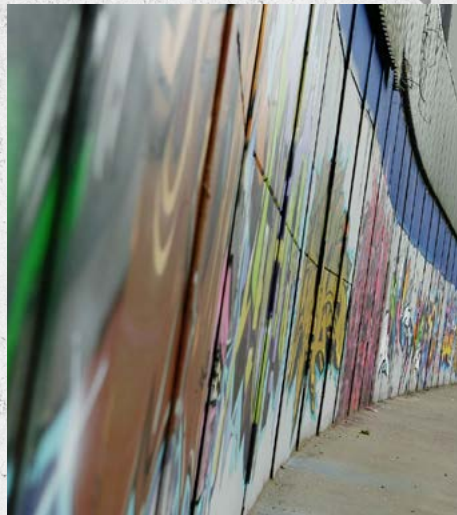


THE TROUBLES AND PEACE



MoTaP 
International



MUSEUM

FOR THE PEACE WALL MUSEUM

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A quarter century after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the time is ripe for a major initiative relating to the Troubles and peace-making in Northern Ireland.

There are three distinctive features to the proposal.

First, there is no single narrative of the three decades of political violence. The intention is to showcase a multiplicity of voices and perspectives on the past, thereby contributing to processes of reflection, understanding and healing.

Second, the Troubles were never just about the Troubles. A social and cultural history of the period needs to highlight the **resilience** of the majority of people who lived, loved and managed their lives in the shadow of conflict. In other words, we need a people's history of the Troubles and of the Irish peace process.

photo : Andersonstown News

OUR PROPOSAL IS FOR A MUSEUM OR FOUNDATION OF THE TROUBLES AND PEACE THAT PRESENTS SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND STORIES OF THE TROUBLES IN ALL THEIR COMPLEXITY AND FROM A VARIETY OF VIEWPOINTS.

'A PEOPLE'S HISTORY'

Third, the scale of the Troubles and the achievements of peace-making in Ireland deserve to be memorialised on a scale befitting the subjects themselves, using advanced digital technology and museum design. This means a world-class complex housed in an iconic building whose design is the outcome of international competition. Our sense is that the best location is either close to the Peace Line that separates the Lower Falls and Shankill or in the Belfast city centre.

Either way, the symbolism of 'peace walls' should not be obscured. As in the case of the Berlin Wall, we look forward to the dismantling of both the physical and psychological barriers that separate people of different communal backgrounds.



(photo: Patrick Speight)

WHY A MUSEUM OF THE TROUBLES & PEACE?

- **Legacy & Healing:** attempting to understand the Troubles in all its complexity is one of the keys to the future. With understanding comes empathy and an appreciation of shared suffering. A museum is an attractive and people-friendly way of beginning that journey.
- **Peace and Violence:** We favour an enlarged, more inclusive concept of peace. Most people were not actively engaged in conflict. We place emphasis on the everyday social and cultural life of the period, acknowledging the resilience of those who lived through the most challenging of times in the closing decades of the 20th century. This might be common ground amid the conflicting narratives.
- **Education:** Younger generations in these islands have little knowledge of the Troubles and some of the rewriting of the past is plainly misleading. There is much to be learned from a dispassionate, multi-voiced exploration of the past, to ensure we are not plunged into communal violence once again.
- **International:** Northern Ireland speaks to a wider world and the wider world speaks to Northern Ireland. Building in a comparative dimension to the Museum that draws on ethnic and national conflicts elsewhere in the world – South Africa, Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Ukraine, Palestine, Israel – would further enhance its educative and consciousness-raising value.



What's it all about? (Pacemaker Press)

‘EXPLORING THE PAST, INSPIRING THE FUTURE’ TOGETHER

- **Peace-making:** To showcase the Irish Peace process as a beacon of hope to other societies locked in conflict. The drama of the Good Friday Agreement and the roles of Trimble, Adams, Ahern, Blair, Mitchell, Clinton and others are chiselled into history and constitute one of the major exhibits planned by MoTaP.
- **Political:** a pluralist venture such as this, in which different political traditions, including nationalist, unionist, feminist, peace, LGBTQ, labour and trade union narratives are represented, could help buttress our still fragile political institutions.
- **Economy:** a multi-functional complex that draws on the rich archives of the Troubles and Peace initiatives – artefacts, photographs, posters, television recordings, documentaries, oral archives, digital recreations of events – would constitute a major visitor attraction in a disadvantaged region of the UK. We especially value the benefits of a museum and peace centre that generates income, export earnings and employment, and contributes to local economic regeneration.

RESOURCES AND CREATIVITY

The Troubles and the Irish peace process are amongst the most heavily documented conflicts of our time. The range of historical materials is enormous. Relevant images, artefacts and recordings include: television and film footage, radio reports, oral testimonies, posters, cartoons, photographic archives and representations of the period in autobiographies, drama, novels, poetry, music and the visual arts. Then there is material culture relating to police and army vehicles, prisons, courts, flags and emblems, weaponry, watch towers, ambush sites, uniforms and much else. Advanced digital technology makes possible immersive experiences that capture and dramatise key moments in the contemporary history of the north.

To give one re-imagined illustration: the late-night negotiations that produced the Good Friday Agreement could be made into one of the centrepieces of the exhibition: a conference room; panels on the walls showing video footage of the key historical actors - Hume, Trimble, Adams, Ahern, Blair, Mitchell, Clinton, Women's Coalition; and historic sound bites from the actual negotiations. These might run from 'the hand of history' (Blair) to 'this is a good Good Friday' (Hume). The atmosphere might be that of a court-room drama, choreographed by one of our leading local playwrights.

To emphasise an earlier point: as well as the roar of guns, Land Rovers and riots, there has to be space for sporting achievements and the art and literature of the Troubles. We think of the Ulster and Ireland rugby teams, of the music of Van Morrison and Barry Douglas, the artistry of Colin Davidson, the works of Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley, Anna Burns and not forgetting 'Alternative Ulster' and its punk rock warriors.



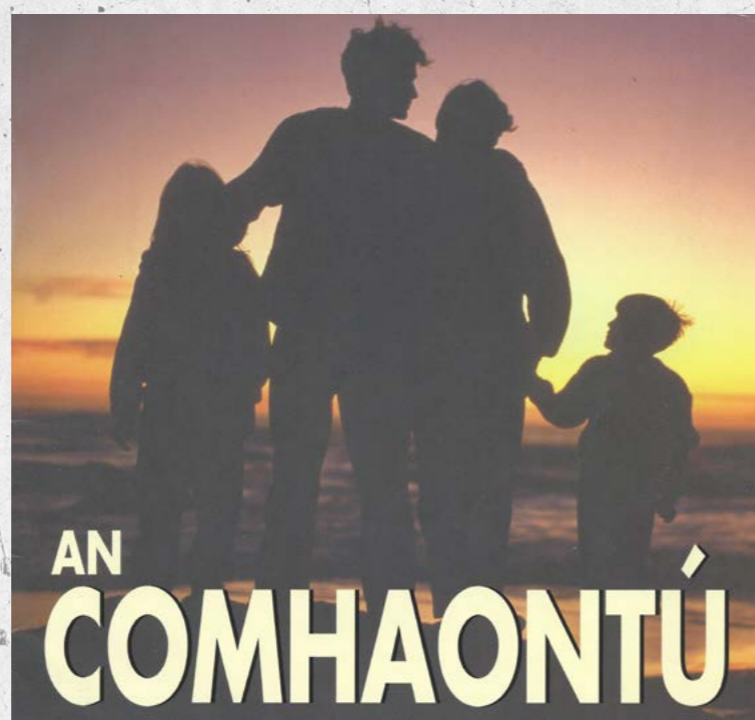
Clockwise: Anna Burns, Barry Douglas, Van Morrison, Michael Longley, Seamus Heaney, Rita Duffy

THE MARKET PLACE

The concept unfolded in this publication is based on conversations with community groups, peace and reconciliation groups, museum specialists, business people, historians and social scientists.

There is a great reservoir of curiosity about the Troubles and peace-building in northern and southern Ireland, and internationally. One indication is the great popularity of tours of sites of conflict and remembrance - most notably the Black Taxi tours along the Peace Line in west Belfast. There is a natural curiosity on the part of the rising generations of young people who have no direct experience of the conflict and the subsequent peace process.

Organised tours by schoolchildren and youth groups are very much on the agenda. We also see MoTaP as offering a safe space for cross-community groups who are engaged in projects of peace-building and reconciliation. It might also act as a resource centre, perhaps in conjunction with the Community Relations Council, for peace-building initiatives, at home and abroad. Viewed in largely economic terms, MoTaP would be an export-oriented services enterprise.



Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, 1998

**BELFAST, VOTED
THE BEST PLACE
TO VISIT IN 2018**



Rioting at Lanark Way, Belfast (photo: Pacemaker Press)

Leading travel publications such as Trip Advisor and Lonely Planet raved about Belfast in the pre-Covid times. There is every reason to believe its vibrant growth as a tourism destination will resume in the years ahead. If the North is known world-wide for one thing, it is the Troubles (followed by Titanic). So, an ever-widening flow of international travellers to MoTaP is to be expected. Some of these will be tourists, in the usual sense. Others will have an interest in learning in more depth about the Troubles and the Irish peace process.

Tutor-on-tap: It is important that expert tutors and seminar facilities are available onsite, so that organised groups or especially interested visitors may be able to engage in deeper conversations about what they have witnessed, as well as probing narratives of the Troubles more generally. This is part of our mission to young people in particular whose knowledge of the Troubles may be fragmentary or limited, and who take peaceful conditions for granted.

We also see Belfast emerging as a leading international centre for conferences, workshops, study tours, summer schools, oral history collections, artistic reflections and other initiatives in peace-building.

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL REGENERATION

Cities can reinvent themselves. Belfast has made major strides in recent years. The Belfast Hub is on the horizon and Belfast City Council has designated 2023 as its Year of Culture ('At Home in 2023').

Barcelona, reinvented itself in the 1990s on the back of a successful Olympic Games and associated cultural events. Once a city bypassed by time and languishing in the shadow of a deadly civil war and Francoism, today it is one of the great cities of Europe.

Much the same is true of strife-torn Bilbao in the Basque Country. Bilbao succeeded in reinventing and regenerating itself following major investments by the Guggenheim Foundation in partnership with the municipal authorities.

MoTaP would be the quantum leap that Belfast needs, building on the existing groundwork. As controversies round legacy issues swirl round us, now is the time for the larger vision.

Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain: the catalyst for economic regeneration.



Belfast Waterfront at night. (photo: Malachi O'Doherty)

FUNDING

This needs political commitment and a variety of stakeholders. The project could be developed in phases and governed by an independent consortium of stakeholders.

In all likelihood, the initiative needs to be taken by Westminster, with support from the Northern Ireland Executive. Dáil Éireann, through the Shared Island Unit and the Dept of the Taoiseach, are already involved in important infrastructural projects and peace and reconciliation initiatives; these might be taken to a higher level. Close co-operation with Belfast City Council is desirable.

Washington (along with London and Dublin) played vital roles in constructing the Belfast Agreement; Brussels helped consolidate the process. The EU through Peace Plus might wish to be involved, so also might Washington with its long record of commitment to Northern Ireland.

‘MORE THAN A MUSEUM ...’

CREATIVITY

The art of the Troubles crosses all kinds of boundaries and should find expression within the complex. It might be a storehouse of concepts and images that inspires further artistic experimentation. Few who have seen Colin Davidson’s exhibition, ‘Silent Testimony’ – portraits of 18 individuals who are only connected by virtue of the loss of loved ones – will be inclined to underestimate the power of art to move the viewer. Colin is a patron of MoTaP and currently chancellor of Ulster University. The artist Rita Duffy is an advisor and is working towards a future-oriented installation as part of our engagement with artistic responses to the Troubles.

The Museum has to have a core collection of artefacts, sounds and texts. As well as presenting different viewpoints, it will have a continuous thread of factual information, colour coded and running through many of the exhibition spaces. This provides chronology and coherence and draws on the work of academic advisers. But the Museum also needs to be able to respond swiftly to moments of heightened public interest. These might be the anniversaries of major turning points (the arrival, for instance, of British troops in August 1969, the formation of the Peace People in 1976, or the death of the hunger striker, Bobby Sands in 1981). Or they might be attuned to some international happening such as the siege of Sarajevo during the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in 1992 or the continuing plight of the Myanmar Rohingya. Special exhibitions, possibly in conjunction with museums elsewhere, could be used to focus attention on these historical and contemporary events.

INTELLECTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The intellectual and professional resources to plan and implement MoTaP are readily to hand. These include the Senator George Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, the Institute of Irish Studies, the Centre for Public History at Queen’s University Belfast; the International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE) and the vast digital repositories of ARK (NI Social Policy Hub) and CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) at Ulster University; the Linen Hall Library, Belfast; the Belfast Newspaper Library; BBC and UTV archives, the UK and Ireland museum sectors; as well as the international connections of many of these institutions.



Queen’s University Belfast (Brian J. Spencer)



Ulster University (Brian J. Spencer)



Celebrating the Belfast Agreement, David Trimble, John Hume, with Bono of U2, 1998 (Pacemaker Press)

ETHICAL AND WELFARE ISSUES

Some wonder if it is appropriate to create a memory site and visitor attraction that memorialises a traumatic past. There are issues of sensitivity here and the task is a daunting one. But anyone who, for instance, has visited Jewish museums elsewhere in the world or foundations devoted to African American history in the United States will have little doubt that controversial histories need to be revisited rather than suppressed. We also note that artefacts of the Troubles are already being presented at a variety of sites throughout Northern Ireland, though usually within a single-identity context.

We do recognise that the impact of the MoTaP experience might trouble some visitors. Examples of vulnerable individuals or family groups might include those who have lost close relatives or those from loyalist or republican backgrounds who have spent long periods in prison. It is important, therefore, that assistance on accessing therapeutic and related social services should be available onsite.

‘WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO DENY RISING GENERATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS TO THEIR OWN HISTORY.’

Professor Fearghal McGarry

MUSEUM OF THE TROUBLES AND PEACE

INTEGRITY

That the project has integrity is fundamental. It is essential that MoTaP is not subject to partisan political pressure. It needs to be a pluralist 'people's history' of the conflict and of conflict resolution, not simply elite or partisan perspectives on the past. Hence the importance of a range of stakeholders, and possibly philanthropic individuals and corporations. Hence also the importance of strong academic and representative involvement at all stages of the project, including governance.

NARRATIVE ARC

There is a striking narrative arc to the course of the Troubles that lends itself to the creation of a museum of the Troubles and Peace. We begin with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the social and political

realities of the time; there is then the transition to the darker days of the Troubles; finally we emerge into the brighter uplands of the new century with power-sharing and a peace process in place. The last is far from perfect. But for most people our lives are so much better than during the decades of conflict. That our children and the generations to come may enjoy the benefits of a society at peace with itself is our deepest wish.

THE VISION

As yet no signature, or mega-project has emerged that engages creatively with the past, that buttresses a fragile peace, that plays a major role in economic regeneration, and that is inspiring by virtue of its boldness and ambition. MoTaP represents such a vision.

Morning Ireland (photo: Malachi O'Doherty)



Lyra McKee, journalist and writer, fatally shot during rioting in Derry/Londonderry, April 2019 (photo: Patrick Speight)

MUSEUM OF THE TROUBLES AND PEACE
www.museumofthetroubles.org

October 2021

Registered Charity: Charity Commission
for Northern Ireland NIC107970,
Companies House NI651235

MoTaP
International

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
contact the project manager:

Dr Irene Boada Montagut,
39 Rugby Road, Belfast BT7 1PT

Telephone: 0747-0037154

 **COMMUNITY
RELATIONS
COUNCIL**
Equity | Diversity | Interdependence

BOARD MEMBERS

Co-chair: Brid Ruddy, MSc (social policy); Community and Youth worker; inter-community good relations; Holyland, Belfast, regeneration project

Co-chair: Jane Morrice, former head of the European Commission Office, Belfast and former MLA (Northern Ireland Women's Coalition); Hon. President European Movement Northern Ireland

Secretary: Dr Karin White, Social Anthropologist and ethno-historian, Lecturer in Social Sciences, Institute of Technology Sligo; Company Secretary, BoM, Donegal Travellers Project

Katie Brady, researcher in Public History and Cultural Heritage, Dublin

Professor Catherine Clinton, Denman Chair of American History, University of Texas, San Antonio; formerly of Queen's University Belfast; historical adviser: Steven Spielberg's Lincoln (2012)

Treasurer: Dr Helmut Riethmuller, Director of Business Studies, Forum Berufsbildung, Charlottenstr. 2, Berlin and project consultant in Germany, Ireland, India and China.

Stefanie Stott, professional conservator and heritage manager, ten years experience working for museums and heritage organisations internationally.

Ed Petersen, Coordinator, Clonard Monastery's Peace and Reconciliation Ministry. Chair, Forthspring Inter-Community Group and Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum.



ADVISORS

Dr Olwen **Purdue**, Senior Lecturer in Irish History and Director of the Centre for Public History, Queen's University Belfast; Dr Patrick **Speight**, formerly of the BBC and curator of A State Apart, a digital archive of the Troubles; Debbie **Lisle**, Professor of International Relations and Political Sociology, Queen's University Belfast; Jenny **Stewart**, communications consultant working across culture, heritage and design; formerly of the Design Museum, London and Royal Museums Greenwich; Magda **Gasso**, Director-General of Museums, Generalitat de Catalunya, Spain.

PATRONS: MUSEUM OF THE TROUBLES & PEACE

John Alderdice, life peer; psychiatrist; former Leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

George Bain, life peer, former President and Vice-Chancellor, Queen's University Belfast

Lady Gwynneth Bain, former governor of Lagan Integrated College, Belfast

Denis Bradley, journalist and former priest; former Vice Chairman of the N.I. Policing Board

Colin Davidson, distinguished artist; creator of the Troubles portrait series: 'Silent Testimony'

Mark Devenport, journalist; former BBC Northern Ireland Political Editor

Rita Duffy, distinguished Northern Irish artist

Robin Eames, life peer; former Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland

Claire Hanna, Member of Parliament for South Belfast for the SDLP

John Kyle, Councillor, Belfast City Council, former leader of Progressive Unionist Party

Fearghal McGarry, Professor of Modern Irish History, Queen's University Belfast

Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner on Human Rights

David Trimble, life peer, former First Minister of Northern Ireland: Nobel Peace Prize winner

ORAL HISTORY AND PEOPLE'S HISTORY

The voices of the people should breathe through the structures and thinking of the Museum or Foundation of the Troubles and Peace.

We mean this in a literal sense. A centrepiece of the work of MoTaP, in conjunction with academic partners and others, should be the collection of oral testimonies and making these accessible. These could be accessed in situ, and also through the medium of a virtual museum of the Troubles. This could precede work on an iconic building.

We place emphasis on those voices that have remained largely unheard. These include sexual minorities, women, rural dwellers, and immigrant voices. MoTaP could also act as a central archive for an Oral History of the Troubles, linking existing but widely scattered archival nodes into a single network.



(photo: Malachi O'Doherty)

MoTaP 
International