



The Tara Foundation Magazine

Issue 1 Vol. 1 May 3 2006

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Welcome

Fáilte chuig ár gcéad eagrán. We at the Tara Foundation are glad to welcome you to the first edition of our magazine and hope that you will come back to download our subsequent issues. Please don't hesitate to contact us with ideas or feedback. You can go to the forums from the front page of our website or email us at momcgrath@eircom.net.

- Claire McGrath Guerin, Webmaster of The Tara Foundation website

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Editorial May 3 2006

April Fools

It has been a busy time for the Government. In between the lines of standard State handouts, or news reporting, a strange and telling item appeared on that All-Saint's Day for politicians, April 1st, in the *Evening Herald*, entitled "Phoenix Park Motorway Madness". It was also referred to on the RTE Radio programme "Mooney Goes Wild on One". According to the Herald's story, "Angry protestors today demonstrated against a new motorway to be routed through the Phoenix Park... The new road will allow motorists to exit the M50 and drive to within 200 metres of the Luas Red Line near Heuston Station. A large 'park and ride' facility will be constructed within the park." Naturally, the story,

and a 'protest' organized by some of the good residents of Castleknock, were afterwards announced to be an April Fool's caper. But what is at issue proves to be a little more sinister than a dose of harmless fun. For a start, this is clearly a sneer at those opposed to the construction of the M3 Motorway beside the Hill of Tara, a project whose principal aims are to enrich politically-connected landowners and to fund multinational corporations such as Brown and Root (who have won the contract to build the M3, and who are project directors of the Dublin Port Tunnel), and to destroy Ireland's heritage. Many major "infrastructure projects", i.e. roads, for which the current administration are responsible, have been designed specifically to impinge on areas of environmental and/or heritage value. This is also true of the Corrib gas scheme, which in true gombeen style the administration is determined on pushing through for the good of Shell and its junior partners.

But a second, and far more immediate, implication can be read from the stunt. For Ireland's class of bag-men and their political servitors, the Phoenix Park is a jewel waiting to be mined. On each side of the Park, every available scrap of land is being seized and built on, most notably the Phoenix Park Racecourse, where numerous apartment blocks are being built, and for which Irish Rail is kindly providing a railway station even before the scheme's first phase is finished. The M50 motorway has provided the perfect pretext for building overpriced, poorly-designed apartment buildings and retail outlets.

The procedure for forcing through large-scale development is to construct a tall office building without planning permission, apply for retention for the building (which the County Council invariably grants), and use that as a planning precedent for further tall buildings wherever they can be made to fit. What has this to do with the Phoenix Park and April Fools? In 1979, Pope

John Paul II visited Ireland, and a huge multi-storey cross was erected in the Phoenix Park for the occasion of a mass at which he officiated, at a huge clearing known as the Fifteen Acres. The contractor was Ove Arup. The tale was that the cross would remain *in situ* only temporarily. Twenty-seven years later, the cross is still in place, and the Irish State continues happily to pay Ove Arup and Partners for its upkeep. The only reason that the State is doing this is the only reason it does anything, to further its political programme, which has been (since at least 1960) to transform Ireland and everything in it into money for international corporations and their local bailiffs. The cross is in place to provide a planning precedent for the day, not very far off, when the Park is rezoned for building.

If the M3 Motorway goes ahead, the same fate awaits the Tara-Skryne Valley.

The Dublin Port Tunnel Scam

by turoe and hanshiro



Picture taken by Sean McClean and is to be found at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:DublinPortTunnelConstruction_2004_SeanMcClean.jpg

This is a shortened version of an article previously published on Indymedia and at Planetsave.com. The full text can be accessed at:

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~guerin/letters.html>

The Progressive Democrat Party recently announced a proposal¹ to move Dublin port to a smaller terminal facility at Bremore Port in Balbriggan. Bremore Port is a deep water facility (unlike Dublin port), and is entirely suitable for development as a 21st

¹ *Village* magazine, 2-8 February 2006, p. 29

century port. However, the suggestion to move Dublin port from its antiquated 18th quayside facilities to a Dublin coastal deepwater site was first made in 1990 by the ESB. Why is this not mentioned by the Progressive Democrats on their website? The actual reasons turn out to be rather revealing.

In June 1990, a report was presented to the Government outlining a series of studies undertaken by the ESB into infrastructural deficits in Ireland in relation to transportation, electricity and natural gas linkages to other EU countries. In addition to these, a study² was carried out into the existing port infrastructure, in the light of what whereby then rather obvious weaknesses in the port transportation network in Ireland. Nothing came of the report. Instead, in 1991, Dublin Corporation hired consultants to undertake a study into a relief road that would connect Dublin port to the first phase of the M50 Ring Motorway, then under construction.

The fact that the Dublin Port and Docklands Authority ignored the ESB proposal and insisted that the money be spent shoring up the existing facilities suggests that other considerations were at work. The Dublin Port Tunnel, though clearly intended as the major component of the Authority's plan to sustain the port's viability, was identified by the ESB report, years before its inception, as a waste of money, chiefly because it would be thoroughly unreasonable to expect port traffic to take a lengthy roundabout route and pay the associated tolls. Thus it could be expected to have little or no effect on the congestion caused by port traffic in the city. And as commuters were not intended to use it, because in the first place it was purposely

² *Port Infrastructure in Ireland: Requirements and Proposals*, ESB, June 1990.

designed to be difficult to access from commuter routes, the proposal amounted to no solution at all, a redundant road, all the more so given that the projected cost of ESB's own plan was significantly lower than the projected cost of the Tunnel alone. The ESB's assessment of the proposal has been demonstrated, beyond a shadow of doubt, to be true by subsequent events. So it could be argued that the Tunnel should never have been built, given that such serious criticisms went without answer.

However, it seems that, far from the Port Tunnel being part of the port upgrade plan, there are reasons to believe that the port plan was simply a pretext for building the Port Tunnel. In other words, given that it was known before the road was begun that it would not serve its stated purpose, it is a more plausible explanation that the Dublin Port Tunnel was planned from the beginning, and that the upgrades were proposed as an afterthought, to provide a reason for building it in the first place. This may seem, at face value, to be unlikely, but that is not the case.

If, instead of the conventional explanations along the lines of bad planning and incompetence, it is suggested that that the State sat on the ESB proposal for over 15 years, then aspects of the PDs' behaviour that previously seemed absurd start to make sense. According to the *Village* magazine of 2nd February 2006, the market value for land in the docklands area is a minimum of €15 million per acre. On such an estimate, the sale of 660 acres would raise €10 Billion for the State, were it to sell the land outright.

However, it is unlikely that a sale is on the cards. Obviously,

the costs involved even for large-scale property corporations, international or otherwise, would be considerable, whatever the financial benefits to the taxpayer. It seems certain, therefore, given the government's record on such matters, that another device will be found to assist Big Property with their difficulties. A pretext has already been created for this, with the Government's decision to hand over State properties to private developers, with the proviso that a certain percentage of social housing is provided (or provided that a commitment is given to that effect).

The purpose of the Dublin Port Tunnel from its inception, was to increase the value of the lands where Dublin port is situated, so as to maximise the potential benefit to private developers. The PD's are the Government's useful lunatic fringe; public opinion has been conditioned to expect their style, and in the public's search for reassurance against their excesses, the State and its PR-economists will produce the needed rationale for the programme. That moving Dublin port 'makes no sense', now that the Dublin Port Tunnel is an accomplished fact, is beside the point: from the point of view of the private interests behind the Government parties, it makes perfect sense to manipulate the State's planning procedures to implement, at vast cost to the taxpayer, what amounts to a long-term land grab. That, in a nutshell, has been the motivation of State policy over the past thirty years.

'Development', that is, the expansion of suburbs into Co. Meath and North Dublin, is being promoted as an inevitable process, no other options being available if there is to be 'progress'. Dublin City authorities decided to implement the

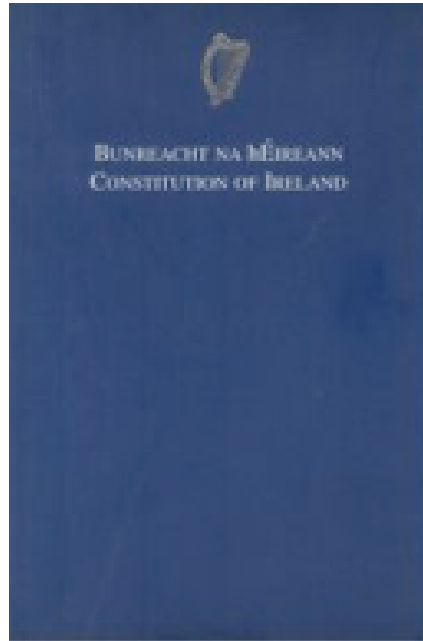
Dublin Port Tunnel, knowing full well that Dublin port was unviable, and knowing that a proposal to relocate it would certainly resurface in the future, thus removing any justification for such a grotesquely expensive scheme. The involvement of Brown and Root, Halliburton's construction wing, as project coordinator, is, and is intended to be, an announcement of the political loyalties of those responsible for devising the plan.

The Drogheda Port Company, as if by coincidence, is now proposing a deepwater port at Bremore³. Neither the Drogheda Port Company web site itself nor the consultant's report, prepared for Drogheda Port Company by John Mangan and Associates⁴, mentions the 1990 ESB report. What is at stake in the disguise is the vast profit potential for private construction and property companies that will accrue through the inflation of land prices in the port region by the now entirely redundant Port Tunnel: a sale of the Dublin port lands is not on the cards, but rather a transfer to private ownership. This will be accompanied by the expected propaganda about Public-Private Partnerships and the Government's commitment to providing much-needed 'social housing', but in fact, and this is a prediction based on the consistent logic of the way the public planning process has been perverted over the years, there will be no provision of low-cost housing. Instead, what is intended, what has always been intended, is to provide construction and property firms with one of the biggest building bonanzas in European history.

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³ http://www.droghedaport.ie/index_home.html

⁴ http://www.droghedaport.ie/cms/uploads/30_9_04.pdf



The Tara Case and the Irish Constitution

by hanshiro

On May 2nd 1937, the text of the new Irish Constitution was published. We wish it a happy birthday and good health in the face of the numerous plots and assassination attempts directed against it by a State which invokes it when convenient, and likewise ignores it.

According to a story in the *Meath Chronicle* April 22nd 2006, Vincent Salafia gave Notice of Appeal of the High Court's rejection of his case against the M3 Motorway. The Supreme Court will hear this appeal and ultimately decide on the constitutionality of the National Monuments Act 2004. According to Mr. Justice Thomas Smyth, "the legislature was entitled to choose to give qualified protection to national

monuments and the court could not strike down section 14 of the Act, as sought by Mr. Salafia, simply because a different or better balance could have been struck, he said. Mr. Salafia had asked the court to make a declaration that the greater Tara landscape - the Hill of Tara/Skryne Valley - is a national monument or complex or series of national monuments within the meaning of the National Monuments Act, but the judge refused to do so.”

The judge was quite correct to make this stipulation. Mr. Salafia’s approach was to, on the one hand, ask the High Court to find that the Act is unconstitutional, which is properly the role of the Supreme Court, and on the other hand to stipulate that the Tara/Skryne Valley is a national monument *within the meaning of the Act whose legality he was questioning*. Normal procedure in such a case would see the plaintiff being one of those whose land has been acquired by the constitutionally dubious Compulsory Purchase Order, yet not one has come forward with a challenge to the State’s right to confiscate property. So Mr. Salafia took on the dubious role of plaintiff in this case, even though he cannot demonstrate any cause for complaint or damages against himself on the part of the State. So, the article goes on to say, “there were differences between Mr. Salafia [and] Mr. Salafia’s experts as to what constituted the core Tara area. In those circumstances and in the absence of any representation in the proceedings for people in the Tara area who would be directly affected by such a declaration, it was not permissible for the court to make any such declaration.” According to Mr. Justice Smyth therefore, Mr. Salafia held a different interpretation of what constituted the “core Tara area” which he sought to have stipulated as a national monument, from those of his expert witnesses.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Salafia did not invoke Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh’s 1972 Supreme Court decision in this case, including his statement that “the Hill of Tara is properly to be regarded as a single unified site and not a series of separate archaeological monuments”. He also stated that “The expression ‘national monument’ means a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic, or archaeological interest... A monument, among other things, is anything that by its survival commemorates a person, action or event... The word ‘monument’ is not defined in the strict sense: it is stated that it ‘includes’ certain things. It does not have to be of archaeological interest; historical or traditional interest will suffice.” During these proceedings, the State itself, as represented by the Commissioners of Public Works (now the Office of Public Works), itself stated in its submission (under oath in Ireland’s highest court) that Tara was an integral part of a wider heritage landscape. A constitutional challenge to any and all aspects of the M3 plan could be made on a basis that extends beyond heritage concerns: an area can be defined, in constitutional terms, as a monument on historical or traditional grounds alone, and preserved as such. We will revisit this issue in more detail at a later date.

Other comments by the judge are worthy of note: “Among other key findings of Mr. Justice Smyth was that even if the Supreme Court upheld arguments in its forthcoming judgment on the Carrickmines Castle case that Section 8 of the National Monuments Amendment Act was unconstitutional, he was satisfied that protections for national monuments, which he

held were built in to Section 14 of the same Act, were ‘constitutionally sound’”. So according to this judge, even if the National Monuments Act is found to be unconstitutional in respect of the Carrickmines Case, the “protections” that allegedly exist in the Act are “constitutionally sound”. As we have already pointed out on previous occasions, according to the National Monuments Act 2004, the sole arbiter of the fate of any monument in the country relies on the decision of the Minister for the Environment, in the absence of any statutory guidelines whatever. This was the purpose of the Act, and all talk of heritage protection in connection with it is essentially guff. It is emergency legislation, like so many other initiatives by the State in recent years, designed to avert a “crisis”, i.e. the fact that the Constitution presents an obstacle to “progress”, meaning that it stands in the way of the implementation of the State’s big project, and must be flouted by any means possible.

This new direction on the part of the State might be traced to about 1960, when the process of parcelling out Ireland’s natural resources to multinational corporations began, and it has been proceeding with a singular consistency ever since. All law making and State policy since that date has been aimed, directly or indirectly, at accomplishing the sale of Ireland’s resources and the destruction of its history and heritage. The Constitution, in so far as it upholds the rights of citizens, is the big stumbling-block to be done away with.

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The Rossport Solidarity Camp - an Example to Follow?

by The Glen



The Rossport Solidarity Camp was set up in June 2005 in order to assist locals in their fight against the endangering of lives and the environment on the Erris peninsula by the Irish Government and Shell Oil. It was set up on the land of Philip McGrath, one of the Rossport Five. An article on Indymedia last August promoting the camp⁵ illustrated its origin:

⁵ <http://www.indymedia.ie/article/71391>, August 08, 2005 by Niall Harnett – Rossport Solidarity Camp

We're here to protect the land from Shell, to picket the compound in Rosspport and to offer practical help to the families of the Rosspport 5.

The campsite is positioned on Philip McGrath's land and directly on the proposed pipeline route, effectively blocking any work Shell would like to do there. The Shell compound in Rosspport, where they store machinery and equipment to do this work is picketed from 7am -7pm to ensure no work is carried out there. We communicate with the picket at the Bellanaboy Refinery Site in case we're needed up there or vice-versa. We help the families with practical work like bringing in turf, gardening etc.

We also have a camp at Glengad beach across the estuary from Rosspport where the pipeline wants to hit landfall from sea. We keep an eye on the compound over there, to alert others if any work is going on and to help with pickets there too. Glengad beach is beautiful and quiet in an unspoilt and remote special area of conservation. There is a camp kitchen there too with food and burners in a big Icelandic tent. Compost toilet built there too. Locals supporting with access, food and water.

People have been coming from all over the country to visit and to stay, to find out more about what's going on and to offer help with camp maintenance, pickets and campaign support.

Food and turf donations are flooding in, we cook and eat together and every night after dinner we discuss plans for the next day and the future. We meet regularly with the families of the Rosspport 5 to discuss issues arising etc.

We have a big marquee for cooking and sleeping, other storage and meeting tents, water on site, compost toilet, compost heap and we recycle our waste. Showers and laundry are being offered by locals. Camp being improved constantly.

The initiative for setting up the camp came after a gathering in Rosspport over the June bank holiday weekend when about 200 people came to a similar camp built in Ray Corduff's field, for a weekend of information workshops, tours of the area and the pipeline route, talks with the landowners (who have since become The Rosspport 5), and a long talk by retired schoolteacher Micheál Ó'Seighin, now prisoner, about the local history and the impact of the Corrib Gas Project on the area. Sr Majella McCarron, friend to Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ogoni, Nigeria spoke about

Shell's record of murder and environmental destruction in Nigeria.

We forged very quick friendships with Philip McGrath, Willie Corduff, Brendan Philbin, Vincent Mc Grath and Micheál O'Seighin that weekend and we offered to help them in their fight.

The weekend concluded with a meeting between the landowners, the local campaigners and others who had come from around the country who committed that day to helping with the campaign. We discussed ways to broaden the campaign nationally, some offered to get busy working in their own areas, towns and cities and some offered to come back to Rosspport to help on the ground there.

The night before the men went to prison, Philip McGrath put out a call inviting those who had offered to return to Rosspport to do just that. The camp was set up in response to Philip's call.

The camp was an inspired idea, and reports on Indymedia showing its continued success - mirroring that of protests by Rosspport locals - illustrate the support that exists among the Irish people for the plight of the Rosspport people, dispossessed of their land and their very existence threatened by gas which will travel through pipelines mere feet from where they live, and through unstable bogland nearby.

The question is - will Irish people, involved in campaigns which are connected by the utter lack of interest for human and constitutional rights in those pursuing “progress”, follow the example of the brave Rosspport men and women and those supporting them?

The Casement Outlook

Venezuela : The Next stage of the Global Oil Wars

by turoe



"You have the freedom here to do what you want to do with your money, and to me, that is worth all the political freedom in the

world." (US banker in Venezuela under the dictatorship of Perez Jimenez (1949-1958)).⁶ In the context of what some observers have seen as a threatened direct US invasion of Venezuela, whose revolution threatens the oil interests that now encircle the globe, it is fitting that the Casement Outlook open its work with a look at this ancient country, Under the presidency of Hugo Chavez, Venezuela has banned GMO's, and greatly increased tariffs upon oil corporations tapping Venezuela's vast oil resources. A variety of social programs have been initiated, with state-supported health and employment programs. To the US and the Venezuelan elite, these socialist measures are proof-positive that Chavez is an heir apparent to Fidel Castro.⁷ With regard to Ireland, where the state is handing gas and oil resources to transnational corporations not merely gratis, but is paying for the privilege, it is instructive to examine the Venezuelan experience in the context of the growing evidence that Ireland has totally ceded national sovereignty to the energy corporations of other nations, a total betrayal not merely of the Constitution, but of the founding fathers of the Irish nation.

<http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/upload/publications/297.htm>
http://www.irelandposters.com/dublin/1916_proclamation.html

See The Casement Outlook on the Tara Foundation website
(<http://www.tara-foundation.org>) to read the rest of this article.

⁶ Noam Chomsky, *Year 501*. Verso Press, 1993, p. 99).

⁷ <http://www.counterpunch.org/sustar05282005.html>

Casement Outlook Report for May 3rd, 2006:

The Tara Foundation is proud to announce the creation of a new section-the Casement Outlook.

The Casement Outlook will act as a voice for indigeneous peoples and nations around the world

We believe that the work of Roger Casement, that great Irish patriot and humanitarian, should be properly celebrated by continuing his work. The barren debate over the so-called 'Black Diaries' has served to cast a pall over Casement's advocacy and championship of the first nations of the world: those endangered old nations and peoples whose very existence is now under such grave danger. The Casement Outlook will act as to promote the rights of those who Casement gave his life to protect, in Ireland, South America and around the world.

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