

# ICTU Cancel One Day General Strike

The one day general strike in the Republic, forced on much of the ICTU leadership, in opposition to a levy on pay (read pay cut) to bolster pensions decimated in the current recession has been cancelled by the ICTU leadership. This is a betrayal of the 150,000 workers who marched on the ICTU demonstration against the pension levy in February and all those who built for and voted for strike action.

This betrayal came as no surprise given the rumours that the ICTU had come up with the idea of the pension levy to the government in the first place! Nor is it a surprise

given that the Trades Union leadership was forced to ballot for national strike action given the strength of opposition to the levy from union members throughout the Republic. Much of the leadership of the Trades Unions is as keen to avoid strike action as the bosses and government - preferring to 'sort things out' over the heads of union members in social 'partnership' deals. If there were any that still needed convincing that social 'partnership' always leads to a bad deal for the workers the attacks on working people and our communities during this recession should dispel

that once and for all. Workers, who were not included in the divvying up of the wealth created by the Celtic Tiger, are now expected to pay for the recession. The recent budget in the south was simply another way to make workers pay for the bosses crisis.

The ICTU may have cancelled this strike but industrial action must still be taken, one way or another, in the face of these attacks.



We were saddened to hear of the death, on 13th April this year, of Spanish Anarchist and veteran of the Spanish Revolution Diego Camacho, better known as Abel Paz.

Abel Paz (born August 12, 1921. - Died April 13, 2009) was a life long member of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), a former combatant in the revolution and civil war and a historian. He was born in Almería in 1921, and moved with his family to Barcelona in 1929. In 1935 he started work in the textile industry and joined the CNT. In July 1936 with the start of the Spanish Civil War and Spanish revolution, at the age of 15, he joined the anarchist Durruti Column. As well as fighting on the Aragon front, he fought in the Barcelona May Events of 1937.

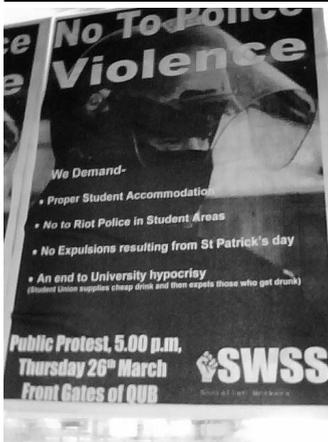
After the fall of Catalonia in January 1939, he went into exile in France, where he was interned. During the 1940s he fought both in the French resistance to Hitler and the Spanish Anarchist resistance to Franco.

He is the author of numerous works on anarchist history, the most important being his biography of Buenaventura Durruti which has appeared in several editions, and numerous languages.

He was a steadfast fighter for social justice and human emancipation from the twin yokes of capital and state.

Up until the end of his life Diego remained a passionate and committed anarchist convinced of the potential of humanity to realise libertarian communism.

In celebration of Abel's life Organise! will be displaying a collection of his photos as part of the 3rd Belfast Anarchist Book fair on the 28th and 29th of August alongside posters from the period and other artefacts from the civil war and revolution.



## Guest Article: Holylands Protest A Cynical Prank

In the wake of St. Patrick's Day rioting in the Holylands in Belfast our guest contributor Alan Murray, a long standing campaigner for what remains of a local community in the area, takes a critical look at the recent Socialist Worker Student Society 'protest' in support of the rioters.

There was considerable concern around Queen's Student Union about this protest. They had little to worry about. No-one showed. As one commenter put it, "They wouldn't have the brass neck".

He was right. Despite copious posters and leaflets and texts, nobody came. The True Believers of the Socialist Workers' Party stood around in the rain hugging their wet placards and looking ever more stupid. I would have felt sorry for them, but I thought their protest was a cynical prank at the expense of the handful of residents imprisoned in the Holylands. They seem to think that privileged, ignorant, sectarian chauvinists only behave like animals when the cops are there to "provoke" them.

### No Riot Police in student areas.

I do not like the cops. They have never protected me, nor will they. They have made no effort to prevent an entire community being driven from their homes by landlords and their "student" tenants. The kind of behaviour we saw as part of a "cultural event" happens five nights a week during term time. The police violence I saw that day was trivial compared to that doled out to protesters on the Ormeau Road throughout the 1990's.

I have no time for token gestures, like do nothing for twelve years then, for one day only, bring out the riot squad. The truth is

that the cops were under political pressure to not alienate a new demographic; the catholic middle class in Mid-Ulster. Now it's all blown up in their faces. The malice that drives people to wave pizza boxes and shout, "We Deliver", cannot be appeased. It's not as if this lot have ever experienced police violence, or adversity of any sort. They've been programmed to hate by their parents and peers. I note that despite many parades occurring in term time this lot never turned out to protest in the 1990's. They're Designer Republicans.

### No Slum Student Housing

An admirable demand. One might ask where the untold millions in HMO grants have gone. At the recent PACT meeting it was pointed out that the landlords have demolished the area and built a slum. Declan Boyle took great offence at this. "My properties are to the highest standard. They're passed by Building Control. They're passed by the Housing Executive. There's nothing wrong with them."

Such righteous indignation ignores the obvious question. What exactly are the authorities doing? They have doled out £240 million in HMO grants across the province, financing the rape of untold communities. This money came out of the housing budget, a fact that would explain the presence of 20,000 homeless. The Housing executive is not allowed to build. Instead it finances the private sector through grants and £140 million every year in housing benefit. In a sane and just society this money would be recycled to finance environmentally sustainable

public housing. I digress. To demolish a family home and build flats to house 16 students in rooms smaller than a prison cell is slum housing, no matter what the authorities say.

### No expulsions for St Patricks Day.

I, and apparently the Union, had expected a large turn-out in support of this. No show. Why? Perhaps because no-one will be expelled and we all know it. At the PACT meeting Gerry McCormack belittled the concerns of residents to the point of obscene absurdity. As it happens Queens do expel people; if they can't pay fees for example, or their studies have suffered because of health concerns or adverse circumstance, and this 40 years after they expelled Bernadette Devlin just before her finals.

This brings me to the big point. Queens was once a hotbed of radical student activism. Today it's a cultural sewer. Why will they not fight against fees? Why will they not demand full grants? Why do they not demand decent housing for all? The destruction of the Health Service; anyone care? Apparently not. Water privatisation; anyone listening? Silence.

What has happened to the student body? The answer can be found on the YouTube riot footage. Thinkers are packing their bags and going. We are in intellectual meltdown. We are also in moral meltdown. Whether it is privileged nihilists high on ethnic chauvinism, or a lost generation who drown their despair in drugs, our youth have no sense of purpose. I could argue that this shows the moral bankruptcy of Christian schooling, and I would not be wrong. I think the larger issue is structural. Thatcher and her heirs have quite literally destroyed society and in its place is that thing understood by Connolly; the morality of the pig trough.