

PEOPLES' FORUM 07 JULY 2012

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ERRIS
Reports and Reportage

VENUE: INVER COMMUNITY CENTRE 07 JULY 2012

The Corrib Gas saga, now in its 12th year, continues to raise issues of democratic concern in the proposed receiving environment but not unfortunately within a wider discourse. This session of the Peoples' Forum examines the human rights issues raised by the continuance of this project with emphasis on the local experience, reports by human rights observers and the reportage of the issue by mainstream media.

SPEAKERS: DÓNAL Ó MEARÁIN, Table Observers; BETTY SHULT, Local Resident; WILLIAM HEDERMAN, Freelance Journalist.

RESPONDERS: Mayo Media representatives.

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 07 JULY

10-10.30 REGISTRATION, INTRODUCTION

10.30-11.30 SPEAKERS' PRESENTATIONS

11.30-11.45 Break

11.45-12.30 Reportage response

12.30-1.30 LUNCH

1.30-4.30 OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION.

CHAIR: ANDY STOREY UCD

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ACCOMMODATION:

Kilcommon Lodge Holiday Hostel B&B 097 84621

McGrath's Pub B&B 097 84626

INTRODUCTION

It is an accepted fact that, in the 12th year of the Shell/Corrib debacle, there are human rights issues to be considered. The popular image of human rights infringements in Erris is possibly that of the police baton charge on a country road on 10th November 2006 but, as with many aspects of Shell/Corrib the reality goes deeper and shows – increasingly over the years – that, approaching the centenary of 1916, we live in a dismal, failed state.

As the years have gone by – each one progressively worse than the previous – one can begin to chart the pattern which has led to this forum discussion. Twelve years ago in Erris, ‘human rights’ were in inverted commas and belonged in faraway places whose populations generally had different skin colours – how little we knew!

I believe the fault-line which began this descent lies with the so-called planning process – planning law was, to a large degree, drafted in the hospitality tent at the Galway Races; designed as a legal ‘tick box’ exercise which ignores any considerations other than those of the prevailing hegemony of the day. Social, cultural, environmental, spiritual, philosophical views are dismissed with a sneer by non-elected, non-accountable County Managers, Secretaries and An Bord Pleanála inspectors (Senior Inspector Kevin Moore the honourable exception) and board members. In the case of Shell/Corrib economic considerations are infantile and consist of repeating the mantra ‘jobs are good’ and ‘we need the gas’; the fact that giving away a country’s natural resources with no consideration of the common good is a perpetration of human rights abuse against this and future generations does not form part of mainstream discourse. Specific abuses over the years include no local consultation from the outset, the denial of a second Oral Hearing by ABP following the September 2003 meeting between Shell and Bertie Ahern, the stitch up by Peter Cassells, the state intervention on behalf of Shell in 2006 when the 15 month peaceful blockade of the Ballinaboy refinery site was smashed, the complete lockdown of the area in 2009 when the *Solitaire* returned which included the unlawful but effective impounding of Pat The Chief O’Donnell’s and his son Jonathan’s fishing boats for the duration of the *Solitaire*’s inshore operations, the APB planning ‘condition’ of an €8.5 million Shell slush fund to be apportioned by Mayo County Council and, most recently, An Taisce’s shameful behaviour in harnessing the good will of, and substantial monetary contributions from the proposed receiving community and others only to reach an arrangement with the state without any further consultation with those whose goodwill (and money) they squandered. Given the above – to which may be added a fawning government and civil service which transferred its sycophantic allegiance from a disgraced church to rampant corporations – feral police behaviour and occupation by a mercenary private security force is an inevitable consequence.

With regard to the Fourth Estate one could paraphrase Wilde and say that, with very few exceptions, they went from a state of ignorance to indifference with no intervening period of information. The role of mainstream media in Shell/Corrib could most charitably be described as pathetic. Readers of weekly regional papers are familiar with regular pieces of court reporting very often under colourful headings. In February this year a five day special court hearing took place in Belmullet where 19 defendants were arraigned – not ONE

reporter was present on any of those days despite prior notice. In May two defendants were before the Circuit Court in Castlebar; one through election for trial by jury on a spurious theft charge, the other on a full appeal of a spurious District Court criminal damage conviction. In open court the defence barrister in the appeal case put it to the guard giving evidence that he had committed perjury in the District Court and again that day in the Circuit Court. Only one of the two cases was reported – ‘Maura Harrington’s son cleared of stealing security radio’ (Mayo News); there was no space given in any paper for the heading ‘Garda accused of perjury’.

It is regrettable that, despite timely invitation there are no speakers attending from the Corrib Monitoring Initiative (Frontline Defenders/Amnesty Ireland) or from the Irish Centre for Human Rights. The following was received by email 04 July 2012 from the former under the heading ‘Line for your publication’ –

"The Corrib Monitoring Initiative - which was run by Front Line Defenders and Amnesty International Ireland - will publish its findings in August. Representatives of the Initiative will meet with the community groups in advance of the publication to discuss the report."

The value of the work done consistently and competently by *Table* over the years cannot be overstated. *Table* consists of four citizens who have given their time and effort with great generosity. To date three *Table* reports have issued, in 2009, 2010 and 2012. The content of these reports should not be underestimated just because they are presented in simple format and run to no more than a few pages; the monitoring, research and recording which underpin each report has, without doubt, done the state some service - should said state have the integrity to pay heed. These reports are included in this booklet and form a valuable part of the ongoing recording of all that is rotten around the proposed Shell/Corrib project.

This forum date marks the 16th anniversary of my father John Harrington’s death RIP. It was of him I thought in the early morning of 03 October 2006 looking out from the police corral at Ballinaboy following a night of noise and menace. When a date, time and place is seared in one’s memory then one’s own and others’ human rights – not to mention the right of Place to its continued integrity – is in jeopardy.

I wish to record my sincere thanks to the presenters and participants in this forum and a special thanks to Andy Storey as an able Chair of proceedings.

The fate of the proposed Shell/Corrib project remains to be determined and will, le cúnamh Dé, be determined by people of integrity rather than by false prophets of profit.

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

Maura Harrington July 2012

Table and the role of the observer **Dónall Ó Mearáin**

The Table Observers is a citizens' initiative which carries out observations in the parish of Kilcommon and at court hearings in the context of the Corrib gas project. The group is currently made up of four active members. The observation activity is with a view to ensuring that the state lives up to its human rights commitments under the various treaties and agreements to which it is a party.

A group by the name of Table (the name, by the way, symbolises the possibility of dialogue as an alternative to physical confrontation and, by implication/extension, a human-rights-based approach to conflicts) came into existence in response to a call from Afri for a civic engagement in conflict resolution and justice in the Northern conflict. By the mid-1990s the group had taken on the role of observer at points of confrontation over Orange parades and was submitting frequent reports to the Department of Foreign Affairs. This presence was greatly appreciated by the local people and set the stage for the involvement of other groups with similar objectives. Sr Majella McCarron was involved in this and some years later brought the idea back to life under the same name. Majella had spent thirty years in Nigeria and had accumulated a great deal of experience of the conflict in the Niger Delta between the Ogoni people on the one hand and the Nigerian government and Shell on the other. She saw some similar themes in the growing controversy in Mayo. Faced with considerable anecdotal and audio-visual evidence of violence and intimidation against local people here opposed to the project, she saw the necessity of having observers in the area and gathered a small group of volunteers for the task. Table carried out its first observation in the area in June 2009 during the Solitaire's pipe-laying activity and published its first report two months later.

Observers may have two sets of aims and see two roles for themselves. One is to witness and report events with a view to establishing the truth and thereby influencing subsequent behaviour. The other is to prevent abuses by their presence. In the latter case, there is the hope that the aggressing party will feel constrained under the eyes of outsiders. Table's focus is mainly on the former. At the beginning of our engagement three years ago, Table set out to provide an objective and first-hand record and assessment of events; to respond to what we had seen by issuing reports set in a human-rights framework, comparing and contrasting the state's behaviour with its obligations under various human rights instruments; and to offer an independent and visible presence. Given our concerns about the policing of the issue, we set out to include in our record any Garda actions that we regarded as improper, unjustified or unwise. We have also given credit where Garda behaviour has improved or where individual Garda members displayed good sense or courtesy. A typical Table assignment covers a period of one to three days, if possible when some construction or protest activity is expected. We generally work in pairs or groups: it is a good thing to have the moral support of another observer and to be able to compare notes to help ensure accuracy. In what are potentially difficult or even dangerous situations, it can be difficult for the observer working alone to know what the best course of action is. Of course we are guided by a concept of the role of the observer and by some basic do's and don'ts, but there are times when one has to think fast and with a cool head, and at such times two heads are often better than one. We wear identification so that locals, protesters and the Garda or other state personnel know who we

are. We try in particular to observe interactions between local people and protesters on the one hand and the Garda Síochána and Shell or private security staff on the other. We aim to be visible and at the same time non-intrusive. Our aim, after all, is to witness and record events rather than to become part of them, although, if our presence has a beneficial effect on the spot that is an added benefit. It is difficult to judge whether our presence has an immediate beneficial effect in terms of the rights of the community and indeed whether our reports have influenced official policy or practice. It seems likely that such an impact would build up slowly after the repeated presence of observers has established itself in the minds of senior Garda officers and decision makers. Whatever role Observers play and whatever approach they take to their engagement, it is wise always to bear in mind the centrality and primacy of the impacted community. Outside groups and NGOs, not only in the field of observing, must accept that the community will find its own direction and create its own momentum.

As mentioned, Table's first observation took place in 2009. We have since then carried out a number of formal observations on the ground, with several other informal visits at shorter notice. In addition to on-the-ground observing, we attend sittings of the district and circuit court where cases relating to the Corrib project are being heard. Our most recent report deals with the special sitting of Belmullet District Court in February of this year and comments on the handling of the cases. We are also looking into the rules governing the private security industry as we have questions regarding the IRMS presence on the public roads and regarding allegations of assault against some of its staff.

It is crucial for observers to have a clear idea of what their role is in advance of their engagement in the process. While every observer will have his/her own views of the issues at the core of any given conflict, the observer when formally in this role must be impartial and objective. The suitable demeanour when in the role of observer is a civil and polite detachment from all parties. The observer must not identify openly with either side, nor behave in a way that undermines his/her credibility. This is a factor, for example, when deciding how to position oneself physically: too much time behind police lines or in the body of the protest could undermine trust. Impartiality in this sense does not imply an absence of solidarity: the act of observing, if done properly and followed by a candid and lucid report, is an act of solidarity, in this case with citizens who wish to use their right to peaceful protest free from fear.

Last year Table branched out into involvement with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. This is a procedure whereby UN member states answer questions from other states about the human rights situation in their respective jurisdictions. As part of the process, non-government organisations are invited to submit statements and questions which may be taken into account by states in formulating their questions to each other. None of the questions we submitted were adopted by the states questioning the Irish government, but the exercise was worthwhile. Two of our members went to Geneva for the government's appearance and got an insight into the workings of such events. We have used a more detailed version of these questions in a submission to members of the Oireachtas and hope to have some of them put to ministers in Dáil and Seanad questions. It is worth reprinting a section of the main part of our

submission here as it reflects many of the concerns that led to our engagement as observers in the first place.

THE TABLE OBSERVERS: THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONTENT OF THE CORRIB GAS PROJECT

Issue: Access to Justice and the Right to Peaceful Assembly

STATEMENT

Human rights workers have observed and recorded baton charges on community members, injuries sustained, arrests, jailing, and police joking about rape supported by an equally heavy-handed private security company. There has been an overall failure by the State to investigate numerous community complaints.

QUESTIONS

Can the State explain why a situation has continued for over ten years in which farmers, fisherman and teachers are being jailed, local women being intimidated by senior police officers who joke about raping them, local people suffering from physical injuries as a result of police action, judges in sentencing local people referring to them as 'bullies' or as mentally unstable in contexts where force is being used against them and they are placed in situations of extreme stress?

What measures has the State taken to investigate the abuse of police power? Specifically why did a Minister of Justice deny the Garda Ombudsman's request to initiate an investigation into the policing of the Corrib Gas Project?

RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed investigation by the Garda Ombudsman into the policing of the Corrib Gas Project should be carried out.

Table has not been the only organisation to send observers to Erris. In 2009 an observer from Afri, who had been present at the same time as our first mission, made a complaint to the Garda Ombudsman about an assault on him by members of the force. The incident highlighted the volatility of some of the situations an observer can be involved in and the disadvantage of being alone in such situations. In May of last year a full-time observer was sent by Amnesty International and Frontline in the wake of the publication of the Barrington report. She was present for six months and her report is being prepared at the moment. Elsewhere in Ireland, communities gathering to resist evictions have brought legal observers to ensure that bailiffs and the Guards behave in accordance with the law.

In fact what is striking is the number and range of observer and monitor groups around the world and the variety of approaches taken. Some of these function as part of the United Nations; others are substantial NGOs with public recognition, media access and funds for training; Table belongs in a third category, that of the small-scale citizens' initiative.

An approach which complements and sometimes overlaps with the role of observer is to accompany people in vulnerable communities as they go about everyday tasks or as they go about peaceful protest where they are likely to suffer intimidation or violence. Ecumenical Accompaniers, for example, is a body operated in Palestine by the World Council of Churches to “provide protective presence to vulnerable communities, monitor and report human rights abuses and support Palestinians and Israelis working together for peace”. Similarly, Peace Watch Colombia “has as its goal to contribute to the prevention of acts of violence. International accompaniment volunteers (human rights observers) are present in Colombian villages to protect the civil population from violence”. The idea of unarmed violence prevention and of accompanying vulnerable communities is a risky one for the volunteers involved but is an exciting development in the practical application of peaceful solidarity. An observers’ group closer to home which caught our attention is the Newham Monitoring Project, established in east London in 1980 to work with members of the black community “suffering racial discrimination/violence, police misconduct and civil rights issues”. In addition to their monitoring activities, they offer advocacy and advice, and operate a 24-hour helpline. They are part of the UK-based Police Monitoring Network.

In theory, the work of monitoring police compliance with the law could be done by the Ombudsman’s Office or some similar body. Quite apart from the criticisms of the Ombudsman’s handling of some Corrib-related complaints and in particular of the notorious comment that a tape containing evidence had been tampered with, there is another weakness: the shackles under which the Office operates. The Ombudsman’s request to the then Justice Minister Dermot Ahern to allow them to review the policing of the dispute was turned down and would likely meet the same response from the current minister. If the Ombudsman’s Office needs the Minister’s permission to carry out such a review, the body’s effectiveness and independence are severely limited. The legislation needs to be changed to take this decision away from government. The Ombudsman’s powerlessness and timidity make the need for independent scrutiny more urgent. Even if we had a functioning democracy with robust institutions serving the public without deference to other interests, there would always be a need for vigilance and, therefore, a role for groups independent of the state. In this state, indeed, where not only the Corrib debacle but bad planning elsewhere and the banking and economic collapse have laid bare the failure of one state institution after another to protect the public interest, there is clearly a role for independent scrutiny of the state’s planning, environmental, regulatory and human rights bodies as well as of policing. Where the media has failed in this role, citizens may have to organise themselves for the task.

It is difficult to gauge the impact of our activities in Erris and perhaps of observers in general but, whatever the impact, observing responds to the call on the citizen to bear witness and to offer this testimony to the wider society, and as such it is likely to continue in areas of conflict. As the world enters a period of unrest and those in power hierarchies resort increasingly to state or private coercion to overcome opposition, there is likely to be an ever greater call on the community to provide observers. There will therefore continue to be a role for such groups of citizens as Table and this role will continue to evolve in response to events.

Human Rights in Erris - Betty Schult

Article 1. of the Declaration of Human Rights

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Maura asked me to talk about 'Human Rights in Erris'. That is quite a challenge for me because I am not a born public speaker and also I'm very aware that I'm surrounded by real professionals people like Andy, Donal, William with a huge amount of knowledge and experience of the reality of Human Rights and Human Rights legislation internationally and specifically here in Ireland. They all have observed the reality on the ground here in Erris and also the reality in the courts for people who have been standing up for their fundamental rights. They are doing Trojan work as observers and reporters and doing it on a solid base of professional knowledge and experience. So I feel like a real blow in to the subject. But a lot has happened here right on our doorsteps that made me reflect on an issue that wasn't really an issue for most of us until the Corrib Gas project started to creep into our everyday lives. So this will be a more amateur and personal approach to the issue.

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I think it is important to be aware of the historical circumstances that brought about the Declaration of Human Rights. This was a time when globalisation, climate change, extinction of habitats and species were not on people's minds. Neither were peak oil or any thoughts of sustainability in development.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948, was the result of the experience of the Second World War. With the end of that war, and the creation of the United Nations, the international community vowed never again to allow atrocities like those of that conflict to happen again. World leaders decided to complement the UN Charter with a road map to guarantee the rights of every individual everywhere.

It was a time of immense trauma and equally immense hunger for progress.

The entire text of the UDHR, 30 articles, was composed in less than two years. The 30 articles define what was regarded as fundamental and inherent rights of every human, inalienable and equally applicable to everyone, Equality before

the law, protection of life and person, good name and property rights of every citizen, liberty, the right to express freely convictions and opinions, to form associations and unions, the right to bodily integrity, to health, education, the right to earn a livelihood, the protection of family, freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion were all recognized. Whatever our nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status, the international community made a commitment to uphold dignity and justice for all of us.

At a time when the world was divided into Eastern and Western blocks, finding a common ground on what should make the essence of the document proved to be a colossal task.

Hernán Santa Cruz of Chile, member of the drafting sub-Committee, wrote:

“I perceived clearly that I was participating in a truly significant historic event in which a consensus had been reached as to the supreme value of the human person, a value that did not originate in the decision of a worldly power, but rather in the fact of existing—which gave rise to the inalienable right to live free from want and oppression and to fully develop one’s personality. In the Great Hall...there was an atmosphere of genuine solidarity and brotherhood among men and women from all latitudes, the like of which I have not seen again in any international setting.”

10 years later I was born, growing up in peace, freedom and surrounded by prosperity. The dark shadows of the recent past were still very present in everyday life and also the fear of another world war, this one would be final I understood.

We learned about the Declaration of human rights at school, rights that were taken for granted at least by my generation and in our corner of the world. Breaches, abuses did exist, we knew well, but not here! We knew, there were countries and societies out there that did not fully enjoy these 'inherent rights' yet and some members of our own society also seemed to have been left out a little bit. But there were rapid changes all the time and seemingly endless possibilities and improvements in all areas.

And there were many good and wise people out there, reaching out for each other and working hard at building a world that would be safe and fair for all of us. All we needed to do is: contribute, participate, be responsible citizens and: enjoy!

Governments signed Human Rights into their constitutions, legislation was put in place to protect them, more and more aspects developed and there was awareness all around: student's rights, workers rights women's rights, children's rights, racial equality, they were all constantly fought for and manifested. An exciting and inspiring time!

I did not reflect very much on the state of human rights in my immediate surroundings, especially not in the Irish country side. Ireland was, as much as I knew, actually exemplary in enshrining, ratifying embracing and protecting human rights in its constitution and legislation.

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Looking at Erris

10 years ago:

The first time I was alerted was not when Energy Enterprise displayed their little matchbox refinery in the local pub or when our neighbour Gerald pulled up on his motorbike, loads of paperwork in the saddle pockets: 'this is huge, it's madness, we must not allow that to happen!' And I was not too worried either when our neighbours in Ballinaboy started to object to the plans for a gas refinery in their village.

Of course, if it was madness, if it was dangerous, if residents did not want it, it would not happen. After all there is a basic human right:

Article 3.

- Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
and

Article 21.

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

So, no worries there.

I got worried when I saw the dead badgers.

A biologist had booked in at our hostel to do some work in Ballinaboy: Counting the badgers there, he said. Recording where their setts were located, doing a survey, finding alternative places for them to live.

‘Why that?’

‘Because they need to be re-homed when the construction work for the refinery will start.’

‘But it won’t. It’s a crazy idea, people are opposing it, it will not get planning permission.’

‘It will get planning permission.’

It did not. Still, the biologist came back, this time he made proper plans for when the diggers came into the site.

‘But it did not get planning permission.’

‘It will.’

And this time it did.

When he came back, working for weeks, returning in the evening all mucky and tired from re-homing badgers. I started to think: and what about the people?

In the following months, even years we frequently saw dead badgers along the road sides all over Erris.

Re-homed badgers.

The jailing of our neighbours.

Article 17. says

- (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 9.says

- No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

But still 5 landowners in Rosspport were and taken to court when they refused strangers to invade their land.

Article 8. of the Declaration of Human Rights states:

- Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

The Rossport 5 remained in jail for 93 days. When they got out it was because it became obvious that detaining them in jail did not change their stance but raised huge awareness nationally and internationally of how easily the Irish jurisdiction had bowed to the interests of multinational companies. Since then we have experienced a long string of incidents that seem to make a mockery of nearly every one of the 30 articles of the original declaration, we learned very quickly that no right will be respected when it comes to the greed for the last resources of fossil fuels and that when you happen to be in the way of the planned developments, you are quickly labeled unreasonable, or extremist, even worse: backwards minded, soft headed romantics. You get bundled off into a corner for odd citizens, weird people who rant and rave. And if you don't stay there you get pushed into the next drain. Or maybe corralled in at the roadside by police, our movements and conversations get recorded, our friends get intimidated. The right to go about our daily business has been curtailed and the right to protest was nipped in the bud! There will be threats as we all witnessed to your physical integrity, your livelihood, your good name.

The state, its legislative its executive and its administrative bodies, the media, private security firms, the representatives of the oil companies, all effectively cooperate on all levels to achieve this.

'f... your human rights' Sergeant Butler from Belmullet Garda Station has to be quoted I'm afraid, because he clearly represents the attitude of many public servants.

The meeting that took place here in Inver Community Hall after the attack on Willie Corduff seems to me a true portrait of the state of our human rights as a community, as a campaign and as individuals and of how our demands to respect our rights are being dealt with on the ground. Most of us here today were there on that night. Terence recorded that meeting. I remember Michael Mc Gaughan saying that he feels this might be the most important document of our campaign. There are some copies here for people to pick up and watch.

At the end I would like to return to

Article 1. of the Declaration:

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

This was worded nearly 70 years ago. Today I understand it much more as a reminder of our duties than of our rights.

In his report 'Breakdown of trust' Brian Barrinton uses the term 'human rights defender' for everyone here who goes out to practice and demand their fundamental rights. I was uncomfortable with that at first because I always imagined human rights defenders as much more extraordinary, heroic people who sacrifice a lot more than we do. But I agree now.

We have a duty to uphold our dignity, claim our rights, stand up for our freedom. We better use our conscience and reason. And we must extend our spirit of brotherhood not just towards one another but towards all life on earth and towards all generations, past and present and future.

I do not fully agree with the quote in the beginning from the Chilean member of the drafting committee but it brings across the spirit of that time, the beginning of it all. But in my view we do not own fundamental rights as human beings just because we exist. Our human rights were not given to us by a higher power; they were recognized and declared by people like you and me. If ordinary people in ordinary communities like ours do not keep using them, claiming them all the time, if we neglect to improve and expand and practice them, then we will lose them.

Betty Schult

Pullathomas, June 2012

Cutting Corrib out of coverage

By William Hederman

On her radio programme a few weeks ago, (Saturday, April 14th, 2012), Marian Finucane interviewed the parents of Michael Dwyer, the Irishman shot dead by security forces in Bolivia in 2009. Michael had been brought to Bolivia by men he had met while working with them on the Corrib Gas project, men with links to fascist organisations in Eastern Europe. They were employees of IRMS, the security firm contracted by Shell to police the project.

During the interview I sent the following text message to the programme:

Michael clearly didn't know what he was getting into. It was dangerous people he met on the Corrib Gas project who led him into a dangerous situation.

Marian read out the second of these texts, but with the words “on the Corrib Gas project” removed. Here is the wording she read out:

Michael clearly didn't know what he was getting into. It was dangerous people he met who led him into a dangerous situation.

This bizarre piece of editing removed the central thrust of my message. Why would an RTÉ radio programme censor a listener's message in such a blatant manner? The excision of these five words may seem minor, but it encapsulates the approach of the mainstream media to the Corrib project. The question about why they would do this echoes a question I have been asked often since first travelling to Rossport in May 2005: why do the national media either ignore or blatantly misrepresent opposition to Shell's inland refinery project? Why do they so conspicuously avoid reporting on certain aspects of the story?

One of the reasons such questions were directed at me was because I had previously worked at *The Irish Times* and, at the time that I first travelled to Erris, I was working for *Village* magazine. It was only after leaving the Irish Times and becoming involved in protest movements that I fully appreciated the extent to which media outlets (even the 'quality' ones) could misrepresent such movements. Corrib is a paramount example of this extraordinary chasm between a reality and the media's portrayal of it.

Trying to answer this question has been at the back of my mind during the intervening years. It is a question that will have painful significance for other communities in Ireland who live where big oil decides it wants to build or dig or drill or frack.

To those resisting Shell in north Mayo, this distortion and misinformation is felt as a deliberate, vindictive attack. It is assumed that such journalistic lies and misinformation could only be the result of direct pressure – and even bribery – from Shell and the Irish Government. In many instances, these assumptions are accurate (in part depending on your definition of bribery). But the reality is much more complex.

Some of the demonisation of those resisting the project is clearly the result of direct pressure from Garda “sources”, who exploit the dependence on them of certain journalists. This intimate, symbiotic relationship between hacks and cops – a central cog in the news factory – is familiar to any observer of mainstream news reporting. Gardaí provide crime correspondents with the raw material for their gangland drama stories; one of the pay-backs is that the journalists regularly run stories that make An Garda Síochána look good, make their opponents look bad and justify heavy-handedness and heavy spending.

In the case of Corrib, these sensational (and mostly fictional) smear stories first surfaced during the summer of 2005 and began in earnest in the autumn of 2006, when Gardaí were violently breaking a 15-month long blockade of Shell’s refinery site at Bellanaboy. To take one of many examples, the *Sunday World* of October 8th, 2006 carried a fantastical and utterly unsubstantiated tale by its celebrity crime writer Paul Williams, under the headline: ‘How the Shinners hijacked Rossport: IRA take control of protests’.

As well as resorting to the Irish establishment’s favourite method of tainting a group – associating it with republicanism – and creating the impression that Gardaí are using their batons to deal with dangerous extremists rather than just decent local people, this brand of fiction also perpetuates the idea that ordinary folk could not rise up to resist corporate and state power or become radicalised without the leadership of radical outsiders.

Still more of the misleading coverage around Corrib is attributable to the simultaneous ownership by Tony O’Reilly and family of so much of our news media and of an oil and gas exploration company. (This is something that I and others have written about before, including Harry Browne at this event last year, and I don’t intend to dwell on it here.)

Why is coverage of this sort not offset by more accurate, truthful coverage elsewhere? Journalists can see the truth of the matter in, for example, the Centre for Public Inquiry’s 2005 report on Corrib or in Lorna Siggins’ 2010 book, ‘Once Upon a Time in West’. Why is this ignored in most media coverage?

The explanation for much of this distortion – or media failure – is more mundane, more subtle, more multi-faceted than any conspiracy theory can account for. In comparison to a conspiracy, this complex set of factors and forces is harder to identify, explain, expose and harder to combat.

Over the years an understanding of how and why media coverage (with rare exceptions) is so appalling gradually took form in my head, but I found it hard to articulate it credibly to others. In particular, I understood that journalists (including editors) feel a desperate need to report the same version of reality that their peers are reporting, even when they know that version to be false. This is counterintuitive for most people. Surely journalists and media outlets want to get the scoop, to report what nobody else has reported (not to mention the quaint old idea of reporting the truth)? Surely egotistical journalists want to be pioneers and mavericks?

The tendency of reporters to stay within the consensus, even if it means ignoring what is happening right in front of them, is one of the confounding aspects of mainstream news media. How to account for it?

Then I read an excellent book that put this phenomenon at the centre of its analysis. In *Flat Earth News*, British investigative journalist Nick Davies – who more recently exposed the News International phone hacking scandal – lays bare a media world beset by distortion, falsehood and propaganda. Ireland does not feature in the book, but anyone with a knowledge of Corrib will be struck time and again by the book's relevance to media coverage of the project. Examples from Corrib could be used to illustrate almost every point Davies makes.

He charts the devastating cuts in the numbers of journalists working in Britain in the past two or three decades, due to the transfer of media ownership to corporations. Those corporate owners (or “grocers” as he calls them) approach news media as accountants approach any business, demanding reduced costs and huge increases in “productivity”. The result is that journalists today operate in what Davies calls a “news factory”, where they are expected to churn out stories at such a rate that they cannot possibly check the veracity of the information that they publish as fact. A reporter on a regional daily tabloid in Britain kept a diary for Davies for one week. The paper produces about 25 pages of news every day, using 12 low-paid reporters (5 of whom are trainees). The reporter wrote 48 news stories in five days, or 9.6 per day. To research these 48 stories, he spoke to 26 people, only four of them face to face; and of his 45.5 hours worked, he was only away from his desk for three of them.

The effect is that journalists are simply unable to check facts and therefore are reduced to relying on companies' PR and official sources, whose press releases and briefings flow straight onto the pages and airwaves without being checked or corroborated. Time pressure also means journalists use the online archive of their own and other news outlets for background, which means the same misinformation keeps reappearing.

My favourite PR-produced-and-perpetually-regurgitated factoid about Corrib is the line about the contribution it will make to Ireland's energy needs. "Corrib will supply 60% of Ireland's gas needs for 20 years" has become so ingrained as to be as essential a part of its name as a trademarked slogan. In fact, the gas in Corrib – one trillion cubic feet – is equivalent to the quantity of gas consumed in Ireland every six years. What Shell has claimed is that Corrib "will supply up to 60% of Ireland's gas needs *during peak production* and is estimated to have a field life of between 15 and 20 years." Of course, "peak production" will be a brief spike. If Shell's figures are accurate, a field life of 20 years would see Corrib supplying just 15% of Ireland's gas needs over its lifetime. As will have been calculated by Shell, careless reporting by overworked or lazy journalists has simplified the claim to one that makes Corrib sound essential to the national interest.

This rings true with the results of research Davies commissioned from researchers at Cardiff University. They analysed all of the home news stories in five British newspapers (four 'quality' papers and the Daily Mail) in two random weeks, and the sources for the stories. They found that 60% of stories wholly or mainly consisted of PR material or wire copy. Only 12% of stories were generated wholly by the newspapers' own staff. Where a story relied on a statement of fact, in 70% of cases the fact passed into print without any corroboration at all. Just 12% were thoroughly checked.

While this helps to explain why certain stories *are* published, Davies uses the analogy of an electric fence to account for the media's *failure* to publish other stories. Repercussions for journalists or media organisations deter them from reporting something or reporting it in a certain way. As with an electric fence, the threat of punishment does not need to be real. The knowledge, or sense, that others have suffered in the past because they have strayed too close to the fence, is enough to inspire harsh self-censorship.

Where similar events, with apparently similar newsworthiness, occupy a different position in relation to this electric fence, the differing coverage of them is telling. Davies cites examples from the war in Iraq, but let's look instead at a chilling example from our own Corrib Gas project.

At 3 a.m. on the morning of April 23rd, 2009, a Rossport farmer was dragged from under a truck on Shell's compound at Glengad, where he was obstructing work. Up to ten IRMS workers wearing masks beat him severely, using a heavy object, while kneeling on his head. He was hospitalised with severe bruising to the head and body. Exactly two years earlier, on April 22nd, 2007, the man in question, Willie Corduff, had become Ireland's first winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize. When a winner of the world's most prestigious environmental prize is hospitalised due to an assault inflicted during the course of the very protesting for which he won the prize, one would assume this would tick enough newsworthiness boxes to make it global news.

A news story did emanate from Glengad the next day and it did go global, but it was a different news story. This was down to a quick stroke by Gardai (none of whom, mysteriously, were anywhere near Corduff when he was assaulted). They used another event on the same night to create a distraction. At

around 11.30 p.m., a group of local people had entered Shell's compound and dismantled fencing for which Shell had no planning permission.

At 9.30 a.m. on April 23rd, the Garda Press Office issued a statement to the effect that a gang of men in balaclavas armed with iron bars had attacked Shell's compound. Journalists were told the "attack" bore "all the hallmarks of a military-style operation".

This is where the Flat Earth News comes in. When a police force's press office says something, journalists will immediately report it as fact. No need to check or corroborate. Thus the falsified story of the gang "armed with iron bars" started running on Irish breaking news sites. Crucially, it was also reported by the wire service, Press Association (PA). By Thursday afternoon, a Google News search showed that 150 news sites around the world were carrying the story under variations on the headline "Armed Gang Attacks Shell Site". A construction industry website even ran the story, opening with the words, "There's a hunt on today for a gang of men..." Of course, there was no hunt, because Gardaí knew that this was a fairly run of the mill piece of direct action by local protesters. A Shell to Sea press release issued on the 23rd openly admitted to the dismantling of the fencing.

The "claims" by "a protester" that he was assaulted did merit a mention in the latter paragraphs of some of the news reports. These claims were mostly "balanced" with a Garda acknowledgement that Corduff was removed from the site after "complaining of feeling unwell".

In the above example, reporters had to choose between an official source and campaign sources about events which the journalists had not witnessed. In other instances, violence has been visited on protesters in full view of reporters. Yet in these instances, they still fail to report reality. Their powers of description have tended to desert them, as they resort to clichés and euphemisms about "scuffles" and "protests turning ugly". Again the electric fence scares them away from doing their basic duty and telling the public what they saw.

This brings us to the most perplexing of the habits of the creature known as journalist: the desire to stay within the consensus, to report what their peers are reporting. Davies cites several powerful examples, including the consensus about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq in the build-up to the 2003 invasion. Some journalists knew or suspected there were no WMD, but the consensus was too overwhelming (or the journalists were too cowardly).

A more humdrum example is the practice of reporters from rival news organisations conferring after an event to agree on "the line" that they will report. Their fear is that they will not have the story the other papers have; that their readers will be isolated. In 2005 it was revealed that, for the previous ten years, the New York Times and the Washington Post had been faxing each other an early proof of their front pages, for exactly this reason.

We all know the consensus that has been built up around Corrib: that technology-fearing and progress-hating country folk have been “got at” by a “motley crew” of opportunistic outsider extremists, who together have exploited the regulatory process to deny a big-spending, job-creating company from building a piece of infrastructure that is essential to Ireland’s needs.

Before concluding, I would like to consider another baffling trademark of Corrib coverage that accords with one of Davies’ “rules” of journalism. Throughout the years of the Corrib story, whenever media outlets have alluded to the question of the safety and or otherwise of the proposed Corrib refinery and onshore pipeline, they all follow a particular stock formula, one which does no service to their audience. This involves simply presenting the positions of the two sides in the issue and leaving it at that. ‘Objectors say the project is dangerous, unprecedented and inappropriate. The company and the government refute this and say it is safe.’ It is left to the reader/listener/viewer to digest these two opposing viewpoints and make up their own mind about the truth of the matter. Only one of these positions could be correct, but *almost never* has a mainstream publication or broadcaster bothered to investigate which one it is.

This is symptomatic of one of the fundamental failures of mainstream journalism: the protocol that dictates that the journalist must be ‘neutral’ and the concomitant excuse this provides not to investigate the matter. Under time pressure and under pressure not to upset powerful interests, this adherence to pseudo-balance allows the journalist to tell the story without unearthing anything that will upset powerful interests.

In conclusion, once a narrative is established, through intensive PR work that takes advantage of time-starved journalists’ inability to do their own research; through the pushing of the same message by official and corporate sources; through the propaganda of a small number of ideologically-driven commentators who may or may not be friends or associates of the corporate PRs; through the fear of upsetting powerful interests who will complain about you to your bosses... When this narrative is in place, the flock-of-sheep factor kicks in and ensures that this consensus is maintained. Staying within the parameters of this consensus is easier, quicker and safer. Gradually the narrative becomes the reality; Gramsci’s hegemony becomes common sense.

By that stage it is harder for journalists to step outside the narrative, just as it was hard for those who knew the earth was not flat to say so at a time when a flat earth was the common sense reality. For a mainstream journalist, to contradict the consensus about Corrib is to be seen to be unpatriotic, anti-business and taking sides with stubborn extremists who are holding up a vital national project and who are damaging Ireland’s image as a place to invest. Under those circumstances, to simply cut the words “on the Corrib Gas project” out of a listener’s text message must seem like the common sense thing to do.

Extract from letter written by Padraic MacCana (Padraic Rua)

Castlebar Monday June 4 '12

Maura a chroi

Great to see you in such good form. Just a few observations on my return to base. Sunday morning was miserable with the wet weather. Then after a Mass which I offered up to the S2S cause a faint glimmer of sun and things began picking up. This culminated in that splendid meeting in the tent which engendered a fine uplifting feeling and sent me home much heartened. Here in Castlebar there is a tout element. Just now walking back from the shops I eluded questions from one of these who stopped his car to ask about our gathering. This is a guy who when I invited him to Aughose said his car wasn't taxed and might not make it in case the cops would stop him. Yet here he was driving out of Castlebar in his car! I was on foot because my bike was on the blink. Touts don't need to tax their cars. Returning to Castlebar I found my bike had undergone some bending – the back wheel – and I had to carry it home instead of it carrying me. A small price to pay for exposing the corruption and injustice around us.

... I have seen these lowlives operate at Tara, in Donegal, in Sligo in Longford and other places. We should pin a **touts out** notice at the gate.

... To proceed. When I recalled the millennium candle from Seamus Brennan and the certificate of ownership of a planted tree the lady who drove us to Castlebar thought it might be worth investigating on a legal basis. She has a brother a lawyer in New York. Add that to the blatant oversight of Bunowna – the invisible non existant village – close to where a bomb might explode, that and the missing deeds of the Bellanaboy bog, it builds a compelling case of injustice that written up would move the citizens of Ireland each of whom own an Irish tree. Then a Fahey or a Burke comes along and hands our heritage away. Our trees. Our bogs. Our turf. Our peace of mind. They give us a candle and expect us to be grateful for the exchange. What fools they take us for!

... As for the August event count me in. These meetings (as this last weekend proved) help to galvanise the faithful (minus the usual tout) and send a message out to other groupings. They come in like welcome water to lift our boat when our boat needs lifting. This is the 'organise' that puts a smile on Joe Hill's face. Consolidate and bring more groupings in. Let the occupy phenomenon know we need their numbers now.

... It amazes me that Sinn Fein fail miserably in Co Mayo. It's like the people have forgotten their fugitive roots and Cromwell. And vote for the suits and not for those who are hurting. People of my own name were driven out of Tyrone and Armagh in the years shortly before Humbert's arrival. They fled across the river Erne and started life again here in this county with next to nothing. Some of those fugitives formed a colony of weavers in Ballina. They (far more than the local Mayos) knew full well the significance of the French arrival. Hurting from their eviction they joined up and followed the banner Eireann go Brath. Many to their death go dtuga Dia suaimhneas siorrai dofa. **We owe it to them to continue this struggle for justice.**

Are we suffering from historical amnesia? A student at Davrtt College didn't know who Davitt was. In the North where I was educated we had to learn history from a British point of view. What are they teaching children here? Revolutions begin in the heart and mind. 1916 was a poets' revolution. We owe it to Pearse and

McDonagh and Plunkett and the great militant Connolly to keep their memory green, green as that flag the Mayo Croppies followed to their death.

I used to wonder what revision meant. Now I know. It's bury your heroes and your history and replace them with irrelevant culture. Pop concerts. Non entities rule. And the pain of Rossport and Erris ignored. The current European cup is a welcome distraction from reality. Cuts and impositions and injustice in its many forms. Even Gaelic football which I love is a distraction. Another Diaspora as one of our supporters cleverly analysed leaves less young disenchanted Irish here to throw stones. To embarrass the establishment. Sorry a chroi for the rant.

I dropped out of a salaried profession to get my head around these things. We in Shell to Sea have enormous potential. You have a marvellous nerve. I cannot emphasise enough our need to hold our nerve and carry on. **Without a doubt we have the potential to expose injustices not just the gas and oil but to send a message out to the world that one community even if it's reduced to one person is capable of changing policies and making a profound difference.**

Thursday June 7 **Breaking News.**

The recent earthquake off Belmullet may be a disaster for some but for us it is the prayed for miracle. Our Lady's answer to the Memorare. The quake dislodged part of a woman's chimney 100 miles away from the epicentre on the Sligo/Mayo border. What could it not do a fragile gas pipe sitting on top of unpredictable tectonic plates? Emphasise how Shell science or Shell assurances are powerless against such unforeseen seismic activity on the ocean floor?

Here is our opportunity to publicly ask Shell as a consequence of the quake what maintenance if any do they propose to carry out on the sea floor to ensure no damage has been done to all they have installed down there. This question could be asked in the Dail. No way can they assure us this will never happen again. Dooncarton mountain speaks from time to time and now the ocean floor has spoken. This is Nature support. Divine support. And timely. It could not have come at a better time. Shareholders must be feeling they backed the wrong horse. Providence has just issued a statement praising the quality of the oil off the south coast. Some investors in the Atlantic Ridge must be cursing their luck. First Shell were saddled with us and now we are supported by the elements of God!

Afri has come out with a statement asking Shell to suspend their operations. I will write to a long time contact I have in that organisation to thank them for that.

Beir bua is beannacht Padraic Rua

Please ensure that the Dail is alerted to this new seismic development. Have these questions asked of the Taoiseach. Is it not blind and utter madness for the government to continue supporting a project to which has been added a further element of danger i.e. unforeseen seismic activity in the region of the gas and oil fields off Mayo? Has a pipe ever been made strong enough to resist such catastrophic forces? And isn't it now time to put a stop to this project before we have a national disaster on our hands?

HUMAN RIGHTS AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RIGHT TO PROTEST IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SHELL/STATOIL CORRIB GAS PROJECT, CO. MAYO, IRELAND, JUNE, 2009

Table* Report No. 1

Introduction

The purpose of the public reports is to record our experiences of issues under observation and to make recommendations regarding policing and the administration of justice with a view to adherence to Ireland's human rights obligations. The text makes reference to *Table* monitoring guidelines, available in a separate document, which set out a list of desirable and undesirable practices. We believe this list to be reasonable and consistent with Ireland's treaty obligations on human rights.

We note that a fact-finding mission in February, 2007, recommended, among other steps, that "global organizations specializing in human rights investigations should further investigate this crisis"; and that "action should be taken to restore order and peace to the region through the intervention of neutral third parties"**. We hope to contribute in some way to objective monitoring of events in the area and thereby to promoting peaceful solutions.

Kilcommon Parish, Sunday, 28 - Tuesday, 30 June, 2009.

Background

Table observers Sr Majella McCarron and Donall Ó Mearáin were present in Kilcommon Parish, Erris, Co. Mayo and, more specifically, in Glengad and Pollatomish, on Sunday, 28th, Monday, 29th and Tuesday, 30* June, 2009. While it was a general and exploratory presence, observer activity focussed on three events:

1. a road protest (tripod) at Glengad from 4.30 to 6.30 pm on Sunday, 28th.
2. a road protest ("lock-on") at Glengad from 7.00 to 10.30 pm on Sunday, 28th.
3. court hearings resulting from the above actions, held at Ballina Courthouse at 5.30 on Monday, 29th. During this period the *Solitaire* was present in Broadhaven Bay.

Observations and comments

At the time of our arrival on Sunday, the *Solitaire* had been in the bay for three days. Local people appeared to have been given no information about when and how it worked.

At both protests (1 & 2 above), there were groups of onlookers/supporters numbering from 50 to 200 people. Local people paid close attention to the quality of policing and loudly remonstrated with members of An Garda Síochána regarding their management of the protest.

Police took extensive video footage of some of those present, repeatedly panning over the same group of people. Those present seemed hardened to this procedure. It does appear pointless in a situation where there is no history of violent protest and could therefore be interpreted as provocative or intimidatory in intent. *Table* monitoring guidelines state the desirability of "police videoing under strict regulations and not for intimidation of individuals".

It had been announced that 300 Guards had been drafted into the area for this period. It had also been reported that there were 160 Integrated Risk Management Solutions (IRMS, the private security firm hired by the consortium) staff at the compound. Two navy vessels and a police helicopter were also present. Given the population of Kilcommon Parish (ca. 2,000) and the numbers at the Rosspoint Solidarity Camp (RSC), ranging from 4 to 100, and that protest appears to have been mild in nature, the need for such numbers for the maintenance of order is questionable.

Members of the Garda Public Order Unit (POU) were present and involved in dismantling the protesters' pipes and tripods. Members of this unit did not display identification numbers.

The Garda Siochana have now been equipped with the machinery to cut through chains and pipes. This removes the need for assistance from the Fire Brigade as was previously the case and can be regarded as an improvement in the handling of such actions. In each protest action, it took 4 - 6 hours to remove the protesters from the structures to which they had attached themselves. The protests resulted in public use of the road being blocked almost continuously from 2 p.m to 2 a.m.

At both protests, there was a Garda presence which appeared proportionate to the situation and reasonable calm was maintained although the initial response on the part of some Gardai appeared hasty and angry. Campaigners involved in these lock-on protests were calm and passive in their demeanour.

At the second protest, a monitor from another organisation felt compelled, as a result of the behaviour of one plainclothes Garda and some POU personnel, to make a formal complaint, although immediately prior to this incident one Garda Inspector had by contrast been courteous and accommodating. This incident is now the subject of Garda and Ombudsman investigations. An agency photographer was threatened and a woman recording a video had her screen consistently blocked by a Garda backing into her. Apart from questions over the legality of these actions, internal discipline and clear lines of command appeared to be lacking among police on site. Clear statements from Garda officers present regarding the management of the incident would also have been helpful. Officers in charge ought to be clearly identified and accessible. Police personnel should not be "fearful [or] excitable" and should be "without specific animosities" (*Table monitoring guideline*) and should be able to read the mood of protesters and onlookers accurately.

It was rumoured that 100 Gardai had left the area by Monday 29th June but no information was provided about this.

Garda checkpoints were in place during the protests. One of these was at one time approximately 1/3 mile from the site of the protest. No explanation was given to motorists, nor was any indication of how long the road block might be in place.

Throughout this period, Garda vehicles were on occasions driven through Glengad at unnecessarily high speeds.

One observer at the first road protest refused to stand behind the POU lines. The officer in charge accepted this and facilitated her presence at another location.

After the second protest, the same observer asked to be escorted from the scene through Garda lines to her car by a member of the Garda Siochana. She was provided with an escort, whose courtesy and helpfulness are worthy of mention.

At none of the incidents mentioned above did campaigners have banners or signs stating the purpose of their protest. This would be appreciated so that members of the public affected by the protest action can be better informed of the reason for any inconvenience and of the issue in question.

It may be desirable for campaigning groups to have clearly identified stewards who would be in a position to give directions in protest situations. *Table* monitors would see themselves as possible conduits of communication between stewards and Garda officers where such communication could be useful in preventing escalation of a situation.

At one stage during this period a member of the RSC pointed out to a *Table* monitor a line of stones which had been placed on the shore at Glengad just below the RSC site. This was described as a line of demarcation which the Garda Siochana did not cross. Informal arrangements like this can be helpful in maintaining calm.

Nine residents of the RSC appeared before Justice Mary Devins at Ballina Courthouse on Monday, 29th June, under the Public Order Act.

It struck *Table* monitors that while Judge Devins refused free legal aid partly on grounds of cost to the State, she did put the State to the expense of remanding seven of the accused in custody although the justification for this appeared weak on public order grounds.

The solicitor representing the accused tried to secure their release by eliciting from them undertakings not to participate in protest actions pending their trials. While, from the point of view of the lawyer and the accused, such undertakings are understandable as a method of securing release, we are concerned by the civil liberties implications of this approach. It is worrying that undertakings not to engage in non-violent protest should be required in order to avoid custody, as such undertakings interfere with the defendants' right to protest and imply that protest actions are in themselves criminal.

The name Table was chosen for this initiative because it symbolises a meeting place where conflicts can be resolved through discussion.

* * Participants in the 2007 delegation were: Danny Larson, Global Community Monitor; Hannah Griffiths, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Hanna Jongepier, Milieudefensie, Friends of the Earth Netherlands; Bobby Peek, Groundwork South Africa; Paul de Clerk, Friends of the Earth International.

Ed note: Transcript of above available at <http://www.gcmonitor.org/article.php?id=598>