions, including the Saarland and Upper Silesia, were subject to a plebiscite on self-determination. Troops under a League of Nations mandate were stationed in order to keep the peace. France played a central role: it used these mandates to broaden its influence over German territory. *Stricto sensu*, this was not an occupation, although the military presence was often perceived as such by the population. Beaupré, Nicolas: *Le traumatisme de la Grande Guerre. 1918-1933*, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2012, pp. 155ff.
2. ↑ Lowczyk, Olivier: *La fabrique de la paix. Du Comité d'Etudes à la Conférence de la paix, l'élaboration par la France des traités de la Première Guerre mondiale*, Paris 2010, p.18.
3. ↑ On the importance and continuity of war aims, see for example, Soutou, Georges-Henri: *La France et les marches de l'Est. 1914-1919*, in: *Revue historique* 528 (1978), pp. 342-388 and Lowczyk, Olivier: *La fabrique de la paix* 2010, pp.129-177.
4. ↑ Soutou, Georges-Henri: *L'or et le sang. Les buts de guerre économiques de la Première Guerre mondiale*, Paris 1989, pp. 789-790.
5. ↑ On the challenges of establishing war aims upon which a large majority could agree, see the unpublished Master's thesis: De Waele, Maria: *Naar een groter België! De Belgische territoriale eisen tijdens en na de Eerste Wereldoorlog. Een onderzoek naar de doeleinden, de besluitvorming, de realisatiemiddelen en de propagandavoering van de buitenlandse politiek* [Towards a greater Belgium! The Belgian territorial claims during and after the First World War. An inquiry into the aims, policy-making, means of implementation and propaganda making of foreign policy], Gent RUG 1989, pp. 201-270.
6. ↑ Beaufays, Jean: *Aspect du nationalisme belge au lendemain de la Grande guerre*, in: *Annales de la faculté de droit de l'université de Liège*, 1-2 (1971), pp. 105-171, and more specifically pp. 114-118. *The Comité de politique nationale* (CPN) called for a military occupation of all of Germany and the establishment of an autonomous Rhenish State. Some CPN supporters were also involved in the separatist movement that gripped the region from 1919 to 1924.
7. ↑ "Historique sommaire de l'occupation des territoires rhénans par les armées alliées", written by the General Staff of the Army of the Rhine on the orders of General Guillaumat (December 1918-June 1930), Mainz 1930, pp. 1-2. The Armistice agreement set 1 December as the date of entry for occupation forces to move into German territory. It appears, however, that some Allied units crossed the border in the days leading up to this date. Hermanns, Will: *Stadt in Ketten. Geschichte der Besatzungs- und Separatistenzeit in und um Aachen, 1918-1929*, Aachen 1933, p. 46.



8. ↑ In his 1 February 1919 report to the General Staff, General Michel, the Commander in Chief of the Belgian contingent, reported that, "Given that the entry of the first troops into Rhenish territory was unexpectedly moved up by several days and given that we were still unsure about how the German population would react, the first statements to inhabitants were quite severe. They were corrected thereafter, once the good will and correct attitude of the population was observed". MRA, Moscow Archives, 185-14-6924. Despite this détente, the Belgian occupation troops were reputed to be the most severe and, for this reason, were the most despised. Marks, Sally : Innocent abroad. Belgium at the Paris peace conference of 1919, Chapel Hill 1981, p. 114.
9. ↑ On 12 November 1918, Foch created within his General Staff the "*Contrôle général des Administrations civiles dans les territoires occupés*" which, in April 1919, became the Inter-Allied Rhineland Commission. Bariety, Jacques: La Haute Commission interalliée des Territoires Rhénans, in: Problèmes de la Rhénanie. 1919-1930, Metz 1975, pp. 17-19.
10. ↑ In the cities of Bonn and Cologne (in the occupied zone) and Essen and Düsseldorf (in the non-occupied zone), eighty-four organized protests against the Treaty of Versailles were recorded between 7 May and 28 June 1919. Voelker, Judith: "Unerträglich, unerfüllbar und deshalb unannehmbar". Kollektiver Protest gegen Versailles im Rheinland in den Monaten Mai und Juni 1919, in: Dülffer, Jost / Krumeich, Gerd: Der verlorene Frieden. Politik und Kriegskultur nach 1918, Essen 2002, p. 230.
11. ↑ Jardin, Pierre, L'occupation française en Rhénanie, 1918-1919. Fayolle et l'idée palatine, in: Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, 33 (1986), p. 410.
12. ↑ Over the course of its twelve years of existence, the Inter-Allied Rhineland High Commission promulgated 319 orders and took over 14,000 decisions. Its president, Paul Tirard, boasted in his memoirs of the "ties of respect and friendship that united the high commissioners of the Allied powers" and that allowed the High Commission to take decisions based on the unanimity of its members; he also boasted of the good relations forged with leaders of the military occupation. The archives nuance this panegyric somewhat. Tirard, Paul: La France sur le Rhin. Douze années d'occupation rhénane, Paris 1930, pp. 213-214, translated by JS.
13. ↑ "Courbes des effectifs des troupes alliées d'occupation (de 1919 à 1930)" in Historique sommaire, Annexe C.
14. ↑ Mignon, Nicolas: L'occupant au pluriel. Autorités civiles et militaires belges sur la rive droite du Rhin (1921-1925), in: Tallier, Pierre-Alain / Nefors, Patrick: Quand les canons se taisent, Brussels 2010, pp. 141-143.
15. ↑ This expression and its definition may be found in Tirard, Paul: Rapport sur l'administration des territoires occupés de la rive gauche du Rhin pendant l'armistice, quoted by Possehl, Ingunn: Der Regierungsbezirk Aachen vom Kriegsende bis zum Dawes-Abkommen (1917-1924), Aachen 1975, p. 158.
16. ↑ On Tirard's general conception of France's Rhineland policy, see Jardin, Pierre: La politique rhénane de Paul Tirard, in: Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande 21/2 (1989), pp. 208-216. With regard to its cultural aspects more specifically, see Brunn, Gerd: Französische Kulturpolitik in den Rheinlanden nach 1918 und die Wiesbadener Kunstaustellung der Jahres 1921, in: Hüttenberger, Peter / Molitor, Hansgeorg (eds.): Franzosen und Deutsche am Rhein. 1789-1918-1945, Essen 1989, pp. 219-241.
17. ↑ Note to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 06/12/1922. MAEB, Rhenish Questions, B 351, translated by JS.
18. ↑ Defrance, Corine: Sentinelle ou pont sur le Rhin? Le Centre d'Etudes germaniques, Paris 2008, p. 82.

19. ↑ According to German sources, nearly 2,800 facilities of all sorts were requisitioned in Aachen in 1919 and 1920. This number doubled in 1923, when roughly 2,700 people were further billeted in private homes. Stadtarchiv, 80: Aachen unter Besatzung, 9-11. According to Belgian sources, 1,065 dwellings were requisitioned in March 1922. MRA, Moscow Archives, 185-14-3532.
20. ↑ Jeannesson, Stanislas: Übergriffe der fanzösischen Besatzungsmacht und deutsche Beschwerden, in: Krumeich, Gerd/Schröder, Joachim (eds.): Der Schatten des Weltkriegs. Die Ruhrbesetzung 1923, Essen 2004, pp. 207-224. On the sexual violence perpetrated in the Belgian zone, see also Godfroid, Anne: Une 'furor belgica' en Rhénanie occupée. Réalité ou fantasme, in: Virgili, Fabrice / Branche, Raphaëlle (eds.): Viols en temps de guerre, Paris 2011, pp. 95-106.
21. ↑ Mignon, Nicolas: Boche, ex-ennemie ou simplement femme? Le point de vue des responsables politiques et militaires sur la question des mariages entre militaires belges et femmes allemandes pendant les occupations de la Rhénanie et de la Ruhr, in: Revue belge de Philosophie et d'Histoire 91 (2013), pp. 1267-1277.
22. ↑ Tirard, La France sur le Rhin 1930, p. 311. The French High Commissioner recorded 400 marriages. General Guillaumat, the last Commander-in-Chief of the occupation armies recorded 465 in 1929. Le Naour, Jean-Yves: La honte noire. L'Allemagne et les troupes coloniales françaises, 1914-1945, Paris 2003, p. 273, note 17. There are currently no figures available regarding Belgian occupation troops.
23. ↑ Cabanes, Bruno: La victoire endeuillée. La sortie de guerre des soldats français (1918-1920), Paris 2004, pp. 253-254 and Krüger, Gerd: 'Wir wachen und strafen!' Gewalt im Ruhrkampf von 1923, in: Krumeich/ Schröder (eds.): Der Schatten des Weltkriegs 2004, pp. 247-250.
24. ↑ On this topic, see: Le Naour, Jean-Yves: La honte noire. L'Allemagne et les troupes coloniales françaises 1914-1945, Paris 2003; Marks, Sally : Black Watch on the Rhine. A Study in Propaganda, Prejudice and Prurience, in: European Studies Review 13/3 (1983), pp. 297-334; Nelson, Keith: The 'Black Horror on the Rhine'. Race as a Factor in Post-World War I Diplomacy, in: The Journal of Modern History 42/4 (1970), pp. 606-627; Van Galen Last, Dick: De zwarte schande. Afrikaanse soldaten in Europa 1914-1922 [Black Shame. African soldiers in Europe 1914-1922], Amsterdam 2012; Wigger, Iris: Die 'Schwarze Schmach am Rhein'. Rassistische Diskriminierung zwischen Geschlecht, Klasse, Nation und Rasse, Münster 2006.
25. ↑ The Belgian occupation army was not affected. Indeed, in November 1919, a ministerial circular had explicitly enjoined "not to admit to action any indigenous from the colonies" and to discharge all young coloured men to civilian life.
26. ↑ Jeannesson, Stanislas: Poincaré, la France et la Ruhr (1922-1924). Histoire d'une occupation, Strasbourg 1998. On the Belgian involvement and presence, see Mignon, Nicolas: La Belgique francophone et l'occupation de la Ruhr (1923-1925), Louvain-la-Neuve 2005.
27. ↑ Depoortere, Rolande: La question des réparations allemandes dans la politique étrangère de la Belgique après la Première Guerre mondiale 1919-1925, Brussels 1997, p. 188.
28. ↑ Krumeich Gerd: Der 'Ruhrkampf' als Krieg. Überlegungen zu einem verdrängten deutsch-französischen Konflikt, in: Krumeich/Schröder (eds.), Der Schatten des Weltkriegs 2004, p. 9.
29. ↑ Krüger, 'Wir wachen und strafen!' in: Krumeich/ Schröder (eds.): Der Schatten des Weltkriegs 2004, p. 233.

30. ↑ Official German sources refer to 154 dead on both sides of the Rhine. French sources refer to 118 dead. Jeannesson, Übergriffe der französischen Besatzungsmacht 2004, p. 210. Despite a slight difference – 141 as opposed to 154 –, Gerd Krüger confirms this relatively low number of losses given the means and men deployed. Krüger, 'Wir wachen und strafen!' in: Krumeich/ Schröder (eds.): Der Schatten des Weltkriegs 2004.
31. ↑ Mignon, L'occupant au pluriel 2010, pp.139-140.
32. ↑ French and German figures differ. According to French sources, on 1 October, 4,987 sentences had been issued in the Rhineland and affected 8,500 individuals and 31,850 had been issued on the left bank, affecting 130,000 people. Jeannesson, Stanislas: Poincaré, la France et la Ruhr (1922-1924). Histoire d'une occupation, Strasbourg, 1998, p. 204. These figures are occasionally as high as 147,000 people. Bariety, Jacques: Les relations franco-allemandes après la première guerre mondiale, Paris 1977, p. 114. German sources refer to 187,671 people forced to flee from their homes, including 172,006 in the occupied territories. Favez, Jean-Claude: Le Reich devant l'occupation franco-belge de la Ruhr en 1923, Geneva 1969, p. 361.
33. ↑ Godfroid, Anne: Les relations franco-belges à la lumière des incidents rhénans de 1923, in: Actes du Congrès de l'Association des Cercles francophones d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Belgique, Namur 2011, pp. 101-110.
34. ↑ Wein, Franziska: Deutschland Strom – Frankreichs Grenze. Geschichte und Propaganda am Rhein 1919-1930, Essen 1992, pp. 123-142.
35. ↑ Beaupré, Le traumatisme de la Grande Guerre 2012, p. 176 and p. 180.
36. ↑ Horne, John: Locarno et la politique de la démobilisation culturelle. 1925-30, in: 14-18 Aujourd'hui-Heute-Today, Paris 2002, pp. 73-87.

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