

WOMEN

War & Peace



Women's Stories of World War II



FINAL REPORT

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Partner Organisations

Smashing Times Theatre Company, Ireland
Institute de Formacion Y Estudios Sociales (IFES), Valencia, Spain
Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universitaet, Hannover, Germany
University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz, Poland



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and Trade



INSTITUTO DE FORMACIÓN
Y ESTUDIOS SOCIALES



University of Humanities
and Economics in Lodz



Leibniz
Universität
Hannover



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Women, War and Peace is an innovative yearlong transnational project with four European partners from Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland.

The project uses creative processes of theatre and film to explore the role of women in Europe from WWII and the power of the EU in promoting peace and gender equality today. The project is co-funded by the **Europe for Citizens programme of the European Union** and the **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Reconciliation Fund**. The four European partners are:

- Smashing Times Theatre Company, Ireland, www.smashingtimes.ie
- Institute de Formacion Y Estudios Sociales (IFES), Valencia, Spain, www.ifes.es
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universitaet, Hannover, Germany, www.uni-hannover.de
- University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz, Poland, www.ahe.lodz.pl

The project resulted in the creation of a **Women War and Peace Digital book** with a foreword by Marian Harkin, MEP. The book contains 23 women's stories highlighting women's experiences during WWII and ways to promote human rights, gender equality and peace today. Also created was an original script and theatre performance of ***The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII***, performed at the Samuel Beckett Theatre, Trinity College Dublin on the 14, 15, 16 September 2016 and a short film ***Tell Them Our Names*** distributed internationally. The performance and film are creative re-imaginings of moments from the lives of women during WWII recalling stories of

“ A total of 34 Women War and Peace fun-based EU-linked events were conducted in four European partner countries attended by 1,769 young people and adults



bravery, sacrifice and love amidst the horror of war, as the women stood up against Fascism and totalitarianism and refused to accept oppression.

A **Women War and Peace International Symposium** was held on the 16 September 2016 and a **Women War and Peace Youth Symposium** was held on the 15 September 2016 for second-level schools and youth groups, both held at the Samuel Beckett Theatre, Trinity College, Dublin. The symposiums were presented by the four project partners in association with the Drama Department, School of Drama, Film and Music, Samuel Beckett Theatre, Trinity College, Dublin.

The international guest speaker was **Dijana Milošević**, director of the DAH Theatre Research Centre in Belgrade, Serbia. DAH Theatre was founded out of the need for experimental theatre work, reflecting historical and political aspects of Serbian society. Dijana facilitated a master class theatre workshop to explore ‘what role can the arts play in promoting women’s rights, gender equality and peace’ at local, national and European levels. We were delighted to have **Senator Ivana Bacik**, LLB, LLM (Lond), BL, FTCD, the Reid Professor of Criminal Law, Criminology and Penology at Trinity College Dublin, speaking. She is a qualified Barrister and a Senior Lecturer and Fellow of Trinity College Dublin (elected in 2005). Her grandfather Karel Bacik was in the Czech resistance and was imprisoned by the Nazis. After the war, he moved to Ireland with his young family, where they lived in Waterford.

The international partner speakers were Edyta Pietrza, PhD, University of Humanities and Economics in Łódź, Poland; Inga

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Research and Resource Book

Women’s Stories of WWII from Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland

Kuzma, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Culture, University of Łódź, Poland; Arne Schrader, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universitaet, Hannover, Germany; Fernando Benavente, Instituto de Formacion Y Estudios Sociales (IFES), Valencia, Spain and Àfrica Díez Álvarez, Gavina Cooperative School, Valencia, Spain. The full range of artists and guest speakers included Mary Moynihan, theatre and filmmaker; Maureen Hetherington, Towards Understanding and Healing, The Junction, Derry/Londonderry; Deirdre Toomey, Practitioner in Human Rights and Community Development; Áine Stapleton, Dance Artist and Performer, Fitzgerald & Stapleton; Paul Kennedy, writer; Chrissie Poulter, Trinity College Dublin; Salome Mbugua, Head of Missions, Wezesh; and Audrey Keane, Information and Advice Officer, Creative Europe Desk, The Arts Council.



Senator Ivana Bačík, Edyta Pietrza, Inga B. Kuzma, Mary Moynihan, Women War and Peace Symposium

A total of 34 **Women War and Peace** fun-based EU-linked events were conducted in four European partner countries attended by 1,769 young people and adults - 959 from Ireland, 247 from Spain, 140 from Germany and 423 from Poland - to promote remembrance, debate and learning in relation to women's experiences of WWII and the role of the EU today for promoting peace and gender equality. One hundred people from four European countries completed an online questionnaire, two transnational partner meetings were held and 1,619,147 people were reached through ongoing dissemination activities.

A total of 791 evaluation forms were completed and 723 participants from 4 European countries stated in the evaluation form that their awareness of issues explored by the project had increased from attendance at **Women War and Peace** events and these issues included European Remembrance, Women's Experiences of WWII, and the role of the EU to promote peace and gender equality. For 1,103 people this was their first time attending a European project.

Women War and Peace Digital Book

A key part of the project was the creation of the **Women War and Peace Digital book** with a foreword by **Marian Harkin, MEP**, Ireland. The book contains articles, research and 23 women's stories from WWII and the Holocaust - highlighting stories of women from Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland who promoted liberty, campaigned against Nazism and Fascism, spoke out against totalitarianism and advocated for peace. The project partners successfully researched 23 women's stories from WWII - eight from Ireland, five from Spain, five from Germany and five from Poland - in order to promote a remembrance of European history with a focus on women's experiences of WWII and the role of the EU to promote human rights, gender equality and peace today. The stories reflect on WWII and the Holocaust as well as the Spanish Civil War and the Irish Uprising of 1916.

The digital book is available online through each partner website and can be read by everybody to promote a remembrance of women's stories and experiences during World War II and a promotion of human rights, gender equality and peace today. The editor of the book is Mary Moynihan and key contributors are Edyta Pietrzak, Inga Kuzma, Fernando Benavente Tendillo Kilian Cuerda Ros, Arne Schrader, Freda Manweiler, Mary Moynihan, Jessie Smith, Bernard Wilson (writing about the life of Mary Elmes) and Nadia Clare Smith (writing about the life of Dorothy Macardle).

The stories in the book from Ireland are Mary Elmes, Ettie Steinberg, Margaret Skinnider, Josephine Alexandra Mitchell, Dorothy Macardle, Louise Graham née Boyle, Mary Fleming and Aileen Turner; the stories from Spain are Federica Montseny Mañe, Pilar Tendillo Haro, Rosa Estruch Espinos, Neus Català Pallejà and Dolores Ibárruri, La Pasionaria; the stories from Germany are Anna Seghers, Esther Bauer, Sophie Scholl, Marta Hillers and Gertrud Pötzinger; and the stories from Poland are Alina Szapocznikow, Maria Eugenia Jasińska, Homeless women in Łódź during WWII, Regina (Inka) Milichtajch and Johanna Majewska.

The book features articles and research on the European Union, on the causes and impact of the Second World War and the rise of totalitarianism in Europe, the founding of the EU and the development of human rights, gender equality and peace. Articles include **The Second World War: A Global Conflict** by Mary Moynihan; **The roots of hate: Fascism, Nazism, totalitarianism and war** by Kilian Cuerda Ros and a keynote article **Human Rights and Gender Equality** by Edyta Pietrzak and Inga Kuzma. The booklet contains information on the United Nations, the Declaration of Human Rights, how to influence the EU and EU common laws, policies and procedures for promoting human rights, gender equality and peace.

Finally, a three-hour **Remembrance Through Theatre Workshop Model** was created by the four European partners using theatre to actively involve citizens in EU-linked fun activities to promote



Fiona Bawn Thompson, Ella Brady, Romana Testasecca in *Tell Them our Names*

remembrance, debate and learning in relation to women's stories from WWII and the role of the EU today to promote peace and gender equality.

The theatre model is available in the **Women War and Peace** book with detailed instructions for artists, facilitators and educators on how to conduct the practical, fun-based drama workshop with young people (ages 14 plus) and adults.

The book was launched at the Oak Room, The Mansion House, Dublin on 8 November 2016 by international human rights activist Mary Lawlor, founder of Front Line Defenders. Guest speakers included Cllr Rebecca Moynihan, Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mary Moynihan, Artistic Director, Smashing Times Theatre Company and Lecturer, BA in Drama (Performance), Conservatory of Music and Drama, DIT, and Fernando Benavente, IFES, Spain. The partners were delighted to welcome Mark Elmes, cousin of Mary Elmes who travelled from Cork to attend the event on behalf of the Elmes family. The **Women War and Peace** Book can be found at www.smashingtimes.ie/women-war-and-peace/

Theatre Performance: The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII

The **Women War and Peace** project resulted in the creation of an original script and theatre performance **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII** by Deirdre Kinahan, Mary Moynihan, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy. The show was performed at the Samuel Beckett Theatre, Trinity College Dublin

on the 14, 15, 16 September 2016. The show is a creative re-imagining of moments from the lives of women during WWII recalling stories of bravery, sacrifice and love amidst the horror of war, as women stood up against Fascism and totalitarianism and refused to accept oppression.

The performance features the world premiere of **Ode to Ettie Steinberg** by internationally-acclaimed playwright Deirdre Kinahan; the world premiere of **Neus** by Mary Moynihan inspired by the life story of Neus Català Pallejà from Spain; and new Irish writing by Mary Moynihan, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy recalling the stories of **Margaret Skinnider** and **Mary Elmes** from Ireland, **Dolores Ibárruri**, or **La Pasionaria** from Spain, **Marta Hillers** from Germany and **Maria Eugenia Jasińska** from Poland, remembering stories of powerful women during WWII.

Women's stories in the performance are **Margaret Skinnider** (1893-1971) a revolutionary feminist and maths teacher who came to Dublin from Scotland at the age of 23 to fight in the 1916 Easter Rising and who remained in Ireland and campaigned for women's rights in the trade union movement from the 1930s onwards; **Mary Elmes** (1908-2002), a Cork woman who was the first Irish person honoured as 'Righteous Among Nations' for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazi gas chambers during World War II; **Ettie Steinberg** (1914-42) the only female Jewish Irish citizen known to have been murdered in Auschwitz; **Marta Hillers** (1911-2001) from Germany who wrote her autobiography **Eine Frau in Berlin** (A Woman in Berlin) under the name 'Anonyma' (Anonymous), detailing her experiences of the last days of WWII as she and over one million other women were

raped and abused by Allied soldiers of the Red Army; **Neus Català Pallejà** (b.1915) from Spain, a member of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War, an active collaborator with the French Resistance during WWII and a living Spanish survivor of Ravensbrück concentration camp for women; **Maria Eugenia Jasińska** (1906-43) from Łódź in Poland who worked for the resistance and gave up her own life rather than 'name names'; and **Dolores Ibárruri, or La Pasionaria** (1895-1989), from Spain, a revolutionary leader, political activist, Communist and crusader against Fascism during the Spanish Civil War who created the famous cry 'They Shall Not Pass'.

The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII Artists and Production team

- Directors:** Mary Moynihan, Bairbre Ní Chaoimh
- Writers:** Mary Moynihan, Deirdre Kinahan, Fiona Bawn Thompson, Paul Kennedy
- Cast:** Fiona Bawn Thompson, Róisín McAtamney with Margaret Toomey, Ella Brady and Romana Testasecca on film
Freda Manweiler, Mary Moynihan
- Producers:** Tara Doolan
- Set Design, Projection and AV Programming:** Risa Ando
- Costume Design:** Cillian McNamara
- Lighting Design:** Eva Walsh
- Production Stage Manager:** Melvin Mwongera
- ASM:** Freda Manweiler, Paul Kennedy
- Post-Show Facilitators:** Freda Manweiler, Mary Moynihan, Róisín Mc Atamney, Fiona Bawn Thompson, Deirdre Kinahan, Yanky Fachler and Hilary Abrahamson, members of the Jewish Community and Lynn Jackson of the Holocaust Education Trust.
- Post-Show Speakers:**



Sabina Coyne Higgins, Áras an Uachtaráin First Lady (centre) with actors Fiona Bawn Thompson and Róisín Mc Atamney



The Women War and Peace project resulted in the creation of an original script and theatre performance **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII**



*Fiona Bawn Thompson in **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII***

Film: Tell Them Our Names

Tell Them Our Names is a short film directed by Mary Moynihan, edited by Mark Quinn, High Wire Ltd and scripted by Mary Moynihan, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy from a devising process with the cast consisting of Fiona Bawn Thompson, Romana Testasecca, Raymond Keane, Margaret Toomey, Mary Moynihan and Ella Brady. **Tell Them Our Names** is an imagined recreation of moments from the lives of five powerful women during WWII recalling stories of bravery, sacrifice and love amidst the horror of war, as the women stood up against Fascism and totalitarianism and refused to accept oppression.

Opening on an anonymous beach in Europe, a group of women and children line up in front of a bureaucrat's desk, only to be barked at by a gatekeeper. But the women are not silent. They are here for a reason. An unexpected act of violence is carried out, as the women become authors of their own stories. **Tell Them Our Names** is an imagined recreation of moments from the lives of five powerful women during WWII; **Marta Hillers** (Germany), **Mary Elmes** (Ireland), **Maria Eugenia Jasińska** (Poland), **Neus Català Pallejà** (Spain) and **Dolores Ibárruri, La Pasionaria** (Spain). Their stories have mostly been unheard or buried, now they are voiced. Set in the context of World War II and the Spanish Civil War, these powerful women speak of harrowing acts of oppression and inhumane treatment, yet still, despite all the odds, the spirit of defiance and hope rings through.

Women's stories that have inspired the film are **Marta Hillers** (1911-2001) from Germany who wrote her autobiography **Eine Frau in Berlin** (A Woman in Berlin) under the name 'Anonyma' (Anonymous), detailing her experiences of the last days of WWII as she and over one million other women were raped and abused by Allied soldiers of the Red Army; **Mary Elmes** (1908-2002), a Cork woman who was the first Irish person honoured as 'Righteous Among Nations' for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazi gas chambers during World War II; **Maria Eugenia Jasińska** (1906-43) from Łódź in Poland who worked for the

resistance and gave up her own life rather than 'name names'; **Neus Català Pallejà** (b. 1915) from Spain, a member of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War, an active collaborator with the French Resistance during WWII and the only living Spanish survivor of Ravensbrück, one of the largest concentration camps set up by the Nazis especially for women; and **Dolores Ibárruri, or La Pasionaria** (1895-1989), from Spain, a revolutionary leader, political activist, Communist and crusader against Fascism during the Spanish Civil War who created the famous cry 'They Shall Not Pass'.

Tell Them Our Names Artists and Production team

Director:	Mary Moynihan
Producers:	Smashing Times and High Wire Ltd
Writers:	Mary Moynihan, Fiona Bawn Thompson, Paul Kennedy
Cast:	Fiona Bawn Thompson, Romana Testasecca, Raymond Keane, Margaret Toomey, Mary Moynihan and Ella Brady
Editor:	Mark Quinn, High Wire Ltd

Artist's Vision for Ireland

As part of project activities in Ireland **An Artist's Vision for Ireland** National Symposium was held at Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin on 21 April 2016 exploring the kind of Ireland artists would envisage for the future, inspired by events from the Easter Rising of 1916. **An Artist Vision for Ireland 1916-2016 Digital Book** was created featuring an insight into the Artist Vision for Ireland Symposia, with a selection of Artist Vision for Ireland manifestoes; keynote speeches and talks; and biographical information on the women of 1916. The keynote speaker was internationally acclaimed playwright Deirdre Kinahan and guest speakers were Emer Boyle, Artist; Dr Eric Weitz, Associate Professor of Drama, Trinity College, Dublin; Mary Moynihan, theatre and film maker, Smashing Times Theatre Company; and Ray Yeates, Dublin City Council Arts Officer. The compere was



Tell Them Our Names



An Artist's Vision for Ireland

Chrissie Poulter, head of Drama at Trinity College Dublin and the symposium facilitators were Jenny Macdonald and Ray Yeates. A theatre performance of **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of 1916** was presented at Smock Alley Theatre on 21 April 2016, with original testimony and new Irish writing by Pom Boyd, Mary Moynihan and Peter Sheridan inspired by women's stories of 1916. The performance remembers the experiences of women as revolutionaries and insurgents fighting on an equal basis with their male counterparts, as advocates for social justice and as pacifists and advocates for peace.

Quality and Innovation

Women, War and Peace is innovative as it uses creative processes of theatre and film to explore the role of women in Europe from WWII and the power of the EU in promoting peace and gender equality today. Innovative outputs are the **Women**

SPECIAL THANKS

Smashing Times wish to extend a very special thanks to Pilar Tendillo Haro; Neus Català Pallejà; Louise Graham née Boyle; Shirley Graham; Marc Fernando Benavente; Esther Warmberg, niece of Ettie Steinberg, and her husband Asher; Caroline Danjou, daughter of Mary Elmes; Mark Elmes, cousin of Mary Elmes; Ronald Friend, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Stony Brook, New York, one of the children saved by Mary Elmes; Stuart Rosenblatt, Irish Jewish Genealogical Society; Edwin Alkin and Yvonne Altman O'Connor of the Irish Jewish Museum; Bernard Wilson, writer and researcher on the life of Mary Elmes; Lynn Jackson and Aideen Stapleton, Holocaust Education Trust, Ireland; Don Davis, American Friends Service Committee Archives; Nadia Clare Smith, biographer of Dorothy Macardle; Colleen O'Reilly, Boston College; Mark Mc Menamin, documentary maker and historian and a special thanks to all those who supported this project.



War and Peace book containing 23 women's stories highlighting women's experiences during WWII and ways to promote human rights, gender equality and peace today; the original theatre performance of **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII** and the original art film **Tell Them Our Names** distributed internationally.

Marian Harkin, MEP, Ireland, in a foreword to the **Women War and Peace** book writes "To all who promoted, designed, organised and participated in this project, I say thank you. You have given me a renewed commitment to the work of the EU" and in relation to furthering the work of human rights and gender quality "I was truly renewed after reading this book". The book is "thought provoking and hugely interesting" and "the individual stories of these women are fascinating . . . they effected change often in incredibly difficult circumstances and we as women in Europe today owe them - big time."

Marian Harkin refers to the Remembrance Through Theatre workshop as "provocative, fun and incredibly mind-opening" and feedback from participants indicates the success of all project activities.

'I never thought about the power of theatre and drama in promoting peace and human rights but after listening to the speakers and seeing the performances I have realized the value of the work Smashing Times are carrying out'

'Superb! Way exceeded my expectations and is sending me away with lots of food for thought. Thank you so much.'

'I feel so grateful to have been present for the discussions offered today- extremely inspiring. Thank you.'

'A transformational day.'



Endorsements

‘I have been involved in European projects for years but this was definitely one of my favourites’ – Fernando Benavente, Project Partner, IFES, Spain

What the Partners Say

‘This was an amazing day, I’m really proud to be associated with it.’
- Edyta Pietrza, University of Humanities and Economics, Lodz, Poland

‘I loved the performance. I had researched Neus and it was so moving to see her story brought to life.’
- Fernando Benavente, IFES, Spain

‘The performances at the symposium were so moving, they really brought the characters to life.’
- Arne Schrader, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universitaet, Germany

‘Saw ‘The Woman is Present’ last night, a call to the heart: Stop war and trumpet the heroism of women, missing from history.’
-Dr Eric Weitz, TCD and Smashing Times

‘It was a really great event and amazing to see . . . I felt really proud to be involved with Smashing Times Theatre.’
- Paul Kennedy, writer and director

What the Public Say

‘It was a truly inspiring event. I was shocked to realize how little we know about the women of our past, we need to do more.’
- Laura Brady



Women War and Peace International Symposium

‘The speakers and performances were truly inspiring. Such an important event. I can’t wait to read the book now!’ - Ciara Smith

‘The women’s stories were inspirational!’ - Carla Ryan

‘It was great to get the opportunity to listen to these women’s stories that too often we don’t hear about’ - Jack Covaliero

‘Our participants really enjoyed the event, thank you so much for including us in the activities, it is great to hear what you are all doing and keep us involved.’ - Yvonne McCarthy, HACE

‘Thanks for inviting me to the event, I always enjoy working with Smashing Times Theatre’ - Andy Redican

‘It was an amazing event, very enjoyable, inspiring and interesting’
- Bridget Kelly, audience member

Theatre Performance

‘Such a moving piece of theatre. The performances were excellent’
- Sabina Higgins, Áras an Uachtaráin First Lady

‘The work Smashing Times are doing is so important. We need to hear more of these stories’
- Laura Brady, audience member

‘I’m amazed I never heard those stories before. It was so interesting, thank you for a wonderful performance’
- Elaine Cronin, audience member

‘Thanks Freda and all the cast and crew of The Woman is Present! What a wonderful evening’ - Mary Duffin, audience member

‘It was just brilliant! The two actors were phenomenal. Well done to everyone involved!’ - Niamh Clowery, audience member

‘Brilliant, moving, eye opening journey into stories of women’s bravery tonight. Well done to all involved’
-Sarah Glennane, audience Member



Women War and Peace Book Launch: L to R: Mary Lawlor, Front Line Defenders, Fernando Benavente, IFES, Valencia, Spain, Mary Moynihan, Freda Manweiler, Roisin McAtamney, Smashing Times Theatre Company, Cllr Rebecca Moynihan, Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin, Margaret Toomey, Paul Kennedy, Smashing Times, Mark Elmes, Cousin of Mary Elmes.

Youth Symposium

'The two drama pieces were excellent and readily understood by the group.'

- Mick Fox, 5th Year Head, St Paul's CBS Secondary School

'The concept was fantastic and something I feel is extremely worthwhile.' - Aoife Rodgers, Transition Year Coordinator, St Louis High School

'It opened their eyes somewhat to new experiences or more to the point, to look at the issue of gender equality from a different point of view.' - Mick Fox, 5th Year Head, St Paul's CBS Secondary School

'I loved the play. We need more workshops like this'
-St Louis Student



Ella Brady and Margaret Toomey in Tell Them Our Names

'Thanks very much, that was really good' - Synge Street Student

'Can we come again next year? We always really enjoy Smashing Times workshops'
- St Paul's Student

'It was interesting to see everyone's opinion on the topic. Everyone should be treated equally'
- St Paul's Student

'I really enjoyed learning about the struggle the women had to go through' - St Paul's Student

Adult Symposium

'Smashing Times work is inspiring, motivating and vital in our world'
- Participant

'Fantastically run. Thank you. For all those that instinctively react negatively when they hear "feminism" I think it's important to take some of the ideas presented today to reach out and break that block'
- Participant

'Congratulations on a successful event. You had great engagement from everybody there.'
- Audrey Keane, Information and Advice Officer, Creative Europe Desk, The Arts Council

'I attended the cross boarder peace discussion in the afternoon. Maureen Heatherington's presentation on patriarchy really made me think'
- William Caughey

Outputs Achieved



➔ **Two transnational partner project meetings**, the first in Carmelite Centre, Whitefriar Street, Dublin 2, Ireland, 28 October 2015, attended by 17 from four partner organisations and the second in Akademia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna, 26 Sterlinga Street, Building K, Poland, 19 and 20 May, 2016, attended by 7 from the four partner organisations.

➔ 100 people complete a European online questionnaire and findings included in the **Women War and Peace Digital Research Book**

➔ **Women War and Peace Digital Research Book** containing articles, research, questionnaire findings, information on the EU and its role in promoting gender equality and peace, and 23 women's stories from WWII and the Holocaust, taken from Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland, highlighting stories of those who campaigned against Nazism and Fascism, spoke out against totalitarianism and advocated for peace. The book is available on the following partner websites:

www.smashingtimes.ie/women-war-and-peace/
www.ifes.es/cursos/dt/valencia/page.do?p=75
www.demokratiedidaktik.de/projekte/women-war-and-peace
www.ahe.lodz.pl/dzialalnosc-naukowa/bpe/projekty-miedzynarodowe/women-war-and-peace

➔ Original script and world premiere of **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII** by Deirdre Kinahan, Mary Moynihan, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy at the Samuel Beckett Theatre, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, on the 14, 15, 16 September 2016, nightly at 7.30pm. The performances are re-imagined moments from the lives of women in WWII recalling stories of bravery, sacrifice and love as powerful women stood up against Fascism and refused to accept oppression.

➔ Original art Film **Tell Them Our Names** created and distributed to 8 festivals

and viewed in Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland, inspired by women's stories of WWII, screenplay by Paul Kennedy, Mary Moynihan and Fiona Bawn Thompson

➔ **Women War and Peace International Symposium**, 16 September 2016 and a **Women War and Peace Youth Symposium**, 15 September 2016 for second-level schools and youth groups, both held at the Samuel Beckett Theatre, Trinity College, Dublin. Speakers included keynote speaker Dijana Milošević, DAH Theatre, Serbia, Senator Ivana Bacik, Ireland and guest speakers from



Women War and Peace Partners L to R: Freda Manweiler, Ireland; Magdalena Tomczak, Poland; Mary Moynihan, Ireland; Fernando Benavente, Spain; Arne Schrader, Germany; and Edyta Pietrzak and Inga B. Kuzma, Poland.



Fiona Bawn Thompson in *The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII*

Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland. Activities included workshops, plenary sessions, discussion, debate and performances.

➔ **Dissemination Activities reaching 1,619,147**

- Dissemination Activities in Ireland reaching 1,461,185
- Dissemination activities in Spain reaching 19,962
- Dissemination activities in Poland reaching 132,000
- Dissemination activities in Germany reaching 6,000

➔ **Research** conducted to identify 23 women's stories from WWII, eight from Ireland, and five each from Spain, Germany and Poland and corresponding research articles from each partner country

➔ **Remembrance Through Theatre Workshop Model** that actively involves citizens in EU-linked fun activities to promote remembrance, debate and learning in relation to

WWII and the role of the EU today to promote peace and gender equality. The model is available in the **Women War and Peace** book.

➔ **34 Women War and Peace** fun-based EU-linked public multiplier activities in four European partner countries attended by 1,769 young people and adults (959 from Ireland, 247 from Spain, 140 from Germany and 423 from Poland) to promote remembrance, debate and learning in relation to women's experiences of WWII and the role of the EU today for promoting peace, democracy and gender equality. Of the 1,769 citizens, 822 were male and 947 female.

➔ Public event at the **Abbey Theatre Dublin** to launch the project and mark the 70th anniversary of the ending of WWII. Theatre director Bairbre Ni Chaoimh read **Holocaust** by Barbara Sonek, Margaret Toomey performed an anti-war monologue by Cindy Sheehan, Fiona

Bawn Thompson and Paul Nolan performed a scene from **Freedom of the City** by Brian Friel, Ray Yeates, Dublin City Council Arts Officer, spoke about the role of inclusion in theatre and Chrissie Poulter, Trinity College Dublin, spoke about the new partnership between the European partners. Actor Ger Ryan read the **Ballad of the Fallen World** by internationally acclaimed poet Paula Meehan who kindly gave permission for it to be read in memory of all those who have died by acts of war.

➔ 791 evaluation forms completed and **723** participants from four European countries stated that their awareness of issues explored by the project had increased from attendance at **Women War and Peace** events and these issues included European Remembrance, Women's Experiences of WWII, and the role of the EU to promote peace and gender equality. For **1,103** people this was their first time attending a European project.

Impacts



⇒ **1,769 European citizens** (young people and adults) had direct access to 34 fun-based EU-linked activities implemented in four European countries that successfully promoted and raised awareness of remembrance, debate and learning in relation to women's experiences of WWII and the role of the EU today to promote peace, democracy and gender equality

⇒ **Democratic and civic participation** of citizens promoted by developing an understanding of EU policy making process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement

⇒ **Digital book, theatre performance, film and public activities** promote active remembrance and dialogue in relation to 23 women's stories of WWII including those women who campaigned against Nazism and Fascism, spoke out against totalitarianism and advocated for peace

⇒ **Women's Stories** celebrated and raised awareness and

acknowledgement of the extraordinary contribution these women played in history

⇒ **By animating women's stories** from WWII through film and live performance, citizens engaged on an emotional level resulting in a deeper understanding of these women's lives

⇒ **Active European citizenship** fostered as 1,103 people attended an EU project related event for the first time and received information on the role of the EU in promoting gender equality and peace

⇒ **723 participants** from four European countries stated in evaluations that their awareness of European Remembrance, Women's Experiences of WWII, and the role of the EU to promote peace and gender equality had increased from participation in activities

⇒ **Raised awareness** of the need to work in a pro-active way for human rights, gender equality and peace

⇒ **Fosters intangible cultural heritage,** women's rights and peace by recognizing, celebrating and restoring the hidden or forgotten stories of women

⇒ **Makes women visible** in society and promotes women's rights by illuminating the hidden or forgotten stories of women from WWII.

⇒ **Challenges the traditional narrative** of history that has silenced women's voices and experiences. Hearing these stories provides young men and women with new narratives and role models that inspire a sense of achievement in relation to women's contribution to society

⇒ **Inspires pride** in the values these women had for freedom and democracy and promotes active citizenship



Selection of Presentations at Women War and Peace International Symposium

Presentation by Dijana Milošević, co-director of Dah Theatre, Belgrade, Serbia

I consider the Dah Theatre an instrument for peace. That's not a theory that I developed. It comes from my experience of working as a director with my group. It comes from having to address burning questions from the beginning. When the civil war began in 1991, it basically meant that people who were our friends, even relatives, were thrown into the war zones, and suddenly they were our enemies. Or that was how it was portrayed by the media and our government. And all the while our government was committing atrocities.

Jadranka Anđelić and I had just started the Dah Theatre, in June 1991. And the first conflict was at the end of May. It was pure coincidence that our theatre began at the same time, but it forced us to face that situation immediately and ask ourselves what we could do, in a very simple human fashion. What can we do with our art? Can we just pretend nothing was happening? That was not possible for us. Should we address all those topics? And that's what we did. The first performance we created was labelled an anti-war performance. We didn't think we were creating an anti-war performance. We really just wanted to speak about how we felt, and we needed to tell the truth—that we were in a dirty war that was being carried out in our names, that our media were silent about that, that our government was lying to its people, creating enemies . . .

It was a total public denial, and I personally had a need to address that denial. We addressed it in that first performance, held outdoors, based on the Berthold Brecht poems. It was during very tough times, but ah!, the response of the audience was something amazing. It really brought home the idea, that yes, theater can create peace, not in an idyllic, simple way, but in the way that people need to hear the truth. Theater can speak the truth, theater can speak the truth to power. Theater can acknowledge the losses, which I find crucial at the beginning of any kind of healing and reconciliation that are the steps toward peace. And of course the notion of theater as the space where we can sit together and exchange ideas in a relatively safe environment is, for me, in itself, peace building.

In the beginning it was absolutely not our idea to do anything related to war or to political issues. After Jadranka and I graduated from the theater academy in 1989 we went on to direct separately at institutional theaters. Then we both went to the Odin Theater¹ in Denmark, and while we were traveling around we decided that

we wanted to create our own professional theater group. It would work in the tradition of a theater laboratory that would explore different topics and be a place where actors and directors could develop artistically and as human beings.

When we started the Dah Theatre (in my language Dah means breath, spirit, movement of the air), just weeks before the first conflict, we weren't even aware that it was a war. We had started to work on a piece based on literature by the great Serbian author, Momčilo Nastasijević², who wrote in the style of magic realism, very beautiful. But while we were building our group and having auditions and starting to work with actors, the conflict was escalating and spreading, and eventually we understood what was happening and started to talk about it with our actors.

The breaks during rehearsals started to be longer and longer. We were becoming aware that we had to protest what was happening, and that particular literature was not offering us that possibility. So we said, "Maybe we'll do that later, but now we have to address what is happening around us." We asked ourselves what we should do, and our dramaturge brought in the Brecht poems.

We started to read them, and it was as though Brecht was our contemporary. It was amazing because he was talking about when people talk about peace, the common people know there will be war. "Will there be singing in dark times? Yes, there will be singing about dark times." We were really inspired. He talked about conquering lands and what a soldier's wife gets from different countries where the soldier goes to conquer. For example, he goes to conquer France, and brings her back beautiful gloves. He goes to Spain and brings her back beautiful lace. And then from the last country he goes to conquer, his wife gets a black veil. It was a very powerful message to our people, to our men, because this was exactly what was forbidden to talk about: A, that our government was drafting and sending our men to war and B, that while we were trying to conquer those lands, there was absolute silence about it at home. This is what we addressed in that first outdoor performance of *This Babylonian Confusion*, June 1992.

Before 1991 there were a few plays that were, I could say, colored in a nationalistic way. One play specifically, *Sveti Sava* (St. Sava), provoked a lot of discussion. St. Sava was an important saint of the Orthodox Church, we have churches with his name. He was a major historical figure, then he went to a monastery and became a monk, and then he became a saint. The Church keeps him very saintly, and then in 1990 one of our writers, Siniša Kovačević,



wrote about him as he was before he became a monk. That play drew strong response from the right-oriented groups that sided with the Church (traditionally, the Church has not had a very nice role in our society). A group of nationalist extremists even stopped the performance of a play at the Yugoslav Drama Theatre presented by a Bosnian National Theatre from Zenica on tour in Belgrade, by running onto the stage and hitting the actors³. I was there when that happened, and it was very, very ugly.

The incident was one we identify with growing nationalism within the republics of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, and the growing right wing. But it's too strong a statement to say that theatre sparked, started the conflict. Plays at that time were simply mirroring what was happening in society, which was the disillusion of the old Yugoslavia.

Tito had died [in 1980] and playwrights started to write more freely. There was heavy censorship during the Tito era. Communist censorship was huge, yet we all lived under this mantra of "brotherhood and unity." When he died it was like opening Pandora's Box. Suddenly each Republic started to exercise national feelings that were suppressed during Tito's era, and those feelings gradually turned into nationalistic feelings, on all sides of the conflict.

Some authors and directors tried to create so-called political theatre to explore what was happening. (They had tried to speak out in some way during the Communist era, but they really were not brave enough.) What they produced was a mixture of half-truths about the rise and growth of nationalistic feelings, a strange hybrid between criticizing Communism and supporting nationalism, but in reality the right questions were not being

asked, the important issues were not being explored, all the issues surrounding suppressed feelings.

That was the situation in the late 80s, before the war started. It was very complex. The civil war started in Slovenia, but it was very short, the famous ten days in Slovenia. Then it spread immediately to Bosnia and Croatia, where it lasted until 1995. And then the conflict with Kosovo started. That was also hidden from us, so we really did not have the full picture of the atrocities our government was committing there. That conflict lasted until 1999, with the NATO bombing of what was then called Yugoslavia, meaning Serbia and Kosovo. And 2000 marked the fall of Milošević and his regime, when basically the civil war ends.

We were the only one professional independent theater company addressing those things during those first years of the war. We had institutional theaters in Belgrade, and we had ad-hoc projects where people would gather and create something, and amateur theaters, but there was really no notion about professional theater on a long term basis outside of the institutions. We were the first. No other independent theatre groups were openly speaking about the situation during the first years of the war. They were afraid. And because institutional theaters were State supported they were silent, absolutely silent.

People in other areas did things, too. A movement called the Belgrade Circle, basically a network of intellectuals, were discussing issues related to the situation and were initiating different actions. In the beginning there were also other women's groups, like Women in Black⁴. But they decided to act separately because they learned that the Belgrade Circle was not aware about the issue of women's rights and was essentially following

1 Odin Teatret was created in Oslo, Norway, in 1964, and moved to Holstebro (Denmark) in 1966, changing its name to Odin Teatret/Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium. Today, its members come from a dozen countries and three continents. Odin Teatret's 50 years as a laboratory have resulted in the growth of a professional and scholarly milieu characterized by cross-disciplinary endeavors and international collaboration.

2 Momčilo Nastasijević (1894-1938) was a Serbian poet, novelist and playwright whose work was produced during the literary period between the two world wars.

3 See *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre: Europe*, by Don Rubin, Peter Nagy, Philippe Rouyer, Routledge Press, first publication 1994, p.147

the same patriarchal model that other institutions were doing in spite of their good political work. So Women in Black started doing their own actions, and soon they began to collaborate with us and with other artists to make their actions more visible.

The costumes for our first performance were influenced by them because their main action was to do a vigil during the day on the main square in Belgrade, Republic Square, standing there dressed in black, from early morning, holding up banners, silently. That was very important. They were silent, they weren't arguing with people. They were just holding the banners, where they had written what they stood for: that they were against the wars and nationalism and killing people in their name, and so on. I was so moved when I saw them that I thought we had to use the same kind of costumes for the first production. We were going to be outdoors and we would be sending the message that we are in mourning because of all people who are being killed in this terrible war, because we are from Belgrade, from Serbia.

We had to report the performance to the police. We reported it as a public event. It was tricky because we don't have laws about outdoor theater performances. This was very new in Belgrade. We did it in the main downtown area where there were right-oriented nationalists in uniforms, with weapons. But we never had a problem, I think for two reasons. One was that it was theater, it was an artistic act, it was not propaganda. The other thing was that the actors were very focused. They had their techniques down pat. It wasn't like we immediately went to the street. We had worked on that piece for six or seven months. It was carefully crafted. It was like a protection.

We were never financed by the government during the nineties – that was made clear. Yet we were never attacked. We got threats, phone threats. For a long time Milošević's government underestimated the power of theater. Their attention was on the media, they were stopping all free media. Luckily, when they started to realize how theater could be powerful, it was near their end.

Many artists initiated political actions using artistic tools to put down Milošević and his regime. Not so many in the beginning, but the numbers grew. For example, composers formed the Association of Professional Musicians and Composers, which initiated actions of "The Last Bell." That's an expression here that means when the last bell rings for somebody, it's the end. They invited people to stand in front of Parliament with bells and ring the last bell to the government and to Milošević. This was the very early 90s. It was very brave, actually. We went, many people went, and did that action. Other actions followed.

In November 1996 there was a big civil protest in the streets, where thousands of opposition supporters gathered to protest against election fraud, and that really was the beginning of the fall of the Milošević's regime. We held municipal elections in November 1996, nobody voted for the representatives of the regime, and then suddenly they said, "We won." We knew it was fraud. Of course

we went to the streets because it was enough, enough of war, enough of all that. The outcome was that the government had to announce, at least partially, their misconduct in counting the votes. And for the first time we got democratic city governments. The election results were still not announced for the whole country, but for the city of Belgrade and some other cities, where we won, it worked. And that was directly connected with the artists' actions. They gave people the incentive to keep having hope.

Some of the visual artists came with a black ribbon that was several miles long, and hundreds of people came to hold it throughout the downtown area of the city as a sign that we were in mourning. Other visual artists brought large mirrors to the streets and put them in front of the cordons of police, so the police were looking at themselves. That was one of the amazing actions. And when police cordons stopped people from moving in the streets, musicians would come with brass instruments and would actually "blow them away." They played right in their faces. And there were theatrical actions initiated by non-theater artists.

We were on the streets for three months, from November 17, 1996 to February 11, 1997. And the police were always there, beating people, arresting people who were doing totally peaceful actions, nonviolent peaceful actions, things like wearing uniforms, for example, because you were always surrounded by uniforms. People would come in a policeman's jacket and high heels, or a funny wig and soldiers boots. Suddenly the police were



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4 Women in Black began in January 1988, at the start of the Palestinian uprising, when about 30 Israeli women gathered in the center of Jerusalem in silent protest of their country's treatment of the Palestinians, each with a sign saying "Stop the Occupation." By the 1990-1991 Gulf War, there were 30 vigils all over Israel. Women in Black made its first appearance in Belgrade on October 9, 1991. In their first public statement the activists defined themselves as an anti-nationalist, anti-militarist, feminist, pacifist group who rejected the reduction of women to the role of mothers.

5 The Center for Cultural Decontamination was established in 1993 and 1994 to fulfill a need to face what was really happening with the situation of the war on the one hand, and all that was being done to hide it, on the other. The Center for Cultural Decontamination (denazification and pacification) was created out of belief that it was necessary, for the sake of future and today's children, to decontaminate and denazify the environment and terrain systematically polluted with nationalism and xenophobia, which, obviously, resulted in provincialism, followed by colonialism. It is necessary to induce catharsis, to purify, purify. --Borka Pavicevic

surrounded by hundreds of funnily dressed people, and they didn't know what to do. We always laughed about it. This is when I realized the power of humor. Humor has the power to face even the most brutal force – and can win.

Our evening newscast at 7:30 continued to broadcast notorious lies. And one action stopped them from being heard. People were told, "Make your own noise," and so at exactly 7:30 they would come out on their balconies and go to their windows with pots and pans and make unbearable noise. This was something like what happened in Chile. It was a very efficient way to spread information about what was happening. People inside started to understand that everything was silenced, in the newspapers, on TV, the radio. At one point all the media were controlled by the government.

We don't know if maybe somebody who knew about the pots and pans action in Chile initiated it in Belgrade, because it was done by word of mouth. All the actions were done through word of mouth. What was the action for tomorrow going to be?

The police would say, for example (because they were acting like it was a democracy), "OK, you can protest as long as you want but you are blocking the traffic in the streets. You can only be on the sidewalks, not on the streets." It was impossible to stay on the sidewalks. There were too many people. So one of the actions was, "Come downtown in your car, stop it, and repair it." We'd go downtown, stop, open the hood, and say to the police, "Sorry, it broke down. I don't know what's wrong with it." We would act like dummies. "It just stopped." So cars flooded the city. Again, it was a very strong message. During those three months the actions were nonstop.

Just before the fall of the regime it was really nasty. We really expected that at any moment the police would come to search our space and the Center for Cultural Decontamination⁵ —a very interesting name—where our piece was being presented and the debates were held. The Center was pro-peace oriented, against the war. It still exists, it's a great venue. The police did go there, search the place, and went through all their computers. At that time we had a small office and were basically nomads, working in different venues. Our official address was my personal address, so I was expecting the police to come to my house. Luckily it didn't happen.

I do feel that those actions had a bearing on the downfall of Milošević. People were empowered by those actions. The creativity somehow gave them energy to go on. The whole resistance movement was formed out of those actions, and it was really that resistance movement that finally broke the government. There were also people working politically on putting down the government, but I think the cultural actions were directly connected. You may not see the connections immediately. Some people were disappointed that the fall of the complete government and Milošević didn't happen immediately. That wasn't possible at that moment. But I think those actions were like seeds planted for the future. And this is exactly what happened. The seeds grew into fruits in 2000.

*Dijana Milošević,
Dah Theatre, Serbia*



Presentation by Freda Manweiler

Smashing Times, Women in Peace Building and UN Resolution 1325

On 31 October, 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed the United Nations security council Resolution 1325 which vowed to ensure that women and gender equality were placed at the forefront of international, regional and local peace-building and security policies. According to Liz Ford, deputy editor of the Guardian's Global Development website, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was passed:

"following decades of lobbying by women's rights activists. It was the first Security Council resolution that addressed the specific impact of war on women and girls. The key points of the resolution were ensuring women's full participation in conflict resolution and peace negotiations; action to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in war, and the prosecution of those who carry out such attacks; as well as a recognition of the different needs of female and male ex-combatants when planning disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes (DDR). The resolution also called for more women in peacekeeping operations and local police forces, more funding to support local women's peace initiatives, and to assess all peace agreements for their effect on women. It even urged the design of refugee camps to take account of the particular needs, and safety, of women and girls – such as installing lights next to toilet blocks, places that are often the site of attacks on women."⁶

Since Resolution 1325 was passed other resolutions have also been passed to continue supporting women in peace building and conflict. But 16 years later resolution 1325 is struggling to be fully implemented because of a lack of proper funding and commitment. In an article 'Time to fund women's role in the cause of peace' from The Guardian, March 9, 2015, by Simone Filippini, CEO of Cordaid, Simone wrote that "resolution 1325 is handicapped by woeful underfunding and women remain largely on the periphery at a time when enlisting their talents in the cause of peace and to combat extremism has never been so badly needed" particularly in relation, she writes, to dealing with radicalization and its devastating impact. She writes that:

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jan/22/women-rights-war-peace-un-resolution-1325>

“the international community’s response is to eliminate violent extremism with military might, while at home governments spend billions on security measures . . . donor countries invest billions in military security to counter violent extremism, but fail to allocate the resources to implement 1325. This lack of political will to generate adequate funding deprives the world of a most effective response to radicalisation, and as long as we, the international community, do not give our full political and financial support to their peace-building and state-building efforts, we will only see more violence in the future, however large the military response. By failing to take women and girls on board in issues of peace and security, the world loses a lot of its potential power to counter violent extremism. In 2000 the world promised to support women who dismantle the culture of violence and promote gender equality in the direst of situations. We broke that promise. Only 46 out of 193 UN member states have developed national plans on resolution 1325. None of these plans have yet received adequate funding. And as Hassina Safi, AWN director, puts it: “If our pocket is empty, we cannot do anything. If we have a little money, are planned and strategized, we can really trouble shoot a lot of problems. . . The costs of inaction are high. Women are active agents of change in their communities and societies. Preventing them from using their full economic, peace-building and state-building potential in their countries is a threat to global security”⁷.

to implementing UNSCR 1325 in Northern Ireland as anything other than denying women and girls their rightful attention and participation, and it is failing to respond to compelling evidence of the impact of the conflict on women”.

Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has said that “we have seen first-hand in countries from every region the critical role women play as peace-builders, as community organisers, as voices for those who are marginalised. We are convinced that strengthening women’s leadership at every level is key to advancing peace, sustainable development and human rights in the 21st century”. She also said that “no society can develop – economically, politically and socially – when half of its population is marginalised”.

In 2015 Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charles Flanagan TD, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, launched the Republic of Ireland’s second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security which runs from 2015 to 2018 and has an increased focus on the empowerment and participation of women in conflict resolution and peace building. A key aim of the plan is to strengthen women’s leadership and participation in decision making in conflict and post-conflict situations and to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated into Ireland’s engagement in overseas humanitarian and development aid, peace-keeping, governance, post-conflict activities and intervention and to bolster Ireland’s ongoing work on the



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Resolution 1325 applies to all UN member countries including the United Kingdom and Ireland. The actual implementation of the provisions of Resolution 1325 are carried out at state level through the development by each country of a National Action Plan, a specific plan developed by the country to implement the provision of UN Resolution 1325. National action plans are official government documents that identify what measures will be used to implement gender mainstreaming and gender equality actions in order to transform policy into practice. Both the United Kingdom and Ireland have national action plans however the United Kingdom is refusing to accept the applicability of UNSCR 1325 to Northern Ireland.

In an article titled ‘The politics of defining ‘armed conflict’ in Northern Ireland’, on www.opendemocracy.net, 26 June 2014, authors Elizabeth Law and Ann Marie Gray state that there is continued concern at the low representation of women in the post-conflict process in Northern Ireland, and the failure to fully implement Security Council Resolution 1325. They write that “it is essential that post-conflict reconstruction is seen through a gendered analysis so that the impact of the conflict on women is identified, their contribution to the peace is recognised and their needs are met. It is hard to see government resistance

protection from and prevention of gender based violence. Full information is available on the Department of Foreign Affairs website <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/women-peace-and-security/>.

Smashing Times is a professional theatre and film company involved in performance, training and participation. The work of the company is underpinned by a rights-based approach and a commitment to artistic excellence and social engagement. As a leading professional arts organization the company develops innovative, cutting edge, state of the art projects that promote social justice, peace, gender equality, human rights and positive mental health through high quality artistic processes, merging art, culture and politics to interact and engage with contemporary society and the world we live in.

The company was established in 1991 by a group of women actors who met at the Focus Theatre Dublin. Today the work takes place at local, national and international levels and is presented in a range of settings from the professional theatre space to on tour in schools and communities where we are invited to work with people collaboratively

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/mar/09/international-womens-day-fund-womens-role-peace>

Smashing Times Theatre Company has worked in Northern Ireland since before the ceasefires using creative processes to promote peace and to address a legacy of conflict. As part of this work participants from a range of communities come together to use drama and theatre processes to share their own stories. It is a form of dialogue sharing where each participant can freely acknowledge their own identity, community and background as well as coming to explore other identities and stories or dialogue from different communities so there is a sharing of experiences.

Many stories, particularly women's stories, are hidden due to silences that can exist as a result of conflict and theatre workshops are an ideal medium for creating a shared, safe space where stories can be told. Because theatre engages the emotions there is an empathy created and this ensures a deeper learning experience within the workshop environment.

The company runs storytelling workshops through theatre. Theatre is an embodiment of storytelling, it is storytelling in action. The company conducts storytelling through theatre workshops where people come together to share their own stories and experiences. We hear the stories of ordinary people that may not yet be a part of a public discourse. It is important to have the choice to tell and have your story acknowledged.

There are many different stories to tell and a drama storytelling workshop provides a safe space for stories to be shared and for discussions to take place. A person can come into a workshop saying they don't have much to say and by the end of the workshop you will have heard about the incredible lives people have lived and you feel privileged to be a part of that shared experience. A storytelling through theatre workshop creates interaction and dialogue, through people to people contact, as one interacts the possibility of meaning for the other undergoes a transformation as each participant hears the other's story and learns more about the other. Through the workshops connections are made as we seek to understand each other and find a collaborative way to address issues and build relations. Because we use our bodies and are emotionally engaged in the workshop, the work opens participants to new perspectives in a way that intellectual discourse may not. Participants are encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and are supported as they explore new or previously hidden territories. The drama provides a space for participants to literally stand in the 'other's' shoes" and to explore a shared humanity.

Freda Manweiler

Smashing Times Theatre and Film Company

Presentation by Maureen Hetherington, Towards Understanding and Healing:

Patriarchy: Women and Gender Based Violence

I would like to thank Smashing Times for inviting me to this International Symposium. So much of what has been said today resonates with our work in peace building at the Junction, which is a community relations and peace building initiative based in Derry Londonderry in the North West.

My remit was to address:



- How, in any post conflict, it is essential that the rights of women be put at the heart of new structures
- How equal women's voices are in the NI peace building process
- Our work on patriarchy in NI and its link to violence against women, and
- The potential of women to promote peace

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge Drs Johnston McMaster and Dr Cathy Higgins, Senior Research Writers and Educators with the Junction. Johnston and Cathy are responsible for the Junction's Ethical and Shared Remembering Project: Remembering a Decade of Change and Violence 1912-1922, of which patriarchy is an integral part of the education and training programme (some of which I am quoting here today).

Patriarchy means 'rule of the father' and it refers to a system of legal, social, economic and political relations that validate male sovereignty in both the household and state as natural, common sense, and god given. It is structured violence along gender lines and is based on biological differences.

For at least 4,000 years women have shaped their lives and acted under the umbrella of patriarchy which has justified the dominance of men over women, mitigated by a system of obligations and rights - women exchange submission for protection, unpaid labour for maintenance.

Patriarchy is an historic construct. It had a beginning and will have an end. It no longer serves the needs of women or men; and it is inextricably linked to militarism, hierarchy and racism. It threatens the very existence of life on earth, as we know it.

One of the women's stories of WWII explored through Smashing Times was Marta Hillers from Germany, who wrote her autobiography *Eine Frau in Berlin* (A Woman in Berlin). Marta detailed her experiences of the last days of WWII as she and over one million other women were raped and abused by Allied soldiers of the Red Army.

On researching the Red Army during this period, military historian Anthony Beevor states,

"By the time the Russians reached Berlin, soldiers were regarding women almost as carnal booty; they felt because they were liberating Europe they could behave as they pleased. That is very frightening, because one starts to realise that civilisation is terribly superficial and the facade can be stripped away in a very short time."

So it wasn't that women were used in this particular situation as 'weapons of war' against the enemy, rather that women were used as 'entitlement' by the soldiers who were 'liberating' them. And I will come back to this notion of entitlement and liberation within the context of Northern Ireland.

We heard one of the speakers this morning quote columnist and drama critic, Fintan O'Toole speaking on war and theatre "... the cultured person and the ignorant killer have often been one and the same." It brings to our attention the fragility of civilization as a whole and reminds us of what we, as human beings, are capable of doing to each other. This is particularly significant when we are exploring violence against women in Ireland and across the world!

In Northern Ireland addressing patriarchy is crucial to building peace. Our evidence for this need has come about through hearing the stories of women who have been impacted by conflict in N.I. and their direct experiences of violence by men, whether it is verbal, physical, psychological or sexual.

There are stories of loyalty to men who were involved directly in violence and this is in relation to men and their entitlement for 'sacrifices' made during the conflict. Being 'loyal' might include keeping the men entertained on stakeouts, or being available to men who were holed-up in safe houses (through sexual favours).

One woman stated that, as a girl, her parent's house was known as a safe house, but it wasn't safe for her - she was raped on many occasions. Another young girl was 'owned' by one particular leader of the [paramilitaries] who, in fearing for the safety of her family, went along with his sexual demands.

I have facilitated numerous workshops, dialogues and storytelling sessions where women are working so hard to bring about positive change and peace in their respective communities but, because of paramilitary activity, gatekeepers and community activists, almost exclusively men, they are controlled, curtailed and often side-lined.

In exploring patriarchy and sexual violence in Northern Ireland, men in particular, need to be helped to embrace positive gender identities that are an alternative to militarised ones. It is well documented that in post-conflict societies where this has not happened, research reveals an increase in domestic violence. In Northern Ireland, police statistics show a dramatic increase in domestic violence since the first ceasefires in 1994 and the subsequent Peace Process. Statistics last year, for example, three to four times more females than males are victims of domestic violence, with over 28,420 incidents recorded.

In Northern Ireland where we have experienced a long, protracted conflict, a culture of violence remains, with women bearing the brunt of violence by men. An average of more than six sex offences are reported to the PSNI every day, of which a high percentage of incidents are reports of rape against girls and women.

This patriarchal culture of violence and entitlement by men has not been adequately challenged and has contributed to ongoing 'acceptable' levels of violence against girls and women. In 2008, an Amnesty International survey among university students in Northern Ireland revealed:

- 46% of students thought that a woman who had been raped was partially or totally to blame if she had been acting flirtatiously
- 44% felt the same if the woman was drunk
- 30% if she was wearing sexy or revealing clothing
- 10% felt it was acceptable for a man to hit his girlfriend or partner if she had flirted with another man
- 9% thought it acceptable to hit her if she nagged

In a conflict situation when economic, political and social structures break down, violence against women often escalates. Cultural norms and stigma usually result in rape and violence against women being under-represented in peacetime.

Thus it is even less likely to be reported during conflict and violence, due to the emotional pain and stigma, as well as fear for the safety of family and lack of ordinary support systems.

Incidents of rape in Northern Ireland by soldiers and paramilitaries during the 30+ years conflict is an unknown quantity. Thus in a peace building context opportunities need to be created for survivors of violence through rape to tell their stories in a supportive and healing environment, alongside education and the deconstruction of the patriarchal conditions that permitted their abuse.

In looking at root causes of conflict and militarism, first wave Irish feminists warned that patriarchal gender relations were a key factor. Within a patriarchal framework, the social shaping of masculinity must be addressed as one of its causes. This point was emphasised at a conference on Global Solutions to Sexual Violence in Conflict (2013) in which Haja Zainab Hawa Bangura (UN Special Representative) stated:

"If women are seen as second-class citizens in peacetime their rights will not be respected when there is unrest. If they are viewed as unimportant before war breaks out they will be treated as expendable during conflict."

A transformation of gender relations, therefore, is essential for the transition to just peace in Ireland. And this is about the liberation of men as well as for women. For restorative gender justice to become a reality we as a community have a responsibility to attend to those women who experienced in their own bodies the full force of patriarchal fear and violence.

Patriarchal gender based violence needs to be addressed as part of building lasting and sustainable peace. At the Junction we are approaching this through a community education programme



In exploring patriarchy and sexual violence in Northern Ireland, men in particular, need to be helped to embrace positive gender identities that are an alternative to militarised ones



that raises awareness of how it is sustained by both men and women. Building knowledge, alongside a skills base, provides the potential for deconstructing patriarchy.

Within the community education programme we cover a comprehensive range of themes, which include the roots of patriarchy and patriarchy one hundred years ago in Ireland in relation to its continuing legacy today. We explore the construction of the gender myth to control relationships. We also examine religion as a basis for patriarchy, and politics as an expression of patriarchy in Ireland. Equally important the community education programme explores Women's Rights and Human Rights, to understand violence against women in the context of Northern Ireland, past and present. We also examine and unpack European and International Human Rights and how to apply Human Rights to Northern Ireland.

I would like to finish with a very recent event, which some journalists have pointed up as a classical example of patriarchy and misogyny that is still deeply embedded in Irish society:

Reporting on The Cavan Family Massacre: Recently, we had the coverage of the Cavan family in which Clodagh Hawe and her three sons were murdered – the coverage by Linnea Dunne, a Dublin based writer and editor, exposed the patriarchal underpinnings of the reportage. According to Dunne, Clodagh Hawe was made invisible by the media. Dunne raised a number of very important questions and challenges. She states, "There is a patriarchal narrative that runs through this entire story, from the act itself to the reporting of it, and we need to allow ourselves to see it if we are to find a way to prevent similar events from happening again."

Maureen Hetherington
The Junction
www.thejunction-ni.org

Presentation by Mary Moynihan, Theatre and Film Maker

The work of Smashing Times: The Memory Project in Northern Ireland and Women War and Peace in Europe

Smashing Times Theatre Company is a convergence of artists who share a common aesthetic making collaborative work through film, theatre and the arts, engaging with audiences and participants to promote social change through high quality artistic processes.

The company creates collaborative performance practice to explore and express life experiences and stories in theatrical form inviting audiences to engage with those stories and share the emotions that tie us together as human beings. The work is based on an intuitive, visceral and physical based approach to performance in order to generate an emotional engagement and intensity that gives each moment its bracing energy. In the work we try to generate an energy that radiates out and touches the audiences, this energy comes from creating intense work that draws upon our deeper selves as actors and having a search for truth in the work. It is the energy we use in Smashing Times, an energy that springs from our joyous, unpredictable, dangerous selves, where we bring the invisible or unspoken into the space.

It is through the body that the invisible life force of the human spirits (characters) can be revealed and brought into the space, making the invisible visible. As such, movement and dance are a key part of the work. To quote Viola Spolin, "the physical is the known and through it we may find our way to the unknown, the intuitive and perhaps beyond to the human spirit itself"



Róisín McAtamney as Margaret Skinnider in *The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII*

Smashing Times takes inspiration from the Living Theatre founded in 1947 in New York city by Julian Beck and Judith Malina and the notion of 'living art', using theatre to explore and express life experiences and stories in theatrical and film form inviting audiences to engage with those stories and share the emotions that tie us together as human beings. The work uses creative processes to raise awareness of a particular issue aiming to promote change. For example in Northern Ireland and the Southern Border counties we use creative processes to explore ways to move beyond years of violent conflict.

Smashing Times Theatre Company has worked in the area of peace and reconciliation since before the ceasefires in Northern Ireland running a range of projects that use theatre to promote reconciliation. The work aims to use the transformative power of drama and theatre to advocate for peace, reconciliation and non-violence and the coming together of different communities in mutual understanding and respect, particularly in relation to addressing a legacy of conflict.

The company ran **The Memory Project** which uses theatre and a television documentary to promote non-violence and address the legacy of conflict in Northern Ireland and to promote a peace and shared future for all. The project was run in partnership with Corrymeela Community, High Wire Ltd and in association with CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) and the University of

Ulster INCORE International Conflict Research Institute and was funded by the European Union's PEACE III Programme.

As part of **The Memory Project** we presented workshops through theatre in anti-racism, anti-sectarianism, gender equality, human rights and storytelling, as well as creating plays drawn from real life stories of the Troubles. The plays are sharing stories and the post-show discussions open up a space for further discussion and debate. In relation to a project such as **The Memory Project**, teachers and youth workers have outlined that they are working with vulnerable young men and women who are at risk of being recruited by dissidents and so watching the performance and then taking part in the discussion offers a valuable forum through which alternative messages can be given. Evaluations of recent work indicate that '... the opportunity to talk about sectarianism and conflict was very much welcomed. It was clear young people don't otherwise have the opportunity to discuss such difficult issues although it was apparent that sectarianism is very current for them and some described experiences of dissident activity.'

Theatre has a role to play as a serious social and political force in the context of the society we live in. As Peter Brook says, "the wish to change society, to get it to confront its eternal hypocrisies, is a great powerhouse". In Smashing Times we stage plays that locate the political within an accessible human context. The company creates original performances that are a combination of fiction



and what the sound of the Lambeg Drum means to her. Some of the participants said that they understood that there can sometimes be an element in the parading that they don't like either, that sometimes it goes to a place they are not happy with but it can be difficult to speak out. One of the outcomes of the workshop was that many of the participants particularly those from the South stated that they had gained a different attitude to understanding the importance of marching on a cultural level.

As part of **The Memory Project** and our acting for peace work the company commissioned **Greenfinch** by Paul Kennedy. **Greenfinch** is based on the story of a woman soldier from the UDR South Armagh Battalion. The women of the UDR were referred to as Greenfinches. The UDR was an infantry regiment of the British Army established in 1970. Women were first recruited to the UDR in 1973 and the monologue tells the story of what it was like to be a member of the UDR and to live in Northern Ireland during The Troubles and what the character sees as necessary for building bridges for the future.

Alongside peace, the company equally promotes gender equality through creative processes. A key part of this work is to remember and celebrate women's stories from history particularly those that have been hidden or airbrushed from history. In this decade of commemorations in Ireland, Smashing Times Theatre and Film Company created and presented **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of 1916** at Smock Alley Theatre on April 21 2016. The performance was based on original testimony and new Irish writing by **Pom Boyd, Mary Moynihan** and **Peter Sheridan** and featured a host of talented Irish actors including **Pom Boyd, Evelyn Shaw** and **Roisin McAtamney**.

The performance explored the varied roles women played in Irish history from the Suffrage Movement to the Easter Rising and brings to life some of the most prominent figures of the day including **Helena Moloney** (1884-1967), a member of Inghinidhe na hÉireann and the Irish Citizen Army, stationed at City Hall Garrison during the 1916 Rising; **Margaret Skinnider** (1893-1971) a revolutionary feminist and maths teacher who came to Dublin from Scotland at the age of 23 to fight in the 1916 Easter Rising and who remained in Ireland and campaigned for women's rights in the trade union movement from the 1930s onwards; **Dr Kathleen Lynn** (1874-1955), a medical doctor, feminist and social activist and member of the Irish Citizen Army, stationed at City Hall during the 1916 Rising and who later set up St Ultan's Children's hospital in Dublin; **Máire Nic Shiubhlaigh** (1883-1958) a founding member and leading actor of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin who led Cumman na mBan at Jacob's biscuit factory in the 1916 Rising; **Grace Evelyn Gifford** (1888-1955), an illustrator and caricaturist who married Joseph Mary Plunkett, a writer and poet and youngest signatory to the Irish proclamation, in Kilmainham Jail Chapel on May 4 1916 hours before his execution and who, after the Rising was involved in the War of Independence and Civil War and later worked as an artist; **Countess Markievicz** (Constance Gore-Booth, 1868-1927) an Irish politician, revolutionary nationalist, suffragette and socialist, a member of the Irish Citizen Army and second in command at St Stephen's Green and the College of Surgeons during the 1916 Rising and who later became the first woman elected to the British House of Commons and first female Cabinet Minister in Europe; and **Elizabeth O'Farrell** (1884-1957), nurse and member of Cumann na mBan, who waved the 1916 Rising surrender flag and who was subsequently airbrushed out of the photograph where she stood alongside Padraig Pearse.

and real stories, 'living theatre' in that the work is fiction yet based on fact as everything expressed on stage has actually happened. The company gathers stories, then draws from this material to create original performances presented to audiences who are then invited to have a discussion about the themes raised in the in the post-show discussions. The plays are sharing stories and the post-show discussions open up a space for further discussion and debate in relation to themes that are a consequence of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the Southern Border Counties.

The company has conducted numerous workshops over the years. One workshop took place in a predominantly loyalist estate in East Belfast which has several peace walls, areas where people are still segregated. Smashing Times brought together adult groups from the Republic of Ireland and groups from East Belfast, in Northern Ireland. Shortly after arriving one of the young men from the South took off his sweatshirt to reveal a Celtic soccer jersey underneath, you could feel 'the tension in the air suddenly rise' with the reaction in the room from the participants. The coordinator asked him why he wore that shirt and he replied 'but does everybody not follow Celtic? There was then a discussion on cultural differences and diversity. During the workshop, one of the women from East Belfast made a passionate argument for the expression of her culture through the parades and attendance at the demonstration field on the 12 July. She expressed how she would love to include other communities in the celebrations



Ettie Steinberg in a dress she made herself, Photo courtesy of E. Warmberg



L. to R: Evelyn Shaw, Adam Traynor, Mark Flynn in *Uprising* scripted by Tara McKeivitt, presented as part of *The Memory Project*

Performances were directed by Mary Moynihan, Andrea Basquille and Jenny Macdonald. The performances remembered the experiences of women as revolutionaries and insurgents fighting on an equal basis with their male counterparts, as advocates for social justice and as pacifists and advocates for peace.

Women, War and Peace is an innovative yearlong transnational project with four European partners from Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland. The project uses creative processes of theatre and film to explore the role of women in Europe from WWII and the power of the EU in promoting peace and gender equality today. The project is co-funded by the **Europe for Citizens programme of the European Union and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Reconciliation Fund** and the four European partners are Smashing Times Theatre Company, Ireland, www.smashingtimes.ie; Institute de Formacion Y Estudios Sociales (IFES), Valencia, Spain, www.ifes.es; Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universitaet, Hannover, Germany, www.uni-hannover.de; and the University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz, Poland, www.ahelodz.pl. Smashing Times were delighted to welcome the Drama Department, School of Drama, Film and Music, Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College as a partner for the **Women War and Peace** International Symposium and performance.

As part of this project, we researched 23 women's stories from WWII – eight from Ireland, five from Spain, five from Germany and five from Poland – in order to promote a remembrance of European history with a focus on women's experiences of WWII and ways to promote human rights, gender equality and peace today.

“
Western countries sell weapons of war to countries around the world and then wonder why they are faced with mass exodus of people fleeing wars

The stories were used as inspiration to create the theatre performance **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII** by Deirdre Kinahan, Mary Moynihan, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy and a short film **Tell Them Our Names** by Paul Kennedy, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Mary Moynihan. The performance and short film are creative re-imaginings of moments from the lives of women during WWII recalling stories of bravery, sacrifice and love amidst the horror of war, as the women stood up against the rise of Fascism and totalitarianism and refused to accept oppression. Women's stories that have inspired the performance and short film include **Ettie Steinberg** (1914-42) the only female Jewish Irish citizen known to have been murdered in Auschwitz; **Margaret Skinnider** (1893-1971) a revolutionary feminist and maths teacher who came to Dublin from Scotland at the age of 23 to fight in the 1916 Easter Rising and who remained in Ireland and campaigned for women's rights in the trade union movement from the 1930s onwards; **Mary Elmes** (1908-2002), a Cork woman who was the first Irish person honoured as 'Righteous Among Nations' for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazi gas chambers during World War II; **Marta Hillers** (1911-2001) from Germany who wrote her autobiography *Eine Frau in Berlin* (A Woman in Berlin) under the name 'Anonyma' (Anonymous), detailing her experiences of the last days of WWII as she and over one million other women were raped and abused by Allied soldiers of the Red Army; **Neus Català Pallejà** (1915-) from Spain, a member of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War, an active collaborator with the French Resistance during WWII and the only living Spanish survivor of Ravensbrück, one of the largest concentration camps set up by the Nazis especially for women; **Maria Eugenia Jasińska** (1906-1943) from Łódź in Poland who worked for the resistance and gave up her own life rather than 'name names'; and **Dolores Ibarurri** or **La Pasionaria** (1895-1989), from Spain, a revolutionary leader, political activist, Communist and crusader against Fascism during the Spanish Civil War who created the famous cry 'They Shall Not Pass'.

All stories are important and by remembering women such as Mary Elmes, a Cork woman who was the first Irish person honoured as 'Righteous Among Nations' for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazi gas chambers during World War II, we hope to play a part in opening up debate on the many different roles women have played in history. It is not known for example how many children's lives Mary Elmes saved however there is a ripple effect in terms of three generations of people who would not be alive today if it wasn't for the work of this extraordinary woman. Also the story

of Mary Elmes has many parallels today. Mary was actively involved in helping refugees who were fleeing from war and persecution. Today we are witnessing the flight of ordinary men, women and children from the war in Syria and there is an onus on all of us to help in whatever way we can.

Western countries sell weapons of war to countries around the world and then wonder why they are faced with mass exodus of people fleeing wars in which those very same weapons are used. There are many factors that cause war including unequal power balances, oppression and poverty. One of the key factors fuelling war, I believe, is a lack of gender equality. It is essential to teach young people that gender is socially constructed. For centuries some men have imposed their own perspectives on state policies, religious teachings and culture that have become internalised and accepted as the 'norm' by both men and women.

Creating new laws is an important part of promoting human rights and gender equality but change also has to happen at different levels within society. There is a need to challenge governments, religions and culture that promote inequality and perpetuate common stereotypes particularly those that place women in subordinate positions, which are often accepted even by women. There is a need to reaffirm a commitment to legislation and action for gender equality and gender mainstreaming as key components for democracy and peace and to commit to women's rights as an essential component of universal human rights. For real change to take place and for equal status we need equal representation in public life and in decision-making processes (Ireland and Northern Ireland still have low gender imbalances at 22% and 28% respectively). We have to challenge prejudice, patriarchy and fundamentalism, end violence against women and the objectification of female sexuality, and promote new feminist visions that ensure social, political and economic equality for all men and women, making women equal and visible in society, in leadership roles, politics and the arts.

Smashing Times are delighted to be presenting **Women War and Peace** and to remember the incredible women whose stories we have gathered as part of this project. All the stories are available to read in the Women War and Peace digital booklet.

In addition to the seven women mentioned above, the other stories in the **Women War and Peace** book are **Josephine Alexandra Mitchell**, an Irish born jazz singer, bandleader and saxophonist who lived in Berlin and performed with jazz legends including Coleman Hawkins, Jack Hilton and Jean 'Django' Reinhardt; **Dorothy Macardle** who worked as a teacher, writer, historian, novelist, playwright and journalist and is the politically engaged author of numerous books; **Federica Montseny**, a Spanish politician, feminist and anarchist trade unionist and Minister for Health during the Second Spanish Republic; **Rosa Ostrich**, a Valencian teacher and politician, a Republican Councillor and Mayor of the town of Vilallonga during the Spanish Civil War, during which she was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison; **Pilar Tendillo** who suffered first-hand the slaughter of the Málaga-Almería road massacre, an attack on civilians that occurred during the Spanish Civil War after Franco's troops entered the city of Malaga and during which around 5,000 civilians were murdered; **Anna Seghers**, one of the most important German women writers of the twentieth century; **Gertrud Pötzinger**, a member of the Zeugen Jehovas (Jehovah's Witnesses), a religious group that was pursued by the Nazi regime during WW2; **Esther Bauer** who was deported along with her family to the concentration camp Theresienstadt, and then to Auschwitz; **Sophie Scholl**, a young German student and anti-Nazi political activist and member of the White Rose non-violent resistance group in Nazi-Germany; **Alina Szapocznikow**, a Jewish woman who survived the Łódź ghetto in Poland and the Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps and later became a world famous sculptor; **Regina (Inka) Milichajtch**, a young Jewish woman from Łódź whose whole family were forcibly moved to the Jewish ghetto in Litzmannstadt in 1940, where Inka's mother died, and then to Auschwitz where her father and brother died, with only Inka and her sister surviving the war; and **Johanna Majewska** recalling in interview the experiences of living as a Jewish person during and after WWII. Also remembered are **homeless women** in Poland who died during WWII.

We remember and honour these women today and celebrate and recognise their stories.

Mary Moynihan

Smashing Times Theatre and Film Company



Mary Elmes:

Interview questions answered by Mary Moynihan



Mary Elmes, photo courtesy of AFSC Archives

How we came across the story of Mary Elmes

As writer and director with the Smashing Times project **Women War and Peace** my role was to create a theatre and film performance inspired by women's stories from WWII. **Women War and Peace** uses creative processes of theatre and film to explore the role of women in Europe from World War II to the present and the power of the EU in promoting peace and gender equality today. The project has four partner organisations from Ireland, Spain, Germany and Poland and each partner researched 5 women's stories from WWII. As part of an international meeting with all the partners held in Dublin in October 2015, we visited the Irish Jewish Museum in Dublin, who had kindly offered to do a talk with us on women from the Second World War period. A fantastic talk was given by Yvonne Altman O'Connor of the Irish Jewish Museum and that is when I first heard about Ettie Steinberg and Mary Elmes. Deirdre Kinahan wrote a piece inspired by Ettie's story for **The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII** and I, along with Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy, wrote a piece inspired by the story of Mary Elmes.

Who was Mary Elmes and why should we remember her?

All the women's stories from the **Women War and Peace** book give the impression of very powerful women who each in their own way resisted oppression and did what they could to help others. Mary Elmes (1908-2002) was an extraordinary woman and by all accounts very brave, courageous and selfless in her efforts to help others. Mary was a Cork woman who was the first Irish person honoured as 'Righteous Among Nations' for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazi gas chambers during World War II.

Mary worked with Spanish refugees in Spain during the Spanish Civil War and then in France during WWII supporting both Spanish refugees and Jewish people incarcerated in concentration camps as well as working with local communities to provide food and other services. Because of her activities assisting those incarcerated in the camps and rescuing Jewish children, Mary was arrested and imprisoned by the Gestapo in Toulouse. She was released after six months without charge. Bernard Wilson has spent many years researching the life of Mary Elmes and in an article on her life he wrote that "After almost six months incarceration she was released without having been charged with any offence . . . and it is recorded that when asked much later about her experiences she just replied "Oh we all had to suffer some inconveniences in those days!"

She looked for no credit for the extraordinary work she had done. Mary refused to accept the salary which had accrued while she was in prison, and likewise the Legion d'Honneur which the French government wanted to bestow on her. Mary saved Jewish children as well as children and adults from many different nationalities.

How important was her impact in WWII?

It is not known how many children's lives Mary Elmes saved however there is a ripple effect in terms of three generations of people who would not be alive today if it wasn't for the work of this extraordinary woman. There are many accounts detailing her work in rescuing children and this has been acknowledged by the fact that she received the award of 'Righteous Amongst Nations' for her work in saving Jewish lives.



Fiona Bawn Thompson as Mary Elmes in Tell Them Our Names

Why is it important to remember the roles played by women in WWII?

Masculinized memories of history are often the norm as the role of women in history is hidden. By remembering women's stories of WWII we hope to ensure we do not forget the atrocities committed by totalitarian regimes when millions were murdered and also to acknowledge the experiences of women in order to reveal a wider picture of what happened. It is important to remember the many different roles played by ordinary, yet extraordinary women during World War II who found their own way to stand up against fascism and totalitarianism and who refused to accept oppression.

Is it important for young women growing up to have role models like these women?

Absolutely. Remembering women's stories is important as today women's rights are under attack from around the world. Misogyny is encoded in many cultures and there is a need to actively work on the promotion of peace as well as gender equality, ensuring fair treatment for all people equally. Part of the work of Smashing Times is to work with young people to raise awareness of how to promote peace as well as raising awareness of the fact that gender is socially constructed. We all need to work together to reaffirm a commitment for gender equality and gender mainstreaming as key components for democracy and peace

In recent times women historians have been doing a great job to put the role of women back into history, however much more needs to be done to ensure that the contribution of women in history is not ignored or minimised. Women make up 50% of the population and yet our young people in schools are still not being taught about the role of women in history on an equal basis to male stories.

All stories are important and by remembering women such as Mary Elmes we hope to play a part in opening up debate on the many different roles women have played in history. Also the story of Mary Elmes has many parallels today. Mary was actively involved in helping refugees who were fleeing from war and persecution. Today we are witnessing the flight of ordinary men, women and children from the war in Syria and there is an onus on all of us to help in whatever way we can.



PERFORMANCE ■ TRAINING ■ PARTICIPATION

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