

The Scandinavian states remained neutral during the First World War. Only few Scandinavian citizens participated in the war on either sides. The experience of war was not communicated into societies by individuals. Instead it was the media that formed views and narrations on the war. From a Scandinavian perspective, the war was perceived as a media event.

The media's general view on the war can be described as a rather distant one. Unlike in the belligerent countries, the war was not described as a national effort or sacrifice but as a common European catastrophe.

The remembrance and memorialization of the war in Scandinavia is characterized by three intertwined cultures of memory; a national, a Scandinavian and a European one.

In Scandinavian *national* histories, the First World War appears to be a peripheral phenomenon. It is not remembered as a crucial historical turning point - as in most belligerent countries - but rather as a catalyst in a longer phase of transformation, of socioeconomic and political changes.

Nevertheless, some memorials were erected to honour and mourn the dead of the war. Most of them had been sailors who died when their merchant ships were sunk by sea mines. Some memorials in the German-Danish borderland commemorated locals who had died at the battlefronts. (The people from this area had to enlist for the German army.) Yet, they were commemorated rather on a local than on a national level. As neither individuals nor societies had to deal with traumatic experiences, the memory of wartime faded faster in Scandinavia than in the war-torn countries. Later on, the 'traumatic' experiences of the Second World War - with Denmark and Norway under German occupation - overshadowed the memory of the Great War.

From a *Scandinavian* perspective, the war helped to initialize an inter-Scandinavian cooperation that shaped the politics and national identities of the three states throughout the 20th century.

A meeting of the three Scandinavian kings in late 1914 laid the symbolic foundation. (A photograph of this event is the only picture to be found in history books of all three states.) Since then, the three states shared the concepts of external neutrality and a 'social welfare state.' (The economic regulations of the war time facilitated the adaption of this model.)

From the Scandinavian perspective, the war formed a somehow distant, *European* event. Still, the Scandinavian states defined themselves as a part of European culture, history and tradition. From this point of view, the war had to be reacted upon. Some writers and artists became inspired by the war. Though on the whole, the shock and experience of war influenced the Scandinavian arts and literature on only a small scale and merely as an adopted topic.

From a Scandinavian point of view, the war had destructed the 'old' Europe but facilitated necessary changes in the own country and Scandinavia.