



After the Great War. A New Europe 1918–1923

International outdoor exhibition as part of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC Programme

Square of the 111th Brigade of the Croatian Army, Rijeka
18 October – 11 November 2020

When did the First World War really end? How many new states appeared on the map? How long did the military operations continue despite the end of the war? Did being a millionaire actually mean being rich and what did the First World War change for women? The answers to these and many other questions can be found at the outdoor exhibition titled *After the Great War. A New Europe 1918–1923*, which is going to be shown in Rijeka (Croatia) between 18 October and 11 November as part of the Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture Programme. The opening of the exhibition will take place on October 20 at 11 a.m. along with a guided tour and reception.

Prepared by the **European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS)** in cooperation with an international circle of historians, the exhibition marks an attempt at summarising the tumultuous beginnings of the interwar period, with a particular emphasis on the history of East-Central Europe. The exhibition includes over 200 pieces of archival material – photographs, documents, films and maps, as well as individual testimonies.

As part of its international tour, the exhibition *After the Great War. New Europe 1918–1923* has been on display for two years now. Thus far, it has been shown in Prague (Czech Republic), Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Bratislava (Slovakia), Verdun (France), Berlin and Weimar (Germany), and in Wrocław, Krakow and Warsaw (Poland).

The abundant selection of materials showcased at the exhibition helps the visitor to better understand the unprecedented scale of the changes that took place in Europe in the period 1918–1923. The First World War (1914–1918) significantly changed the face of the continent. A dozen of new states arose from the ruins of four empires. Almost all borders were delineated anew, often through armed conflicts over the five years following the official end of the war. In a number of places, such processes came to a close as late as around 1923. As a result of tensions between different and frequently contrasting interests, a 'New Europe' emerged (a term first used by the Czechoslovakian president Tomáš G. Masaryk). Some nations perceived the results of the war as a great tragedy, whereas for others it marked a culmination in their fight for achieving independence. However, they were all faced with the challenge of post-war reconstruction and modernization efforts done in the shadows of not only the political but also social, economic, and cultural transformation processes.

'Our objective is to show that the consequences of certain phenomena from a century ago can still be felt today. By juxtaposing various interpretations of processes taking place in our region after the Great War, we can also portray the different sensitivities of individual nations, as well as the diversity of the images of the conflict imbedded in collective memory,' says **Prof. Jan Rydel**, the Polish coordinator at the ENRS, while **Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett**, one of the consultants on the exhibition text, adds: 'The exhibition

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recalls important events from a hundred years ago, helping us to realise their importance for a better understanding of not just the Second World War, but also contemporary East-Central Europe.'

The content of the display has been determined by an international circle of historians from 18 countries across the world. Other members of this group include Prof. Jay M. Winter (Yale University, USA) and Prof. Andrzej Chwalba (Poland).

More information on the project and experts involved in the preparation of the exhibition and its international tour can be found at:

www.enrs.eu/afterthegreatwar

We also recommend the video materials available at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3mposj9_bGsZEmg_157UpfEOIKRD1Xm1

Given the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, the exhibition is going to be presented with the due application of available safety measures.

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Partners:



The European Network of Remembrance and Solidarity is an international initiative whose aim is to research, document and educate the public on the history of 20th Century Europe and European cultures of remembrance, with a particular emphasis on periods of dictatorships, wars and resistance to political violence. The members of the network are: Poland, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, with representatives from Albania, Austria, the Czech Republic and Latvia, participating in the advisory bodies.

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