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# Belfast to Berlin

Lessons in remembering conflict



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# Foreword

This report is a record of the visit made to Berlin in March 2010 by individual members of Healing Through Remembering to gain insight into remembering a conflicted past.

Healing Through Remembering is an extensive cross-community organisation made up of a range of members holding different political perspectives working on a common goal of how to deal with the legacy of the past as it relates to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

The group visited various sites, museums, memorials and met the individuals involved in their development.

This report profiles the places we visited. Each place has an explanation in its own text, edited by HTR to fit the report. A number of comments from the HTR participants are also included to share our particular learning from each site.

This report is not intended as a definitive guide, a commendation of sites or a recommendation for processes. Instead it is offered as a means of sharing some of our experiences with others who are also grappling with the issue of how to deal with remembering a violent past in a way that helps build a more peaceful future.

**Kate Turner**  
Director HTR  
Autumn 2011

Garten-u. Ber



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# Key to Report

This report contains information by each site and thoughts or comments from the Healing Through Remembering members who visited the site.

A comment about the site from one of the Healing Through Remembering group.

*The information provided by the site describing its history, function and operations.*



## Introduction

In March 2010, a site visit to Berlin was conducted under the remit of Healing Through Remembering's Living Memorial Museum Sub Group in an effort to gain an international perspective on memorialisation and dealing with the past. The trip was funded by PEACE III and the International Coalition for Sites of Conscience, and involved a key link with the House of the Wannsee Conference.


In addition to Wannsee House members of the group visited 16 other sites over the course of five days, including the former Stasi prison, the site of Hitler's bunker, the Berlin Wall Memorial and Documentation centre, the Jewish Museum, and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

Some sites were visited collectively while others were seen only by a smaller group, or visited by individuals. As Berlin is a city where memorials and museums are so prominent it was important to include a variety of sites that were relevant to the current work of the Sub Group and which would also inform the wider debate surrounding a memorial museum of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. A number of sites had a strong educational element, some had a commercial edge to them, whilst others focused on the significance of the site itself. Each site generated much discussion amongst the participants, which has in turn shaped the future plans of the Healing Through Remembering.

# House of the Wannsee Conference

On January 20th, 1942 Reinhard Heydrich, Head of the Reich Security Main Office, chaired a meeting of high-ranking civil servants and SS-officers in this mansion. As the decision to murder the European Jews had been made earlier the Wannsee Conference was concerned with the organisation and implementation of "The Final Solution". The meeting has become known as the "Wannsee Conference".

*Educational opportunities at the site are designed according to the interests and prior knowledge of the participants. For this reason there are neither standard guided tours nor standard seminars. These principles are based on the assumption that the supervisors of any visiting study group are prepared for both long-term pre-registration and preliminary discussion of course contents. The educational opportunities at the house are addressed to pupils and other young people, and also to adults. Generally the seminars for adults are vocationally oriented. Their central theme is how the respective occupational groups, to which the seminar participants belong, acted during the time of National Socialism. Proceeding from there the discussion concentrates on the significance which the history of National Socialist crimes has in our own time. With the aid of exhibits and various sources and media available, the house as a place of learning facilitates in-depth study of a range of particular topics. The absence of institutional constraints such as curricular guidelines and rigid time schedules allows for methods of teaching and learning that motivates participants to try, actively and self-critically, to gain insights into the history of National Socialist crimes and their effects on the present.*



"The exhibitions that adorned every room in the house put a human face on both those who suffered under the Nazi regime and those who implemented it."

## Memorial and Educational Site

"Being in the actual building where the conference was held was an education in itself. To be in a lovely house set in its own grounds by the side of a large lake on a bright, sunny day jarred with the knowledge of what a small group of men had decided in the house during a comparatively brief and business-like meeting in 1942. It reminded us that although we like to think otherwise, such decisions are rarely taken in dark, underground, filthy, ugly places because those making them are usually powerful, wealthy, influential people with stately homes and offices".



"The exhibition also posed the discomforting question of all who participated in the events that flowed from the decision...and who by their action or lack of actions allowed these events to take their course, or...actually benefited in a socio-economic way."

# ZeitZeugenBörse

## Berlin

ZZB is a non-profit group that organises dialogue between senior citizens and students on topics such as National Socialism, the Second World War, the Cold War, GDR history, re-unification, and the Berlin Wall.

*There are approximately 200 “witnesses” who are invited to speak about their personal experiences and many discussions can involve issues such as dictatorships, democracy, persecution, the secret police, and political identity. Witnesses are from both East and West Berlin and they have the opportunity to meet with other witnesses before they speak to students. Witnesses are also encouraged to bring with them any personal items they may have such as objects or photos.*

“The detailed and thoughtful training given to ‘storytelling’ in ZZB seems designed to assist witnesses in telling their story without superimposing a structure.”

“This project could be described as a process rather than a material entity. It was important to hear what they are doing and how as it fits very well with the whole concept of dealing with the past or at least hearing about that past from first-hand witnesses.”



# DDR

# Museum

"This museum worked in the sense of delivering what it set out to deliver – a view of ordinary everyday life in East Berlin. Being very interactive it encouraged you to engage with the exhibits and certainly attracted young people and children."

The DDR museum is one of the only museums in Berlin which concentrates on everyday life in the German Democratic Republic. It not only shows the State Security apparatus and its border defences but also displays some of the lesser known aspects of the lives of people in the GDR. The DDR Museum is privately financed entirely from entrance fees.

*The DDR museum provides a hands-on-experience of history. It is not just an exhibit to regard but one the visitor can take part in, handle the exhibits and look behind drawers and doors. The museum considers itself to be one of the most interactive museums in the world.*

"The juxtaposition between the DDR museum and the Stasi Prison - it was as if two different eras had been depicted or even two separate countries."

"The museum lures you into a playful sense of fun - sitting in the Trabi, rummaging through the wardrobe, listening in on the surveillance - which distracts you from the horrors of the era. However, the way the exhibit makes you feel at ease is interesting within itself as it could be seen to hint at the subtleties of communism."



# Memorial

A small stone cube marks the site where, in May 1942, the Herbert Baum Group staged an arson attack on an anti-Soviet exhibit staged by the Nazis. The Baum Group, a resistance faction founded in 1936 by Jewish communist, Herbert Baum, was primarily made up of young German Jews and Communists. Many group members were arrested and either killed or sent to concentration camps. Herbert Baum was arrested soon after the arson attack and committed suicide in prison in June 1942.

*The City Council of East Berlin commissioned the Herbert Baum Gedenkstein in 1981 to stand as a symbol of East Germany's friendship with the Soviet Union. The inscription on the original stone reads; "Bound in friendship with the Soviet Union forever," and, "Unforgotten, the courageous deeds and the steadfastness of the anti-fascist resistance group led by the young communist Herbert Baum." After the reunification of Germany some Berliners thought the stone should be removed as part of a renovation of the Lustgarten but Gerhard Zadek, a surviving member of the Herbert Baum Group, suggested that instead, the message on the stone should be updated, reframed, and expanded. The District City Hall agreed and in 2001 two transparent plexiglass plaques were added on top of the original stone monument adding new information while allowing the original memorial to remain visible. One of the plaques lists the members of the Herbert Baum group while the other provides information about the group and states that the memorial "documents the brave act of resistance in 1942, the conception of history in 1981, and our continuous remembrance of resistance to the Nazis."*

# Herbert Baum Memorial Stone

"The memorial goes a step beyond simply asking us to remember resistance and sacrifice. Instead of erasing one version of the past and substituting a new one, the plexiglass panels and the still visible older inscriptions beneath, provide the viewer with food for thought and challenge us to remember that history too is in a state of frequent change and transition, just as societies, ideologies and governments are. That is part of its message – quite paradoxically this is a solid cube of stone that says memory is malleable."

"There is wonderful symbolism in the fact that the past is still there - just dimly seen through the opaque lens of perspex."



# Homosexuals persecuted under Nazism

"The closed anonymous nature of the memorial also speaks to the 'forgetting' of the persecution of homosexuals."

"The memorial expresses the secrecy surrounding homosexuality in Hitler's Germany; a shut away dangerous activity, and the viewing window forces us to peer in at an expression of intimacy in the manner of police spies. Which is more shameful the memorial seems to say – a hidden, snatched and fearful expression of love, or the peering and spying?"

## Memorial

The Memorial is in the form of a grey rectangular block of concrete about 4 metres high. On one side there is a small opening through which viewers can see a black and white art film scene of two men kissing. The video changes every two years. Near the memorial is a signboard where visitors can read about the persecutions against homosexuals during Nazism and under Paragraph 175, the law during the 1950s and 1960s that outlawed homosexuality.

*Under the Nazi regime, gay men and women lived in fear and under constant pressure to hide their sexuality. For many years the homosexual victims of National Socialism were not included in public commemorations - neither in the Federal Republic nor the German Democratic Republic. In both East and West Germany homosexuality continued to be prosecuted for many years. In the Federal Republic Section 175 remained in force without amendment until 1969. The aim of the Memorial is to honour the victims of persecution and murder, to keep alive the memory of this injustice, and at the same time to act as a constant symbol of opposition to enmity, intolerance, and the exclusion of gay men and lesbians.*



# Memorial

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is located 100 meters away from the Brandenburg Gate. The Memorial is composed of 2,711 concrete slabs ('stelae') arranged in an undulating grid pattern covering 19,000 square meters. Each stele is 0.95m wide and 2.38m long. The height varies from 4.8m down to 0.2m. There are no inscriptions on the stelae. The memorial is dedicated to the Jewish victims of the Nazi regime and the monument acts as the central site of remembrance and commemoration of the victims of the holocaust.

*The memorial's physical integration into the newly built parliament and government district signifies an official recognition of historical responsibility. As a result of the process through which it emerged the Memorial is closely tied to a commitment to democracy and civil courage. Its open form facilitates personal remembrance, commemoration, and mourning. The site is accessible from all four sides and visitors are able to experience the wavy shape of the memorial at a different angle from each different position. The designer of this monument, Eisenman, said of it; "I want it to be part of ordinary, everyday life. People who have walked by say it's very unassuming...I like to think that people will use it for shortcuts, as an everyday experience not as a holy place." To complement the Memorial the architect designed an underground information centre. The central function of the information centre is to back up the abstract form of remembrance inspired by the memorial with concrete facts and information about the victims, including a recording of as many names of murdered Jews as possible. Personal and biographical details of individuals and families are also presented as examples.*

# Murdered Jews of Europe



"The design may aim to create an uneasy dislocating atmosphere - as you wander through it it is easy to become confused about your path."



"In inviting multiple interpretations, eschewing overt inscription and symbolism, and prompting feelings of dislocation and unease this is a memorial with a very postmodern stamp and thus similar to Libeskind's use of architecture in the Jewish Museum."

# The Führer bunker

The Führerbunker was located beneath Hitler's New Reich Chancellery. The subterranean bunker complex was constructed in two major phases, one part in 1936 and the other in 1943. It was the last of the Führer Headquarters to be used by Hitler. The ruins of both the old and new Chancellery buildings were leveled by the Soviets between 1945 and 1949 but the bunker largely survived and remained undisturbed until after the reunification of Germany. In 2006 a small plaque was installed with a schematic of the bunker to mark the location.

*The recent success of the film, "Der Untergang", in which the final days of Hitler's life in a Berlin bunker were painstakingly and dramatically depicted, exposed one of the continuing anomalies of modern German attitudes towards the Nazi regime. The Germans, who in all other respects have confronted and acknowledged the crimes of the Nazi regime, always stopped short of recognising the actual location of Hitler's bunker. The fear was that the site would become a point of pilgrimage for neo-Nazi skinheads. And there was no moral imperative to identify its position, unlike for instance, the gas chambers at Auschwitz. The information panel marking the site shows a history of the bunker as well as a number of photographs, plans, and schemata detailing its construction. The panel was unveiled by a Berlin-based historical society whose aim is to demystify the history of the bunker and dispel some of the rumours. It is also hoped that by making the site and its history plainly visible that glorification, nostalgia, and the building of myths can be avoided.*

"In a city where memorialisation is so important I was taken aback by the fact that Hitler's Bunker was a parking lot. In my naivety I had expected it would be a bit like the British Cabinet War Rooms, instead of waste ground. It brought home the sense of shame felt at the Nazi period and helped explain why there are so many memorials to victims of the Nazi regime."



“Whilst popular on the tourist guide trail the site is not one of revered heritage and displays nothing of the sacral that sites commemorating loss express. There is no sense of it being an important, protected, bounded space. If anything evidence at the site might suggest that it’s an anti-sacral site - the patch of grass by the panel is peppered with cigarette butts, beer cans and bottles, and several objects that look like syringe tops.”

# Stasi Prison

## (Berlin-Hohenschonhausen Memorial)

The prison was originally established in 1945 by the Soviet NKVD, the forerunner to the KGB, as an internment camp ('Special Camp Nr. 3'). This camp was closed in October 1946 but the cellar was converted into cells and taken over by the East German Stasi in 1951. By 1961 a new prison building was constructed using prisoner labour. Following the construction of the Berlin Wall many attempted escapees were held here. Much of the area around the prison was a forbidden zone to the public though few were aware of the prison's existence. Following the collapse of the Communist regime and the disbanding of the Stasi the prison was converted into a memorial museum on the initiative of former prisoners.

*The Memorial's charter specifically entrusts it with the task of; researching the history of the Hohenschonhausen prison between 1945-1989; supplying information via exhibitions, events and publications; and, encouraging a critical awareness of the methods and consequences of political persecution and suppression in the GDR. The former Stasi prison is therefore intended to provide an insight into the workings of the GDR's political judicial system. Since the vast majority of the buildings, equipment, furniture and fittings have survived intact the Memorial provides a very authentic picture of prison conditions in the GDR.*

"The guide was a key part of the experience; without that input we would not have learnt so much nor understood many of the things that we saw. This emphasised the importance of personal interpretation."



"The Stasi Prison site was an excellent example of how simply visiting a site and hearing just the practical details of what took place at it, rather than being given an explanation or political interpretation, is always more powerful."

"While the guide showed us documents, reports, and images the fact that we had no German lessened their impact. Original furniture somehow conveyed so much more of the story than the documents."

# Stasi Museum

Situated in the former Stasi Headquarters the Stasi Museum depicts the work of the Stasi, the surveillance techniques they used, the story of the resistance movement, and the offices of the elite - including those of Erich Mielke, head of the Stasi - which have been maintained using the original furnishings. The Museum is run by a private, not-for-profit association which took over the premises in 1990 after a government decree stating that the site would be run as a memorial and research centre.

*On the site are the archives of Stasi files which hold information on thousands of people gathered using surveillance and by recruiting informers - often the person's family members, friends, or colleagues. Following considerable debate after the fall of the East German government it was decided that people could access their own file rather than them being destroyed. Any informant's name would be revealed upon reading the file which often meant that close friendships or relationships were destroyed.*



"If the focus had been on the site itself where the Stasi were stationed (as in the case of the prison) and dealt exclusively with them, their numbers, methods, etc it would have been more powerful but so many other things to do with the collapse of the wall and East Berlin had been added on that it over-shadowed the site we were in."



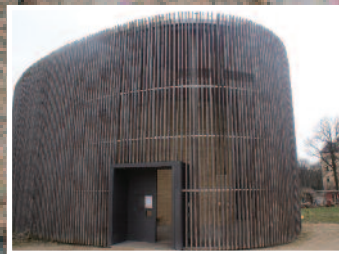
# The Berlin Wall Memorial

The Berlin Wall Memorial Site includes the Documentation Center (see below), a "Window of Remembrance," the Berlin Wall Memorial, and the Chapel of Reconciliation. The Berlin Wall Memorial, established by the Federal Government of Germany in 1998, consists of sixty meters of the former "no man's land" which was preserved, undeveloped, as a physical reminder of the Wall, while giving it an artistic interpretation and shape. The Chapel of Reconciliation stands on the ground of the Protestant Church of the Reconciliation parish. Situated on the death strip it became inaccessible and was ultimately destroyed. The Chapel of Reconciliation now serves not only as a place of worship for the Protestant Reconciliation Parish but as a place of commemoration for the victims of the Berlin Wall and one of spiritual reflection on the history of the site.

*An outdoor exhibition (when completed in 2012) will use many historical fragments still found on the site, and the area's eventful past, to provide concrete examples to describe the purpose and function of the Berlin Wall. It will concentrate especially on the stories of people whose lives were disrupted or restricted by the Wall, who were expelled from their homes because of it, or who attempted to escape over it. Representations of escape tunnels and demolished border buildings will also be added. Incident markers will show where specific incidents occurred and a "field book" provide details of these events. Archeological windows will show previous layers of the border fortifications and historical traces of the city that were destroyed by the Wall and the border strip. An exhibition on the border strip will explain the site, describe the most important events, and provide the historical context.*

## Memorial

"How to develop a memorial that is also a street is very interesting for us as the sectarian geography of Belfast and Derry has been marked by street peace lines."

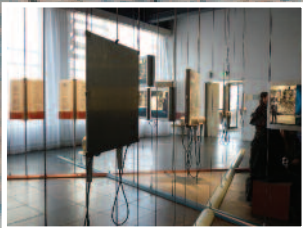


"It was great to see the wall memorial site as a work in progress; to feel that moment of history between the site and the tourist future. The detailed explanation of why elements were being used and how to balance the needs of the city with the memorial was interesting."

# The Berlin Wall

"I was very struck with the commemoration of the East German guards within the Berlin Wall Documentation Centre."

"The process that a site goes through as beliefs/ideologies/governments/the general consensus of the population change over time."



"[Exposure to the length of the wall]. It wasn't just sightseeing; there were actual life stories connected to people. Learning from the people was most significant. Also, how the museum project started and developed, working with opposition, and deciding what to memorialise, what to not memorialise, and how to go about it. But the history of the project was the most beneficial."

# Documentation Centre

The Berlin Wall Documentation Center is part of the Berlin Wall Memorial Ensemble. It opened on the 9th November, 1999, and offers detailed historical and background information on the history and politics behind the building of the Berlin Wall. It has a permanent exhibition in German and English, an observation tower overlooking a section of the original border, a digital archive with original documents, audio stations with historical radio broadcasts from East and West, and regular events.

*The exhibition "Berlin, August 13, 1961" documents the events that led to the construction of the Berlin Wall, the measures taken to close the border on August 13, 1961 and how these events affected people. The exhibition focuses on selected aspects of this history, showing events that were representative of the broader history and observed from three different perspectives. Each perspective is communicated through a different medium – the situation in Berlin is conveyed through audio recordings; the situation in Germany is presented through archival documents; and photographs taken by Allied photographers reflect the view from the outside. An important task of the Documentation centre is to conduct research on the Wall and its history. This focuses both on the people in the East and West who suffered because of the Wall as well as on the people who contributed to its existence. A further priority is to develop educational work on the Wall's history and the politics surrounding it. To this end it offers a wide variety of tours, seminars, and thematic events.*

# The Jewish Museum

The Jewish Museum covers two millennia of German Jewish history. It consists of two buildings; one is the old Kollegienhaus, a former courthouse, built in the 18th century; the other, a new addition specifically built for the museum, was designed by world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind. This was one of the first buildings in Berlin designed after German reunification. The museum opened to the public in 2001.

*The Jewish Museum explicitly thematises and integrates the history of the Jews in Germany and the repercussions of the Holocaust. It is comprised of three main components, the Old Building, the Libeskind building and the Glass Courtyard. The Old building and Libeskind building are linked by an underground passageway. Visitors who pass through the great Void down to the end of the staircase from the Old Building find ahead of them a path system made up of three axes symbolising three realities in the history of German Jews. All the axes intersect symbolizing the connection between the three realities they represent. The "Axis of Continuity" symbolises the continuation of Berlin's history; the connecting path from which the other axes branch off. The "Axis of the Holocaust" becomes ever narrower and darker ending at the Holocaust Tower, which is effectively a dead end. The pathway is lined with glass cases displaying documents and personal possessions of holocaust victims. The "Axis of Emigration" has walls which slant slightly and close in the further one goes, while its floor is uneven and ascends gradually. This axis leads through a heavy door to the outside, into the Garden of Exile. Together these pieces form a visual and spatial language rich with history and symbolism. The museum provides guided tours and also hosts temporary exhibitions and a diverse calendar of events, including scientific symposia, concerts, talks, and workshops for kids and teenagers.*





"A signature building, which uses its internal architecture in a very direct way to help tell stories and set up tone. Although there is no over-reliance on objects it uses photographs and three-dimensional objects to tell a story in ways which the other sites did not."

"The museum succeeds in setting mood and tone, and seems designed to make a visitor feel as well as think. But a question remains – is this architecture a form of emotional manipulation, or is it an effective response to mass death on an unheard of scale which cannot be adequately reduced to a museum text?"

# Topography of Terror

The Topography of Terror is an outdoor museum located on the site of buildings which during the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945 were the headquarters of the Gestapo and the SS; the principal instruments of repression during the Nazi era. The cellar of the Gestapo headquarters, where many political prisoners were tortured and executed, was found and excavated. The site was then turned into a memorial and museum in the open air detailing the history of repression under the Nazis. The excavation took place in cooperation with East German researchers and a joint exhibition was shown both at the site and in East Germany in 1989.

*Since 1987 an exhibition has existed to inform the public about this historic site. The focus of the exhibition is the central institutions of the SS and police in the Third Reich as well as the crimes they perpetrated throughout Europe. Attention to the Nazi regime's many victims groups assumes central place alongside the portrayal of the system of terror. Various tours of the site provide the opportunity for a differentiated examination of Nazi policies and their consequences up to the present day. This involves looking at the perpetrators and their motives and deeds while at the same time it involves asking what effect the Nazi terror had on the lives of the population and how it changed their living conditions, their thinking, and their scope for action.*

## of Terror

"This site shows how a site can allow the development of an educational exhibition even when the building themselves are gone."



"The fact that Berlin itself is a memorial site made up of different memorial spaces will also help in the consideration of HTR's creation of a 'map' or network of museums/sites."



# Checkpoint

The Mauermuseum, or the Checkpoint Charlie Museum as it's known to visitors, was founded in 1962 at the Checkpoint Charlie border crossing, a geographic focal point during the Cold War. It is one of the most frequently visited museums in Berlin and claims to be the first museum of international nonviolent protest as its exhibits include: The Charta 77 typewriter; the hectograph of the illegal periodical "Umweltblätter"; Mahatma Gandhi's diary and sandals; and the death mask of Andrei Sacharov.

*Exhibitions at the museum detail the history of the Berlin Wall and incidents surrounding it including dramatic stories of escape attempts, some by hot air balloon, chairlifts, and even a small submarine. All exhibits are in English, German, French and Russian. Through its presentation of the many ways in which people tried to escape East Germany the museum aims to bring that period of history to life and ensure that it is not forgotten.*

# Charlie Museum

"The most famous crossing between East and West Berlin and portrayed in numerous spy film and books, Checkpoint Charlie symbolised the divided city. In 1961, at the height of the Berlin Crisis, Soviet tanks faced American tanks there. A year later, Peter Fechter, a teenager, was shot by East German guards and bled to death there, only yards from freedom, while trying to escape to the West. Today, while Checkpoint Charlie is choc a bloc of souvenir stands and teenagers queue to have photos taken with actors dressed as allied military police, its past is not forgotten. I was glad not to have left Berlin without seeing it."



"It's strange to visit what is now a tourist site with people mingling and chatting and taking photos and to try and picture how at one time this site would have held so much foreboding for many German people."

# Guided Tour

Nigel Dunkley, former British Military attaché in Berlin, provides a private guided tour and delivered knowledgeable stories behind Berlin's turbulent history. This history moves from its very origins as a Slavic fishing village, through to the opulent Prussian and Bismark eras, taking in the two World Wars, the Cold War, the Fall of the Wall and finally culminating in the forming of this trendy, transparent and optimistic capital of the new German Federal Republic.



"The advantage of the guided walking tour was that [our guide] was able to bring a broader perspective to visiting the various sites. His knowledge of Berlin during the time of the Wall meant that we realised the absurdity of the Russian Monument placed in what became the Western sector with Russian Guards in turn guarded by British. We also were able to understand...the debate about whether to remember or forget [as] the site of Hitler's former Chancellory...is still seen as 'contaminated space'..."

"The tour guide was a former British army soldier who had served in both Berlin and in Northern Ireland. Having a well-informed tour guide was especially important when visiting various memorials at which little in the way of in-depth background information was provided. Much understanding from such sites would have gone undiscovered without the aid of the guide."

# Trains to Life, Trains to Death

The memorial "Trains to Life - Trains to Death: 1938-1939" stands outside the Friedrichstrasse Railway Station in Berlin-Mitte from which the first emergency transports of Jewish children – Kindertransport – from Germany and Austria departed for England on 1 December 1938.

*The memorial remembers both the facts that 10,000 Jewish children were able to leave Berlin for England by train before the start of WWII and that many other Jewish children were later deported to the extermination camps, also by railway. Two children stand for those saved, five children for those murdered. The transports ended with the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. The sculpture was created by Israeli sculptor and kindertransportee Frank Meisler, who was among those saved. A corresponding memorial is located at Liverpool Street Station in London where Meisler arrived in August 1939. The memorial in Berlin was dedicated in November 2008.*



"This was a disturbing monument showing the positive and negative sides of transport."

"We stumbled on this memorial by chance as it was by the door of the train station we happened to exit. It was emotive meeting this image after coming off a train, but it also left me wondering if the message was lost in a side street by the station."

# Soviet War

"It has the feel of a heritage site; a site of 'lost' heritage perhaps. It demonstrates that even the most political and militaristic sites, overhung with slogans and symbols of power, can change radically in their tone and interpretation as their original message is changed (and diluted) by the passage of history and collapse of ideologies."



# Memorial

The Soviet War Memorial (Tiergarten) is one of several war memorials in Berlin erected by the Soviet Union to commemorate its war dead, particularly the 80,000 soldiers of the Soviet Armed Forces who died during the Battle of Berlin in April and May 1945. The Memorial is located in the Tiergarten, a large public park to the west of the city centre. The Memorial is constructed as an arch with a bronze soldier on top of it and very much resembles the Brandenburg Gate which is located only 100 metres away.

*Rather than be a museum of artefacts the Memorial is constructed from the artefacts of war - marble and stone taken from the destroyed remains of Adolph Hitler's Chancellery, the heart of the Nazi government. The main entrance to the Memorial is guarded by two T34 tanks, said to be the first to reach Berlin, and two heavy artillery pieces. The Soviet sickle and hammer design sits alongside quotes from Stalin. Behind the Memorial is an outdoor museum showing photographs of the Memorial's construction and giving a guide to other memorials in the Berlin area. An inscription written underneath the soldier statue translates as "Eternal glory to heroes who fell in battle with the German fascist invaders for the freedom and independence of the Soviet Union". The Soviets built the statue with the soldier's arm in a position to symbolize the Red Army's putting down of the German National Socialist state. On the anniversary of VE Day (Victory in Europe Day), wreath-laying ceremonies are held at the Memorial. It is a site of pilgrimage for war veterans from the countries of the former Soviet Union.*

# Concluding

# Thoughts of Group

"Most of the exhibitions made allowance for detailed narratives and difficult themes to be addressed – this has underlined for me that we should be wary of taking short cuts in museum text and the general presentation of history."

**"Berlin has several conflictual pasts and is a city already engaged in tackling the issue of conflict tourism."**

**It therefore is a rich resource for us to learn from."**

"A good range of projects, big and small, were visited. The educational dimension to several of them, as opposed to simply displaying artefacts or located on a particularly historic site, was very beneficial as we attempt to realise in practice what our concept of a Living Memorial Museum could look like."

"[This visit gave us the opportunity] to establish to what extent there exists a 'network' of museums in Berlin and [allowed us to see] how museums communicate and share information, enhance thinking and development, and how they tackle the tension between a society at once looking back and striving forward."

"Whilst we should make allowance for a degree of commodification of the past we should avoid anything which presents difficult histories purely in terms of nostalgia or entertainment."

"[The] timing of when you start to tell certain stories is important. The stories which are not told are also significant. How can we respect history but not build a shrine to those that were involved in various atrocities?"

"It was great having access to people who were involved with the development of museums, not just staffing them after they were done. Insight into how the museum came about was helpful because of their knowledge about the struggles that go along with it."

"It was important to see sites that showed that conflict is not black and white, we need to examine the grey areas."

"You look at things at home with a new eye after a visit like this"

"From [the] group's point of view, learning together rather than simply passing on information was really beneficial."

"Berlin and Belfast are two places that share an important and relevant characteristic in that each city is also the site on which the historical events at hand took place. As a consequence, each city has become a historic site in its own right. [This added further] relevance to our choice of Berlin as a place for our visit."

## HTR Living Memorial Museum Sub Group

"The Living Memorial Museum Sub Group serves as a group of individuals who are exploring options related to the development of a dynamic memorial to all those affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, and keep the memories of the past alive. Such a memorial would provide a diverse chronicle of the history of the conflict, increase public awareness of the impact of the conflict, disseminate information and provide educational opportunities ensuring lessons are learned for the future."



### Participants' Biographies

**Kris Brown** was a research fellow working on a two year project held jointly with the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast and Healing Through Remembering, preparing an audit of artifacts relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. He is currently a researcher in the Department of Information Services at Queen's University Belfast.

**Hugh Forrester** is the Curator of the Police (formerly RUC) Museum since 1997, he has also been in charge of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers Museum and Somme Heritage Centre. After studying history at Edinburgh University, he worked as an archivist in

England before moving to Northern Ireland.

**Will Glendinning** has been involved in the development of HTR since its inception, initially as CEO of the Community Relations Council but latterly as an individual. He has worked in community relations and reconciliation since the 1970s.

**Olivia Glendinning** studied History at Edinburgh University. She has completed a study of Berlin from the end of the Second World War and has written on the impact of unification. She is also studying the impact of conflicts and the use of contemporary memory to the study of history. She composed her dissertation on

the importance of collective and personal memory of the Northern Irish conflict in forming identities amongst the Protestant community in South Armagh.

**Alice McCartney** is Arts Regeneration Officer at Derry City Council. She has worked in the victim/survivor sector for over six years. Alice trained as a sculptor, and she has had work commissioned for both the private and public sector. Alice has exhibited both nationally and internationally.

**Alan McBride** is the coordinator of the WAVE Trauma Centre, (Belfast branch), a Victims and Survivors Organisation providing care for those affected by the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland.

**Laurence McKeown** is a former republican prisoner (1976-1992). In 1981 he participated in the hunger strike in Long Kesh/Maze Prison during which 10 prisoners died. He is currently Research Coordinator with Coiste na nIarchimí, the umbrella organisation for republican ex-prisoner groups throughout Ireland. Laurence is also an established writer and playwright. He has two daughters Caoilfhionn and Órlaith and lives outside Newry with his wife Mick.



**Yvonne Murphy** is Librarian of the Northern Ireland Political Collection and Director of Development at the Linen Hall Library in Belfast and creator of the Troubled Images project.

**Dr Louise Purbrick** is a Senior Lecturer in the History of Art and Design at the University of Brighton. She writes on the heritage of conflict and is editor, with John Schofield and Axel Klausmeier, of *Re-Mapping the Field: New Approaches to Conflict Archaeology*, Berlin-Bonn: Westkreuz-Verlag, 2006 and, with Jim Aulich and Graham Dawson, *Contested*

*Spaces: Sites, Histories and Representations*, Palgrave, 2007.

**Kate Turner** is the Director of Healing Through Remembering and was the Project Co-ordinator from December 2000. She has over twenty years experience in the voluntary sector.

**Claire Smith** was the Administrative Assistant with Healing Through Remembering from March 2008 until January 2012. Previous to that, Claire was an Intern with organisation.

#### LMM Sub Group Members

Kris Brown  
Dominic Bryan  
Déaglán de Breadun  
Máirín Colleary  
Briony Crozier  
Hugh Forrester  
David Gallagher  
Tony Gallagher  
Mervyn Gibson  
Will Glendinning  
Alan McBride  
Alice McCartney  
Declan McGonagle  
Laurence McKeown  
Yvonne Murphy  
Louise Purbrick  
Dave Wall

#### HTR Board Members

Seán Coll (until March 2010)  
Harold Good (from April 2010)  
Claire Hackett  
Brandon Hamber  
Alan McBride  
Dawn Purvis  
Pat Sheehan  
Geraldine Smyth  
Irwin Turbitt  
Alan Wardle  
Oliver Wilkinson









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