



THE STARRY PLOUGH

IRSP Newsletter - Jan/Feb 2023



IRSP Announce Belfast City Council Candidates

The IRSP in Belfast have announced 2 candidates to contest in the upcoming council elections scheduled for May 2023. Michael Kelly has been selected for the Court ward and Dan Murphy for Blackmountain.

Michael, a long time community activist in the Lower Falls area has said, "I am certainly looking forward to the electoral challenge, though for me the work as normal just continues. I believe the people of the Lower Falls deserve Republican Socialist representation in City Council. The IRSP have a long and proud history here, and the movement is well entrenched within the community and supported."

Dan Murphy, who contested the recent assembly election in 2022, gaining a respectful 1100 first preference votes is looking to continue the trend.

Dan has said, "We were very happy at our electoral showing last May, considering it was our first time. Our campaign was run off the back of openly challenging landlordism along with tackling community issues. The people know that when you vote the IRSP, we don't disappear until the next election, we are on the ground 7 days a week, 365 days a year."

LIVES ARE AT RISK

IRSP warn of youth work funding crisis

The IRSP have warned that lives are potentially at risk if the British Government continue with their plans to slash youth work funding in the North of Ireland.

Lower Falls representative Michael Kelly has said, "Within communities like the Lower Falls, to some kids, the youth workers are the only stable and positive relation in their lives. Some have built decades of relationships with these workers who don't just act as their youth workers, but their confidants, their crisis worker and their role model."

Under the plans, the British secretary of state plans to slash youth work funding that is issued through the Education Authority which could lead to many of these vital roles being cut across working class areas.

Michael went on, "Our youth workers are the best in the world, we seen how vital they were on the Springfield Road in April 2021, we see it every day and night in areas like the Lower Falls, they are on call 24/7. Our communities need them and our youth need them."



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Commemoration for Neil McMonagle held in Derry

On January 29th Republicans from throughout Derry and further afield gathered to commemorate Volunteer Neil McMonagle.

Neil was 23 years old when he was assassinated by British operatives on February 2nd 1983 near his home. His young age at the time of his death had not stopped Neil from being a dedicated and committed activist in the Irish Republican Socialist Movement. Neil had given the oration at the funeral of Hunger Striker Patsy O'Hara. He was dedicated to the cause of Irish freedom, and was well aware of the struggles taking place throughout the world against imperialism and capitalism; a struggle he brought to the streets of Derry against the British.

Neil was held in high esteem by his own community. His funeral was attended by people from throughout Ireland and he was given a full Republican burial by the IRSM. A monument was built in his memory in Derry and it has been the site of commemorations since. At the recent commemoration on January 29th marking 40 years since Neil's death hundreds gathered behind a colour party and band to remember his sacrifice.

We will pay tribute to him in continuing on his struggle for National Liberation and Socialism

Saoirse go deo

IRSP Donegal attended a "Day Of Action" protest

As the people of Co. Donegal, take to the streets to demand proper services, duty and care.

All sectors of the health care systems are failing every person in Co. Donegal.

Letterkenny hospital is persistently in the top 5 lists as being overcrowded. No beds and people laying on trolleys in corridors are regular basis THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE !!

Care homes are unable to accept discharged patients as they have no beds or not enough staff.

Cancer patients, operations and vital checks are cancelled numerous times resulting in the patient getting worse or dying before they even get a diagnosis.

Nurses and doctors are exhausted to the point they sign off sick with exhaustion and depression or they leave the job they spent years learning and training to save and care for others.

Co. Donegal deserves better, And we demand better.

Save our services, save our people.

IRSP Limerick canvass for unity

IRSP Limerick were on the streets of Limerick city centre during January canvassing on behalf of the Yes For Unity campaign, distributing leaflets and engaging with people on the future of Irish Unity. With successful Yes For Unity marches around Ireland, it is time for the West to awaken to the possibility and full potential of a border poll.

Our aim as Republican Socialists is not just to achieve a United Ireland but to grasp power from the capitalist political elite, who have never had working class interests at heart, an end to the 6 County sectarian state, and an equal Ireland for all. This can be, and will be, achieved by a broad coalition of like minded Republican Socialists, not just organisations but also

individuals. The mobilisation of working class communities to such an extent can bring about a 32 County Socialist Republic, out of the hands of the two corrupt political institutions which have divided our country for over a century, at the will of their British counterparts. Such a Republic can and will radically change and benefit all the people of our now divided country.

Home News & Party Updates

Dublin IRSP activists attend anti-war protest outside British Embassy

On February 4th, activists from the IRSP Dublin branch attended a 'No to escalation' protest outside the British embassy. The event, organised by the Irish Truth & Neutrality Alliance, highlighted NATO expansion as the primary cause of the war and called for an end to the escalation. Recently, Western countries have agreed to send heavy tanks to the Kiev regime and now there we hear talk of fighter jets being next. More arms for Ukraine only means more devastation.

Despite the unprecedented levels of misinformation in mainstream media regarding the conflict, around 50 people came out to take a stance against the insanity.



Vital Dementia Housing Unit Reduced in West Belfast

The IRSP in Belfast have been made aware that a vital dementia housing unit operated by Choice Housing based in Cullingtree Road has been reduced of its capacity for vulnerable residents to make room for Refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. We understand this situation is complex and we recognise the anger being expressed by the local community witnessing this vital service being reduced. The IRSP will always work to ensure a solution is found that meets the needs of our most vulnerable whether that be sick residents or those fleeing conflict.

Billions of pounds worth of weapons and equipment is being sent into Ukraine on a weekly basis, yet it is our most vulnerable who are having to pay the price for this ongoing war. The IRSP on behalf of the local community will be contacting the private operators of this building to clarify and engage around this issue.

Slum Housing Conditions in the Heart of West Belfast

The IRSP in the coming weeks and months have announced their intention to campaign on behalf of Lower Falls residents around housing conditions that can only be described as 'scandalous for this day and age'.

Lower Falls IRSP representative Michael Kelly today accepted invites from the residents of Lower Clonard Street and Dunville Street, to visit their homes and witness for himself ongoing problems with Landlord neglect and serious damp, all of which are having an unacceptable negative impact on the health and wellbeing of parents and vulnerable children. Upon entering homes in Lower Clonard Street and Dunville Street, the presence of 'Damp' in the air was clearly evident. All families visited

reported related respiratory complaints amongst their children and themselves, including asthma, emphysema, and COPD caused by visible mould on walls and surfaces, a result of years of neglect.

Residents also reported how food and clothing were being destroyed due to the damp. Having inspected their homes further and upon consulting with party workers, it became evident that the source of the problem was untreated 'rising damp', with Landlords (both private and NHE) having cut corners over the years, opting for a cheaper 'wall skimming' approach while ignoring the source of the problem.

Following the visit, Michael Kelly stated:

"What I have witnessed today is honestly infuriating. We have homes in the Lower Falls in which families are living in conditions reminiscent of the 1940s.

These homes need root and branch structural treatment and 'Rising Damp proof coursing'. So far they have been palmed off with cheap 'wall skimming' solutions that have done nothing to improve their living conditions and children are now becoming ill as a result."

The IRSP have informed local residents of their options and intend to fight tooth and nail until this issue is resolved. We encourage all other residents with similar protests in West Belfast to come forward and inform us of their plight.



The Frozen Conflicts that could ignite in 2023

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the West was quick to recognise independence wherever it was declared. New national borders were determined by the pre-existing administrative borders of the Soviet Union. Amidst all this haste for nationhood, millions of former Soviet citizens found themselves within recognised states they wanted nothing to do with. In many cases, the new ethnic minorities in the former USSR states took up arms to protect themselves. Within the next ten years war broke out between Russians and Chechnyans, Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Ossetians and Georgians, Abkhazians and Georgians and Transnistrians and Moldovans.

In international relations, a frozen conflict is a situation in which active armed conflict has been brought to an end, but no peace treaty or other political framework resolves the conflict to the satisfaction of the combatants. Chechnya aside (where Russia's victory was complete), all of the aforementioned conflicts fall into this "frozen" category.

The events in Ukraine can be understood within the same context as the frozen conflicts as the post-Soviet borders did not correlate to democratic will. Nearly 25 years of painful, but largely peaceful, co-existence between East and West came to an end in 2014 when the Maidan coup created a western-oriented, neo-fascist entity in which millions of ethnically Russian people did not want to be. Similar to the 1990s post-Soviet conflicts, neither the Maidan regime nor the Donbass republics could achieve complete victory after years of war. After at

least 13,000 deaths from May 2014 to February 2022, the conflict seemed set to join the frozen list. When Russia launched its Special Military Operation to protect their compatriots in the Donbass and its own strategic security, the West escalated its military support and a fierce war has burned the country since.

It's clear that all of these conflicts would be resolved by now if it weren't for the hand of the West. If the US and its satellites weren't so hellbent on weakening Russia, the national borders in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine would have been readjusted along democratic lines — whether in the shape of new national states or a larger Russian Federation. Likewise, if western powers weren't funding both sides, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would have concluded long ago, as both would depend on Russia (as the regional power) and stability for prosperity and security.

Now, with the war in Ukraine ongoing, the Western media and political establishment have a clear interest in stoking tensions to open new fronts against Russia. Here are some short summaries of the circumstances surrounding the frozen conflict zones and the likelihood for war to erupt:

Moldova

The situation in Moldova has become considerably more tense lately. Transnistria, a strip of land on the border of Ukraine populated by Russian speakers, has been a de facto independent nation since the Soviet Union collapsed despite falling within the boundaries of the Moldovan Soviet Republic. War broke out with Moldova (who then were moving towards unification with Romania) in March 1992 and concluded with a ceasefire in July

that year. Unlike Abkhazia and South Ossetia, however, Russia does not recognise its independence. This is in part due to less hostile governments in Chisinau who did not renew hostilities against Transnistria since the 1990s and the presence of Russian peacekeeping troops. However, in 2020 Maia Sandu won the presidency against the then sitting president Igor Dodon and implemented a pro-western and anti-Russian foreign policy. As the war in Ukraine escalated, in Transnistria a series of five explosions occurred in 2022 between 25 and 27 April, on 6 May and on 5 June. No casualties were reported, but material damage did occur. The source of the attacks is disputed. There have been many calls by Ukrainian politicians to attack the Russian peacekeeping contingent there.

It is probable that there is a Russian plan to annex the historically Russian Odessa region of Ukraine, which would connect Transnistria to Russia proper. Whether such a situation is realised depends on the outcome of the battles in Ukraine at present. In the meantime, however, the Sandu administration is inching closer to EU and NATO integration, meaning Transnistria's days as a de facto independent nation are numbered either way as NATO membership will require Chisinau to capture and control the region.

Azerbaijan and Armenia

Armed clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh broke out in 1988 before the Soviet Union collapsed. Back then it was an Autonomous Oblast — home to a 90 percent plus ethnically Armenian population — within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

War erupted from 1991 to 1994 after the region declared independence, resulting in roughly 30,000 casualties and creating hundreds of thousands of refugees. In 1994, Russia brokered a ceasefire known as the Bishkek Protocol, leaving Nagorno-Karabakh de facto independent, with a self-proclaimed government in Stepanakert, but still heavily reliant on close economic, political, and military ties with Armenia.

Intermittent clashes occurred until full war broke out again in September 2020 when Azerbaijan, with Turkish military aid, attacked Nagorno-Karabakh. In only one and a half months of fighting more than 7,000 soldiers were killed. Russian peacekeepers upheld a ceasefire that granted Azerbaijan most of the territory it lost two decades prior, leaving Armenia with only a portion of Karabakh. Periodic violations of the 2020 ceasefire eventually escalated into a 2-day conflict beginning September 13, 2022. The death toll has been disputed, with estimates ranging from 100 to 300 killed in the cross-border attacks.

It's likely that this conflict will break out again soon. The West uses this war as a tool to discredit Russia's role as a peacekeeper in the region. After last September's clashes, Nancy Pelosi led a congressional delegation to Armenia to "denounce" Azerbaijani aggression, despite such aggression being enabled by lethal aid from a NATO member — Turkey.

Georgia

Abkhazia and South Ossetia were "Autonomous Oblasts" within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. War broke out between the Abkhazians and South Ossetians against Georgia shortly after the latter declared independence in 1991. Fighting persisted throughout the 1990s despite the presence of UN and Russian troops as Georgia tried and failed to retake the regions.

War erupted again in August 2008 when Georgia invaded the self-governing territories. However, Russia entered the conflict, defeated Georgia in 12 days and subsequently recognised

Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. The prospect of a new war of aggression from Tbilisi is never too far away. The culprit of the 2008 disaster, former President Mikheil Saakashvili, a clown prince of the West, returned to Georgia after exile in October 2021 to organise another colour change "revolution". He was immediately arrested and is currently serving a six year term for corruption charges .

For now, common sense prevails in the Georgian government led by the Georgian Dream party who have declined to provide military aid to Ukraine. They know that starting a new war against Russia or her allies won't work out in their favour. In the absence of the complete collapse of the Russian military, this conflict is likely to stay frozen.

Conclusion

All of these conflicts have deep-rooted causes which were exacerbated by the West's plans for the region. We live through times of omnipresent propaganda. Western media bets on our ignorance and uses it to spread a distorted view of conflicts which they created. The mass anti-Russian hysteria since February has been difficult to live with for anti-imperialists in the West. Should war break out in one of these conflict zones, we can't surrender the narrative to the US deep state and their media. We should work diligently to explain the true local and geopolitical sources of the conflict.

The endless stream of Western weaponry, mercenaries and media propaganda made a quick conclusion to the SMO all but impossible. It is also now clear decision-makers in Moscow gravely underestimated the amount of force necessary to secure Russia's security. After the early successes in Mariupol and Luhansk region, Russia paid dearly for this miscalculation with their retreats from Kharkov region and Kherson city. Not only did these retreats reinvigorate the Western war camp and their Ukrainian proxy forces, but it also opened the door to more massacres being committed on ethnic Russians deemed collaborators, the people the SMO was supposed to protect.

War, however, is not a perfect science. Now, like their grandfathers in WW2, the Russian army is learning from its mistakes and adopting new methods. General Surovkin, appointed commander of the operation in October, quickly launched a campaign of strikes against Ukrainian energy infrastructure. Irregular and scheduled blackouts are now a weekly, if not daily, occurrence.

West Ramps up Lethal Aid to Ukraine

As Russia's Special Military Operation in Ukraine approaches the one year anniversary, the idea of a diplomatic settlement is still unacceptable to the Western media and political establishment. Their policy of war to the last Ukrainian is being slowly and brutally realised across a frontline exceeding 1,000 kilometers.

Russia's reasons for the SMO, well-known to all honest observers of the conflict by now, are quite simple. To demilitarise Ukraine means stopping their armed conflict against the Donbass people and agreeing to never join hostile military pacts. To denazify Ukraine means removing from power the neo-nazi and extreme nationalist elements who have served as the West's puppets in Kiev since 2014 and have committed many atrocities against their own population.

The West's goals in this conflict are somewhat more nuanced. While the return of Ukraine to the 1991 borders is their stated objective, removing Russia as a sovereign, powerful rival is obviously the end goal. Hence the hysteric propaganda, the unprecedented levels of military and financial aid to the notoriously corrupt Kiev regime, the biolabs and the total economic war. Western private economic interests in both countries are also another crucial factor in continued Western support for the Kiev regime.

No end to the war in sight as West ramps up Lethal Aid to Ukraine

(continued) in most urban centres the Kiev regime controls. Of course, the western establishment's shameless double-think is on full display during this war. Ukraine's carpet shelling of the residents of Donetsk and countless other acts of terrorism are simply not mentioned, while Russia's strikes on infrastructure are portrayed as genocide.

The withdrawal from Kherson, a city on the wrong side of the Dnipro for the safety of Russian forces, showed that Russia is prioritising personnel over territory. The Kiev regime's long and hopeless holdouts in Mariupol or more recently Soledar, however, shows that they are prioritising territory over people in a bid to win ever more money for themselves from their Western sponsors.

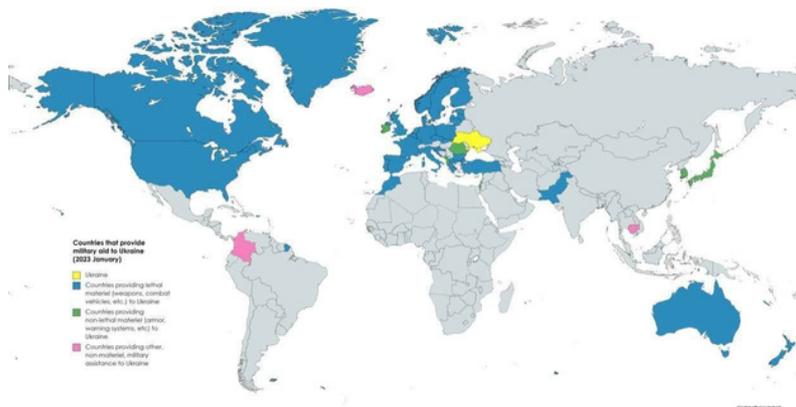
Russia's recent success in Soledar has prompted a new escalation from the West; the provision of modern tanks to the Kiev regime. It will be at least half a year until we find out whether the 100 or so Main Battle Tanks promised by Western countries give Ukraine any advantage, but given Russia's own fleet will still be around 6 times larger, it is unlikely.

The political fallout in Western countries due to the self-induced energy crises created by their war on Russia may well be more decisive than any events on the battlefield itself. If more anti-sanctions governments are elected in the EU and NATO (so far Hungary and Cyprus stand alone), the West's war effort in Ukraine could collapse. In Germany, especially, the deindustrialising effects of sanctions are creating a broad anti-NATO movement.

If Western support remains at this level, however, it is difficult to conceive Russia completing the SMO this year. On the other hand, even if Western aid to the Kiev regime increases tenfold, it is impossible to imagine the 1991 borders being returned. Ukraine simply no longer has the numbers for such an endeavour and NATO knows their direct involvement means collective suicide via nuclear apocalypse.

So what we're seeing now is a long war of attrition. The maths, however brutal and long, will ultimately work out in Russia's favour. They always do.

Countries that provide military aid to Ukraine (January 2023)



Rememberances

January

- Seamus O'Kane - Jan 2nd 2018
- Tony Friel - Jan 29th 2018
- John McColgan - January 24th 1998
- Patrick Hessay Phelan - Jan 21st 1996
- Colm Murray - Jan 22nd 2001
- Thomas Power - Jan 20th 1987
- John O'Reilly - Jan 20th.. 1987
- Mary McGlinchey - Jan 31st 1987
- Gino Gallagher - Jan 30th 1996

February

- Harry O'Hara - 28th Feb 2017
- Gérard Anderson - 20th Feb 2015
- Dominic McGlinchey - 10th Feb 1994
- Denis Murphy - 6th Feb 2010
- Neil McMonagle - 2nd Feb 1983
- Mickey Kearney - 18th Feb 1987
- Hugh Ferguson - 20th Feb 1975

Fuair Siad Bás ar son Saoirse na h-Éireann