



## COLLOQUE THE EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR - LE PATRIMOINE INDUSTRIEL EUROPÉEN DE LA PREMIÈRE GUERRE MONDIALE

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**The “invisible” memory  
The industrial heritage of the Great War  
in the Saint Etienne basin**

*Robert Belot et Luc Rojas*

Despite the fundamental role it played in the Great War, because of its powerful armament industry, the industrial mobilization in Saint-Étienne and in the Loire left a patrimonial and memory trace almost invisible, both yesterday and today. The industrial landscape is a palimpsest in which it is difficult to read and interpret the material evidence of this conflict, especially as these traces have not been the subject of a heritage policy. We are in the presence of an absent memory, repressed. Historiography is almost silent.

Saint-Étienne and his region had to manage after the war a schizophrenic memory: it was a question of reconciling a pacifist political culture of left wing with the image of city supplying weapons. This ontological ambiguity is at the heart of the difficulties of heritagization, whether immaterial or material. Why, in this case, the past did not have this “exemplary value (which) orients the future”, to use the thesis of Paul Ricoeur? This paper attempts to provide some answers on this blind spot of Saint Etienne's memory.

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