

1918-2018. Four Years of War. Hundred Years of Impact

November 1918. Finally, the guns fell silent. Yet, it was not possible to close the chapter. The world as we knew it had disappeared for good.

A new fragile world was beginning, still to be invented. It was the beginning of 'the short 20th century' as Eric Hobsbawm so eloquently put it, a phrase now appropriated by many historians.

To illustrate this complex period, the *Vif/L'Express* has published a special issue, aimed at a wide audience, which has been coordinated by Chantal Kesteloot and Laurence van Ypersele.

To evoke some of these questions, they appealed to 31 historians of all the universities of the two Belgian communities.

Each text is accompanied by one or more carefully selected images which illustrate the richness of the collections of the federal institutions. Are addressed, the topics related to the military questions, the tensions and achievements of the post-war period, the consequences of the conflict on the international level but also on society. The issue concludes with a few contributions which illustrate the memory of the war and the turning point that constitutes the 'Great Centenary'.

This issue is also the opportunity to highlight the renewal of historiography. Although it has existed since long before this anniversary, it is a fact that studies on the Great War have never been so numerous: more than thirty young historians are writing or finishing a PhD relating completely or in part to the First World War, an unprecedented phenomenon.

The publication deals with a number of questions and issues that are challenging. How did the experience of the Great War have such a profound impact on Belgian society, which went through such a particular time of war.

How did the almost total occupation of the territory shape a specific memory of this conflict? This history is not limited to our frontiers: the colonial dimensions and the peace treaties are also considered as the Great War dramatically affected the situation in this field.

In short, a history, an experience, but also a firmly plural but indispensable memory for the understanding of the history of this little but complex country.