

## PEOPLES' FORUM SEMINAR

### **TEN YEARS ON: CORRIB GAS – GREAT GAS FOR WHOM?**

#### *Retrospect and Prospect*

**VENUE: INVER COMMUNITY CENTRE 01/02 JULY 2011**

**Over the past ten years the proposed Shell/Corrib Gas Project has highlighted issues that go to the heart of governance in Ireland: Community Consultation, Planning, Regulation, Environmental Protection/Human Rights, Media, Policing and the Common Good.**

**SPEAKERS: DR. KIERAN ALLEN, Author and Lecturer UCD; HARRY BROWNE, Lecturer in Media DIT; NIALL KING, Retired Principal Rossport N.S; MAJELLA McCARRON, OLA; MRS. JOY PHIDO, OGONI; COLM RAPPLE, Journalist and Economist; ROSSPORT SOLIDARITY CAMP.**

#### PROGRAMME

**01 FRIDAY JULY 8-10pm MEET, GREET, REMEMBER**

#### SATURDAY 02 JULY

**10-10.30 REGISTRATION, INTRODUCTION**

**10.30-1.00 SPEAKERS' PRESENTATIONS**

**1.00-2.00 LUNCH**

**2.00-6.00 OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION.**

**CHAIR: LELIA DOOLAN**

**FURTHER INFO: 087 959 1474 [maurah.ias@eircom.net](mailto:maurah.ias@eircom.net)**

**ACCOMMODATION: Kilcommon Lodge Holiday Hostel B&B 097 84621**

**McGrath's Pub B&B 097 84626**

## Introduction

Kilcommon Parish 2001-2011			
Baptisms*	199	Deaths	296
	Primary & Secondary School Population	2000/2001	2010/2011
Ceathrú Thaidhg	46	30	
Gleann na Muaidhe	23	25	
Inbhear	81	33	
Poll a' tSómais	57	47	
Ros Dumhach	51	38	
Coláiste Chomáin Ros Dumhach	105	41**	

\* In Kilcommon Parish baptisms may still be taken as a close indicator of total births.

\*\* The total attendance at Coláiste Chomáin in 2011 is 78 to include those taking PLC courses.

The short table above encapsulates what defines the current human community at this time and in the Place that is Kilcommon Parish – births, deaths, school-going children; humdrum humanity. (I am indebted to Fr Rogan and Treasa Ní Grearraigh together with the Principals of all the schools for their willing help in providing the data).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century/2<sup>nd</sup> Millenium in Christian time the human communities in Kilcommon, Erris, together with their floral and faunal co-habitants, were infected by a strain of state/corporate venom for which the collective communities are still working to produce the antidote; this ‘antidote’ I believe is a crucial determinant of the future direction of our currently benighted country. We became the receiving community for the proposed Shell/Corrib Project – a project which was considered a *fait accompli* by the state/corporate nexus in 2000 but about which the venomous nexus neglected to either inform or consult the proposed receiving community.

The local issues of health/safety and defence of a near-pristine environment (clean water, clean air, clean soil, sight of the night sky and the sound of silence are natural resources in their own right) have been, through the decade joined by the national issue of the scandalous – if not treasonable – oil/gas licensing terms and conditions for offshore and onshore exploration which were set in place by dubious politicians when oil was \$10 a barrel; the local and national are further joined by the global issue of Climate Change. Local people were thrown headlong into this heady mix in 2000 and, eleven years on, as a result firstly of local effort later underpinned by national and international support the outcome of the proposed Shell/Corrib Project remains in the balance. When I went back to St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra in ‘91/’93 to undertake the B.Ed. course I listened to history lecturer Dr James Kelly explain that, as undergraduate students we read about what *did* happen historically but at any point in history what actually happens is determined by those who live in that time and place; one only discovers what *may* have been possible when one studies any period in greater depth. The outcome of the proposed Shell/Corrib project remains to be determined (it is essentially a black and white issue – the complex either will or will not go ahead as originally planned from Point A, the well-head to Point B, the refinery) and it remains to be seen what future undergraduate students of this period will read when all of us are in *Cré na Cille* but the Place that is Sruth Fada Conn and environs will still be there. I believe that the defence of the integrity of Place, fostered over at least seven millennia, is worth fighting for – and fighting to win; I further believe that winning this fight in a remote corner of the West of Ireland will create the conditions whereby the Augean Stables of past and current governance can begin to be cleansed by the burst dam of the will of the people exercising their hard-won sovereign rights.

It is not possible in a brief introduction to give anything but an impression of events in Erris over the past years; a sample only would include a dawning awareness that something was afoot; attending a presentation by Enterprise Oil in McGrath's pub – where it transpired that giving one's name and address in order to allow a reply to a few written questions was subsequently used by the company as a head-counting exercise in 'consultation' (but ne'er a reply!); the exponential learning process attached to dealing with a subject hitherto alien to one's regular learning; endless submissions made in good faith; attendance at Oral Hearings in Ballina; the advent of Shell in 2002 when one could literally sense the change in ownership; the sight of sand martins flying hopelessly at the empty space where their nests had been in Glengad prior to destruction by Shell agents; reading every word of Kevin Moore's forensic report; the 'Nuremberg Rally' in Belmullet; the landslide of 19 September 2003; Ruairí who created the corribsos website; a gale-force day in Rosspport January 2005; a growing sense of menace; attendance at the High Court where one couldn't say, as to children 'speak clearly so you can be heard'; the advent of the Camp – Terry, Bob, Val Dazzle RIP; the jailing of the Rosspport Five followed by a manic summer; illegally welded pipeline; blockade of Ballinaboy refinery site; Advantica/Cassells; marginalisation; recruitment by Shell of John Egan, Johnny Carey, Pdraig Hughes, Christy Loftus; 03 October 2006 forever etched; Days of Action; 10 November 2006, baton charge on country road; dissension, mistakes; 'Iron in the Soul'; Shell site incursion February 2007; Glinsk; 'hangin' in', survival; 2008 – Solitaire sent away by Chief, Camp and Hunger Strike; 2009 – Solitaire back, state/mercenary lockdown; 2010, 2011, dead Tiger, non-existent regulation; national tatters – and, from this remote corner, where its struggle continued through the years of perceived plenty into years of imposed penury there is a signal of how everything could be so different.

The first public seminar on Shell/Corrib was held in Geesala in June 2001, its title 'Corrib Gas – Great for Whom?' Richard Douthwaite, Mike Cunningham, Pdraig Campbell, Michael J. Daly, Komene Famaa, Majella McCarron OLA spoke at it (Mrs Phido attended) and it served as a useful exercise at the time to inform a wider group of people of the proposed project's complexities. Following the rout of the Solitaire in 2008 then Ministers Ryan and Ó Cúiv invited disparate groups to meet with them in Ballina. I attended as part of Shell to Sea who left both Ministers in no doubt about its views. There was no further contact from either Minister until, in December of that year, from within the safety of The Pale, it was announced that a North West Mayo Forum was established based on Cassells' recommendations that 'benefits' would accrue to the area. The composition of this Forum included Shell, Mayo Co Council, statutory bodies, the police, and groups who had been or hoped to be in receipt of monies from Shell and/or its agents. Shell to Sea, Pobal Chill Chomáin, Pobal le Chéile did not participate in the exercise and, indeed, it was henceforth referred to as the 'Funny Forum'. The idea of a Peoples' Forum which would be open to all and visually and aurally recorded grew as an alternative to the other forum. The 'Funny Forum' is now essentially defunct, having had no meeting for the past 18 months but the Peoples' Forum continues.

The organisation of this seminar has shown the stark difference between 'corporate' Ireland and the peoples' Ireland. All the participants have given freely and willingly of their time and effort – there was no need to cajole, neither did the question of 'expenses' arise; in contrast, Shell's MD Mr Terry Nolan wrote 'Thank you for your invitation but I am unable to attend'; it appears everybody in DCENR has 'significant work commitments' which include 'evaluating the applications recently received under the 2011 Atlantic Licensing Round and monitoring the compliance conditions relating to the Corrib gas pipeline consents' (Ciarán Ó hÓbáin email 14 June 2011); current Minister Pat Rabbitte has a prior diary appointment which is understandable but he appears unable and/or unwilling to spare a staff member to attend the seminar in order that he may be appraised of its proceedings – *plus ça change!*

All speakers were asked to also submit a written piece now collated in this booklet – simply printed in black and white; no glossy production techniques where style substitutes substance (some EIS's come to mind!) – one more example should one be necessary of the chasm between the opposing mindsets in the Shell/Corrib debacle. Written pieces were also invited from Imelda Moran who with her husband Edward have done sterling, back-breaking work over the years; Máire Bhreathnach whose world view, so gently expressed, is searing in its response to *pro forma* processes and Pdraic MacCana, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Bard.

Finally, thank you Lelia Doolan for your willingness to attend here and for your undisputed competence in chairing proceedings.

Go mba fada buan sinn uilig anseo inniu agus go mba síorraí buan ceanntar ársa álainn Iorras Domhnann.

Maura Harrington

# So how are we going to pay for the €19 billion deficit?

If we tear up the IMF deal, the ATM machines will stop working and there will be no money to pay social welfare or public sector workers. This is the scaremongering the political establishment use continually on their population.

The same scaremongering tactic was used in the Lisbon debates. If you voted No, then foreign investment would flee the country. We were instead supposed to 'Vote Yes for Jobs' and 'Be at the heart of Europe'. But after we were finally dragooned into voting Yes, the jobs never appeared. And far from being 'at the heart of Europe', we have been shafted with a demand for interest payments of 5.8% from our 'friends' in the EU.

So instead of falling for the blackmail, let's stop and think.

Politics is not just about answers but about how questions are framed and who gets to frame them. The particular question: How are 'We' going to 'Fix the Deficit?' contains three assumptions.

First, who is this 'WE'? Nobody was talking about how 'WE' could help share the wealth when the Celtic Tiger was booming but yet when the crisis hit, the 'WE' word was invoked everywhere. It is only when there is pain about, that the elite talk about sharing.

Second, the question conveys an image of a hole that has to be filled. But this hides the fact that tax revenue keep on falling and so the 'hole' gets deeper. Government revenue fell by 4% in 2010, 19% in 2009 and 14% in 2008. The reason should be fairly obvious. The more the government cuts, the less money people have in their pockets, the less they buy and so the less people are employed. The 'deficit hawks' ignore how their demands for ever more cuts creates a vicious downward cycle that deepens recession.

Third, the question gets its listeners to focus only on the public sector and take their eye off the private sector. It assumes that the problem with the Irish economy is the public finances. Yet the most recent figures from the Central Bank, however, contain an ominous figure about how capitalists have gone on an investment strike.

## THE INVESTMENT STRIKE

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Gross fixed capital formation	-14.3	-31.0	-24.8	-13.2
Of which:	-13.2	-34.9	-32.0	-22.0
Building and construction				
Of which:	-15.3	-19.3	-10.0	00
Machinery and Equipment				

This table shows the astounding drop in investment in the Irish economy over four years. In our society, the bulk of capital for such investment is held by a tiny number of people who only seek an opportunity for profit. They are now sabotaging society by their refusal to invest. The table illustrates how there has been a huge fall not just in construction - as would be expected but also in the broader category of machinery and equipment.

This issue is often hidden in official documentation. Conventional economists appear on television and note that there has been an increase in 'savings' during the recession. They seek to convey the impression that people are rushing down to their banks each week and putting away a few hundred Euro for the rainy day. The government's purpose in this scenario is to instil 'confidence' by endlessly repeating that 'Ireland is open for Business'. Eventually, our experts believe the 'savers' will release their money and the economy will grow again.

This little fairy story hides an obvious fact: the vast majority of society have little to save because their wages have been cut and they have been hit with a Universal Social Charge and new rounds of tax hikes. The 'savers' are not the population as a whole – but rather the wealthy who are staging the investment strike we have described above.

Further evidence of their activities can be found. The recent 'The Financial Measures Programme Report' of the Central Bank noted that;

*'During the period September to December 2010 the six Irish banks lost over €100 billion as debt instruments failed to roll and deposits were withdrawn. The outflow came mainly from the retreat of corporate depositors and whole providers of funds from outside the Euro area.'*

Corporations reduced their holdings in Irish banks by 73 percent while deposits from ordinary customers fell by only 18 percent.

This again provides clear evidence that the corporate sector is engaged in the sabotage of Irish society by moving billions out of the country. This has brought the economy to a classic cul de sac: The hoarding of idle, unused capital on one hand – and 450,000 out of work on the other.

Investment for profit is the engine which drives a capitalist economy. When it seizes up, the whole of society is thrown into a crisis. One aspect of that seizure will be public finance because tax revenues fall and tens of thousands are thrown onto the dole.

So instead of framing the question as: 'How will we plug the public deficit' we could equally well ask: What will we do about the investment strike that is causing crisis in public finances and the running of society?

This leads naturally to the question of what will we do about the super-rich who show no concern for Irish society at large even while their paid mouthpieces tell us to make sacrifices.

There are five principal mechanisms for tackling this issue.

Our assumption behind the combined measures is the necessity to encroach on the power and resources of capitalists who refuse to help our society.

## **1. CANCEL THE DEBT**

Recently the Irish government paid out €750 million to Anglo-Irish bondholders. Yet the combined 'savings' from slashing the income of social welfare recipients this year amount to €870 million.

Which only begs the question: Why is it 'realistic' to cut social welfare to pay off the likes of Goldman Sachs?

These payments to bondholders should cease immediately. Bondholders are very wealthy people who move their money about for speculative purposes. They foolishly gave huge amounts of credit to private Irish banks and so they have as much right to make a claim on the Irish people as regular punters who lose at the bookie shop.

There should also be an end to 're-capitalising' Irish banks. These banks have already received €60 billion but are demanding still more in funds. We have been repeatedly told that these injections of public money are necessary to get credit flowing again. There would be no need for working people to re-capitalise the banks if we imposed capital controls and stopped the rich moving their money out of the country.

We need instead to take emergency measures to create a good state banking system from the remnants of the private sector. The debts of that were run up by these banks should be repudiated; all accounts below €100,000 should be guaranteed by the state; emergency laws should be introduced to take the physical assets and accounts of the old banks into the new state bank. This bank will then function like a credit union and will be banned from engaging in speculative activity. Large-scale loans – generated from deposits from citizens – will be directed towards planned investment projects that create jobs and provide a real return.

These measures will save billions for Irish society.

## 2. TAKE CONTROL OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES AND RE-BUILD OUR MANUFACTURING BASE

Ireland has become a major centre for exploration of oil and gas.

Recent licensing rounds include the 2010 onshore round in which companies applied for licensing options for blocks over an 8,000 sq km area covering parts of Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon and Sligo in the North West Carboniferous Basin and parts of Clare, Cork, Limerick and Kerry in the Clare Basin. Licensing options were granted to a number of companies in late February 2011 and the licensing option holder must apply for a petroleum prospecting licence to begin exploratory activities. Holders of a licensing option are given the first right to an exploration licence.

Companies have also applied for option in the current Atlantic Margin licensing round. This is an area of 250,000 sq km area – the largest tranche of acreage ever opened. It is in this area that the Petroleum Affairs Division D has estimated there to be a potential 10 billion barrels of oil equivalent.

Various international studies have shown that Ireland has one of the lowest rates of government take in the world: under the 1992 licensing terms companies are only required to pay a 25% tax rate against which all related costs accrued over a previous 25 year period can be offset. For licences granted after January 1 2007, companies are liable to pay a profit resource rent tax (PRRT) of between 5% and 15% in addition to the 25% tax rate. However, considering that this PRRT is calculated on profits after costs have been offset, tax has been paid and is determined by a profit ratio of after-tax profits to capital investment, only the most profitable fields will result in additional returns to the state. Different commentators have recently suggested that the state will not see any financial returns from Corrib gas (granted under the 1992 terms) because of delays with the project and increases in costs.

We need to change this absurd policy.

Ireland natural resources should be taken into public ownership. Full consideration should be given to the concerns of the people of Rossport who have Shell for nearly ten years.

Those resources should then be used to develop downstream industries that help to restore Ireland's manufacturing base.

## 3. TAX THE MILLIONAIRES TO SAVE THE POOR

A number of measures can raise funds to help society

- **A Wealth Levy:** the last Bank of Ireland wealth report indicated that there were 33,000 millionaires who had combined assets of €150 billion. The economist Tom O' Connor has adjusted these figures to take account of falling property prices and rising bond market prices and calculates that this millionaire class now has €121 billion in assets. A wealth levy of 5 percent would raise €6 billion – and do away with the need for the savage cuts in last year's budget.
- **A new tax on incomes over €100,000.** It is not fair that someone who receives an income of €200,000 pays the same rate of tax as someone on €40,000. All income of single earners over €100,000 should be taxed at 70 percent to raise necessary funds. After World War 2, Japan established a legal maximum income of five times the minimum income. So a 70 percent tax rate looks 'moderate' by comparison.

**Impose a Financial Transaction Tax:** Dublin has become a major centre for financial speculation. Irish resident investment funds accounted for 10 percent of the Eurozone area. The total value of the funds in the IFSC amounts to € 1,800 billion. These include hedge funds and funds used to speculate in government bonds – including those of Ireland itself. The French right wing President Sarkozy is currently advocating a financial transaction tax of 0.5% of currency movements across borders. Such a tax would generate considerable revenue for Ireland

- **Increase taxes on profits.** Ireland's industrial development strategy has been based on its status as an Atlantic tax haven but this is no longer sustainable. Other countries are undercutting Ireland's low corporation profits tax rate and there is now huge pressure from the EU to change it. Each 1% rise in corporation profits tax will generate an income of €300 million. So a 1.5% rise, for example, would do away with the need for a Universal Social Charge on PAYE workers.

#### 4. STOP THE GRAVY TRAIN – SLASH THE JUNKETS

We should not accept the artificial division between public sector and private sector. We want to tackle the greed of the rich in both sectors. It is unacceptable, for example, that Cathal Magee, the head of the HSE, is earning more than the US President Barak Obama. These exorbitant managerial salaries must be cut.

Instead we should:

- Slash the salaries of TDs, judges and top civil servants and semi-state executives. The scandal whereby the most recent crop of Ministers walks away with pensions of more than €200,000 must end.
- Impose a maximum salary of €100,000 on the public sector. It is time to restore the ethos of public service not private greed.
- End the rip off of public funds through crony procurement. Irish capitalists have traditionally looked for secure profits by getting government contracts. Hangers-on of Fianna Fail have used the planning mechanism to secure big pay-outs. This needs to stop.
- Stop consultants working in private practice while paid by the state. Introduce generic drugs in all cases except where necessary for health reasons.

#### 5. PUBLIC INVESTMENT TO CREATE JOBS

The engine of our economy must be started through a new investment programme that can create jobs. As private capital has failed, it is necessary for the state to step in and take a lead. This shift to public investment has two aspects;

- A **Public Works programme** to give immediate work to the unemployed. 14% of the Irish workforce was employed as construction workers at the height of the Celtic Tiger. These should be taken on by a state construction company to engage in necessary infrastructural work while the economic crisis lasts. We need, for example, a major insulation programme for housing. Instead of installing water meters for eventual private profit, people should be employed to fix the water infrastructure.
- **Initiate a state led programme of investment in strategic industries.** At present Ireland's export programme relies heavily on the pharmaceutical industry. But there are already signs that this may not last forever. The Irish state should be using the skills that have been built up to initiate the establishment of generic drugs industry.

In 2008 and 2009, a quarter of a million people were made unemployed. The cost of this to society at large was €14.5 billion when account is taken of falling PAYE taxes and payment of social welfare. Now we are approaching half a million. The 'deficit hawks' in the right wing parties say we must keep cutting. We should instead invest in our society and put people back to work.

This programme is practical and workable. It requires popular mobilisation to take the resources of our society out of the hands of a tiny minority who have squandered it and continue to squander it.

By Harry Browne

Most of us are familiar with the litany of media failures that has marked the coverage of the Erris gas dispute in the last 10 years. The failures range from the most local to the most national questions raised by the controversy; from the inability to get to grips with how the proposed Rossport pipeline differed from other gas pipes that pass through populated areas, to a refusal to admit debate on the extraordinary terms by which Irish gas is made available to the companies that exploit it. We heard a great example of the latter on Morning Ireland just a few weeks ago, when Pat Rabbitte was told by the questioner that his party had in the past been critical of the infamous Ray Burke deal, but then was permitted to slip and slide through a reply that gave no indication whatsoever that he would do anything different.

We are familiar too with the exceptions to media 'failure', and the peculiarities of those exceptions. We know, for example, that easily the best and most thorough investigation of the dispute and the issues it raised was conducted outside the mainstream media, by Frank Connolly's short-lived Centre for Public Inquiry, and that not only was that report largely ignored, but the centre that produced it was closed down soon after, coincidentally or otherwise. We know that the best national reporter covering the story over a period of years, Lorna Siggins of the Irish Times, had to do so while carrying a huge additional workload as a regional correspondent for the entire Irish 'West', and probably facing the indifference to the issue, or worse, of editors back in Dublin.

We know that one sympathetic documentary, Richie O'Donnell's excellent *The Pipe*, chose for whatever reasons to focus on the human-interest rather than political side of the story. And we saw that an unsympathetic documentary, Gerry Gregg's smear for TV3, was slick enough to be celebrated with a nomination by the Irish Film and Television Awards. Incidentally, the failure of complaints against Gregg's 'Paul Williams Investigates...' programme provide a textbook example of how difficult such a complaints-process can be: no complainant really engaged with the programme at the same level of visual and structural sophistication with which it was produced, and the Broadcasting Complaints Commission's rejection of the complaints was thus as predictable as it was dispiriting.

So for anyone who has been following the Corrib-gas story with any dedication, the 'what' of mainstream media failure is an old story, and the contours of the few exceptions also fairly clear. Even the occasional strengths of, and sympathy derived from, the 'human interest' approach, as was seen at the time of the Rossport Five incarceration and can be seen again in the popular and critical acclaim for *The Pipe*, are often limited and politically unpredictable. Gregg's film, for example, effectively used the 'human interest' of the young people trying to work at the refinery as a means to attack Shell to Sea; and when some campaigners tried to draw lessons from the 2009 death of former Shell security man Michael Dwyer in strange circumstances in Bolivia, journalists like Michael Clifford (then of the Sunday Tribune) were able quite effectively to cry 'Shame!' – as though the issue were simply about one dead young man's reputation.

I thought it would be useful here, rather than rehearse the 'what' again, to try to address the 'why': What is it about journalism in Ireland today, and perhaps journalism more generally, that makes it treat this particular issue so badly?



My friend Ciaran O'Reilly, one of the 'Pitstop Ploughshares' who disabled a US navy plane at Shannon Airport in 2003, often asks, rhetorically: 'Why do we continually talk about the media as though they were there to provide a public service?' Of course the question is pertinent, when the majority of the media outlets that we regard as mainstream news sources are commercial enterprises, with a dual business model of selling information to consumers and selling the attention of their audiences to advertisers. Ciaran's understanding of this set of facts suggests that any 'public service' that arises in that context is purely coincidental.

And yet of course there is another way of thinking about Ciaran's question, and that is to try to answer it directly. Why do we continually talk about the media as though they were there to provide a public service? In part, it's because that's the way journalists – in public, and in their fictionalised Lois Lane/Lou Grant guise – tend to talk about themselves. Most journalists would genuinely much rather think of themselves as seekers of truth in the public interest than as cogs in a corporate machine, and journalism courses such as the ones I teach on at Dublin Institute of Technology decorate their curriculum with high-minded talk about the essential role of journalism in a democracy. Journalists are more cynical in private but have, for the most part, internalised some version of this vision. Much criticism of journalism, even from the anti-capitalist left, takes these values as a given and often tries to 'call' journalists on their failures to live up to their ideals. This can occasionally bear fruit, insofar as the ideals are in fact taken seriously, inscribed in codes of practice by newspapers, unions, press councils etc.

However, it might be more interesting and valuable to try to understand how these ideals are circumscribed by the media institutions in which they operate, and how journalists, consciously and unconsciously, are trained to understand those limits, resulting in a de facto pro-business and pro-police bias that comes disguised as 'common sense'. In other words, before most journalists go out in search of 'truth', they understand their newspaper, or magazine, or TV/radio station, has a commitment to certain other underlying truths about the correct disposition of power in society, and any further truth-seeking is naturally contained within those limits.

Noam Chomsky's favourite phrase to describe this is 'service to power', and it's a simple starting point for understanding why news media behave as they generally do. Chomsky and Edward Herman developed what they called a Propaganda Model to account for the pro-establishment bias of most journalism; the model includes some explanatory tools in the form of five 'filters' that determine what gets into media outlets: ownership, funding (i.e. advertising), sources, flak, and 'anti-communism/fear'. The final effect is that journalism becomes an arm of the ruling elite.

In Ireland, of course, much journalism is produced more or less directly by one very important player in that elite, a company called Independent News and Media, run for more than 30 years by Tony O'Reilly, now controlled by his son Gavin but also part-owned by telecoms and radio tycoon Denis O'Brien. INM owns or part-owns a substantial majority, by circulation, of the newspapers bought in this State every week, including 14 provincial titles in addition to the well-known national daily and Sunday papers. In addition, the papers and broadcasters that are not owned by INM in general seek to avoid direct, overt conflict with this dominant company. Meanwhile, O'Reilly is a major shareholder and his son Tony Jr is the CEO of Providence Resources, an oil-and-gas exploration company involved in offshore operations all around Ireland's coast. It is no conspiracy-theory to imagine that INM journalists approaching the Corrib story do so with awareness of the O'Reillys'

direct interest in the maintenance of the no-royalties status quo, and in the minimisation/marginalisation of environment-based protests against drilling and its downstream consequences.

Shell is, of course, well equipped to tell its own story and, even outside of INM, most journalists have been prepared to treat the company, along with its partners and predecessors in the Corrib operation, as reliable and accurate sources of information. The favouring of elite, corporate and state sources over non-corporate, non-state actors is partly, as Chomsky and Herman suggest, a built-in structural bias, a means by which journalists ensure they are keeping the 'wrong sort' out of their pages. But it is also a reflection of the competent and friendly public-relations structures the company has put in place. Shell has had the best PR money could buy, including former journalists with good reputations among their ex-colleagues at both local and national level. To this day you can go on the BBC website and hear competent reporting from the 1990s by John Egan about how people on the delta of the Niger river in Nigeria were seeking alternatives to corporate exploitation of their region's natural resources. Not much later, Egan was working for Shell back home in Ireland. What some activists might regard as evidence of his profound hypocrisy is seen by most of his former journalist colleagues as a signal of his 'credibility', and the fact that he is specifically paid to hold and communicate a certain set of positions on the Corrib dispute is as widely ignored for him as it is for most 'spokespeople'.

It's a well-known if tiresome fact that people are capable of feeling, and evincing, sympathy for activists thousands of miles away but turn their backs when struggles erupt closer to home. For most Irish journalists, the admirable and exotic courage of a Ken Saro-Wiwa can, by definition, bear no resemblance to the pure stubbornness of native culchies such as Willie Corduff or Maura Harrington. (Not that Western journalists did an especially good job covering the Ogoni struggle.) It's important to understand that, for reasons of logistics and sociology, journalism has been for most of its history in most of the world a largely urban phenomenon. That's not to say that people who are originally from 'the country' don't often produce it, especially in Ireland, but it tends to be produced in towns and cities, for audiences traditionally concentrated in towns and cities. This gives rise to what I have called a 'metropolitan bias' in much reporting and commentary, in which rural communities and locations may be sentimentalised, especially if they are scenic holiday destinations for the urban bourgeoisie, but there are limits on the understanding and sympathy the people from those communities can evoke. When a conflict appears (note I say 'appears') to come down to executives and engineers against farmers and fisher-folk, few journalists will have the tendency, let alone the nerve, to side instinctively with the latter.

And if the conflict can be depicted as executives and engineers against 'activists', then God help us. Journalists have a mixed relationship with activists, who can sometimes be sources for stories and are often 'lively and picturesque' (media code-words for rural and working-class people). However, ultimately and with no apparent irony about their own status, journalists regard most activists as suspicious in origin, dangerously unrepresentative and generally up to no good. I can remember on my very first day in the Irish Times in 1990 the editor instructing staff not to give too much coverage to a particularly large and spectacular demonstration taking place that evening, on the basis that the paper had 'already given these people enough oxygen' – i.e. had used information activists supplied to produce well regarded investigations on the subject of the demonstration. The basic contempt for

'these people' was evident even when their 'issue' (justice for the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four as it happens) had proven to be absolutely justified and relevant.

This contempt has been greatly evident in the treatment of Corrib, and in much the same way: activists have been portrayed as somehow, by definition, flighty and irrational, even when their concerns have been utterly validated. Every time yet another 'objective' investigatory process ratified some or all of the activists' concerns, media figures seemed to find it effortless to move the goalposts: 'Ah, well yes, of course, there *were* legitimate concerns' – the very same concerns that they had mocked previously – 'but now they've been addressed by the competent authorities' – who only got a chance to address them because of the protests that made new inquiries necessary – 'and it's time for people to move on and accept this carefully revised new plan.' Irish Times editorials have been particularly good at this. It is often said that journalists, even good journalists, have the attention span of a gnat; in such cases as these they count on their readers suffering from similar memory lapse. Perhaps it's the historian in me, but I find that when I am weighing up the bona fides of some commenter on issues such as Corrib, I'm less likely to ask 'Which side are you on?' (this can be a tricky and elusive question) but rather 'Which side *were* you on?'

The by-now-traditional good news is the internet gives us the means to strengthen historical memory and to bypass the hopelessly corrupted messengers. Unfortunately those online means remain poorly distributed – in Ireland Tony O'Reilly, via Eircom, has played a part in this failure too – and they face the real danger of having their power concentrated in the wrong hands, again. That's why really changing the media requires really changing society: for journalism to reflect the people's priorities, other powerful institutions in society will have to do so as well.

ends

## **Archaeology and the Community of Kilcommon Erris**

Kilcommon has had a rich and varied past possibly stretching back some 9,000 years. Until about 13,000 years ago Ireland was covered by the extended Arctic Ice sheet which eventually retreated northwards leaving the land free of ice. With a rise in temperature vegetation began to grow. After about 4,000 years the entire island was covered in forest apart from some coastline areas.

Kilcommon was one of those areas. Sruth Mhada Conn would have been little more than a river running down to Broadhaven Bay as sea levels were much lower at the time, about three to four metres lower.

Around 7,500BC humans who originated further south, reached Irish shores from the sea. These Stone Age People known as Mesolithic came ashore where conditions were favourable for them. They needed fresh water, somewhere relatively safe where they could hunt wild game and birds, fish, gather nuts for food, gather wood for making fires and make temporary shelters for their families; Kilcommon would have been the ideal location.

Mesolithic people found North Mayo a desirable location to hunt, to fish and live in because unlike much of the interior of the country it was not heavily afforested; it had sandy beaches and areas of machair, there was plentiful fresh water and wild game and fish to hunt. The openness of the landscape would have protected them from attack from wild animals living in the forests.

Archaeologists have found Mesolithic sites at Belderrig because they have carried out extensive archaeological surveys there over the years.

Many areas of Kilcommon would have provided even more fertile and accessible sites for Mesolithic man and it is likely they settled in areas surrounding Sruwaddacon and Trá Mór Bays.

Artefacts from this period were Stone Age tools as there was no megalithic burial tradition until a later time. Middens, early rubbish dumps, sometimes date from this period are often seen along cliffs after erosion occurs. They often contain charred stones, shells, bones and sometimes stone tools used in the preparation of food.

Neolithic culture began about 4,000 B.C. These Stone Age people had developed ritual and belief. The most common Neolithic site in our landscape is the Megalithic Tomb. These Tombs were of four principle types and show that the people who built them possessed a superior understanding of natural events such as climate and seasons. Almost all megalithic tombs have an east/west inclination and are positioned exactly towards where the midsummer sun rises and sets. They are often referred to as cromlechs, giants graves, dolmens, fairy forts, druids altars or Grainne & Diarmuid's bed.

Of the four defined types of Megalithic Tombs no Passage Tombs have been recorded on the National monument register for Kilcommon. Examples of the other three types of tombs are registered

Court Tombs: Glengad/Dooncarton; Rosspoint

Wedge Tomb: Glengad/Dooncarton.

Portal Tomb: Knocknalower/Gortbrack.

The Neolithic farmers built these tombs for their dead leaders often in very scenic locations usually higher than their settlements. Although there are many other unregistered megalithic tombs at Inver, Gortbreac, Gortmelia, Faulagh and Muingeroon why the lack of official recognition of these sites? Funding for archaeological investigation is in short supply and major sites such as Newgrange command almost all available funding. This should not detract from the importance of sites such as those which can be seen all over Kilcommon parish area.

## **The Parish of Kilcommon and Environs and Celtic Literature**

The Dindseanchas is a highly imaginative early Irish verse glorification of the place names of Ireland, personalising and deifying much of the landscape. For example Sruth Mhada Conn is the "stream of the dog of the hound," which is quite odd until one realises that it is merely an expression of the totemism that is an element of Animism. Further the "Conn" part is the Conn, one of the children of Lir, and to go a step further, when swans lie in the stream, instead of over flying to the bog lakes, they are held to herald a death in communities along the shore. I'd like to mention here as an aside that on

a visit I made to the home of Willie Corduff and Mary his wife before Easter that at one point in our conversation Willie happened to mention that on the day that Shell entered the compound at Aughoose to begin preparatory work for the tunnelling of Sruth Mhada Conn twenty seven swans arrived on the estuary and alighted opposite the site. The community of Kilcommon look on this tunnelling project as a death blow to the ecology of the area.

In the origin myths of the people of this area Balor Beimear, Balor the one-eyed, the Spirit of Darkness, the Celtic Cyclops, led his raiders, the Fomharaigh in an attack to wrest control from the Tuatha De Danann, the Spirit of Light. They landed at Tra na nOistreach the landing place of the pipeline. After the initial success of the invaders, the forces of light repelled them, led by Lugh, the God of Wisdom, the Ildanach, the founding God of London and Lyon.

A Domhnonian race gave its name to Erris Domnon and perhaps to Dundonnell; we hear of vague Fir Bolg settlements, and a tradition on the verge of prehistory shows us a belief that the Fir Domhnoun, like the Cruithne of Croghen, were of the race of Genaun and so of the tribe-group called Ganganoi by Ptolemy.

Sandhill settlements exist to the east of Broadhaven near Rosspoint.

The entire Dun Chaochain area (which historically includes Glenamoy) from the Glenamoy area north to the sea, and much of Dun Chiortain, from Ceann Tra Chiortain (now Barr na Trá) to Sruth Mhada Conn is the local area.

Dun Chiortain commemorates the steward of Domhnaill Dualbhui, who was killed in the process of Tain Bo Flithais, when Queen Maeve's army attacked Erris. On the way her warrior daughter, Calaire was killed, and so we have Gleanncalry near where the Glenamoy river rises and finally enters the sea at Sruth Mhada Conn.

Maeve's army moved through Muing Engain (Engain was the herald of Donall Dualbhui) where battle was joined, through Dun Domhnainn now Glencastle over the hill to Ceann Tra Ciortain where Domhnaill Dualbui was killed (Dun Domhnainn is the fort in the middle of the valley surrounded by gravel pits). To the south of that, and just over the quarried ridge, is the fort of Ferdia, of Tain Bo Cuailgne fame.

About the beginning of our era the hero "Fergus" plundered Erris which was then owned by the giant Donell Doolwee (Donall Dual-Bhui, one of the Fir Bolgs) whose wife was in collusion with him. Fergus came to his castle, where the faithless wife Munchin gave him Donell's sword. When Donell found he was betrayed he went to his neighbour "Carton" of Duncarton, for aid and found he was out in a boat. He shouted to him and receiving a refusal, hurled a rock, sunk the boat and killed or drowned Carton, who was buried at Gort Malle, near Tra Kirtaan where an oblong enclosure of stones, with taller ones at the end marks his grave and gives the strand his name.

Donell grows desperate, returned to Dundonnell and was slain by Fergus who, with Munchin, set off for his home. They reached the stream from Carrowmore Lake and were crossing on a foot-stick when he pushed his accomplice into the river and she was drowned. Free from his undesired lover he marched gaily round Corrsliabh to the east of Bangor Erris where he was set upon by another giant "the Amadan Barroosky, who slew him and all his followers, burying him in "Fanny leach Feargois" (Tamhnaigh Leacht Fhearghais) at Sheskin.(The Promontory Forts And Early Remains Of the Coast Of County Mayo By Thomas Johnson Westropp, M.A.)

### **Shell E&P Ireland and the Archaeology of Kilcommon**

In the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government submission to the Bord Pleanála re application by Shell E&P Ireland Limited (Sepil) in respect of a Strategic Infrastructure Development for the proposed re-routing of the onshore upstream gas pipeline facility relating to Corrib Gas Field Project, Co. Mayo, we read the following observations:

It is noted that the proposed development is large in scale. Given the scale, extent and location of the proposed development it is possible that subsurface archaeological remains could be encountered during the construction phases that involve ground disturbance. It is our recommendation that the following, as described below, be carried out at this site and included as conditions in any grant of planning permission.

Palaeoenvironmental analysis should include the following:

Analysis of the peat morphology

Pollen analysis

Sequence of Carbon 14 (C14) dates

Insect and wood analysis

The Department (DoEHLG) in specifying the palaeoenvironmental analysis of the site was being true to the precautionary principle. The archaeological integrity of the area must be protected. The conditions pertaining to the granting of planning permission would depend on these analytical tests.

Michael O'Connell in his article on "Early Environment and the First Settlers" shows the importance of pollen analysis. At Newferry, in Co. Antrim, in the middle reaches of the lower Bann River, charcoal layers and an increase in the pollen of herbaceous plants in Mesolithic settlement layers, dating approximately 6000 B.C. point to forest clearance. However, by and large, Mesolithic peoples while being efficient at exploiting the surplus produce of their natural environment, probably did not seriously interfere with natural woodland or soil development.

In the Corrib Onshore Pipeline E.I.S. Volume 2 of 3, Book 5 of 6 Appendix N the section dealing with Archaeology has no reference to pollen analysis. There was no pollen analysis undertaken either in Glengad, the pull-in site for the pipeline, or the Aughooose site from which the TBM excavation will begin.

The Records of Monuments and Places list seventeen sites for the town lands surrounding Sruwaddacon Bay.

The marine geophysical survey was comprehensive and indicated a relict palaeo-channel running through the bay.

Coastal, estuarine and riverine environments especially in the west of Ireland have been shown through research and fieldwork to have significant archaeological significance. Archaeological evidence has shown that these areas have acted as focal points for both settlement and ritual activity through all periods of human settlement.

The Mesolithic period (c 8,000-4,000BC) which records human activity in Ireland, after the end of the Ice Age, does not appear to be represented among the known archaeological records for the immediate area. Mesolithic people did not build permanent stone monuments and the sites dated to the Mesolithic are usually connected with habitation or food production activity. However, the hunting and fishing economy of this period means that many Mesolithic sites are coastal and estuarine and there is significant possibility that work in coastal, estuarine and riverine areas, such as Sruwaddacon may reveal Mesolithic material.

There is a prehistoric settlement site (MA004-007) at the mouth of the estuary of Sruwaddacon Bay consisting of middens, field walls, hut sites, a cairn and a possible burial site, Curraun Boy. While this site is 900m from the proposed route of the pipeline it provides a good example of the type of coastal settlement which may be found in the surrounding area providing that environmental and physical conditions are suitable.

Sand hills are also noted to the east of the landfall site, these are limited in extent and it is unknown whether the environmental conditions existing at this location would have attracted settlement.

John Jackson in his article "The Geology and Raw Material of the Stone Age," wrote the following piece on the Mesolithic people. It would appear that the inhabitants of the Bann estuary could live for most of the year on food from the surrounding area. The spring and summer saw runs of salmon in the estuary, while in the autumn a rich array of nuts, berries fruit and eels running down stream would have been available. During the winter, stored supplies of food and wild pig would have been the main sources of nourishment. We must imagine these people as capable of planning ahead and deciding exactly where to live-in particular, where they could maximise the return from their environment.

### **Marine Archaeology of Sruwaddacon Bay**

In the conclusive report on marine archaeology the possibility remains that the subsurface deposits within the Bay retain archaeological material. The mobile nature of the estuarine silts within the sandbank areas and the palaeo-channel on the southside of the bay in particular would be an ideal holding area for said material. This is especially the case for all wooden constructions, such as log boats and other pre-modern sailing craft and related features, since geo-physical prospecting is unable

to detect such anomalies that are buried. This point was made in the course of the Irish Subsea 2025 Gas Interconnector Project at the Gormanstown, Co. Meath landfall, when a 7 metre long logboat was encountered during dredging 1Km offshore. Despite a detailed geophysical survey in advance of the work, it was impossible for the suite of instruments to detect the wooden vessel (Corrib Onshore Pipeline E.I.S. Vol. 2 of 3, Book 5 of 6 Appendix O P.38-39)

### **Borehole Sediment samples from Sruth Mhada Conn**

Twenty one BH samples were on the agenda for deliberation at the Bord Pleanala oral hearing that was reconvened in Belmullet in 2010.

There was no Carbon dating C14 available for discussion. The excuse offered was that the hazel-nut that was sent for C14 dating had been mislaid or had been lost at the laboratory. A commitment was made to the chairperson that a new test would be undertaken with a hazel-nut from one of the 21 BH cores. Shell also promised to do a C14 test on a wood sample as well.

A C14 result of a hazel-nut shell from BH 30 was obtained by a member of our community on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 from Shell's office in Belmullet. There was no result provided from any wood sample. "The radiocarbon dating certificate from the laboratory for the hazelnut shell fragment found in Borehole 30 has returned a date of 7970+30 BP."

When this is calibrated to cylindrical years, the sample indicates a date of cal BC 7050-6700. It places the shell in the early Mesolithic period. This is great news for the community to know that if you had people living in Kilcommon 7000 years ago which is most of pre-history and most of the history of human activity within Ireland. But there is a proviso in that in the report we also read "it does not provide an association with man, as no anthropogenic material was revealed in association with the macro fossil". But in a talk that Professor Caulfield, an eminent archaeologist, from Belderrig, the site of the famous Ceide Fields, speaking at Inver National School, on the occasion of the celebration of its 125 year history spoke on the pre-history of the area and about a very important archaeological excavation that has been ongoing for the last seven or eight years on "the slight raised cliff to the right hand side of the Bay at Belderrig". "Those excavations have shown that there were earlier communities before farmers in North Mayo that dates back about 7000 years ago. These fishing communities, fishing and gathering, is before farming was ever introduced into this country. If there are fishing communities at Belderrig 7000 years ago you can be absolutely certain that they were in a much more fertile fishing grounds and a much more productive shoreline of the Inver area here and around Broadhaven. So those farming communities that have left their mark so strongly on the peninsula here from Ballinboy down they weren't the first people here. There would have been fisher-gatherer communities here about 7000 years ago and that is most of the history of Ireland"

This confirmation of the early presence of Mesolithic people in Kilcommon Parish is a vindication of the communities' belief that the area was a desirable location for these fisher-gatherer Mesolithic communities.

Why wasn't the palaeoenvironmental analysis stipulated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government undertaken by Shell's Archaeologists in the field? In the Corrib Onshore Pipeline E.I.S. there was no reference whatsoever to: Pollen analysis; Sequence of Carbon (C14) dates; Insect and wood analysis.

What is the relevance of having a Department of Government with the statutory responsibility for enforcing regulations pertaining to best practice in archaeological matters on behalf of the citizen?

### **The Community, their Supporters, the Media and Others.**

From the beginning of the communities involvement in active citizenship in regards to the 'Great Corrib Gas Controversy' particularly through the various oral hearings attended and participated in, a new meaning to a sense of person, a sense of people and a sense of place for a community was realised. 'Nothing is more important, not even the value of shares for Shell or their partners or not even the national interest. The national interest cannot be served if our sense of person, people and place is usurped.

Our sense of person, people and place is who we are, as individuals and as a community. It is about that community living in a certain place in a period of time. Money cannot negate our lived

experience.

That lived experience of a person in a community is the context of life itself. For any statutory body to claim that an issue must be examined in terms of laws and regulations only is an aberration. "Law never made men a whit more just; and by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice".(Civil Disobedience by Thoreau). A value has to be put on the shared life experience of the people in Kilcommon parish in the twenty first century. These are the people with a sense of time and place and must count in any future reckoning of any development.'(Mayo Echo 18 Dec, 2002 Liamy McNally)

The Stockholm Declaration was the first international instrument to explicitly recognise the relationship between individual human rights and the quality of the environment.

"Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of quality that permits a life of dignity and wellbeing and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations."

The Stockholm Declaration is not a legally binding document but it has been contended that the Stockholm Declaration builds on the language from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which is in fact binding on Ireland (adapted in 1966 entered into force in 1976). The ICESCR recognises the individual's right to 'continuous improvement of living conditions' which can be linked to principle 1 of the Stockholm Declaration (Human Rights and the Natural and Cultural Environment June 2009 p4)

"Although regional in scope, the significance of the Aarhus Convention is global. It is by far the most impressive elaboration of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration which stresses the need for citizen's participation in environmental issues and for access to information on the environment held by public bodies. As such it is the most ambitious venture in the area of environmental democracy so far." (Kofi A Annan)

The Green Party never ratified the Aarhus Convention when they had the opportunity when in Government with Fianna Fail.

"I wish to express not just my gratitude for being invited along here today, but to express what an honour it is. It is an honour to be in the company of national heroes -Philip McGrath, Vincent McGrath James Philbin, William Corduff agus Michael Seighin. Free at last, Free at last, The 5 are free at last. . ."

"Many questions we demand answers today.

What went on in that room when Minister Ray Burke – a known criminal met with the exploration companies behind closed doors?

Why did he break protocol by preventing our civil servants from being in that room, the guardians of our state assets?

What did these company representatives promise to Mr. Burke?

We know he took a bribe of £30,000 for rezoning favours in 1989. How much for the entire Corrib Gas Field in 1992?"

"And why would Minister Frank Fahey deny the due planning process to the people of Mayo? Why did he give 400 acres of our state forests to Shell at a knockdown price?"

"Why would Mr. Fahey ride rough shod over his own people? What was it worth to you Mr. Fahey?"

"Why was the FF/PD coalition so keen that planning processes had to be subverted, land had to be stolen from its citizen, lives could be put at risk, and citizens imprisoned. All for the greater good? What greater good? Whose greater good? Exactly how much goods are we talking about?"

"Messrs Burke, Fahey, Ahearn, Dempsey et al would do well to remember Eamon de Valera and how he planned out our constitution of 1937. Did he ever think he wrote Article 10 of Bunreacht na hEireann, that "All natural resources, including the air and all forms of potential energy ... and royalties and franchises within that jurisdiction belong to the state". Did he ever think he would see the day when Fianna Fail ministers would connive with big business to give away our natural resources and imprisoned those who rightfully shouted "no"?"

"At times like these it's hard to find the right words to express the outrage we all feel about the misuse of our natural resources. But there was one man who foresaw this kind of situation away back in the 1970s. He saw that Ireland was becoming a place where everything could be bought and sold, and where rights and justice had to bow to the dark arts of spin and bribery."

"He saw a nation that had fought so long and hard for its freedom but one that could very easily find



that freedom put up for sale by the enemy within.”

“Luke Kelly’s words were true then, but more so now.” (Address to Rosspoint Demonstration Dublin Oct. 1, 2005 by Trevor Sargent T.D, Leader Green Party).

“In September 1987, Ray Burke ... announced new terms that included exemption of all oil and gas production from royalty payments and the abolition of all state participation.”

“Mr. Burke also introduced a 100% tax write off against profit on capital expenditure for exploration, development and production for up to 25 years. He left corporation tax at 50%.”(C.P.I. p.11)

“In April 1992, the Minister of Finance, Bertie Ahearn, incorporated Mr. Burke’s 1987 changes to the taxation regime into the Finance Act and also further reduced corporation tax on oil and gas companies from 50% to 25%.

In June 1992, the government introduced new licensing terms with no royalties on state participation. The new licensing terms also permitted producers to sell any oil or gas at market price.” (C.P.I. p.11&12)

“During 1975 and 1992, thirteen of the world’s largest oil and gas companies drilled 100 wells offshore Ireland, but during this period the oil majors, by their own account, failed to find one single well that was commercially viable.” (C.P.I. p.57)

“The changes to the 1975 offshore licensing terms made by Mr. Burke in 1987 were supposed to ‘kick start ‘ exploration and production but the government in 1992 to enshrine the ‘kick start’ provisions in a manner that abandoned all principle of good offshore management.

Although the 1992 terms were supposed to improve conditions for exploration, oil companies only drilled 26 exploration wells between 1993 and 2004, compared to 100 exploration wells between 1975 and 1992.”(C.P.I. p.58)

“Some might argue that there is little point in raking the embers of past fires but if we are to move forward with the Corrib Gas project we must attempt to understand what has gone before. The Findings of Kevin Moore, an independent observer and a respected planning inspector, have never been properly analysed, let alone addressed by the Irish Government. Indeed, the Government’s attitude to the Corrib Gas crisis has amounted to a little more than a few hand-wringing gestures and tearful pleas to the parties involved. The lack of leadership at national level has been quite shocking and one wonders what the historians will make of the dreadful debacle a hundred years from now. Even at the early stage the verdict is fairly damning.”(Western People 1 August 2006, James Laffey, Editor.)

“Seamus Heaney had previously spoken out in support of the people of Kilcommon congratulating Willie Corduff and the Rosspoint Five on winning the Goldman prize (the US Nobel for the Environment) acknowledging his pride “when five ‘green’ men stood their ground”. The media ignored the intervention which ran contrary to the needs of Ireland’s professional political class, distant strangers to the Republic of Conscience. This cultural dominance is not reflected across the social spectrum as the mainstream media have played a key role in portraying the community and their campaign as a work of malcontents who prefer protest to proposal. (Erris Imagining Ireland by Michael McCaughan, Village Nov-Dec. 2009).

“Ten years ago, locals in Kilcommon began asking questions about a gas project, a process that has led them to question the economic model, the political system and the very notion of belonging in contemporary Ireland. As the economical and political crisis deepens this process is likely to spread to many more corners of the island. The concept of active citizenship and social capital is highly valued in political circles but there is no recognition that the people of Kilcommon have become perhaps the most active citizens in the country, alert to the contradictions at the heart of our economic model and the need for change which goes well beyond a reshuffling of seats in Dail Eireann. The community and their supporters have been rewarded for their activism with a security clampdown, media hostility and the dismissal of health and safety questions as nimbyism, The professional political class of left and right , cannot co-opt or appropriate this unmanageable assembly of local business people, farmers, fishermen teachers, retirees, priests, students and others.”( Erris Imagining Ireland by Michael McCaughan, Village Nov.-Dec. 2009).

I would like to end my presentation with an inspiring piece of writing by Naval el Sardavee from her book "The Dissident Word".

"Our Struggles are becoming more and more difficult. They need more and more creativity. There are always new words appearing that we have to demystify, words such as peace, democracy, human rights, privatization, globalization, multiculturalism, diversity, civil society, non-governmental organizations, cultural difference, liberation theology, religious fundamentalism, post modernism and others.

We need to discover new ways in exposing the paradox and the meanings in old words endlessly repeated. We cannot acquire this knowledge through books, through formal education or the mass media. All of them are controlled by the local and global powers of domination and exploitation and they help to veil our brains with one myth after another.

We have to acquire this knowledge by ourselves, from our own experience and the daily struggle against those powers globally, locally and in the family. This is creativity. It is inspired and stimulated by our living our own lives and not by copying theories of struggle from books. Every struggle has its own unique theory inseparable from action.

If you are creative you must be dissident. You discover what others have not yet discovered",

.

Niall King

**People's Forum, July 2011, Inver Community Centre, Erris, Co. Mayo**

**“Put your Body where your Mouth is! “ Majella Mc Carron**

A frequent complaint among the ordinary people of Ireland is that our voices are not heard. It is an increasingly frustrating experience. Confronted by voicemail, the message box, a trail of buttons to press, a short formal acknowledgment perhaps ending hopefully with “you will be hearing from us soon”. Freedom of expression to which we are entitled by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* seems to ignore the responsibility of dialogue, engagement inclusive of the right to say no. This series of blocks to communication denies the participation of citizens in society. It is ironic in the present context to find communications and natural resources sharing the one Ministry. We are compelled to transfer our voices to banners, to posters, to amplify them by megaphones, to multiply them by long lists of signatures, and finally to make our bodies a voice. We refuse to go to work, place our bodies in awkward public places, we starve our bodies, we destroy our bodies... appeal through our bodies to the media as in *The Pipe*, to whoever will listen and respond over the globe. Once we put our bodies where our mouth could be the response is rapid and often brutal. Particularly so where the State is concerned ignoring a range of international constraints. It gives the lie to our voices not being heard. They are being heard and they are about to upset plans made behind closed doors and without representative consultation. A unique contribution of *The Pipe* is its portrayal of the brutal reaction of the State to the message of the human voice: no. The State may take life from bodies as it did in the case of the *Ogoni Nine*. That is why the minimal intervention of human rights observers must expand: their presence is to assure that protest is fair and that the body-bearers of the voice are respected and their activity is of right.

Our most precious natural resources on the planet are to be found on lands and under water away from Europe. Historically they are found in ethnic nations arbitrarily bundled together in the recent era of colonisation. Like large ugly predators, multinationals prowl the continents including our own in search of such resources to enhance profit for their investors and themselves. They do not ask, they do not consult but they collude with powers of modern states promised crumbs in return. The ethnic wealth of indigenous peoples is taken by force. The voice of the people is silenced. Or so we would be led to believe. It is never quite like that we have discovered; our role is to listen, to hear, to amplify so that bodies are not put where mouths could be. We have to let the world know that natural - resource bearing communities ignored by their respective States seek inclusion among indigenous communities recognised at the United Nations and also find membership among the Unrepresented Peoples and Organizations (UNPO). This would make visible the ‘disconnect’ that multinational activity impacts on the rights of a community. Attention must be brought to States where their governments act irresponsibly in the face of constitutional norms for the protection of the people and its resources. That is done by seeking shelter elsewhere. Indeed as it is the governments of Ireland have proved is so particularly inept that our social order depends on the instruments of the UN and EU. These institutions protect us from ourselves but at our expense.

Two years ago the Annual Ken Saro -Wiwa Memorial Seminar accommodated a view on this matter. One contributor went to great pains to argue that the community affected here in Mayo and somehow defined by a unique culture and language unbroken by colonial intervention qualifies as an indigenous people. So far the notion has not been pursued. However it is my suggestion that the term ‘indigenous people’ be expanded and/or replaced by ‘community’. This is especially relevant

where the community is resource - bearing and both terms are used interchangeably in the related literature already. The aforementioned contributor, Cathal Doyle, wanted the community to pursue a submission to the UN. His research area is about indigenous rights and multinationals in different parts of the globe.

It represents a certain growing acceptance by multinationals of the voice of indigenous people/community very often expressed through their bodies. These peoples of faraway places have stood before the UN and brought about some change. There is now a UN Forum on Indigenous Issues, a UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, an ILO Convention 169, a UN Representative of Business and Human Rights... It remains of concern that the Declaration was voted against by the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand where some of the indigenous peoples live on resource - rich land. These are successfully planted lands by people from Europe. Nine countries abstained – Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Gbutan, Burundi, Columbia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russia, Samoa and Ukraine. A government as in Nigeria would be reluctant to negotiate power over resources with its myriad indigenous peoples. Yet it bears the dramatic imprint of failure to work out a solution. Ireland was one of the 144 countries which voted the adoption of the Declaration at the UN in September 2007. It must be well aware of changing times as illustrated by the Shell Corrib gas Project. Yet it has failed to ratify the EU Aarhus Convention, the only country in Europe to do so.

Ten years ago a public statement was nailed throughout the parish of Kilcommon on posts for all to see. It read NO CONSENT. It was well before its time when now it is common place for multinational companies to begin to think through struggles with resource - bearing communities. That they are poorly equipped to do so is their reliance on consultants who are grappling with the new concept of FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC). Material for this contribution has been gleaned from two such sources - Doyle's paper (2008) for a consultation in the Office of the High Commission on Human Rights relating to extractive industries , and an advisory paper authored by Lehr and Smith for multinational Talisman (2010). Each of these came on stream almost the ten years after this local community had evolved the concept out of their own thinking. Lehr and Smith suggest that *"Consent is best understood as a formalised, documented, and verifiable social licence to operate"* (p.8). It is considered FREE when not bound by intimidation, coercion or manipulation. The people of Kilcommon can easily measure the degree of freedom they have had to refuse part of the Shell Corrib Gas Project. The replacing of the public statement NO CONSENT as an outcome of this People's Forum might be considered. FPIC is now entering legal discourse and in time will become hard rather than soft law. Be assured that Shell has been in similar situations to this and that such lack of consent is part and parcel of its business history. Engagement is not consent nor is compensation part of the resolving language in many cases.

The Lehr and Smith paper also outlines the advantages to the company of adhering to the FPIC principle which is only fully operative when the community feels free to say NO, to withhold its consent. Indeed there have been occasions when the company has accepted the refusal and moved on. This happens more with mining companies and there is little or no acceptance of it in the oil industry. A company even if persuaded that this is a right way of action is often very slow to becoming a precedent in the field. The State is considered as the appropriate starting point where it is suggested that consent issues are resolved before the project even begins. It is also pointed out that weak States may wish to gain profit and political prestige by rushing to sign contracts for which

FPIC has not been fully achieved. The cumulative effect of this for the company may be very damaging to reputation and to its profits as it deals with resistance and intense hostility not just in the present but in the future as well. The situation is compounded if the State feels impelled to force its will through military action and presence. This is what consultants are telling the companies and researchers in corporate social responsibility are confirming.

*The Table Observers* became active in 2006. It was a formal way of responding to the levels of intimidation being experienced and so as a group it is a witness to the lack of FPIC. The record was kept and circulated to significant political authorities and to the relevant organs of government as well as to Shell. This witness extended into the courtroom and overall it was remarkable to discover the level of weakness at the heart of government as displayed by so many of its institutions. It makes a case for the exercise of FPIC not only among clearly defined indigenous peoples but among resource-bearing communities in whatever part of the world. Human rights organisations hold back the punishments meted by government and company to non-consenters by appealing to the UN and to the EU in situations where the State fails to govern us in the pursuit of the common good. There is a certain irony in making a *Table* submission to the UN's *Universal Periodic Review* which takes place in Geneva for Ireland on 6 October 2011. States (a *troika*) sit in judgement on member states where their own record of FPIC is not inspiring. It is a political game of sorts much promoted by the Irish Government which wishes to present a willing collaboration to the UN for other gains. *Table* has made sure to comment on the absence of FPIC in the Shell Corrib Gas Project. It acts thus for the common good of the resource-bearing community of Erris; it is genuinely supported by the voluntary and non-funded time and energy of concerned citizens. It attempts to show what the heart of government should look like when its citizens are in distress. It listens to the voices and attends to the bodies when only these speak in the silence.

I remember my dread when a new poster appeared in the window of Ken Saro-Wiwas's office: The Spirit of Ogoni Say No. It appeared in full glory during the cruel regime of the dictator Sani Abacha who was later to hang the Ogoni 9. Today Abacha too has died and Shell is out of Ogoni since 1993. It finally lost its social licence to operate.

Sources:

Lehr, Arny K and Gare A Smith. Implementing a Corporate Free, Prior and Informed Consent Policy: Benefits and Challenges, Foley Haaf eBook, 2010.

Doyle, Cathal. 'Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) - a universal norm and framework for consultation and benefit sharing in relation to indigenous peoples and the extractive sector', 2008.

*The Table Observers*: Reports and Submissions, 2008 – 2011.

*Majella Mc Carron is a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles. In 1990 she was mandated by her institute to examine the impact of Western business in Nigeria. This led her to the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People. It was supposed to be an extracurricular activity to her lecturing in the University of Lagos, Nigeria. But it resulted in her departure from Nigeria. She has continued to heed the words of Ken Saro-Wiwa in a letter to her from his final detention as she was about to leave in 1994: And don't forget the Ogoni people. She has been honoured to keep the Ogoni spirit alive in Erris where it has found a welcome home.*

Colm Rapple

Shell to Sea has a lot to be proud of. In its ten years of existence it has achieved many successes. Most notably it has forced the would-be mandarins in government departments, regulatory authorities and local government to rethink their old “touch the forelock” attitudes to the multinational oil companies and their followers, in favour of a more citizen friendly approach.

The favourable impact is not only on Shell and its partners but also on other individuals and corporations that attempt to ride roughshod over the rights and interests of people and communities both now and in the future. Of course, there is more to be done but much has been achieved.

It is arguable that many towns in Mayo would never have been connected to the natural gas grid had it not been for the Shell to Sea campaign. It wasn't an objective of the campaign but it is one of the side-effects achieved as a result of the attempts by Shell and its official backers to buy support.

Those who have benefited from Shell's seeming largess should realise that without the Shell to Sea campaign there would have been a lot less of it.

Another very notable success of the Shell to Sea campaign has been its highlighting of the scandalous way that our natural resources are being given away. The campaign undoubtedly played a part in forcing the Government to improve the licensing terms in 2007. But they are still far too generous to the oil companies and much more needs to be done, and urgently.

Last year Conor Lenihan, then junior minister to Éamon Ryan in the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources invited applications for licensing options to all of the remaining areas off the west coast. Fifteen applications had been received by the end of May and they are now being assessed in the Department.

It can be assumed that these applications cover all of the remaining potential oil and gas bearing structures in the area. If these licences are issued, there will be little left to licence in the future.

Given the rapidly changing world energy market and the spiralling cost of oil and gas, it is essential that government policy with regard to the exploitation of any hydrocarbon reserves be reassessed before any fresh licences are issued.

Following a Dáil debate on offshore licensing terms in May, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Pat Rabbitte undertook to have the current terms considered by an Oireachtas Committee. This is the least that should be done before any new licences are issued. The Committee should have the widest possible brief to consider not only the changes necessary in the licensing terms but also alternatives involving a more direct State involvement.

But there is still no guarantee that new licences will not be issued before the promised review takes place or, even if they are put on hold, that the review will be adequate in its scope. Up to now Mr Rabbitte has shown no sign of deviating from the policies pursued by his predecessors. Only two pages of the briefing document were devoted to hydrocarbon exploration including the Corrib debacle and in the Dáil debate initiated by Sinn Féin last month the Minister showed no sign of any fresh thinking on the issue.

It was very clear that the permanent government is alive and well in the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, and that Mr Rabbitte has taken his brief only too well from his department chiefs who were described during the debate as very dogmatic on the issue of our offshore resources by former minister Éamon O Cuiv.

The Department's dogmatic view was accepted by Mr Rabbitte's predecessors, Éamon Ryan, Conor Lenihan and before them by Fianna Fail minister Noel Dempsey and it seems that the Labour minister has succumbed within weeks of taking office. We can only hope that given time he will consider the possibility that the Department might just be wrong and that there are alternative policies that need to be considered.

That type of unquestioning attitude to the dogmatism of the bankers, the regulators and many civil servants is at the root of much of our current financial problems. Yet we seem bound to repeat our mistakes.

While later conceding An tUas O Cuiv's suggestion that the issues should be considered by an Oireachtas Committee, Mr Rabbitte gave no indication of backing down on his intention to issue fresh licences under the current terms and conditions. This is nothing short of scandalous and in no way justified by the general arguments he put forward in the Dáil.

The fifteen consortia that have applied for licences under the current round have clearly cherry picked the best prospect. If they are granted licences, they won't even be required to drill a well. All they'll have to do is pay a fee of only €1,520 and buy, or carry out, some seismic exploration using boats that may never even call into an Irish port. In return they gain an option to get a full exploration licence at any time during the following two years. Such a licence would allow them to exploit any find at the current generous fiscal terms.

The Department itself, in an official document available on its web site, describes our terms as "amongst the most attractive in the world". For many finds the State take would be no more than a 25% corporation tax charged on profits after allowance has been made for all exploration and development costs. For very large finds the take can go up to 40% but even that's low by international standards.

In North America the minimum Government stake according to a report prepared within Mr Lenihan's department is 42% and it can rise above 60%. South American governments get between 25% and 90%. The take in sub Saharan Africa ranges from 44% to 85%.

Just how generous our terms are was made clear when Tony O'Reilly's Providence Resources got an exploration licence in 2006 and was able to do a deal with Exxon Mobile under which the US giant took 80% in return for giving Providence and its partner, Sosina Exploration, a free ride on the other 20%.

So Exxon Mobile was willing to give away a 20% free stake. That could have been got by the State rather than Providence.

The licence covers the Dunquin prospect that on some relatively conservative estimates could be five times as big as the Kinsale gas field.

Our very favourable licensing terms have been defended in the past on the basis that we still need to prove the potential of Irish waters to yield sizeable oil and gas finds. Once we've made that big strike, it has been argued, we can then up the ante for new licences. It might be a valid argument if we hadn't already licensed many of the most promising areas, most of

them at the previous give-away terms under which the State can get no more than a 25% profit tax irrespective of the size of the find.

There is no case at all to be made for now letting the oil companies lay claim to the most promising of the remaining areas of the Atlantic margin at the current terms. There'll be nothing left on which we can demand the type of return due to the Irish people for the exploitation of their natural resources.

Putting the issue of new licences on hold wouldn't put an end to exploration. There is plenty of scope for exploration in areas already licensed. Mr Rabbitte made great play, in his Dáil contribution, of the fact that only four discoveries off the Irish coast have been declared commercial. That's true but 13 other discoveries are still being assessed. There have been two oil finds and three gas finds since 2002.

Davy stockbrokers in a report prepared earlier this month on Providence Resources pointed out that contrary to popular perception, oil and gas have been found offshore Ireland on numerous occasions. High oil prices and technological advances now offer an opportunity to revisit some of the earlier finds.

Security of supply was another issue raised in the Dáil debate mainly in relation to getting the Corrib gas ashore as quickly as possible. The trouble is that the pipelines bringing gas into Ireland can just as easily bring it out. Shell can sell the gas to whoever it likes and no-one has ever claimed that Bord Gais has rights under any contract.

Even if it has, it doesn't guarantee security of supply. If gas was ever in short supply in the EU for some reason or other, we'd undoubtedly have to accept a limited supply or else we wouldn't get any oil.

Even an oil find wouldn't guarantee security of supply since there is no requirement in the offshore licences for companies to land product in Ireland. Providence Resources is currently examining the possibility of piping oil from some small finds off the south coast into tankers that would most likely take the oil off to a British refinery.

Departmental officials did recommend that the State should be able to demand payment in kind of the extra tax introduced to licences issued after 2007. But that proposal was overruled by the Minister or the Government. It never found its way into law.

Gas found off the west coast would almost certainly be landed in Ireland but oil could go anywhere. It could be piped from sub-sea facilities into tankers for shipment to refineries anywhere in the world.

We urgently need a debate on the lines suggested by Éamon O Cuiv and a Dáil committee would be as good a place as any to hold it with Department officials having to answer for their views in public. According to the briefing document prepared for Mr Rabbitte they view the oil industry's representative body, the IOOA, and individual companies as the key stakeholders. Some TDs might be able to remind them that the public that they represent are the major stakeholders since they own the resources.



While only four discoveries offshore Ireland have so far been declared commercial, another thirteen are still being assessed. The table below, presented to the Dáil in October 2010 details all significant hydrocarbon discoveries on and off-shore Ireland.

Discovery Name	Hydrocarbon Type	Status	Current Operator	Discovery Year	Discovery Well	Original Well Operator
Bandon	Oil	Under assessment	Serica Energy	2009	27/4-1,1z	Serica Energy
Hook Head	Oil	Under assessment	Providence Resources	2007(Initially identified 1971)	50/11-3	Providence Resources
Schull	Gas	Under assessment	Island Oil and Gas	2007(Initially identified 1987)	57/2-3	Island Oil and Gas
Old Head of Kinsale	Gas	Under assessment	Island Oil and Gas	2006	49/23-1	Island Oil and Gas
Dooish	Gas Condensate	Under assessment	Shell	2002	12/2-1	Enterprise Energy Ireland
<b>Corrib</b>	<b>Gas</b>	<b>Undergoing development</b>	<b>Shell</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>18/20-1</b>	<b>Enterprise Oil</b>
<b>Ballycotton</b>	<b>Gas</b>	<b>In production</b>	<b>PSE Kinsale Energy</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>48/20-2</b>	<b>Marathon</b>
Dunmore	Oil	Under assessment	Providence Resources	1985	50/6-1	Gulf
Galley Head	Gas	Under assessment	Lansdowne Oil and Gas	1985	48/18-1	BP
Helvick	Oil	Under assessment	Providence Resources	1983	49/9-2	Gulf
Spanish Point	Gas Condensate	Under assessment	Providence Resources	1981	35/8-2	Phillips
Connemara	Oil	Under assessment	Island Oil and Gas	1979	26/28-1	BP
Burren	Oil	Under assessment	Providence Resources	1978	35/8-1	Phillips
Ardmore	Gas	Under assessment	Providence Resources	1974	49/14-1	Marathon
Barryroe	Oil	Under assessment	Lansdowne Oil and Gas	1973	48/24-1	Esso
<b>Seven Heads</b>	<b>Gas</b>	<b>In production</b>	<b>PSE Seven Heads</b>	<b>1973</b>	<b>48/24-1</b>	<b>Esso</b>
<b>Kinsale Head</b>	<b>Gas</b>	<b>In production</b>	<b>PSE Kinsale Energy</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>48/25-2</b>	<b>Marathon</b>
Dowra	Gas	Not in licensed acreage		1963	Dowra-1	Ambassador Irish Oil Company

Key Discoveries Offshore and Onshore Ireland (Fields that are producing or undergoing development are highlighted in Bold)

## **Reflections on the Rossport Solidarity Camp**

### **Introduction**

The camp was set up in 2005 on a bog in Rossport. It started off as a place for people to stay & support the families of the Rossport 5 who were in jail at the time. In 2006 it moved to a drier & more permanent place amongst the dunes of Glengad. A magical place to live, the camp strove to be as ecological as possible so as to minimise any impact on the fragile Machair dune system. A wood cabin was set up as the communal area & benders-structures made of hazel poles & tarpaulin were erected. This camp became a base for the following 18 months until it was evicted by the council; ironically for its ecological impact. Whilst a real blow to the camp all was not lost as the Meenaghans kindly offered their family home as the permanent base for the camp. Since then the camp has been based there over the winter months & then chosen a strategic site each spring & summer. The three previous being in Glengad & this year at Aghoos.

The camp has no leaders; working non-hierarchically & making decisions using consensus. This means that we discuss issues until we have come to a decision that everyone is comfortable with.

There are a lot of domestic/site jobs that are essential to keep the camp running smoothly so everyone is asked to muck in with the cooking/cleaning/building work etc. We aspire to be as sustainable as possible in the way with live at the camp; composting or recycling our waste; using solar & wind energy for power & buying seasonal or local food whenever possible. The camp also works several gardens in the area providing fresh salad & veg for campers.

The camp supports all those in the community opposed to the Corrib gas project and is involved with the national & local Shell to Sea campaign whilst maintaining an autonomous identity. We strive to be an open & accessible place for people to visit & encourage people to fully participate in all decisions about the camp & actions against Shell. It has become somewhat of a training ground in direct action & practical skills. It is a great place of learning; politics, practical skills, interpersonal dynamics.

### **Who are the Campers?**

People visit the camp from all sorts of backgrounds. There are trained carpenters & electricians, cooks, carers & artist, graduates in engineering, ecology, sociology. Some left school at 14, some have PhD's. There are those who prefer to hold intellectual debates over the dinner table & those who would prefer to build some shelving! There are people who would call themselves socialists, anarchists, communists, feminists, environmentalists. There are those who wish for no label.

People come from all over Ireland to support the campaign & from far flung corners of the globe. From Australia, Poland, the US & UK; people visit because of the inspiring community-led resistance here in Erris. Links between different campaigns blossom here & we all learn from one another of the parallel stories of state oppression & corporate control.

There are varying reasons why people come to Erris to support the campaign. Concern over:

- The appalling abuse of human rights over the last 10 years of the people of Erris
- The ecological threat to this highly protected area with regards to habitat destruction & pollution
- The blatant give away of Irish natural resources especially at a time of economic crisis
- The excavation of a fossil fuel & its subsequent contribution to CO2 emissions & the devastating impact of climate change
- The industrialisation of the West of Ireland
- Corporate control over resources & community decision making

The common thread is to stop Shell from pushing forward with this project. People are drawn here by the windswept beach of Glengad, the mountains & bog; the defiant local community with their warmth, humour & steadfast resilience. The chance to help fight a multi-national such as Shell & to be a part of front-line climate activism: stopping a fossil fuel leaving the ground. These are all reasons why people come to the camp & why ultimately they stay & keep returning. Niall King once said “the passion for this place is like a true love” & that resonates with many campers.

### **Politics of Direct Action**

The camp supports the use of direct action as one of many tools fighting this project. Whilst also supporting legal battles, attending oral hearings, lobbying & many other tactics the predominant tactic used currently by the camp is that of direct action.

### **WHY?**

This struggle has seen the system take sides with Shell. Whilst political parties, the gardai, the courts & the mainstream media all seem to work hand in hand with Shell what is left but to try to physically stop the project ourselves? All over the world corporations & governments work together to crush local community dissent; people have consistently been let down by party politics & the legal system & respond by taking action themselves.

When faced with fighting the system many believe that we will never win by fighting within that system & only by making the struggle outside the current status quo can we truly resist. This is direct action's strength. For some this grass roots people power is part of a wider political strategy of resisting capitalism & those systems that support it. Direct action has been used the world over throughout history to bring about radical social change. The Zapatistas in Mexico fighting for indigenous rights over their lands & resources, Indian peasants resisting GM crops, anti-war campaigners smashing planes & arms factories, the civil rights movement in the US, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa & the suffragettes demanding female emancipation. All are chapters in the history of direct action & are stories of normal women & men rising up resisting.

The way we resist is also as important as resisting itself. Challenging hierarchies whether they be patriarchy or class or race privilege is essential to the process of resistance. Whilst fighting the dominant powers that are creating a world where capital comes before human rights or ecological survival we wish to not recreate those hierarchies within our own communities & struggles.

Many at the camp wish to see radical social change; a society based on mutual aid & co-operation not one based on profit. If there is any hope of radical social change it is dependent on people with different life experiences, and perspectives, being able to come together to share ideas, find common ground and collectively work out solutions of new ways to live; it will not happen in an activist ghetto. It is a common thread in history that during periods of upheaval, times when life can no longer continue as usual, that long established world views are turned upside down. The realisation that government and religious institutions cannot be depended on for support is often paralleled by an increased reliance on friends, family and community, and the benefits of mutual aid, co-operation and solidarity are discovered experientially. These realisations are often the 'side effects' of taking direct action and are certainly borne out here both on the camp & within the community.

Direct action isn't a tool to be used by an elite squad of "professional activists". Whilst at times the camp can be guilty of giving that impression with young people running up tripods & clambering on diggers we are over-awed by the refinery blockades of 2005-2007, with the images of local people blockading the road on a cold winters morning day after day. When direct action becomes a profession it loses its meaning. It's a tool for the masses of any age, mobility and sentiment and this campaign has proved that over the many years of struggle.

### **Solidarity**

Working in solidarity means different things to different people. In 2008 several people were asked what their perceptions of solidarity were. Here are some of the replies:

"To act in solidarity is to recognise your own struggle as part of a wider one; to join the dots so that you can act in someone else's struggle or they yours, in the knowledge that both parties interests are essentially the same."

"Solidarity is acting with shared interest, or parallel interest. It is an expression or even definition, of community and community is something that can exist over any geography if there is enough suitable common ground."

"Solidarity is very different from charity or simply helping. It's not about acting on behalf of others, it's about working with them . It isn't about total unity of beliefs but it is about finding enough common ground to enable collective action"

So for many at the camp working in solidarity with this community is part of a much wider battle; -the struggle against a system based on the endless pursuit of profit at the expense of people & ecologies across the globe.

This community inspires people from all over the world. Erris is a place where community struggle combines with the fight for control over natural resources, ecological survival & resistance to the power of capital over people & place. The campers are indebted to the local community for their hospitality & spirit of resistance. We have learnt so much from all of you. Thank you.

## **EPA AND AN BORD PLEANALA PROCEDURES ARE IN BREACH OF EU COURT OF JUSTICE RULING**

The EU Court of Justice recently ruled that Ireland, by separating the decision-making process between the Planning Authority and Environmental Protection Agency, is acting in contravention of EU Law.

In the aftermath of this EU Court of Justice ruling, An Bord Pleanala finally rejected the long fought Ringaskiddy Incinerator Application. This project had been contested with immense energy and resources over the same period as the Corrib project has been in contention. This outcome signifies a major change in official thinking.

For example at the last Bord Pleanala Oral Hearing, vigorous attempts to have environmental effects of the pipeline/umbilical questioned were disallowed by the Chairman on the basis that such matters belonged exclusively and separately to the EPA. This position was trenchantly re-iterated by counsel for SEPIL, who repeatedly interrupted when questions relating to environmental issues were raised. He specifically stated, on the record, that the EPA and An Bord Pleanala were two completely separate decision-making bodies. This is precisely what the EU Court ruling has judged to be in breach of EU law.

As early as 2005, we pointed out in both written and oral submissions to the EPA that they were in breach of the EU IPPC Directive 96/61/EC which requires that a fully co-ordinated and integrated approach by all authorities *must* be followed where more than one competent authority is involved. This point was made a central issue in our 2008 High Court challenge to the EPA grant of Licence where it was stated both by affidavit and in presentations to the Court. That challenge was foiled only because the Court refused to grant 'Protection against Costs'.

The Ringaskiddy group managed to surmount that barrier despite costs and to unmask the subversion of EU Directives in transposing them into Irish law. There is every reason to believe that their success could have been our success since so many of the fundamental issues were common to both cases and Ireland's record of compliance with EU legislation has so often been discredited by Rulings of the EU Court of Justice.

What is relevant now in light of those developments is that Decisions of both the EPA and An Bord Pleanala still remain in the balance as neither has yet achieved full or final conclusion. On these grounds there is every reason to re-double efforts to get the message spread far and wide that we were denied fair and proper hearing of our case throughout the whole appeals process. This has been placed beyond doubt by the implications of the Ringaskiddy Ruling from the EU Court of Justice.

Imelda Moran

**“May Dawn become life-giving, and Dusk have the promise of renewed life, our gift from the Sun”**

**“Once the photograph of Earth, taken from the outside, is available ... a new idea as powerful as any in history will be set loose.”**

When the astronauts went to the Moon, and looked back and saw Earth haloed in blue, in all its delicacy, elegance, fragility, and beauty, they encountered the Divine in a way never experienced before. The vision of a distant, beautiful, vulnerable home planet has forever altered their consciousness of themselves, of Earth, and of our place in the cosmos. The images and their accompanying texts shared by them with the world, portray the bond between Earth and its inhabitants, the personal relationship suddenly realised, with all life on this amazing planet. They realised in a profound way that they were inhabitants of Earth, with a responsibility to preserve the only planet we have. We too are entranced with our beautiful planet in Mayo, where our whole being is nourished and nurtured. Our ancestors have bequeathed it to us. They preserved and enhanced its integrity – that is their only footprint. They lived in a neighbourhood, not just of those who lived next door, but of the dead who bequeathed place to the living, and of the unborn whom the living will in turn, bequeath. We, the present generation, will not be found wanting in our responsibility. We too will preserve their inheritance in its integrity.

Human presence on planet Earth is the single greatest issue in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The human has become a profoundly disturbing presence throughout the entire planet. The human community is terminating 65 million years in the biological history of the planet. The changes presently taking place in human and earthly affairs are far beyond any parallel with historical changes that have occurred in the past. These changes stretch into the biosystems and geological structures of the planet itself. We are in the terminal phase of the Cenozoic Era: the last 65 million year period, the time in which the full flowering of all species in their glorious splendour is present on Earth. During the Cenozoic Era, the wonderful variety of life that evolved became possible when Earth discovered a way to store immense quantities of carbon in the petroleum and coal deposits in the ground, and also in the great forests. This process was worked out over millions of years, until a balance was achieved, and the life systems of the planet were secure in the interaction of the air, the water, and the soil with the energy flowing in from the Sun.

It is imperative that we understand the nature and the extent of what is happening. In just a few centuries, we have created a toxic wasteworld, and destroyed an ever-renewing wonderworld. Unaware of what we were doing, or the order of its magnitude, we have thought our achievements to be of enormous benefit for the human process, but we now find that we have disturbed the biosystems of the planet at the most basic level of their functioning. We discover that we have disturbed the chemical composition of the air, water, and soil to an extent that has affected the entire network of organic life on the planet. The ozone layer protecting the organic forms of Earth from the ultraviolet rays of the sun have been weakened. The tropical rain forests have become largely destroyed. Vast regions of our oceans are becoming commercially extinct. The residue of burning fossil fuels has led to an excessive amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere and is causing climate change, and the acidification of the oceans. The extinction of species is happening at a rate and on a scale, never experienced on the planet before.

The modern age was made possible by the freeing and the cheapening of energy taken out of the ground. Through the use of cheap energy, and developing technologies, we began to experience the transition from an organic economy to an extractive economy. We paid little attention to the consequences of basing the entire functioning of the human community on an extractive economy, which by its very nature is a terminal economy, whereas an organic economy is by its nature an ever-renewing economy. We have established a way of life dependent on extracting non-renewing substances from Earth. We can survive only as long as these endure, or, as long as the organic functioning of the planet is not overwhelmed by the violent intrusion involved in extracting and transforming these substances.

In the world of today, our human economy “requires” growth because it only functions well when it is growing. Much of the world is now chained to and operating on a debt-based monetary system that requires not only exponential growth, but **perpetual** exponential growth, to operate. Our industrial economy insists on operating as if no physical limits exist. And the entire globe is involved! Are governments in denial that the industrial world, as it functions presently, is known to be definitively bankrupt? The present recession is a planetary

recession. Earth cannot sustain, or, endure our present human economy in its devastating mode for much longer. The industrial economy that we have created is over. Mitigating, reducing, limiting, does nothing. The human economy is a subsystem of Earth's economy. To think that we can have a viable human economy by destroying Earth's economy is absurd. We need to accept that the human economy is as dependent on Earth as much as a baby in the womb. Everything we have is derivative from the larger community out of which we have come, and in which we are fulfilled.

The biblical Creation Story is no longer adequate to explain the world, or, how we should function in it. The perilous condition of planet Earth is a clear indication that human activities are not fitting in with how Earth functions. All of our major institutions are living out of this paradigm that is both dysfunctional and destructive, but they do not know it! They do not notice a predatory economy that has ravaged the planet, destroyed its natural beauty and health, divided and plundered its communities – human and other than human. To designate human plundering of the planet as “progress” is an unbearable distortion. The human has come to believe that it is a superior form of life, and that Earth and other forms of life were created for its use and benefit. Consequently, the human has bestowed all rights on itself, with no inherent rights or value for Earth or other forms of life, except through their use by the human. We are in trouble because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. We urgently need a story which reflects how Earth functions, and provides a context for all human activities.

A new origin story, the Universe Story, has been emerging through scientific explorations and discoveries. It tells how the Universe came to be, how planet Earth emerged from it, how our planet came to life, and how in the human, it reflects on, and celebrates itself in conscious self-awareness. The new Origin Story establishes a comprehensive context for all human activities, activities by which the human community can move our modern industrial civilisation from its devastating influence on the planet to a more benign human presence, to an era when humans will be a beneficial presence on Earth, and when Earth's comprehensive community is recognised and accepted as the greater reality and the greater value, not the human.

The Universe is a creative, emergent, evolutionary reality that has developed from the time of the primordial flaring forth, and is still developing, through a sequence of irreversible transformations. As a whole, it is an interactive community of beings inseparably related in space and time. **It is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.** It is bonded together in an absolute and unbreakable community. Every being has its own form, its own spontaneity, its own voice, its own role, its own ability to declare itself, and to be present to other components of the Universe in a subject-to-subject relationship. This is true of every being in the Universe, and it is especially true of each component member of Earth's community. Each component is integral with every other component. It is equally true of the living beings of Earth in their relationships with each other.

For the very first time it is dawning on human consciousness that Earth is part of an irreversible developmental sequence of time. **Earth exists, and can survive, only in its integral functioning.** It cannot survive in fragments any more than any organism can survive in fragments. Earth governs in a manner such that its bounteous gifts are shared among all members of the community. All rights of all species, both individually and collectively, are relative and limited. All of life, individually and collectively, lives within absolute limits. Earth has so much, and no more, just enough! All live in a community, and all cooperate. Everything is turned into food, so there is enough for all. Nothing is wasted! Nothing is used faster than Earth can replenish it. Life gives to the future, by never taking more in its generation than it gives back to the next. Earth governs! We rejoice because we have been born into a world of self-maintaining abundance, and incredible beauty. We are fulfilled! Like all other species, we cannot live harmlessly, or strictly at our own expense. To live we too depend upon other living beings, and survive by their death. We break the body, and shed the blood of Earth. When we do this knowingly, lovingly, skilfully, reverently, it is a sacrament. When we do it ignorantly, greedily, clumsily, destructively, it is a desecration. In such desecration, we condemn others to want. Earth is for life!

**Earth is a one-time endowment in the unfolding story of the Universe.** We do not know the quantum of energy contained in Earth, its possibilities, or, its limitations. It is subject to irreversible damage in the major patterns of its functioning, and even to distortions in its possibilities of development. Although there has been survival and further development after the great extinctions at the end of other eras, life was not so highly developed then as it is now. The conditions of life at those times were not negated by such changes as we have brought about by our toxification of the planet. The planet that ruled itself directly over these past millennia is now determining its future largely through human decision.

**Earth is primary, and humans are derivative.** The present distorted view is that humans are primary, and Earth and its integral functioning only a secondary consideration. In the Ecozoic Era, the primary concern of the human community becomes the preservation and enhancement of this comprehensive community, even for the sake of its own survival. Earth must become the primary concern of every human institution, profession, programme, and activity. Earth can survive without the human species, but the human cannot survive, let alone thrive apart from Earth's community.

**There is a single Earth community.** The human, or, the human community, is not separate from, or superior to Earth, or other members, or species, of the life community. The human community and the natural world will go forward together as a single integral community, or, both will experience disaster on the way. There is one integral Earth community. All is sacred! All is one!

In the light of the Universe Story/New Paradigm, it is abundantly clear that the proposed Corrib gas project – a project for the exclusive benefit of the human – does not fit in with how Earth functions. In pursuing this project, the government is making the human world primary, and the natural world secondary. It is not about enhancing Earth and Earth's community in this sacred place. It would seem that our politicians have no understanding of how Earth functions, or, why Earth stored carbon compounds in the ground in the first place. They are determined to extract more and more fossil fuels from the ground, regardless of the consequences for the health and peace of the planet and its life community, including the North Mayo community. To disturb the village lives of a people living in peace and harmony all their lives, by inflicting on them a project like the proposed Corrib Gas Project, is to impoverish rather than to enrich them. If this proposed project is given the green light, these people will be entering a new and indefinite all-pervasive anxiety, and they will be condemned to breathing an atmosphere less refreshing, and drinking water less wholesome. It will serve as a monument to human arrogance, and a visible monstrous expression of reckless and irresponsible governance, of the oppression of its citizens, and of dominance over the natural "resources" of Earth. It also clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of European law. The profiteering corporation, Shell, does not hesitate at the destruction of a person's life as it is, and as it desires to be, or, the life of a family, or, the life of a community. Nobody, or, nothing may be spared. How different life would be on Earth in this place, if both corporation and government came to enhance the great community of life in this beautiful region! If they had responded to the grandeur and integrity of woodlands, the lakes and rivers, the mountains and valleys, and the vastness of the ocean, with the reverence and wonder that is appropriate, how different that would be! They might have learned something of the spirituality of this place and people, and about value, and lasting. Sadly, they had none of the reverence or aesthetic appreciation due to this place, or, its community. Instead, government came, armed with an inadequate, dysfunctional, and destructive "Bunreacht na hEireann", as their primary referent for reality and value, as if the Bunreacht in its present form is justification for imposition of this project where it is not wanted. Bunreacht na hEireann is a disaster for everything that is not human. With our present Bunreacht, there is no restriction on what government, or, people can own, or what they do with what they own. In the absence of legal protection for anything that is not human in our Constitution, we have established a predatory relationship. Such is Catholic Ireland's respect for God's Creation. Humans in this country are just devouring everything, because that is what the Constitution stands for – for humans to devour, to manipulate, to use, not to commune. Whereas placed people obey the deeper laws of place, laws written in the stones, the wind, the water, and in their own hearts. They recognise and acknowledge the Covenant of the Universe, which supersedes all anthropocentric oriented constitutions. The question of whom placed people can trust has taken over the consciousness of the community in a new way. This is happening at a time when we need to create the basis on which an enduring confidence can exist within communities, and between communities and Government, local and central. The very opposite is happening for the people of North Mayo.

A viable future for the human communities rests largely upon a return to the mystique of Earth, and a new relationship between the human communities and the planet on which we dwell. We must stand for our place – land/soil, air, water, community – and protect and defend its integrity. We are answerable to the paradox of the parable of the lost sheep: that the endangered place is more precious than all the rest. There is no "trading off"!



## Gas for Grief and Friction

Let us begin with a quote found by accident. A sentiment simple and true, and penned with no ego and no name. Written on a wall near the battle lines. Begging the eye to read.

“It isn’t by accident that this adventure begins where and when it does at Lath na Athnann at a time when the peoples are fighting for the soul of the country, one people seeking to turn it into a human convenience, the other finding fulfillment in being of one mind with the wind and the sun”

And here is another quote, something woven out of Indian wisdom. Patches to make a quilt of indignation.

Poncas of Indian Territory learned a bitter lesson  
White man’s law was an illusion  
Did not apply to them

The Indian who spoke those words is dead. Like those who died at Wounded Knee he is happy in his hunting paradise. He will bless one who as a child was inspired by reading in comics of wigwams and war paint and was made to believe the whites were the good guys.

The Indians of the Yukon could not understand the white man’s rush and lust for gold. In their hunting fishing culture gold had no functional value like salmon and arrows and horses. Micí MacGabhann from Donegal fell ill on route to the dig and was deserted by his “friends”. But for local Indians who nursed him back to health with herbs he might have died. As it was he lived to write Rothaí Mór an tSaol (The Hard Road to Klondyke). Better than the book was the lesson learned. The incalculable value of true friends.

Wind will separate the chaff and grain.  
It takes a wise head to separate friends and pretenders.  
A good enemy is better than a bad friend.

Some weeks ago we heard this from ministers.

The memorandum of understanding.  
Not a great longevity in our horizon.  
The stress test mechanism  
is rather conservative.  
Fiscally neutral.  
Subsequent adjustments.

Polysyllables (such as these) remind us of a moment in a story by William Carlton. The bishop is calling to the writer’s home and the father calls in the scholar of the family to address the dignitary not in Gaelic but in the language of Dickens. This was to impress. Gaelic wasn’t good enough. A beautiful simple language. Words of few syllables. The language in which his mother sang. The more English syllables the better. Why use two when ten will do.

Ministers today are wheeled out for reasons not dissimilar. Polysyllables used to impress back then are still being used today. Not to communicate but to confuse. The longer the word the vaguer the meaning. **You realize that language itself is groomed and used not to convey meaning but to muddy and muddle. Language to dupe. Words to confuse and bewilder.**

**Some may recall the Gaelic aspiration on the title page of The Irish Press. Do chum Glóire Dé agus onóra na hÉireann. God’s glory has no bond value and Irish honour has been sold to the highest bidder. These people are not national leaders but auctioneers who have auctioned off**

**our spoons and sovereignty.**

**We can be great again but not under this leadership. Installed with so much hope and regarded with so much despair. Have they forgotten the meitheal? Save our hay and we'll win your turf. No greed or grubby money entered it.**

There is a song where the boy asks 'What colour is the wind Daddy?' Soon, the father should have explained, soon the wind may be dirty and dangerous. Unfit to breathe. An asthma carrier son. Dirty, son, so dirty it may wrap the stars in a dirty, contaminated blanket. And what then will fishermen do who sail by the Plough and the Hunter's Belt? What then will we who are star inspired do for inspiration? Without their mystery, their mythology, their mind extending remoteness. We need another song. An album of wake up songs to warn the world of chimneys that flare unnecessary flame. Shrouding those eye-delighting sparks of light that hurtle towards this polluted planet. At each others' throats like dogs fighting over a bone.

So where does Erris go from here to put the brakes on this madness? We are big time on the world radar now.

**We may need gas to cook  
But not a gas to cook us.**

Crocodile tears will be no use then. Or mass cards or requiems except to help the burnt and crippled into Paradise to join the Indians of Bhopal and Wounded Knee.

Let us make verses out of Shell's atrocious history. Thank you author Doyle. Bless you Jack. Please update your book. You are a prophet of our money grubbing times. In a climate of blasts and spillages your book is saving lives. Awareness is all. No not all but enough for the moment as we think our way through this unwanted affliction. We who fish and farm and have taken to prayer. We who have asked Our Lady for special protection. We who watch our children grow and fear for their future.

We share with American Indians the fear of the influx. Remember Dances with Wolves? Ireland is no stranger to such influxes in the past. To get their profit they would blast our culture and us like blasting quarry stones. We are an inconvenience. We are in the way. They looked at a map and saw we are remote, abandoned. No serious political clout.

Did they miscalculate? Did they overlook people grit, stubborn character? Against such clout and power how can this abandoned community win? Some will go another 10 years and more. Whatever it takes. This is not a role we asked for. This is a role of resistance forced on us. And why? Because the salaried politicians we elected have thrown us to the sharks. This is what should be on the Abbey Stage. The story of a people under siege. In serious danger.

**Gas for whom? It may be for us  
But a life or a crippled limb is too high a price.  
Gas for what? Gas for profit and grief.  
Gas and flaring snuff those candle stars.  
Songs and indignation won't stop Shell.  
They can plant their dangerous bomb  
And leave the danger zone  
And cry their crocodile tears if something explodes  
And make a limping promise  
To improve their vigils and locks.  
Men who need never visit  
Our shores our fields our rocks**

**Do you hear the water that dances?  
Do you hear its musical tune?  
Or see the surf that will darken  
Should gas be followed by oil  
The dreaded fish killing oil  
That turned the Niger Delta  
Into a zone of war  
And murdered Ken Saro-Wiwa.  
His doom laden words live on  
Like something uttered by Emmet  
Before he met his Maker.**

Pearse had a huge affection for Connaught the province which inspired his poem The Wayfarer. It's a poem of rabbits in the field and children playing on the shore. Did Pearse the poet have a premonition of this threat?

**Children not allowed out to play  
On beloved fields beloved bay  
Strangers foreign to these parts  
Invade them rudely with their snaps.**

**The gas is surely for them  
At study school or playground game  
It's not for those who kneel and pray  
Within earshot of the bay**

**Leitrim county split in two  
By Allen next it will be you.  
To get the gas a pipe they'll sink  
And poison what you'll boil and drink.**

There was a time in the history of Tara when the rest of Ireland ganged up against Na Fianna and the latter lost. A battle of shields and spears. They fell and were buried where they fell. Their storied bones now covered with modern tar. They had a code of honour, Beart agus Briathar. Their word was their bond. No U turns for them, no broken promises. Their heroic deeds will never die. This crack troop took their duties seriously. And like Pearse fighting for their principles they died.

They destroyed a henge at Lismullin  
An ancient alignment with stars  
A white mare galloped there  
In that valley of battle and water  
And the Fianna kissed the turf there  
When Gowra ended their era.

It will take more than tar to cover this story. Locals are being asked to live beside a dragon that belches flames and contaminated air. Abandoned utterly by men, some of whom like an Taoiseach and an Táiniste and resources minister were born in the west. Left to solve this for themselves by people who in 2016 will invoke Pearse in their speeches and the Proclamation without asking themselves what would Pearse think of **them?**

Why are they so disloyal  
To their roots and origins  
Who against the people's wishes  
Allow the warring Yankees  
Eavesdrop and fly into Shannon?

Some of the children born into this, had this inflicted on them. Like children born in a war not of their making they have never known a day's peace. This gas is not for them.

There was a day a thousand years ago before Erris became a barony when something rare happened on the north coast of Mayo. Thinking locals would buckle, a longship landed. Danes or Vikings looking for loot. Visitors dreaded when the summer seas were calm. The story goes that the locals gathered and put feet to them.

Some things are wrong they may have said  
We don't have much they may have said  
But what we have we hold.  
You'll find no easy pickings here  
They may have said.

What more do they have today? We have the athann, the furze. We still have the genes of those far off stubborn, territorial people. The would-be fleecers took off leaving the locals to their turf and tides. To the wind, to the seasons and the sun. a story of resistance remembered and passed down. **This has been repeated in our time.**

**Others will enjoy the profits of this gas  
Locals will live with the danger.**

**NB**

The book referred to, **Riding the Dragon by Jack Doyle**, is a publication of the Environmental Health Fund, Boston Massachusetts which catalogues Shell maintenance neglect from 1947 to 2002. A book of serious revelations. With a whole series of revelations covering the last ten years waiting to be added. Not available here.

Padraic MacCana

## O For A Rapper

O for a rapper boy or girl	Sing of the pipe and greedy men	To speak in truth on our behalf
To sing this story to the world	Who have no feel for bay and glen.	A joke a jest a lie a laugh.
And around the world the truth would go		
What they are doing in Mayo.	Far Alaska and the Cape	Yeats should be alive today
	Sruwaddacon now they want to rape	Davit Pearse and Gregory
	Rosspport Durban hand in hand	And Raftery who fiddled his airs
They did it in Los Angeles	Sure if it blows it will be grand.	To empty pockets at the fairs.
They'll do it here just as they please		
If we all stand by and let them sink		With a bowl to beg we go
This tunnel this infernal link	Even if they build it deep	To Germany and France for dough
	This tunnel will deprive us sleep	While round us in the Irish seas
Essex England Mexico	Who wants to live and work close by	There's more than enough to fund our fees.
Honolulu Ohio	A ticking bomb to blow sky high?	
Michigan Nigeria		
Brunei California.	There are more important things on earth	If this could be extracted clean
	Than stocks and shares and coins and cash	Why we would all ecstatic be
Indiana Illinois	And those who sold us down the Bay	Instead of which they threaten us
Mississippi and Marseilles	Who took the bribes and walked away.	With dangerous untreated gas.
Washington and Lyons France		
San Francisco Geelong Oz.	Those in Europe all agree	Gas that we may never burn
	We have the most corrupt MP's	Gas for export that's our own
To think they want to add Aughoose	By far the Irish top the league	Or if we burn it it we will cost
Rappers help us this announce	For cronyism and intrigue.	A leg an arm an oven roast.
Pollatomish and Glengad		
And Bellanaboy is very sad.	So much expected of this crew	A meteor it might take that
	We put in power you and you	To rectify a world gone mad
O for a rapper who would sing		Where all our pillars strong and stout
And loudly to the world this bring		Have shut the poor and suffering out.