

Recd From: Padraic MacCana
(Sean McDermott Group)

A Licence to Kill

Date Recd: 26/4/07

Is mise Padraic MacCana. My name is Padraic MacCana. My contribution to this hearing is entitled **A Licence to Kill**. Throughout this submission I use the term pobal na haite to mean those locals directly affected by and opponents of Shell's insistence to go ahead with the building of the gas refinery.

The first thing I want to do is to add my voice to the stated preference for the Twister technology. This Twister option should be emphasised and reemphasised. The adoption of this technique would make the building of the complex site proposed for Bellanaboy superfluous to requirements. Briefly put, there's a safer way of refining the gas. More community friendly. The Twister option works effectively elsewhere. It can solve a major problem here in Bellanaboy. The feeling is that this industrial site is the beginning of something far larger, far more invasive and totally out of sync with an area noted for its great natural beauty and quiet and neighbourly pace of life. That's my first point.

My second point is as follows. Broadly my concern would be for local health, local culture and the Erris Gaeltacht.

This licence, if granted is a licence to kill a whole way of life in an achingly beautiful part of Mayo made extra special by its bilingual status. Gaelic is the oldest vernacular language in Europe and recently received official status in Brussels. This is the language spoken by scholars and monks who carried Christianity deep into the heart of pagan Europe well over a thousand years ago. We respectfully ask the EPA not to grant this licence to Shell to proceed as the consequences for this beautiful part of Mayo would be devastating.

Would Shell let their children play next or near a pipe whose pressure equals that of 200 car tyres? We don't know the exact figures here. The bars by which pressure is measured. Estimations of pressure go up and down like a yo yo. Where life and death are at stake more precision is called for. Bhopal wasn't Shell's fault but it **was** the result of bad management. 34 hundred killed which equals all the victims of the Northern Irish war.

That bird that announces the dawn
Will her singing be heard again
If the oxygen air is destroyed
And the flies and insects she feeds on?

Save our beautiful lake
Save us from dirty water
Save our Erris Gaeltacht
Save our pristine air
Save us from belching smoke
An explosion waiting to happen.

Children come here in the summer, part of their education, to learn the Gaelic language, to learn ancestral songs, to learn ancestral dances. One outbreak of polluted water would put a stop to all that. Put a stop to na Colaisti Samhraidh. The Summer Colleges. And put a stop to a summer income for pobal na haite for feeding and housing the students. Few if any would bring their children to visit grandparents near the toxic fenceline. Such an outbreak could close down this hotel. Such an outbreak could kill local tourism. Galway as we speak is losing millions because of water pollution.

You in the EPA
 You can put a stop to this
 By refusing to grant this licence.
 Come and see for yourself
 The early morning vigil
 The long line of helmets
 Some with tears in their eyes.
 Come and see for yourselves
 Pobal na haite defending
 Their roots and their neighbourly values,
 AGAINST GOD KNOWS WHAT DRAGON.
 Come and see for yourself
 The men who should be at sea
 The wounds on the protesters' faces
 Hear the fingers breaking.

A man came from the States
 And fell for a local girl.
 Don't take her away, they pleaded.
 Now he has 3 children
 And a pair of helpful crutches
 And a doctor who refuses to treat him.

At the excavations in Bellanaboy there is no designated archeological presence to call a halt to the work if some heritage artifact is turned up. No official present to monitor what the bog might yield. Over the centuries, Irish bogs have been generous in yielding bone and document and vessel. Vellum and mystifying stone circles. Our museums are thankful to the bogs for preserving these priceless clues to our early Irish civilisation. Our museums would be impoverished without them.

Where is the authorised presence
 At the boggy excavations
 To monitor the findings
 As the pages of turf are turned
 A bower of clues to our culture
 Heritage artifacts

Buried for centuries
Fingerprint, fossil and relic?

And you on the payroll of Shell
Please bring your pressure to sea
And let the people of Erris
Rooted where surf is a comfort
Live on where they were driven
Through no fault of their own.

Generations ago
They fled or faced extinction
From other parts of our island
An extinction they face again.
100 States agree
That Shell should go to sea.

A parish away the Ceide Fields got an interpretative Centre. Bellanaboy got a JCB. What's happening here is community rape.

We call on Granuale
We call on Michael Davitt
And on Charles Stewart Parnell.
We call on the little Lady
Who came to Knock long ago
Help us this hour of peril.
We call on the EPA
Don't grant this licence to Shell
We don't object to gas
We do object to your manner.

It's a story of distrust.
Why should pobal na haite
Believe Shell's promises
When they remember the rope
That hanged Ken Saro Wiwa.

Finally there is a suspicion that this is only the beginning of something more ambitious given the hundreds of acres that could be earmarked for further expansion. A belief in short that Shell is not coming clean. That some terrible reality is being withheld from pobal na haite. That bad and all as things are, they could get worse As an outsider I sense a great injustice here and a matching lack of faith in Shell's assurances. Added to that we have a community of people literally fighting for their lives, totally unaided and scandalously abandoned by the State. I should correct myself. These people are not without friends. They have

powerful friends in the wider global family who cherish the earth and want to hand it on without pollution. We ask the EPA to find its conscience and act.

Finally finally there is an atmosphere of scepticism surrounding this entire hearing. A feeling amounting to a belief that behind closed doors this has been done and dusted. That this is a done deal and not in the people's favour. And that nothing we on the outside do or say will alter that.

From time to time I get another perspective. That justice for once **will** be done. That the voice of the protestors will be genuinely listened to and action taken to banish their worst fears. **Fears that once again Dublin will let them down.** It would be wonderful if after all our fears, after all our suspicions, this protest by pobal na haite had a happy ending. EPA we are at your mercy. We appeal to your sense of decency.

We have not inherited the earth
Only borrowed it from future generations.
The earth is not our own
It's only ours on loan.
Please help us hand it on
To children yet unborn.
Pristine pure and clean
As it has always been.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

PS

THURSDAY
This was my submission to the EPA oral hearing in the Broadhaven Hotel,
Belmullet on ~~Wednesday~~ **Thursday April 26 2007**
EPA: The Environmental Protection Agency

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FOOTNOTE

I got the word dragon from this book

Riding the Dragon was published in the States. It's a record of Royal Dutch Shell's history across the planet from 1947 till 2002.

The book alleges that

Shell has gone to some lengths to remove accident, fire and other incident photographs from web sites and has completely ignored, removed and/or sanitized certain unhappy accounts from its corporate history.

They are still not rising to the global imperative to reduce known risks, the book goes on to claim

Fossil fire is essentially unmanageable holding inherent dangers in all its forms.

The book asks some questions.

What is corporate responsibility? What is acceptable?

Is it acceptable to delay new and safer technology?

Is it acceptable to defer maintenance?

Is it acceptable to defer equipment replacement?

Is it acceptable to overlay an industrial agriculture on farming and village economies?

Is it acceptable to continue dumping chronic levels of pollutants on nearby residential communities?

There's almost 40 pages listing leaks and spillages, erosions and explosions. One of these articles appears in the San Francisco Chronicle where one of the Rosspart 5 was interviewed when he visited that city a week ago to collect a major international award for defending this beautiful region from what would damage it. The damage has already started. A diesel spillage in Bellanaboy. Accusation and denial.

Here's a sample, taken from the long Appendage of things that went wrong under Shell's management.

Unsafe trap door

Missing bolts

Untested fire detective systems

Damage to hydro treating units

Faulty grounding system

Electrical fire

A pump severely cracked

Valve failure

Leaks after a rupture

Operational problems

Storage tank explosion

Telephone not working

Devices not tested at regular intervals

Acid corrosion of a pipe
Pump malfunction
Human error
Slag sparks from welder ignites gas tank seam failure
Blown gasket
72 violations of pollution discharge
A submerged pipeline is crushed
A worker dies killed by hydrogen sulfide gas
Sulphur dioxide released, cause unknown
A caustic release
Refinery fire rages over 30 acres
Summary of 65 upsets
Zero emissions don't enter this story
And on and on page after page a catalogue of woe.
These disasters could happen here. And as I pointed out it has already begun.

A note on local culture before I continue. This is just one of a number of books written on local culture. Bilingual, it's the story of a place whose people are keenly aware of their deep rich roots going back many generations.

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