

Famine Walk 2014

Opening the Gates
From Famine to Food Sovereignty



Saturday, May 17th 2014
From Louisburgh to Delphi Lodge, Co. Mayo.

(Walkers will be welcomed at Delphi Lodge where a memorial will be unveiled, a tree planted and a moment's silence observed in memory of those who died on the original famine walk in 1849.)

Registration from 12.45pm
Beginning at 1.30pm

Walk Leaders

Paul Nicholson
Luis Jalandoni
Emanuela Russo
Music : Imogen Gunner
and Friends

As in last year's Walk, the names of those known to have died on the original walk in 1849 will be carried as will names of those who continue to die as a result of famine in today's world.

We are asking each participant to raise at least €20, in sponsorship for this event, to ensure that Afri can continue its important work

Introduction

The 2013 Famine Walk will long remain in the memory of those who were there to experience it. The opening of the gates of Delphi Lodge and the welcome extended by proprietor Michael Wade to walkers carrying the names of those who died on the original walk in 1849 was particularly poignant. The planting of an oak tree and potatoes supplied by Willie and Mary Corduff were powerful symbols of new life while the hauntingly moving words of Declan O'Rourke's Famine song echoed: 'you Con-nacht orphans, bare of foot, who walked ten miles at 7 years/ you took your little sister's hand and walked her to the poorhouse door/ and when they had but room for one/ you left your little sister there/ and feint with hunger all day long/ you walked the ten miles back again'. There was a profound sense of history being made, of those who had died being fittingly remembered, of at least some wounds being healed.

Earlier we heard moving words from Salome Mbugua recalling recent famines, including in Somalia where over 200,000 died virtually unnoticed by the outside world in the period 2010-2012, and we were inspired by Gary White Deer's reflection that "as we retrace the steps of the people whose names we bear, we believe that they will be with us on our journey".

Fergal Anderson foreshadowed the theme of this year's walk when he spoke of food sovereignty as an idea which "offers us a response to the failure of food systems motivated and driven by profit". Fergal reminded us that we live in a world where a billion people are hungry and a billion obese; where food has become primarily a 'business', controlled by transnational corporations while causing great environmental damage and significantly contributing to climate change. Food, in its current form, is killing us, just as the lack of it kills people in Somalia and elsewhere.

This year we continue this theme with Paul Nicholson from the Basque Country who was part of the core team that established La Via Campesina, an international movement which coordinates peasant organizations of small producers, agricultural workers, rural women, and indigenous communities from Asia, Africa, America, and Europe.

Luis Jalandoni, who supported the mass struggles of sugar workers and peasant settlers in Negros, Central Philippines, in the 1960s and 1970s and spent time in jail as a political prisoner under the Marcos dictatorship, will speak about the situation in the Philippines. And Emanuela Russo who has years of experience in the food sovereignty movement in Europe and in Ireland will speak about 'walking the talk' and putting food sovereignty into practice.

We look forward to seeing you there. Beidh fáilte mór roimh gach duine.

- Joe Murray
Afri Co-ordinator



An Arrow Through time, painting by Choctaw artist Gary White Deer. Gary will join Michael Wade of Delphi Lodge to unveil a memorial and plant a tree at the end of this year's walk

Biographies

Paul Nicholson is from the Basque Country. He is a farmer on the coast of the Cantabrian Sea, the Bay of Biscay. By profession, he is a dairy farmer, although he is no longer a practicing dairy farmer. He has a small farm and is part of a cooperative where they make jams, cider, preserves, with their products. He is a member of EHNE (Euskal Herriko Nekazarien Elkartasuna), the Basque Farmers Union in the Basque Country. EHNE is part of the Spanish COAG (Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Agricultores y Ganaderos), which is part of the European Coordination-Via Campesina, a Via Campesina organization in Europe. La Via Campesina is an organization of organizations, a global movement of peasants, family farmers, indigenous and landless people. Paul was part of the core team that established La Via Campesina 20 years ago. He was a member of its International Coordinating Commission from 1993 to 2008.

Luis Jalandoni supported and joined the mass struggles of sugar workers and peasant settlers in Negros, Central Philippines, 1968-1972. He was an elected member of the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) National Executive Board, 1972. Upon declaration of martial law in September 1972 he joined the revolutionary underground and was a political prisoner from September 1973 to August 1974. Luis helped launch the La Tondena strike in October 1975, the first big challenge of workers to the Marcos dictatorship. He was appointed International Representative of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in 1977. In 1994 he was elected a member of the NDFP National Executive Committee.

Emanuela Russo is from Milan, Italy but currently lives in the West of Ireland. She has a degree in Journalism and has worked on International Development issues since completing a Masters in International Cooperation in Rome in 2007. After spending time in Latin America and other countries in Europe, she has now settled in Ireland where she farms

vegetables for the local market with her partner. At the same time, she continues to work part-time as the coordinator of the International Nyéléni Newsletter for Food Sovereignty, which is published online four times a year. The International Nyéléni Newsletter represents the collective voice of the International Food Sovereignty movement.

Imogen Gunner's musical career began at a tender age in the UK and South Africa. She is an award-winning fiddle player, singer, composer and multi-instrumentalist, whose talent spans the realms of elaborate multi-instrumental composing, arranging, songwriting and collaborations with artists of many and varied backgrounds and genres. Her unique voice in instrumental composition is now flowing into the new art of her songwriting.

Jack Hynes



Jack Hynes on the 2004 Famine Walk.
Photo: Derek Speirs

In this year's walk we will also remember especially our friend and former Afri Board member, Jack Hynes. Luis Jalandoni was a good friend of Jack's and worked closely with him during his many years in the Philippines. The Philippines was the focus of the first (of many) Afri Famine Walk in which Jack participated. Jack was unique and exceptional who made a big impact on all who met him. He had a very significant impact on the development of Afri's philosophy and approach. He was a strong proponent of tackling the causes rather than responding to symptoms of injustice and a strong advocate of solidarity rather than a more patronizing charitable approach

Abjata Khalif



Abjata Khalif, from Afri's partner organisation, Kenya Pastoralist Journalist Network (KPJN), at the Famine Memorial in the Doolough Valley. The KPJN will organize a simultaneous Famine Walk, a gesture of solidarity, linking Ireland and Northern Kenya. *Photo: Joe Murray]*

of using renewable energy for community development, community adaptation, food security and livelihoods and contributing to economic empowerment for women's groups in the area. We are also exploring the possibility of solar cooking stoves which will be of great assistance to the community.

We value our partnership with Afri. The work on the Solar project is receiving a lot of attention from local and international organisations who have contacted us. The solar story has been published by Alertnet Reuters and republished by various international media as a change agent project."

A Famine Walk organized by the Kenya Pastoralists Journalists Network will take place simultaneously with the Afri Walk. This will be a walk of solidarity linking Ireland and Northern Kenya.

Abjata writes:

"I have been doing this work for many years with or without support, without fearing, because I was once a victim of various armed attacks in northern Kenya. It is imperative for me to show how I became involved in this work, sustained it, keeping the fire burning and try to mould the young generation of activists.

Thanks a lot for Afri support which will go towards training and distribution of solar lamps for pastoralist women affected by TB. Such a small intervention will help the pastoralist women's group to think about the establishment of small businesses. Also I am following up the solar irrigation kit which will solve many problems as it will give communities guaranteed livelihood and food security and allow them to sell produce to local markets. It's the best way



Fergal Anderson plants an Oak tree in the grounds of Delphi Lodge at end of Famine Walk 2013

Famine Walk 2014

Transport

This year the walk will start in Louisburgh at 1.30pm (registration from 12.45pm) and walk to Delphi Lodge. Shuttle buses will collect walkers from Delphi Lodge, returning them to Louisburgh from 6.30pm onwards.

Afri is a justice, peace and human rights organisation, which was founded in 1975. Afri's first 'Famine Walk' took place in 1988, with the aim of linking the experience of Ireland in the 1840s with contemporary issues of famine, hunger, food insecurity and human rights abuses. Since our first famine walk, we have taken up the following themes: the Philippines; Central America; South Africa and East Timor; the exploitation of the Maya people in Guatemala and of banana Workers in Belize; the legacy of colonialism; Ireland's 'Welcome to the Stranger'; 'War is Terror is War'; the rights of Migrant Workers; 'Land for People not for Profit'; 'Erris, Gas and global Warming'; 'Water, Oil, Weapons: resources and conflict at home and abroad'; 'Power Concedes Nothing without Demand'; 'Hunger in a World of Plenty: Sowing Seeds of Hope'; 'Corporations, Crops and Control: Seeds of Life or Seeds of Strife?'; 'Opening The Gates, Sowing New Seeds'

**Please help Afri to continue its work
by getting sponsorship and taking part in this walk.
To register online: bit.ly/1qclEu5**

**IN THE INTEREST OF HEALTH AND SAFETY, PLEASE WALK ON THE
LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE ROAD FOR THE DURATION OF THE WALK.**



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