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Peace education in a time of war: the Museum of Peace in Rivne, Ukraine as a space of memory making and hope

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ABSTRACT

Peace museums play an important role in peace education by offering visitors informal and non-formal education. As sites of remembrance, peace museums are rich pedagogical spaces for experiential learning and reflection. Educating children in the spirit of peace, tolerance and harmony between nations has been central to the work of the Museum of Peace in Rivne in Ukraine. Whilst peace museums usually engage in peacebuilding and memory making in times of peace, post conflict, this article reports on the work of the Museum in Rivne in a time of war. Wartime brings difficult questions about engaging in peacebuilding in the face of military aggression and about sustaining memory-making work when violent conflict makes memories too immediate and painful. As explained in the article, the reinvigorated peacebuilding effort at the Museum in Rivne demonstrates that, in a time of war, it is even more important to promote peace, in opposition to war. Through the annual event 'I Vote for Peace', the Museum has sought to create a network of schools committed to global tolerance and peacekeeping, as well as offer Ukrainian children a space for talking about their experiences and their hope for a peaceful future.

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Introduction

Peace museums play an important role in peace education by working beyond the boundaries of school curriculum and connecting visitors to informal and non-formal education. As sites of remembrance and memory making, peace museums are rich pedagogical spaces for experiential learning and reflection. In Japan, for example, in addition to the historical artifacts on display, several

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peace museums offer a volunteer guide service to enrich visitors' experience (Tanigawa 2015). In Australia, as local 'sites of conscience', war memorials and related exhibition spaces afford opportunities to critically reflect on issues of peace and to check the impulse to engage in selective remembering and 'battlefield tourism', with its myth-making tendencies to militarise historical narratives (Herborn and Hutchinson 2014). The Tehran Peace Museum in Iran hosts exhibitions about the horrors of chemical warfare, with volunteers who were directly affected by chemical weapons giving talks to visitors about the importance of peace as part of the Veterans' Voices of Peace Oral History project (Lewis and Khateri 2015). Peace museums thus engage in two main kinds of work: peacebuilding and memory making. Much of this work is intergenerational (Murakami 2003; Arriaga 2011; Tanigawa 2015) and situated in the local community (Kletchka 2023), offering visitors a space to engage in local memory making and local particularisations of the national narrative themes.

Since peacebuilding and memory making are two core functions of peace museums (Walters 2018), they require conceptual elaboration. Specifically, engagement in peacebuilding requires a closer look at how peace is understood, both nationally and locally (Richmond 2007). As noted by Richmond (2010), the latter allows to understand peace from particular local experiences and perspectives that can inform national and international approaches to peace. Moving beyond the dyad peace vs conflict/violence, any peace effort requires the 'integration of human society' through social institutions which promote social justice and equality (Galtung 1969). In this sense, peacebuilding education initiatives in museums and other public spaces need to provide opportunities for inclusion and challenging war, the armed conflict, and structural violence which arises from unequitable social structures (Galtung 1996). This contributes to developing more equitable social structures to sustain peace into the future.

In Ukraine, peace education scholars highlight the global dimension of peace as a universal human value and a vital part of citizenship education (Andrushchenko 2014), as well as the individual and moral dimensions of peacefulness as an important attitude to nurture in children (Demianchuk and Kolupaieva 1990). This is part of the Ukrainian socio-historical transition and nation-building, whereby education is tasked with promoting democratic values and comprehensive social and cultural development (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2022). Therefore, both formal and non-formal education need to create spaces where those values are rehearsed and creative forms of non-violent approaches to conflict are imagined and re-imagined. Here, peace education needs to also offer spaces for critical conversations which enable assumptions to be evaluated and meanings constructed and reconstructed (Gill 2014).

The two-fold focus on peacebuilding and memory making also underpins the work at the Museum of Peace in Rivne in western Ukraine. In founding the

Museum in 1999, educationalist Stepan Demianchuk set out to display major events in the history of Ukraine which, by the end of the 1990s, brought the country to the threshold of social and economic transformations connected with: gaining sovereignty and independence; the transition from Soviet-style Gosplan to a market economy, as well as a renewed focus on human values and peaceful relations between different ethnic groups in Ukraine. Importantly, Demianchuk also saw museum visits as an opportunity to educate children in the spirit of peace, tolerance and harmony. In his work on peace education (Demianchuk 1995), he was joined by other scholars who promoted educating children in the spirit of peace, in the contexts of preschool education (Pahuta 1997; Petruk 2001) and peace education for older children and youth (Bekh 1999; Bezkorovaina 1999; Demianchuk and Kolupaieva 1990; Iskra 2014). What was inconceivable in 1999, were the events, which unfolded in 2014 and 2022: Russian illegal annexation of Crimea followed by the invasion of Ukraine (UN Press 2023). At the time of writing this article in 2023, the world saw some of the horrors of Russian brutality in Ukraine, with their full scale yet to be fully investigated, reported and redressed (Conflict Observatory 2023). Wartime calls into question the peacebuilding and memory making work of peace museums. How is it possible to engage in peacebuilding in the face of military aggression? How can memory making be sustained when violent conflict makes memories too immediate and too painful to bear? As explained below, for the Museum of Peace in Rivne, 24 February 2022 was a time when its peacebuilding work became even more important, in opposition to war.

This article is a product of collaboration between teacher educators and researchers at the International University of Economics and Humanities in Ukraine and Bath Spa University in the UK. Since the Twinning of our Universities in summer 2022, we have worked together on a range of educational projects, including 'I Vote for Peace' event in April 2023. The authors based in the UK are familiar with the work of the Museum of Peace in Rivne through online participation in this event, as well as a virtual tour and conversations with authors based in Ukraine. We utilise bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln 2005) to present a report on peacebuilding in a time of war, in the moments of its unfolding, in the face of an uncertain future. The wartime work of the Museum in Rivne reported below offers insights into peacebuilding education, with implications for peace museums in other contexts and countries. The next section reviews international literature debates on the educational role of peace museums, focusing in turn on: the relationship between education and peace; the role of peace museums; and the dynamics of memory making and peacebuilding which are enabled within the unique spaces of local museums of peace.

Peace education in museums of peace

The relationship between education and peace has been widely explored through approaches, curricula, and other educational programmes (Bush

and Saltarelli 2000; Foley 1999; Harris 2004; Insuasty Rodríguez and Borja Bedoya 2016; Murphy, Pettis, and Wray 2016). When done well, education has potential to challenge logics of war and propose alternatives to violent conflict. However, the potential of peace education transcends the boundaries of schools and universities and reaches informal and non-formal education represented in public spaces such as libraries, community centres and museums, amongst others (Foley 1999; Novelli 2010). The importance of such spaces lies in the fact that violent conflict is experienced by people daily, which imposes a first-hand knowledge of war (Sanchez-Meertens 2017). Thus, museums and other public spaces can contest war-like narratives through communication with diverse audiences, where dialogue and dissensus are both possible and necessary (Mokus and Chiappe 2017).

Museums are seen as dynamic institutions where constantly evolving dynamics facilitate the communication with socio-economically and culturally diverse populations within an inclusive environment (Anderson 2004; Pastor 2004; Soto-Lombana et al. 2023). They are also seen as institutions that own and manage intellectual property seeking to preserve and teach about cultural patrimony (International Council of Museums, ICOM 2007). The construction of the museums (monuments, spaces, colours) and the exhibition of artifacts constitute a deliberate intention of meaning making (García-García and Medina-González 2022). Museums contain narratives of national identity, of what a society wants to show about themselves, and what they want others to know. This is also the case of museums of peace, where artifacts are displayed to teach about the experience of war and reconciliation to the next generations (Murakami 2003; Tanigawa 2015). Likewise, the purpose of a peace museum is to create spaces of reflection that guarantee a change of attitude towards war.

Museums of peace are called to escape ideological rigidities and become a powerful space to tell stories, stimulate imagination and prompt a deep sense of sober reflection. This aims to help the community understand their own historical processes and their possibilities (Watson 2007). Whereas the exhibitions may show elements that illustrate socio-political and historical processes resulting in conflict, the challenge for a peace museum initiative is to make sense of the conflict in a way that articulates institutional mandates/conditions. Here, too, the local experience needs to be offered, as opposed to hegemonic national narratives (Richmond 2010). The Memory House Museum in Bogota, for instance, shows artifacts that offer diverse perspectives of the conflict; personal histories in conjunction with more collective experience of the conflict configure a many-voiced museum experience (Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliacion 2020). On the other hand, the Memory Museum of Buenos Aires shows the histories of victims of dictatorship and the responsibility of the state (ESMA 2020). This goes to show the multiple needs of communities when it comes to process memory and its narratives.

Memory is a central concept that allows the exhibitions to constitute tools for evocation, reflection, and engagement. In this sense, Jelin (2020) points that, through memory, people interrogate the ways in which they make sense of their past experiences, and how both past and present intersect in the act of remembering/forgetting. However, such a process is never monolithic or straightforward; there are tensions, contradictions, silence, and conflicts. Memory does not escape the terrain of conflict, but its construction requires interactions, dialogues, discontinuities, and more sophisticated forms of non-violent conflict (Zuleta 2011). Likewise, spaces and artifacts make part of the process of memory and its narratives through a process of integration of contradictions that guarantees a sense of belonging and trust (Arfuch 2013; Jelin 2020).

A question that emerges for museums of peace is how to collect pieces of history and narrate their experiences in the face of current oppression. Contradictions and conflicts fluctuate and make the task a difficult one. There is a two-face challenge: on the one hand, it is memory in the making while violent conflict takes place; on the other, it is compelling to promote peace and reconciliation in opposition to war (Tanigawa 2015). It is here where the interaction with objects and its integration with many-voiced narratives can make sense of the conflict in idiosyncratic ways. It is understandable that the mist of an armed conflict, views of militarism, victory, and fight interact with views of peace and reconciliation [see Vignette 1 below]. This requires a willingness to risk and openness to vulnerability (Lederach 2005). And what is risk in this instance? Lederach (2005) defines risk as a journey in which mystery is revealed when navigating the complexities of the conflict. Such journey requires the articulation of various narratives, oftentimes contradictory ones. Peace museums like Rivne's have the tremendous challenge of traversing the rigidities of existing conflicts while providing safe spaces for imagining futures of peace. What is more, a peacebuilding dimension opens up when the educational acts seek to demilitarise the mind (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000).

The role of peace museum educators and guides is essential for communication and transmission to the community (Kletchka 2023). While the initial state of conflict is usually followed by the emergence of narratives of identity, patriotism, and institutional mandates, the educational potential of a local peace museums lies in the strength of pedagogical approaches. Objects, spaces, and narratives need to allow for narrative exchanges and critical conversations (Gill 2014). Bush and Saltarelli (2000) point out the need for a demilitarisation of the mind and the articulation of alternatives from within education sites. In this sense, non-formal and formal education need a strong articulation to provide spaces for reflection and the dismantling of forms of violence exercised and legitimised on both sides of the conflict.

Peacebuilding unfolds in the activities and interactions with artifacts and stories that give account of historical processes, (re)interpretations, and views of the future. Creativity and critical conversations taking place in museums

constitute in and of itself an opportunity to re-evaluate assumptions, construct, and reconstruct meaning (Gill 2014). Through artistic and creative practices, peace museums display their educational and transformational role in the community, even more so when they reach different generational groups (Arriaga 2011). Thus, peace education is mobilised and actualised in spaces outside schools (and in connection with them), promoting connections to the national narrative through local intergenerational interaction and sensemaking as sustainable modalities of change. The next section explores how peace education has been mobilised and reinvigorated in the Museum of Peace in Rivne in wartime Ukraine.

Research methods

As noted in the Introduction, we utilise bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln 2005) to present a report on the work of peacebuilding in a time of war, in the moments of its unpredictable unfolding, which makes planning a more traditional approach to data collection challenging, if not impossible. As a research methodology, bricolage is a multi-tooled way of conducting qualitative research which foregrounds natural data and multiple data sources, whatever is available to researchers, to shed light on multiple interpretations (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Bricoleur researchers 'piece together' narratives, vignettes and other ways of presenting data, to enable the plurality of voices to be heard and multiple readings to be made. The 'data' in this research comprises narrative accounts of teacher educators based in Ukraine pertaining to their everyday experience of working with student teachers and children and the public event 'I Vote for Peace' held both in person and online in April 2023.

As bricoleurs, we embrace our own positionality, stemming from our particular histories, assumptions and worldviews, inextricably linked to where we come from (Ukraine, Poland, England and Colombia), as well as our unique lived experiences. We also recognise the impulse to engage ethically with children, young people and all those affected by the war in Ukraine, directly or indirectly, not from a position of 'scientific insider researchers' (authors based in Ukraine) and 'objective outsider researchers' (authors based in the UK) but from a recognition of our shared vulnerability. It is our shared vulnerability that makes us deeply affected by others. It also entails that, whereas it is impossible for us to feel the pain of others, this does not mean that: 'the pain is simply theirs, or that their pain has nothing to do with me' but rather that 'an ethics of responding to pain involves being open to being affected by that which one cannot feel' (Ahmed 2014, 30). Following Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 4) we also acknowledge that there is no one 'correct' way of reporting and telling but rather that 'each telling, like light hitting a crystal, reflects a different perspective' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 4). When pieced together, the 'tellings' offer some insight into the complexity of peace education in a time of war. We have

'refracted' each narrative account of teacher educators based in Ukraine through literature-informed reading and our own reflections to present multiple facets of this education.

Peace education in a time of war

As explained above, we have utilised bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln 2005) to develop an account which follows. Three vignettes presenting accounts of peace education in a time of war are 'pieced together' and refracted to shed light on diverse perspectives, viewpoints and voices. We start by outlining the education policy context, which has come about since the start of the war. We piece together the ways in which one specific initiative on education issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2022) seems to be reaching out across schools and universities. We find ourselves in our Twinning collaboration, reflecting on how the goal of creating citizen-patriots, which is being is pursued through a range of educational and community activities, brings forth contrasting perspectives on selected pedagogical activities undertaken at the Museum of Peace in Rivne.

The national and patriotic education of children and youth

The Ukraine government reacted to the military aggression through revising the long standing *National and Patriotic Education of Children and Youth Order* (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2022). Specifically, to strengthen the patriotic dimension of education, the *Order* recommends that in education establishments 'value orientations and civic consciousness among children and youth should be carried out in examples of the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people for self-determination and the creation of their own state'. This entails that teachers and teacher educators have a duty to treat every school, university or other educational establishment as a place where each student is encouraged to become a citizen-patriot. This requirement extends to the Museum of Peace, where educators and visitors engage in peacebuilding and memory making under extraordinary present day circumstances: whereas previously patriotism was associated with past conflicts that could be looked back on, today it is seen as an integral part of the fight for victory.

Activities for citizen-patriots include talks and story-telling about Ukrainian culture; student public readings; communication sessions dedicated to the war; historical and current projects about fighters for independence and freedom; meetings held with veterans and representatives of the Armed Forces; nationwide minutes of silence that are held in memory of compatriots killed in the conflict. While there is a drive towards citizen-patriotism, educators acknowledge that their establishments need to focus on young people learning about conflict-free, non-violent communication and co-existence, however

challenging this can be in a time of war. To this end, as well as students being engaged in patriotic activities, organisations and school networks are being created to educate the younger generation in ideas of peace. For example, the Children's Ambassadors for Peace movement attracts potential future leaders for building civil society, on the foundation of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNICEF 1989). Young people are supported to develop the necessary characteristics and inner qualities for building peace across society: family, community, nation and the world. This cooperation between children, teachers and parents in the fields of education, science and culture foster respect for social justice, the rule of law and works toward upholding human rights. Vignette 1 presents an excerpt from an account of day-to-day realities of children and young people told by a teacher educator from Rivne during one of our collaborative Twinning workshops.

Vignette 1

The war has changed the lives of children and young people and their world-view. They are experiencing the loss of their relatives and friends. They want to be useful and speed up the end of this cruel war. Today, for them, war is not a game. Even though their weapons are not real, their fighting spirit is admirable. Children and young people in towns and cities across the country have stood up to defend their homeland. They have set up their own checkpoints in the yards, kept an eye on strangers and often ask them to say the local password to enter the neighbourhood. Moreover, they dream of becoming military personnel. Many are involved in volunteer work and donate all the money they earn to the meet the needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. In these ways they are contributing to the struggle of the nation in the war. The children and young people dream of Ukraine's victory and a happy future in their homeland.

Refracting patriotic education

Vignette 1 shows the challenges posed by the armed conflict in the everyday life of young people and teachers. Social fabric is under threat as a result of the war, with deep fear and a sense of loss becoming part of the everyday experience of children and young people. The war brought in a substantial change to the policy landscape in Ukraine and education is no exception (Dorontseva 2023). Patriotic education has been mobilised in schools and local communities to promote civic self-awareness and a sense of self-determination in young generations (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2022). Patriotic education is a vehicle for developing a sense of belonging to a country while understanding broader responsibilities as citizens (Schumann 2016). The challenge for patriotic education is to avoid adopting a militaristic ethos (Malkoç and Ozturk 2021). For example, the image of children setting up checkpoints might

cause some concern about the militarisation of childhood. Here, a demilitarisation of the mind would be a primary goal of peacebuilding education, although the stark realities of the war make it too difficult a task (Bush and Saltarelli 2000).

War and invasion pose the challenge of navigating uncertainties and complexities imposed by brutal logics of aggression and violence. It is in this context that view of patriotism, resistance, strength, and a spirit to fight percolate cultural and social movements opposing the war. For example, as powerfully argued by the Feminist Initiative Group (2022): 'If Ukrainian society lays down its arms, there will be no Ukrainian society. If Russia lays down its arms, the war will end.' In the mist of armed conflict, views on victory, peace, war, and nation building converge, altering social roles and forms of interaction to simultaneously oppose the war and legitimise armed defence. The overarching concern for Ukraine is existential, going to the very heart of its future as a sovereign country and, therefore, its right to resist.

Fieldwork visits to the museum

Inaugurated in 1999, the Museum of Peace, Rivne is a unique institution amongst Ukrainian higher education establishments. Stepan Demianchuk (1925-Demianchuk 2000), pedagogue, member of the Ukrainian Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, founded the Museum and worked toward the establishment of its sister University institution. The Museum comprises two sections. The first exhibition hall outlines topics concerning peace. The displays pertain to the environment, national approaches to religious and interethnic relations that promote mutual understanding and respect, the contributions of sports and the arts to peace, and the work of organisations. The second exhibition hall reports on the wars that have raged throughout Ukraine's past. This exhibition, entitled *Peace Builds – War Destroys*, presents accounts of the joy and despair, heroism and tragedy that have marked the history of Ukraine including the tragedies of the Holodomor genocide and political repressions. The Museum of Peace is used by the University faculty to broaden students' outlook by holding regular visits to the exhibitions to acquaint students across many faculties with its peace ethos. For example, the University programme in Preschool Education contains the module on *Methods of National and Patriotic Education of Early Childhood and Preschool Children*. As part of this, programme leaders and lecturers organise a day of study held annually in the Museum with third-year pre-service teacher trainee students. A brief overview of a typical visit is followed by a vignette depicting a visit in spring 2023.

On arriving at the museum entrance, the first thing that often catches visitor attention is the biblical inscription that states 'A new commandment I give to you: Love one another!' This is highlighted by the lecturer leading the visit as it captures the spirit of the Museum. The visit starts with a minute of silence for all

Ukrainians who died during the years 2014 to 2023 and all those who fight for independence. The lecturer proceeds to guide the student group through the historical materials in chronological order. In the second exhibition, *Peace Builds – War Destroys*, they explore the theme of Ukrainian humanist thinkers, which is followed by the section *Ukraine 1917–1920: Search for Harmony*, and they end the visit with viewing *Peace Supporters in Ukraine 1940–1980*.

The arts, music and cultural artifacts are used throughout the exhibitions to emphasise that, as one lecturer put it: 'war and equally, its victims never change, that is, children, young people and the old die during hostilities'. For the visit held in April 2023, the lecturer selected to read and discuss the poem, *And he is young, young. . ..* The poem depicts a young person, with 'Unshaven fuzz on his face' who 'probably hasn't learnt to love yet', who only yesterday went to school and today is fighting and learning about the evils of war. When the students were asked to guess when the poem was written, most of them thought that it was about the shootings of Ukrainians in Bucha, Irpin, Hostomel or Borodyanka in the spring of 2022. They were surprised to learn that the poem dates back to 1924 (Pluzhnyk, 1924) and was written after the First World War by Yevhen Pluzhnyk (1898–1936), a poet of the Ukrainian Executed Renaissance generation. Vignette 2 is an account of the abrupt ending to the students' visit.

Vignette 2

[Our] Museum excursion was held on 12 April 2023. Towards the end of the tour of the Museum exhibitions, the air raid siren went off and this abruptly ended the visit, meaning there was no opportunity for students to write any comments in the visitors' book. Instead [we] went down into a nearby bomb shelter. It was after the group moved to the shelter that they [students] explained that the day had helped them understand the meaning of the word war. One student explained that war had not changed. Just like in the years of the First or Second World Wars, war still requires sacrifice, young men die, women become widows, their mothers and their orphans cry. They discussed their everyday events . . . and told stories about young men who were disabled or killed over this the last year. It was painful to learn how much they cared about their parents, fiancés, and relatives who served in the Armed Forces or who suffered from the war. It is very moving to hear all students say that they would never have thought that at the beginning of the 21st century there could be a war in Europe and people would still be dying because of it. They really expressed their hope for its speedy ending soon.

Refracting fieldwork visits to the museum

Memory making at a time of war oscillates between the past and the present, in the face of unknown future. Time, understood as a linear measure of the passing

days, weeks, years, punctuated by victories and losses, horrific discoveries of events in Bucha, Irpin, Hostomel or Borodyanka, mobilises hope for a speedy ending to the war. But there is also a timeless dimension to wartime, which over and over again, ends the life of young soldiers with unshaven 'fuzz' on their faces, as they run out of time to learn romantic love. The love of one's country and romantic love mesh in with the biblical call to love one another as it implores for peaceful existence in a space where the air raid siren becomes a harsh reminder of how war creates ruptures in time. As Dodd (2023, 272) explains in her research on childhood memories of Second World War in France, such ruptures in time shake up 'everyday life in physically or emotionally violent ways and generat[e] opportunities for experiencing those intense and novel things that cause memories to stick'. As illustrated in Vignette 2, the memory making work at the Museum has shifted from the past and an impulse to tell the story of past wars as a story of heroes, to the specific, particular telling of everyday fears, loves and hopes.

'I vote for peace' event, 28 April 2023

The International Public Student Readings 'I Vote for Peace!' event has been held annually for the past 27 years. The key participants are students of grades one to eleven in primary and secondary schools. The purpose of the event is to promote peace ideas among students. On 28 April 2023, more than 250 students, educators and academics from different regions of Ukraine and abroad took part. International partners were able to participate online.

This event comprises two sessions. The first is a plenary session where all participants and students are greeted by honoured guests: the mayor and representatives of the city and regional education departments and representatives from the military. The second is a breakout session, where students and international attendees are divided for groupwork in separate rooms. Before the start of the plenary, the children and young people are given the book of the collection of their works (essays, poems, stories). They read out their individual piece during their group sessions.

For the youngest participants, in 2023, the breakout meeting was held at the Museum of Peace. Before groupwork, primary school students take a tour of the Museum exhibitions. The children were most interested in the second exhibition hall, *Peace Builds – War Destroys*. The young visitors were impressed by the flag of Ukraine, on which children signed their good wishes for serving Ukrainian soldiers, and they also remarked on the photographs of children's letters sent to defenders in the frontline. The children were very moved by what they saw in these collections. After they had read out their own work to the group, they expressed a desire to join in ways to further support Ukrainian soldiers. Each child's message expressed hope to live in a peaceful land, to have faith in victory, and feel sympathy for the victims. According to the staff who

accompanied them, 'in these children's minds, Ukraine is like a long-suffering mother who needs to be protected and raised from the ruins'.

Vignette 3

Many of the young participants had fathers who were at war, defending Ukraine's independence. These children expressed a desire to write a letter to their dad, expressing their love and words of support. Others wanted to offer support through their drawings, as touching messages from young Ukrainian citizens can provide powerful help for our soldiers who are engaged in the fighting. All the children were unanimous in their desire that their dad should return to his family alive and well. The touching letters from the children of our soldiers left no one indifferent. After listening to students reading their poems, all the children and their parents could not hold back their tears: the content of the messages created by our little citizens addressed to their parents at the front, was so heartfelt. Those students whose fathers were not in the war zone grew to understand and feel the pain of schoolchildren who are waiting for their fathers to return home from the war. At the same time, those children whose parents are currently in the ranks of the Armed Forces saw how much support they were receiving from their peers and other adults. Their confidence that their fathers will return to their families alive and well was bolstered by participating in the event.

Refracting 'I vote for peace'

Whilst 'I Vote for Peace' has been held at the Museum every year for the last 27 years, the work on extending its reach within and beyond Ukraine was reinvigorated following the outbreak of the war. Enacting non-violent, peace-affirming practices is important in opposition to war. Retelling the peacebuilding work at the event is a memory making activity, relying on rational sense-making, which raises a number of questions. What was the significance of 'I Vote for Peace' when it first started 27 years ago, in peacetime, as compared to now? Do calls for peace in a time of war render the event 'pacifist' or do they affirm the call to resist and fight? Were there different kinds of 'peace' in the more recent, post-Soviet history of Ukraine, not just in the sense of the absence of war and armed conflict but also in the sense of building a socially just society (Galtung 1964)? And, if peacebuilding and memory making are about critical questions and contradictions, as argued by scholars (Arfuch 2013; Jelin 2020), then why was 'I Vote for Peace' so moving?

Once formal welcomes and speeches closed the first section and the event moved to children and adult participants' readings, it became highly charged and emotional. The feelings of togetherness and compassion for Ukraine, not just as a 'long suffering mother' but also admiration and faith in Ukraine as

a country of courageous, resilient people, were palpable. The Museum became a space for the community to reach out beyond its locality and, through the collection of poems and reflections on 'I Vote for Peace' 2023, to create lasting memories that reach out to the future. Ultimately, however, it is the shared feelings that united us as a community. Accounts of the lived experiences of war, whether presented as narratives, poems or reflections, are 'filled with claims to feel for, with or about other people' (Dodd 2021, 123). An interplay of time, memory and affect in relation to others (Dodd 2021) is thus at the heart of memory making in a time of war.

Conclusions

The Museum of Peace in Rivne was founded to promote the spirit of peace in the local community and across Ukraine, as well as enhance an understanding of peace pedagogy amongst student teachers. For the last 27 years, the annual 'I Vote for Peace' event organised by the Museum has aimed at engaging children in peacebuilding and memory-making work. Since 2022, this work has become even more important, enabling children to express their hope for a peaceful future, develop compassion for all those who have suffered as a result of the war and sustain their faith in victory. Scholarship on peace museums cautions against monolithic national narratives and highlights the need to recognise contradictions, silences and tensions (Zuleta 2011). Peacetime gives the distance and the benefit of hindsight necessary for a more nuanced engagement in peacebuilding and memory work, for a more cautious, critical approach to the national narrative themes. Wartime generates the imperative to surpass contradictions and unite through common purpose.

Since the outbreak of the Russian war of aggression, the world has witnessed the indomitable courage, resilience and patriotism of Ukrainian people. The vignettes presented in this article reveal that this courage and resilience mesh in with fear and suffering, as well as love and hope. Underlying strength, courage and resilience is the vulnerability that we all share, the vulnerability expressed by children involved in 'I Vote for Peace' 2023 through references to Ukraine as a suffering mother who needs to be 'protected and raised from the ruins'. Although children pointed this out, this work is for adults to carry out. Whereas memory making in a time of war is at its core affective (Dodd 2023), peacebuilding is also a political act. For the children in Rivne, 'I Vote for Peace' has been an opportunity to express both their feelings, concerns and dreams and to make a stand for peace as a political act connected to the activity of voting. Allowing children to express their feelings and their hope in safe spaces, where their voices and their everyday experiences matter, is an important implication for peace education in times of war, as well as in times of peace. Annual events such as 'I Vote for Peace' are important due to their peace affirming impetus and implicitly teaching children and young people about the importance of voting. Inviting children and young people to local public spaces in which they can tell about their own experiences, hopes and fears, is a powerful affirmation of peace,

when compared for example to holding a silence to remember those who died to defend their country, as is the case in schools across the UK during the annual Remembrance Day (BBC 2023). Children's hope for peace is an ethical call on adults to support Ukraine and other countries which suffer from wars of aggression.

Engaging in education for peace in the face of military aggression is underpinned by two logics: a peace-affirming logic underlying events such as 'I Vote for Peace' and the logic of resisting aggression. Whilst accounts of peace education in a time of war presented in this article tell a lot about hope and love, this is not to diminish the importance of justified anger, which can also animate education for peace. Equally important in education for peace is sustained memory making, even though violent conflict makes memories too immediate and too painful. The ethical call on those not directly involved in the war is to be 'open to being affected' (Ahmed 2014, 30) by the pain and suffering of others and stand in solidarity with Ukraine. As we plan our Twinning collaboration into the future, we envisage a time *after* the war, after Ukraine's victory. The authors based in the UK plan to visit the Museum of Peace in person and the authors based in Ukraine have already extended their invitation to Rivne, *after victory*. Victory for Ukraine is also *our* victory, victory for justice and a source of hope for a more peaceful future.

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