

Peacemaker

Afri NEWSLETTER 2013



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Famine Walk 2013: Opening the Gates, Sowing New Seeds, 18th May 2013. A historic moment as Michael Wade from Delphi Lodge opens the gates to the Famine Walkers. Photo: Derek Speirs

Moments of Truth

Fáilte arís chuig ár n-éagrán bliantúil dár nuachtlitir. We are delighted to bring you our annual Peacemaker, containing a flavour of the activities, events, campaigns, walks, talks, plays, visitors and memorable moments from 2013.

George Orwell's adage 'In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act' could be the theme of this edition. And there are few better examples of this than the case of Chelsea – formerly Bradley – Manning. According to the family, Manning's Irish Grandmother used to say 'if you can't tell the truth, then don't bother saying anything at all'. Grandmother Manning would no doubt have been amazed at the extent to which Private Manning would go to follow that advice! On seeing lies and deception on a grand scale being used by the U.S to cover up war crimes and atrocities, Manning told the truth and took the consequences – torture, demonization and a 35 year jail sentence in Fort Lavenworth, Kansas.

Afri was privileged to host a November visit to Ireland of Chelsea's mother Susan, Aunties Sharon and Mary and Uncle Kevin. The visit of the family, prompted by peace activist Ciaran O'Reilly, really was one of life's great surprises, through which we were privileged to spend three intense days in the company of a wonderful family whose lives have been turned upside down as a result of Chelsea's willingness to tell the truth in the face of power. We will continue to celebrate Chelsea's life and example in the months and year ahead.

The opening of the gates of Delphi Lodge to the Famine Walkers in May was another memorable moment of truth. For twenty five years we had walked the route in memory of

those who died on the famine road in 1849 – and in solidarity with those who go hungry or face other injustices today – but we always did so in the shadow of Delphi Lodge which stood somewhat in the distance like a 'forbidden mansion', removed and aloof. It was an approach from the current proprietor, Michael Wade, in 2012 that led to the moment when the gates were symbolically opened to walkers carrying the names of those who had died on the original walk. One sign read: 'They All Had Names'. Michael Wade's words rang out through the rain-sodden landscape as he said: 'we in Delphi Lodge are honoured to open the gates and welcome you all as should have been done all those years ago'. This was a moment of truth when Delphi embraced its history. Delphi Lodge will now, fittingly, host a memorial garden to those who died in 1849.

Yet another great moment was the awarding of a 'Fringe First' prize at the Edinburgh Theatre Festival and a nomination for an Amnesty International Freedom of Expression award to Donal O'Kelly for his remarkable play 'Fionnuala', which tells the truth about what happened to Willie Corduff in the Shell compound in Glengad, County Mayo, in 2009. 'Fionnuala' is a celebration of the resilience of the people of Erris in the face of corporate and state abuses and Afri is proud to have supported both the people of Erris and the play that tells their story. Unsurprisingly, Donal dedicated the prize to Willie and Mary Corduff, themselves dedicated and courageous speakers of truth to power.

Truth be told!

Joe Murray, Afri Co-ordinator



*Joe Murray, Salome Mbugua, Fergal Anderson, Gary Whitedeer, Declan O'Rourke and Michael Wade plant a tree at Delphi Lodge.
Photo: Derek Speirs*

Opening the Gates Sowing New Seeds

2013 marked the 26th Afri Famine Walk – this walk having taken place every year since 1988. About 200 hundred people took part in the walk in atrocious weather conditions. The Walk leaders were Fergal Anderson of the Food Sovereignty Movement, Salome Mbugua from Northern Kenya and Choctaw Gary White Deer. We had music from Declan O'Rourke and Emer Mayock.

This year's walk had added significance because for the first time it retraced the exact route taken by the people in whose memory it is organized. We don't know all of their names but we know that 'they all had names'. We remembered especially those whose names we do know: Catherine Grady, Mary McHale, James Flynn, Mrs. Dalton and her son and daughter, and the Dillon Family. We carried their names on this year's walk and we were not turned away but we were welcomed to Delphi Lodge. When we arrived at Delphi Lodge the gates were opened; we entered the grounds; we gathered in respectful silence and remembrance of those who died in 1849; we planted a tree and some potatoes. Declan O'Rourke sang two hauntingly beautiful songs and Emer Mayock played stunningly evocative music. And from May 18th 2013,

a place of remembrance for the walkers of 1849 will be retained in the grounds of Delphi Lodge.

The opening of the gates at Delphi Lodge was a very significant act and demonstrates, among other things, the possibility of change. And change is urgently needed in our world. We need to learn from our history in order not to repeat the same mistakes again. We need to open the gates that divide our world into rich and poor. One billion people go hungry in our world of plenty. The following are the names of just 5 who have died of hunger in recent times: Anna Ematha, Surura Bashey, Halima Abdi, Dubey Gafafa, all from Northern Kenya, and 9-year old Abebe Mesfin from Ethiopia.

The reality of a billion hungry people in our world is a scandal. It is all the more so while 17 hundred billion dollars is spent annually on the war industry. We need to change this and we need to change our attitudes and those of governments and policy makers to urgently tackle the many challenges that face us – challenges such as climate change which threatens the very future of our planet. The Afri Famine Walk is about taking steps towards that change.



*Members of the Manning Family with Gerry Conlon (Guildford 4) and friends of Afri at a solidarity meeting in Trinity College in November.
Photo: Derek Speirs*

Manning Family Visit

Afri was proud and delighted to host a series of events and meetings in November in solidarity with imprisoned Chelsea (Bradley) Manning's mother Susan, Aunts Mary and Sharon, and Uncle Kevin. The family travelled from their home in South Wales, to Dublin, the birthplace of their father. In what is a continuing indictment of the Irish Government's subservience to US power, Pvt. Manning had transited through Shannon on the way to the war on Iraq. He was subsequently tortured in Kuwait and Quantico and is now serving 35 years imprisonment in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, for courageously exposing the horrors of the endless U.S 'war on terror'.

As well as meeting TD's and Human Rights groups such as Amnesty International and FrontLine Defenders, they attended a solidarity meeting attended by over 100 people at Trinity College to hear a powerful presentation by Gerry

Conlon who had served 15 years in prison in Britain, having been tortured & framed as part of the Guilford 4. His father, Giuseppe, who was also framed, died in prison. The film 'In the Name of the Father' recounts this tragic story. The day following the meeting was the 39th anniversary of Gerry's kidnapping by police from his home in Belfast. Gerry reminded us, that it is not only the prisoner who suffers the consequences of imprisonment but also the families and this was confirmed by the Manning family who have borne the brunt of media invasion and harassment, particularly by the prison authorities, during visits. This ordinary – yet extraordinary – family have, however, maintained their dignity and their pride in Chelsea's actions right throughout this long and painful ordeal.

Lawyer Gareth Peirce joined us on video from London having recorded a speech that afternoon.



Afri was delighted that Donal O'Kelly's play, "Fionnuala" won a Fringe First award during the 2013 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Joyce McMillan described "Fionnuala" in the Scotsman as "Gripping, funny and full of a rich sense of Ireland's great tradition of myth and legend... ruthlessly precise in its analysis of the deep malaise of 21st century Ireland in its subservient relationship with global corporate power and the threats faced by all of us in an age of ever more desperate energy extraction." Donal dedicated the Fringe First to Willie and Mary Corduff and also thanked the people of Kilcommon for their support.



To coincide with the Hedge School Afri planted three trees in Farnaght Woods in Leitrim as part of the Native Woodland Trust's project to restore Ireland's tree cover. Afri's partner – The Kenya Pastoralist Journalist Network – also planted a tree in Kenya, highlighting the fact that we are all affected by climate change and all need to be part of the solution in whatever way we can. Pictured, Salesa Abudho planting tree in Kenya. Photo: Abjata Khalif



The Climate Bill Need Targets: In June 2013, Stop Climate Chaos Campaigners held a photo shoot outside the Dáil to highlight the need for the Climate Bill to include targets to ensure that climate change is properly and justly tackled by Ireland. Afri is a member of this coalition. Throughout 2013 SCC campaigned to ensure a strong climate bill is introduced in the Dáil, and Afri made a submission to the Environmental Committee as part of the process to highlight the need for the principles of climate justice to be taken into account in the drafting of any such legislation.



The Hill of Uisneach. "Sustaining Activism's Fire: Caring, Campaigning, Creating", 20th April 2013, ended with a walk on the Hill of Uisneach guided by Ruth Illingworth, who explained that, in its day, the Hill of Uisneach was at least as important as the Hill of Tara, and is associated with sovereignty. Photo: Lisa Patten



At the end of the day: Rose Kelly, Tom Roche, Natalie Cullen, Joe Murray and Lisa Patten pack up at the end of Féile Bríde 2013.



Afri joined Stop Killer Robots Campaign in October 2013. Launched in April 2013, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is an international coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to ban fully autonomous weapons, a new heinous method of warfare being developed. To find out more about this campaign go to: www.stopkillerrobots.org



Afri is supporting the Pay a Living Wage Campaign, launched in October 2013. This campaign is being spearheaded by the Clean Clothes Campaign Ireland and is calling on clothing companies to Pay a Living Wage to garment workers. You can sign a petition to demand that the people who make your clothes are paid a living wage by going to: <http://cleanclothescampaignireland.org/living-wage/>



Afri's 2013 Féile Bríde, "Dreaming for the Earth: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change" was held in the new venue of the Osborne Centre, which is beautifully surrounded by a lake and native Irish trees. There were contributions from John Feehan, who took participants on a walk on the Curragh, input from Tom Roche (Just Forests) and Rose Kelly, Afri's Development Education Co-ordinator who linked Brigid's story to themes such as disarmament, climate change and resources. Music was provided by Cormac Breatnach and Brian Dunning. Pictured, Gráinne O'Neill working on the Graphic Harvest throughout the day. Photo: Muireann De Barra



Abjata Khalif speaks during "Sustaining Activism's Fire: Caring, Campaigning, Creating" in April, which was co-organised with Friends of the Earth. Abjata Khalif spoke about his campaigning work with the Kenya Pastoralist Journalist Network (KPJN), which is a community organisation in northern Kenya that uses media in offering peace education, reconciling communities through radio and other community forums. The KPJN, in partnership with Afri, is providing solar powered lights for school children, community groups and mid-wives in the region.



Afri has supported calls for an independent international enquiry into allegations that large quantities of alcohol were supplied by Shell to Gardaí in Belmullet, who are responsible for policing the Corrib Gas Project. Afri has previously called for such an enquiry believing that there are abuses of Garda power in Erris of 'Donegal proportions', as revealed in the Morris Tribunal, and that urgent, immediate and independent investigation is required. Image from Shell to Sea facebook page



The Afri Hedge School 2013 "Resources, Conflict & Climate Change: The Links" was organised in partnership with I.T. Blanchardstown. It included a debate between Petrel Resources CEO, David Horgan and William Hederman, journalist and activist, as well as contributions from Justine Nantale from Uganda, John Lannon from Shannonwatch, Choctaw Gary White Deer. Pictured, students from Blanchardstown IT who contributed to the success of the event. Photo: Derek Speirs



The conversation begins: Arriving at Blanchardstown IT for the Hedge School. Photo: Tatiana Turchina



Job well done! Heading back after the tree planting at Féile Bríde. Photo: Muireann De Barra

Anglo: Not Our Debt

Afri continued to support the critically important work of Debt and Development Coalition Ireland, Anglo: Not our Debt and Debt Justice Action. Members of Afri attended the DDCI's 20th anniversary event in Charleville, Co. Cork, in November, which was co-hosted by 'Ballyhea Says No to Bondholder Bailout'. We also took the opportunity to join this group's weekly protest, which has continued for over 140 weeks.

Debt Justice Action has launched a campaign to freeze the remaining €5 billion of 'Anglo bonds'. The campaign was launched in the wake of the so called 'Anglo tapes', which reveal how Anglo executives misled

the government before the issuing of the 2008 bank guarantee. Campaign spokesperson, Andy Storey said: 'The people of Ireland must not be held responsible for this criminal debt, and charges must be brought immediately against those who defrauded the state. The Anglo bonds must not be traded.' To mark the launch of the campaign, 'Forensic scientists', dressed in CSI-style examination suits cordoned off the Central Bank behind tape that read "Crime Scene – Do Not Enter", and carried out an inspection of the evidence of financial crimes as a result of the socialisation of the Anglo debt.

Since its inception in January 2012, Debt Justice Action has been lobbying the Irish Government to negotiate a

full write down of the Anglo Irish Bank / Irish Nationwide Building Society 'promissory notes'.

Over the last 4 years the government has entirely failed to bring the bankers to justice through the existing criminal system. Debt Action Justice are now encouraging the people of Ireland to submit complaints of suspicion of financial crimes in Anglo to the Gardaí, for example under Section 6(1) of the Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) Act 2001.

Afri Chairperson, Andy Storey also took part in a debate with Dan O'Brien on Drivetime on the issue of the Anglo Debt.



Just A Second...

Afri are currently engaged in an exciting and challenging project with Transition Year Students and their teachers from three schools in Galway. The title of the project is 'Just A Second' and refers to the statistic that an estimated €1, 180 is spent every second on weapons. That's €4,470,800 every minute, figures that boggle the mind. So big that they are practically incomprehensible to most of us other than as a scandalous waste of money. The Afri 'Just A Second' project seeks to go beyond the statistic, and beyond the financial figures. It seeks to examine the real price paid for militarisation by those on the receiving end of violence and war; for those lacking basic needs and whose rights are not being met as their governments decide to spend on weapons and armies that bring death as opposed to on resources and services that sustain and enhance life;

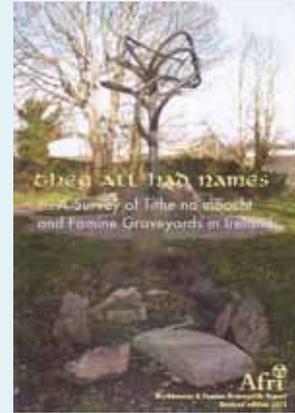
the cost even, to those very leaders who make such choices; and the cost to those who are caught up in the maelstrom of destruction, the war zones that such military spending fuels. In short, to examine the price and fallout of a world currently trapped in a war orientation.

The project title, 'Just a Second', also seeks to draw the mind and heart to the power, potential and uniqueness embedded in every moment. Each new moment we are given the opportunity to make choices and take actions that either maintain the status quo or shift our realities onto a different plane, even if that shift is initially an internal one. Beginning with the individual, the personal, linking then to the collective and eventually applying this concept to the global, the participants in the 'Just A Second' project are invited to imagine an alternative to the existing system that spends millions each minute on war. They

are invited to envisage instead what the world might look like if different decisions were taken; decisions for life rather than death; decisions that involve applying energy and resources to protecting and enriching life; decisions that reveal and sustain a peace orientation.

Weeks of exploration using a variety of media and methodologies including debate, drama, art and music are to culminate in a public sharing of findings and learning. This sharing it is hoped will take a very creative shape – perhaps in the form of drama, art, poetry. A lot depends on what media the participants choose as most appropriate. The final presentation is to take place in the Galway museum on the International Peace Bureau's Global Day Against Military Spending (GDAMS) in April 2014.

Visit to Irish Great Hunger Museum



In October, Danny Cusack visited the Irish Great Hunger Museum at Hamden, Connecticut, USA on behalf of Afri. Danny toured the Museum, looking at the 115 paintings and sculptures (spanning some 167 years) located in the main exhibition room upstairs. A seven minute silent slide show was included as well as

a 15 minute video introduction to the Great Famine which was shown periodically in a small auditorium. He also met with a number of the Museum personnel and presented them with copies of Afri's *They All Had Names: A Survey of Tithe na mBocht and Famine Graveyards in Ireland*. Dr Christine Kinealy,

Resident Scholar at the Quinnipiac University in Hamden, and former Famine Walk Leader, met with Danny and explained that at least until recently there was little interest in relating the Great Famine to issues of contemporary global hunger in the museum but that appeared to be changing.

Acknowledgements

We would like to welcome Laura Geraty, Finance Officer of the National Youth Council of Ireland and accountant, to the Afri Board. Laura brings with her a wealth of financial expertise and we know that she will make a valuable contribution to the Afri Board!

We would also like to thank Lenka Vrbaňakova who worked with Afri on a JobBridge placement for 9 months. Lenka was involved in cataloguing Afri's archives and also assisted in the organisation of three Afri events and in the management of Afri's website and updating our facebook page.

This year we organized our Hedge School in partnership with I.T. Blanchardstown and worked closely

with Liam McGlynn, a lecturer in ITB, in the run up to the event. Liam was enthusiastic and accommodating and helped to ensure that the running of the Hedge School was very smooth. We hope it will be start of a fruitful partnership!

We would like to thank Danny Cusack who visited the Irish Great Hunger Museum in Connecticut, U.S. on behalf of Afri and who has made the first steps towards possible closer collaboration with the museum.

There are a number of people we would like to thank for their work on the Afri website: Aubrey Robinson for redesigning the website; Ruairí McKiernan for helping to set up Afri twitter account and provide some social media training; Sean Boland

who has taken over as Afri's website consultant. In addition, we would like to thank Ruairí for his work done for Afri throughout the year promoting various Afri events.

We thank our excellent Board who contribute so much to the success of Afri. We thank Dermot Lawson for his contribution as Afri's financial consultant. We also thank our auditors Malone Power, and a special thanks to Brendan Malone and Fiona Stanley for their work which is much appreciated.

Finally, we wish to especially express our grateful appreciation to our loyal and generous supporters who continue to contribute as they have done for many years.

Budget Summary 2011

Income	€62,474
Less Programme Expenditure	€11,3806
Less Operating Expenditure	€3,009
Deficit	€1,915

Income and Expenditure in Euros

Shamrock Shame and Shannon

Shamrock Shame and Shannon. From left to right: Raymond Keane as a US marine, Dylan Tighe as a Guantanamo Bay prisoner and Donal O'Kelly as an Irish politician, in a protest action to highlight the use of Shannon airport by the US military on the 10th anniversary of the Iraq war earlier this year. Photo: Derek Speirs



In January the head of the Shannon Airport Committee, Rose Hynes stated in an Oireachtas Committee that “Military traffic has been in the DNA of Shannon for many years. It is something that is important, it’s lucrative and we are certainly going to go after it as much as possible.” Her comments highlighted a trend in Irish society that fails to acknowledge the moral and ethical implications of allowing military traffic to pass through Shannon. Evidence from Amnesty International shows 50 landings at Shannon of aircraft involved in rendition/torture up until 2005, with further such cases since recorded by the NGO Shannonwatch.

To highlight this issue Afri organised a photo call on Easter Monday: “Shamrock Shame and

Shannon”. Actors Donal O’Kelly, Raymond Keane and Dylan Tighe – dressed as a US soldier, a Guantanamo detainee and an Irish politician – marked the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq by dramatically enacting outside the Dáil how ‘official Ireland’ warmly embraces the US military, while turning a blind eye to the kidnap and torture of civilians. The purpose of the photo call was to use the medium of drama to highlight what standard media coverage of the issue now routinely ignores, namely that we have made ourselves complicit in war crimes and the worst violations of human rights. A short video of this photo call was made by Dave Donnellan and is available on the Afri website: <http://www.afri.ie/news-and-events/shamrock-shame-and-shannon-short-film/>

The Shannon issue again made media headlines in October when it was discovered that a U.S. military aircraft armed with a fixed weapon passed through Shannon. Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore attempted to brush over this incident by calling it an “administrative error”. Afri once again called on the Government to end this practice of participating in proxy war by handing our airports over to the US war machine. John Lannon from Shannonwatch, who was invited by students in IT Blanchardstown, also spoke at Afri’s Hedge School about Ireland’s complicity in wars such as Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of the use of Shannon airport. He pointed out that an incredible \$1,700 billion dollars is wasted annually on the arms industry, which is obviously diverted from other more important needs.

Dates for your Diary

Erris Aired: The Media & The Shell Corrib Gas Project: Saturday 18th January 2014

Féile Bríde: Saturday 8th February 2014

Global Day of Action Against Military Spending: Monday 14th April 2014

Famine Walk: Saturday 17th May 2014



Afri has signed the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.

Afri gratefully acknowledges the support of Trócaire and Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Concern.

Afri is a member of the International Peace Bureau, Act Now on 2015, Debt and Development Coalition Ireland, Dóchas, Irish Development Education Association, Stop Climate Chaos and the Stop Killer Robots Campaign.