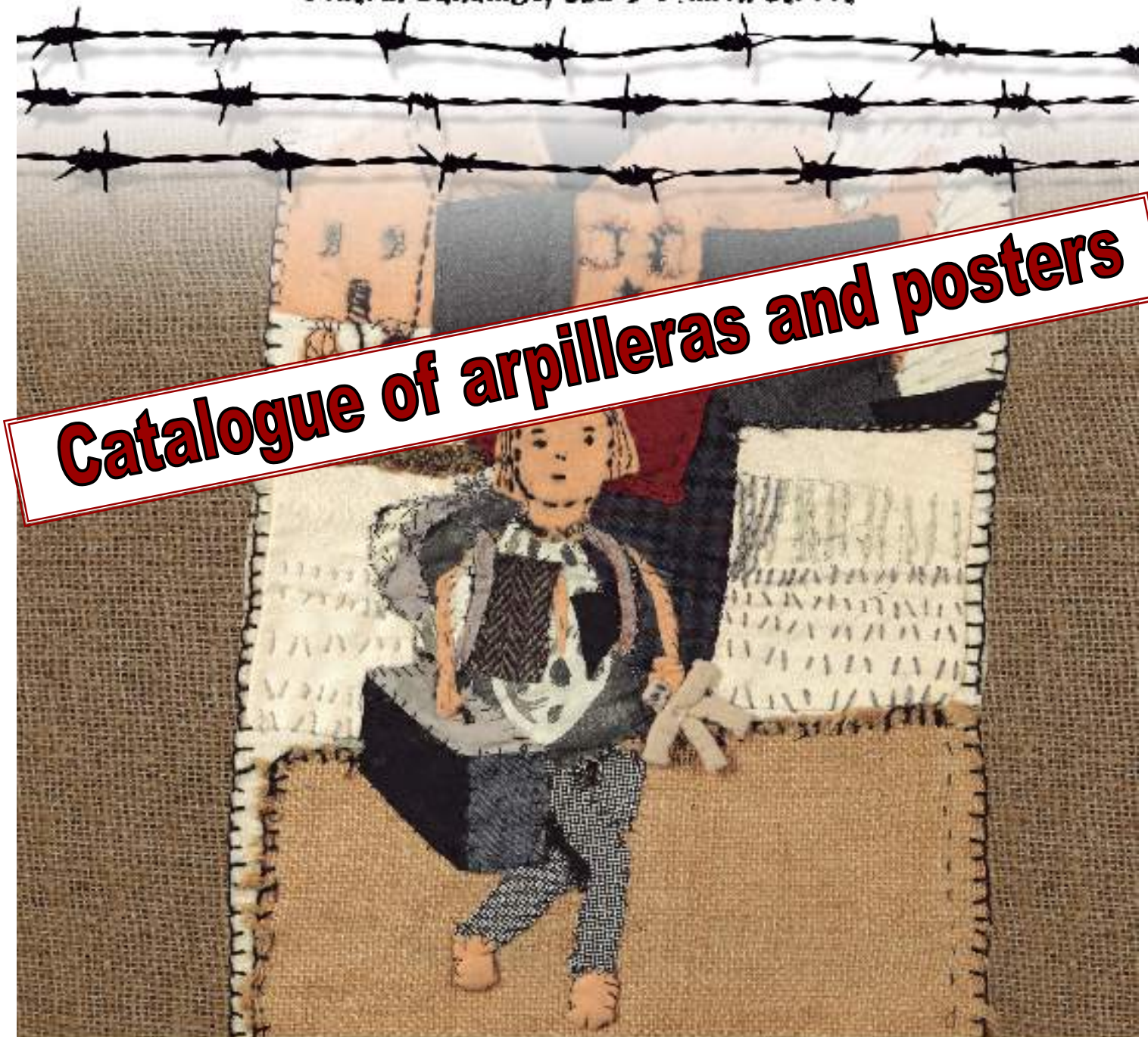


# WAR-TORN CHILDREN

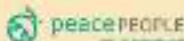
17 - 28 JULY / 2017

CB1 Gallery - Limerick

Central Buildings, 51a O'Connell Street



**Catalogue of arpilleras and posters**





## WAR-TORN CHILDREN

### Introduction

The aim of the exhibition is to raise awareness of the human impact of war and injustice, and to promote a culture of hospitality and welcome for refugees seeking sanctuary from war and persecution in Limerick. A series of activities will take place during the exhibition to enable people, businesses and other organisations in the community to connect, engage in conversations about war and its impacts, and break down barriers that impede progress towards a better world.

This exhibition of arpilleras, photographs and posters, commissioned by Doras Luimní, highlights the devastating impact of war on children, their families and communities. It is an adaptation of War-Torn Children, exhibited at the Linen Hall Library, Belfast from 1st March to 15th April 2017.

The arpilleras are drawn from Conflict Textiles, the photographs from Fundació Ateneu Sant Roc (Catalonia) and the posters from INNATE (Irish Network for Non-violent Action Training and Education).

Partners to this initiative are CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet), at Ulster University, Linen Hall Library Belfast, Peace People, Belfast, Chilean Embassy, Dublin and Central Buildings Community Project/Christ Church, Limerick.

### Further details at:

<http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflicttextiles/search-quilts/fullevent/?id=168>

Curated by Roberta Bacic  
Assisted by Breege Doherty  
<http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflicttextiles/>





**Children on the Edge**  
Northern Ireland Wall hanging,  
Irene MacWilliam, 2016  
Photo Irene MacWilliam  
Irene MacWilliam collection

Details on all these arpilleras  
also on Conflict Textiles  
CAIN site at  
[http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/  
conflicttextiles/search-quilts/  
fullevent/?id=168](http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflicttextiles/search-quilts/fullevent/?id=168)

Conflict, both global and local, past and present, and the devastation it causes to children and families, is a recurring theme in the work of Irene MacWilliam. A picture in a newspaper: “of a starving and dying child hunched up on the ground; the vultures in the trees above ... waiting for it to die” inspired her to create this piece.

This desolate image is reinforced by stark statements on the impact of conflict: “They burnt our homes and crops – they took our land” and “the water supply is polluted.” The bleakness continues in the background colour, deliberately chosen, Irene says, “to depict barrenness and ravaged earth.” The desolation is accentuated on the reverse side with the addition of barbed wire.

Pondering on the inadequacy of words to explain the depths of these images, Irene reflects: “I find it impossible to write why I made it, the expression of my feelings is in the images.”

Ann M. Venemen, then Executive Director of UNICEF, in her foreword to the 2009 report “*Machel Study 10 year Strategic Review: Children and Conflict in a Changing World*” states that in 2006, over 1 billion children were living in areas in conflict, an estimated 300 million of whom were under the age of five.

[http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/  
Machel\\_Study\\_10\\_Year\\_Strategic\\_Review\\_EN\\_030909.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Machel_Study_10_Year_Strategic_Review_EN_030909.pdf)

Over ten years later, these statistics, so vividly brought to life by MacWilliam, show no sign of decreasing.



**Lost children of war**  
Northern Ireland arpillera, Irene MacWilliam, 2009  
Photo Irene MacWilliam  
Conflict Textiles collection



Irene MacWilliam was deeply moved by the posters being circulated at one time to help families find each other after being separated and displaced by war. Especially concerned about the lost and displaced children, she created this piece, her first arpillera, to depict their desperation, making the children ghost like, devoid of nationality or race to express that they are living a half life. Irene chose to focus on children rather than adults: “*since the image of a distressed child is very emotive.*”

Recent reports reveal that worldwide, almost 28 million children have been forcibly displaced; 10 million of whom are child refugees, approximately 1 million of whom are asylum-seeking children and an estimated 17 million displaced within their own countries by violence and conflict.

<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/displacement/>

Displacement poses real dangers for children, with unaccompanied children being the most likely to be killed, tortured, raped, robbed and recruited as child soldiers.

Much remains to be done to safeguard children affected by armed conflict so that they have an opportunity to live as children, grow to adulthood and contribute to their communities.





## Landmines / Campos Minados

English arpillera, Linda Adams, 2015

Photo Martin Melaugh

Conflict Textiles collection



Arpillerista Linda Adams created this arpillera “as a response to the fact that even after a war is over the landmines stay and continue to kill.” Antipersonnel landmines, can lie dormant for years until their detonating mechanism is accidentally triggered. Designed to maim rather than kill, they cause horrific injuries resulting in amputations, long hospital stays and extensive rehabilitation.

<http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/problem/landmines/What-is-a-Landmine>

In this piece, Linda depicts a woman tending her crops, a routine task which has become highly dangerous as we can see from the sign: “Danger-Land Mines.” In the corner we see a child absorbed in play, bent over colourful objects, about to pick them up. These are “butterfly” mines, a type used during the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan.

Exploiting the natural, playful curiosity of children in this manner is particularly disturbing for Linda, who states that: “children need to explore and play without risking injury and often death from a conflict which finished some time ago.”



## Gaza

English arpillera, Linda Adams, 2014

Photo Tony Boyle

Conflict Textiles collection



On 8 July 2014 the Israeli government launched a large military operation in the Gaza Strip, codenamed “Protective Edge” with the stated objective of stopping Palestinian rocket firing at southern Israel and destroying the military infrastructure of Hamas and other armed groups.

Fifty days later, when the ceasefire was declared on 26 August between Israel and Hamas, United Nations figures stated that 2,131 Palestinians, mainly civilians, including 501 children, had been killed in the conflict. Over 3,300 children were injured resulting in a permanent disability for almost one-third. The already overstretched Education sector was severely affected with 22 schools completely destroyed and 118 badly damaged.

[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_sitrep\\_04\\_09\\_2014.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_04_09_2014.pdf)

Outraged at the scale of destruction and needless loss of life, Linda has responded via needle, thread and fabric. Through a letter tucked in a pocket at the back of her arpillera, she questions:

*“...why a nation that has suffered ...feels it can justify killing ... and destroying hospitals, schools and mosques.”* Further linking recent events to the destruction of the Holocaust she reflects: *“... I felt that the spirits of those who died at the Holocaust would be desperately wishing they could say ‘why do this when you know how much it hurts’.”*





## **Auf der Flucht 1945 /**

### **Fleeing in 1945**

German arpillera,  
Mara Loytved-Hardegg, 2010  
Photo Martin Melaugh  
Conflict Textiles collection



In this arpillera Mara vividly remembers fleeing in 1945 as a child from the Russians in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, in the Soviet zone north of Berlin.

*“We were about three months running westwards during the nights and hiding in the woods during the days. I was not yet three and had to run with my bigger brother of five years old. My mother took the one year old sister in her arms. Finally my mother returned with us to Ulrichshusen where we had found shelter in 1943 when bombing in the cities became too hard. When we returned ... my mother had to work in the fields for the Russians. There was little food and a lot of people died of Typhus.”*

More than sixty years after the event Mara reflects that “*children are always the fragile ones*” in such traumatic events “*...mark[ing] their whole life.*” She connects her experience to our present: “*all these children suffering now in these new wars is deeply concerning.*”

This arpillera was sewn by Mara in one of the workshops - EVACUATION - that took place as part of the associated activities during the exhibition *The Human Cost of War* at the Tower Museum, Derry City Council Heritage and Museum Service, 2011.



## **Violencia en Ayacucho /**

### **Violence in Ayacucho**

Peruvian arpillera, FCH Mujeres Creativas workshop, 2009

Photo Martin Melaugh

Conflict Textiles collection

Provenance Rebecca Dudley,  
USA / Northern Ireland



Made by the Mujeres Creativas workshop in Lima, Peru, this piece, a replica of the 1985 original arpillera, takes as its inspiration a picture drawn by a child portraying his memories of the military arriving in the city of Ayacucho in south-central Peru. His mother, through the Mujeres Creativas workshop, created this arpillera depicting the harshness, violence and repression of this era.

Over 600,000 people were displaced within Peru during the 1980s and 1990s as a result of an armed conflict between the government, self defence groups and insurgent forces of the Shining Path and the Tupac Amaru Resistance Movement. In 1980, the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) used Ayacucho as its base for its campaign against the Peruvian government.





## **Olla común en una población /**

### **Soup kitchen in a barrio**

Chilean arpillera, anon., Taller Fundación Missio, Santiago, 1982

Photo Martin Melaugh

Conflict Textiles collection. Provenance Kinderhilfe arpillera collection, Chile/Bonn



This arpillera depicts the hunger and poverty that is wrought by conflict and social injustice. Created during the Pinochet dictatorship, it depicts both the desperation of hunger among the poor, forced to seek food from church charities, and also the resilience of those who find ways to ensure that the worst affected are not left hungry.

Soup kitchens, similar to the one portrayed in this arpillera, were a life line for the impoverished during the Pinochet regime. Church charities such as the Vicaría de la Solidaridad and later, the Fundación Solidaridad, were in the forefront in setting them up. María Madariaga, whose husband was unemployed and who wondered how she could provide food for her children, recalls what the soup kitchen meant for her family, even though not all of them could benefit from it: *“There was an age limit to abide by...of my three children at the time, only one was able to eat...We thought it was better that one eats than none...”* (Agosín, 2008).

The need was so great that difficult choices had to be made, both within the family and in the organization, which meant that for Maria and her husband: *“the days were especially long...because there was nothing to eat.”*



**Shannonwatch (Extraordinary rendition)**  
Irish arpillera, Deborah Stockdale, 2011  
Photo Martin Melaugh  
Conflict Textiles collection



Extraordinary rendition, the international transfer of individuals from the custody of one state to another, in the absence of following procedures for extradition agreements, is against international law. Yet this practice was admitted to in 2006 by then US President George W. Bush, when he referred to a programme implemented by the CIA to arrest, detain and interrogate terrorist suspects outside of US jurisdiction. The use of planes masquerading as civilian aircraft is a deceit practised by the US since the mid-1990s, as civilian status bypasses restrictions placed on military aircraft.

Shannonwatch, the work of a small group of peace and human rights activists based in the mid west of Ireland, has played an important role in monitoring Shannon airport's links with renditions. Their documented evidence indicts Shannon as a stopover for CIA rendition planes and by the US military.

Here, artist Deborah Stockdale depicts the actions of the Women's Peace Camp at Shannon set up in 2010. In support of the numerous Afghani women who were innocent victims of the conflict there, they demonstrated in white burkas at the airport gates. As Deborah comments: *"this arpillera reflects an ongoing dialogue about a contentious international 'arrangement'...."*

The Irish government consistently denies that Irish airports and airspace have been used by US rendition flights, insisting that US assurances are its guarantee against violation of international law.







**Aleppo school**  
 English arpillera,  
 Linda Adams, 2016  
 Photo Linda Adams  
 Conflict Textiles collection

In March 2011, inspired by the Arab Spring, Syrians took to the streets, in ever-increasing numbers, demanding reform of the oppressive Assad regime. Repression of these nonviolent protests by Syrian Armed Forces & Allied militia was immediate and brutal. Soon the conflict escalated into civil war between government and rebel forces, with both sides aided by a proliferation of armed groups and powerful external players. As 2016 drew to a close, the country's infrastructure was in ruins; over a quarter of a million Syrians had been killed and an estimated 13.5 million people, including 6 million children, were in need of humanitarian assistance.

<http://www.unocha.org/syrian-arab-republic/syria-country-profile/about-crisis>

Thousands of miles away in England, arpillera Linda Adams was shocked at the images of Syrian children caught in the chaos of war. Digging deeper she *"watched newsreel film and read first hand reports for days"* and with needle and thread she stepped into their world. In this piece, as the barrel bombing continues relentlessly overhead we descend into an underground school, where teachers, at great risk to their own safety, persist in educating their students.

Absent children and adults, killed during the war *"are represented ...as shadows in the spaces where they would have been."* Childrens' drawings cover the walls, a common sight in schools worldwide. Linda reminds us that these images *"came from childrens' drawings [in] Aleppo [and] show things children shouldn't have to see."*

Mindful of the fact that that *"new news [items] ... push stories like this away from the front pages"* Linda is hopeful that her work will bring *"some attention and understanding"* to the crisis in Syria, where, as we see in this arpillera, people are striving, against all the odds, to educate children and rebuild communities.

## **Escuela en la población /**

### **School in a población**

Chilean arpillera, anon., c 1980

Photo Martin Melaugh

Conflict Textiles collection

Provenance Kinderhilfe arpillera collection,  
Chile/Bonn



This arpillera belongs to a series of three big arpilleras, the complete size of a flour sack, with a specific focus on each. This particular piece titled: "Vida cotidiana poblacional; vamos a la escuela." depicts dwellers in a shantytown community of Santiago going about their daily routines, engaged in a myriad of family, community and economic activities.

On the left hand side we see a community school where children are attending lessons. Here in this community, where life is a daily struggle for the majority, education remains at the heart of the community, highlighting the resilience of families in finding community solutions during the dictatorship. Attending classes in these small schools also protected children from being involved in riots or detained for breaking curfew.





# Posters



An A4 version of this poster is available for free downloading and printing on the INNATE website at <http://www.innatennonviolence.org/posters/index.shtml>

# War is not a game



**INNATE**   
inn network for nonviolent action, training and education  
www.innatenonviolence.org

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www.innatenonviolence.org/  
posters/index.shtml](http://www.innatenonviolence.org/posters/index.shtml)





Syrian refugee girls with bracelets they have made,  
Amman, Jordan, Za'arari refugee camp, November 2016

Photo: Ann Patterson, Peace People

**INNATE**   
INNATE supports the international justice training and education  
www.innateinstitute.org

# Child's letter to Margaretta D'Arcy

This letter is one example of schoolchildren's expressions of solidarity with Margaretta D'Arcy in 2014. She had been recently imprisoned for walking on the runway at Shannon Airport in early 2012 as part of nonviolent protests against the Irish government's acceptance of USA military use of Shannon Airport, in breach of Irish neutrality.

Scoil Eoin,  
Tubber Road,  
Gort,  
Co. Galway.

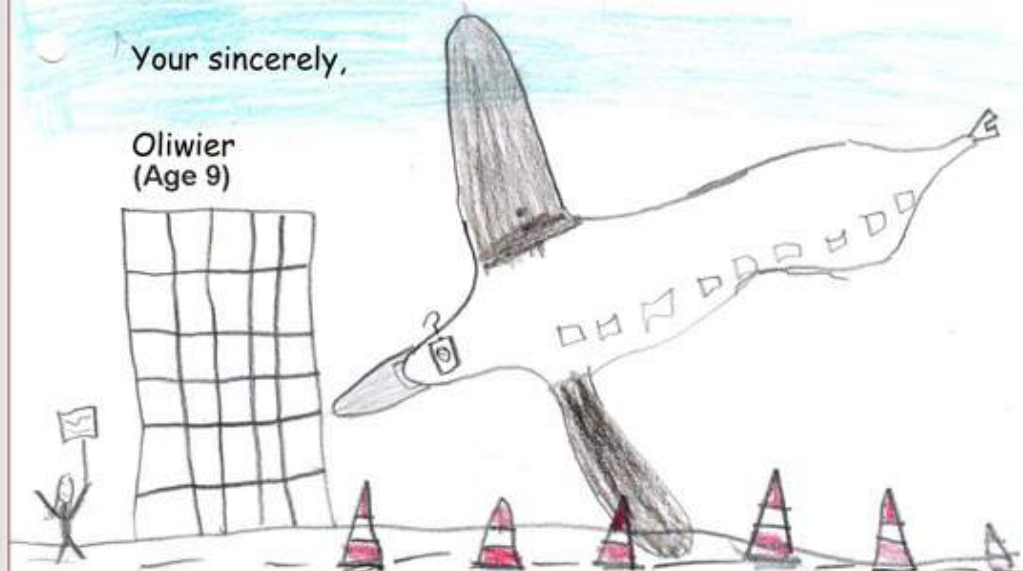
11th February 2014

Dear Margaretta,

How are you doing there . My name is Oliwier and I saw you on the computer. My teacher told me about you. I think that you are a great person. I believe that war is a terrible thing. We have heard about our human rights. I know that everybody is born free. We have the right to say what ever we want. I don't think that you should be in prison because you were only saying what you think. We hope that you are going to go home soon.

Your sincerely,

Oliwier  
(Age 9)

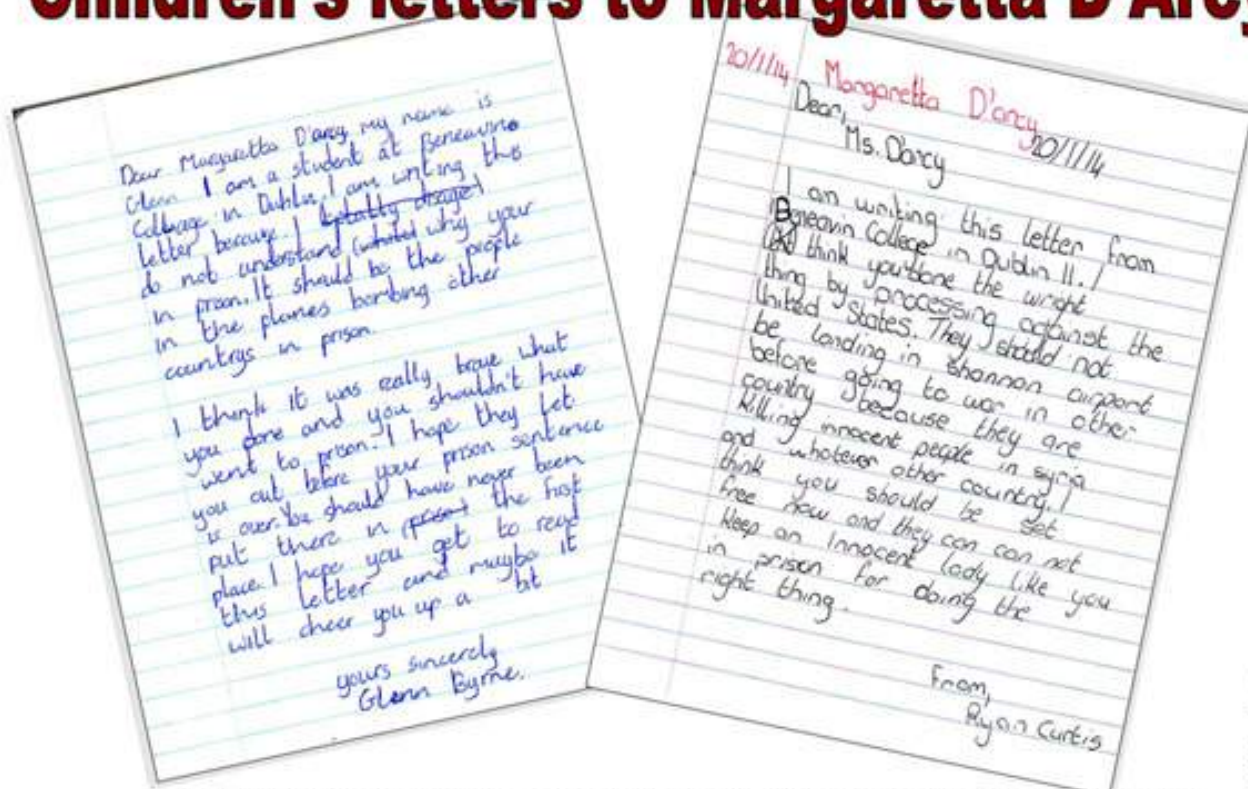


•This letter emerged from activities associated with Amnesty International Friendship Week which happened to coincide with the theme of persuasive writing for creative writing lessons. Scoil Eoin/Gort National School is multicultural and the teacher, Mary Mellick, felt that it is important to recognise that diversity is to be valued and that tolerance is vital in the world we live in today; she was handed a postcard in Galway to send to Dáil Éireann highlighting the situation in Shannon Airport. When shown to the class, one of the children suggested writing to Margaretta D'Arcy. "It really demonstrated to me the uncomplicated view that children have of the world, their understanding of fairness and their willingness to show tolerance. If I remember correctly they even sent her a friendship band! They really engaged with the activity and the simplicity of their words was very moving..."

**INNATE**  
www.innateeducation.org



# Children's letters to Margaretta D'Arcy



•These letters came out of discussions in 1st year RE class at Bective de la Salle College, Finglas, Dublin around the topic of Christian nonviolence and its obligations on Christians today to engage in nonviolent resistance to every form of evil in the world. After looking briefly at the action by five people who put a US Navy warplane out of action in Shannon Airport in 2003, the class went on to look at the example of Margaretta D'Arcy who had recently been imprisoned for protesting at the US army's continued use of Shannon Airport. The teacher, Máirín MacMóilín, reports that "The whole class was engaged with writing solidarity letters, horrified with the reality that peacemakers were the ones being imprisoned while the war-makers were free to bring death and destruction anywhere they wished with the help of the Irish State."



**Full credits list on page 2 of this catalogue**