

Global and local

A grassroots gathering

Friends,

The last ten years have seen an upsurge in radical activity. From the Zapatistas in Mexico, to the anti-road protests, to the campaigns against the Bin Tax and Reclaim the Streets actions to anti-incinerator/dump struggles and the mass demonstrations against the WTO and IMF in Seattle, Prague, Quebec and Genoa, people have been organising to take back control of their lives.

We've all been inspired by the way actions like these have brought so many different people together, organised as equals and without hierarchy. This wave of increasing mobilisation has offered fierce resistance to the notion that the world must be ruled from above by a tiny elite of bankers, politicians and billionaire tycoons, showing how millions of people can effectively organise without them.

In Ireland, although there have been many campaigns on these issues, we haven't always been as successful at keeping campaigns open and decentralised, in getting a radical message across or in avoiding the co-optation, fragmentation and professionalisation of activism. That's why we* think it's time to set up a new bottom-up (grassroots, libertarian, anarchist, participatory, anti-authoritarian) network.

This network would

- Be based on the principle that people should control their own lives and work together as equals, as part of how we work as well as what we are working towards.
- Within the network this means rejecting top-down and state-centred forms of organisation (hierarchical, authoritarian, expert-based, Leninist etc.) We need a network that's open, decentralised, and really democratic.
- Call for solutions that involve ordinary people controlling their own lives and having the resources to do so: the abolition, not reform, of global bodies like the World Bank and WTO, and a challenge to underlying structures of power and inequality.
- Organise for the control of the workplace by those who work there.
- Call for the control of communities by the people who live there.
- Argue for a sustainable environmental, economic and social system, agreed by the people of the planet.
- Working together in ways which are accessible to ordinary people, particularly women and working-class people, rather than reproducing feelings of disempowerment and alienation within our own network.

This won't stop us from working with other groups, of course. We still think it's essential that, when we campaign against the effects of economic globalisation, we have as many people as possible on board. So we will continue to work with NGO's for example, even if they spend as much time attending summits as protesting against them.

But we think that it's time for us to start talking to each other and making our voices heard as a distinct trend within the movement. So we'd like to invite you to a meeting on 24th November in The Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square, Dublin, where we can talk about what we have in common and what we might gain from working together. While we will be bringing some proposals to the meeting we think it's important that there is plenty of room for your ideas as well and that decisions should only start to be made once everyone in agreement with this letter has a chance to participate.

Signed by

Nick Jones (Irish Mexico Group - personal capacity)

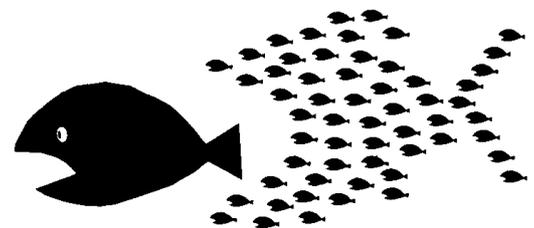
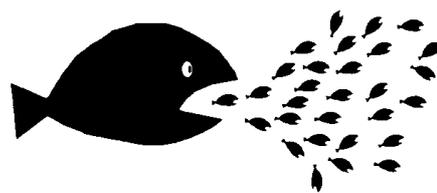
Eoin Ó Broin (Glúaiseacht - personal capacity)

Laurence Cox (Maynooth community researcher)

Members of Workers Solidarity Movement

Members of Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation

Members of Alliance of Cork Anarchists



** The initial group (above) calling this gathering includes men and women from Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Derry and Limerick. We intend to dissolve once it is underway so that the gathering itself can freely choose if, how and who will continue to coordinate the network.*

Proposed structure for gathering

We propose that our gathering take place over two days, the first to be comprised of general discussions between those who attend as below and the second, for those interested in ensuring this process continues, to set up some form of formal co-ordination structure.

Agenda - Day 1 Saturday Nov 24 2001 – Teachers Club (reg. at 11.00 sharp)

Three sessions each of which will comprise a very short introduction followed by small group facilitated discussions of the topic with key points being noted and displayed around the venue for people in the other groups. This method has been used with some success at similar gatherings internationally

Session 1

(Introduction Nick Jones)

Who are we and why have we come here

Session 2

(Introduction by Eoin Ó Broin)

The what, why and when of bottom up organisation

Session 3

(Introduction by Laurence Cox)

What can we do together in the future

Agenda Day 2 – Sunday 25 Nov - Spacecraft (starting time to be announced)

Discussion of concrete proposals of structure and activity for those who agree with the points outlined in the letter. We encourage groups and individuals to submit written proposals in advance of this session but also hope that the previous days workshops will result in new ideas which can be made concrete at these discussions.

Day 1 of this event will be held Saturday 24th November in the downstairs hall in the Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Sq, Dublin.

Day 2 will take place in Spacecraft, North Wall. Dublin

This is a preliminary notice to which changes may be made. Contact us to make sure you are told of these changes and also so we can have an idea of how many are likely to attend and plan accordingly.

To receive **further updates** about this gathering by email send an email to grassrootsgathering-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

By post send a letter to Grassroots gathering at any of the PO Boxes below
Belfast – c/o PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ
Dublin - c/o PO Box 1528, Dublin 8
Cork - c/o PO Box 31, Sorting Office, Cork

By phone ring Andrew at 087 9934150 --- **By email** contact us at GGcontact@yahoogroups.com

More information on the web at <http://grassrootsgathering.freeservers.com>