

REPORTING TWO IRELANDS



Eight CCSU journalism students embark on a journey to Northern Ireland and the Republic.

ANALISA NOVAK

BY RUTH BRUNO

Following our Spring 2016 trip to Cuba, the Central Connecticut journalism department began preparations to return to the sun-kissed island to report on the unfolding United States – Cuba relationship. We had landed on the pulse of one of the biggest international headlines when we covered the repeal of the long-standing embargo two years ago and were rearing for follow-up stories. But with a Donald Trump presidency and a vacant U.S. embassy, those travel plans were thrown the way of diplomacy and a stable White House staff. By the time Spring Break rolled around, it found us watching Irish jigs in the basement of O’Flaherty’s Bar in Donegal, Ireland, just 50 miles from the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic.

I will admit I was not thrilled about spending our ten, short days reporting from a soggy island that, at an outsider’s first glance, was seemingly cemented in its own haunting past. But within a few days of landing in the country, any stereotypical tropes of lucky clovers and lucrative rainbows melted away under heated discussions about abortion referendums, Brexit, sectarianism, segregation and a not-so-distant past filled with violence and hatred.

Among the many we visited was Michael Gallagher, who lost his 21-year-old son, Aiden, in a car bombing in 1998 in which 29 people were killed.

We shuffled into a meetinghouse in Omagh where Gallagher discussed the attack made by a splinter group from the Irish Republic Army which opposed the IRA’s efforts to enter into peaceful negotiations with Great Britain, Protestant loyalists and their respective violent groups.

“The Troubles,” as the period of violence is referred to, has left many like Gallagher reeling. When asked by a history student how he had dealt with the loss of his son, Gallagher gave insight into just how the violence still affects many across the country.

“In a lot of ways I really haven’t dealt with it,” Gallagher said. “Because I know if I took one second to sit and process this, I would probably never get back up again.”

Gallagher lamented that after two decades since the bombing, no convictions have ever been made. Last year, he filed a lawsuit against Northern Ireland’s police chief under accusations of breaching their human rights by failing to investigate the bombing.

And Gallagher is certainly not alone in his quest for answers and accountability. In Derry, we talked with

Micheál Smith of the Pat Finucane Center, which seeks to bring justice to the victims and survivors of terrorist and para-military organizations made up of both Irish Catholic, Republicans and Protestants loyal to the reigning Great Britain throne.

With Brexit threatening to tear Northern Ireland apart once again, the world will be watching to see if the Good Friday Agreement will hold. But many fear that along with the United Kingdom’s decision to overrule Northern Ireland’s wishes and leave the European Union, violence will be incited once again.

Throughout our travels, interviews and meetings, those in Northern Ireland remarked on how they had been inspired by the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. to both fight for their rights and to make peaceful negotiations.

Today, the United States and Northern Ireland share a commonality in seeking reparations for a past of repression and violence. Perhaps it is our turn to watch Northern Ireland as they watched us in the 1960s and as we both seek a way to tread across divided soil.

In Northern Ireland there will be no simple “burying of the hatchet,” but perhaps, if efforts succeed, that hatchet can be acknowledged and used to build a brighter, peaceful future.

Bus With CCSU Students A Target For Paint Attack



DILLON MEEHAN

The bus was filled with CCSU journalism, history and sociology students.

BY DILLON MEEHAN

While driving on the A6 coming back from Belfast, the bus containing CCSU students was struck by paint from a passing vehicle.

Luckily the paint splatter only caught the side of the bus and not the windshield, which could have caused a major accident.

John Guthrie, a resident of Derry who has been giving tours and lectures to the students while on the trip, alleges that the incident was actually an attack carried out by someone from the north because the bus is from the Republic of Ireland. He alleges that the driver saw the license plate belonging to the Republic and then tried to cut the bus off. When he was unsuccessful, he opted for a different tactic.

Despite being 20 years removed from the Good Friday Agreement, which was mainly focused on troubles within Northern Ireland but addressed tensions across the border as well, there are still some troubling sentiments.

Family History: The Fight For A United Ireland

BY DILLON MEEHAN

It’s the spring of 1973 and Pink Floyd’s Dark Side of The Moon had been out for a little over a month. My father, Shawn Meehan, a 16-year-old junior of Hall High School, came home to give it yet another listen. However, after walking to his house on Long Lane Road, he found his turntable snapped in half and engulfed in flames in the backyard. The culprit? His grandfather, Thomas Barry, a man who 57-years prior put his life on the line to fight for Irish independence in 1916. The former record player-turned-kindling was a Garrard turntable, and printed on the plastic base read “Manufactured in Great Britain.” It was a hatred that nearly every Irish citizen had after almost half a millennia of British rule.

Fast-forward 45 years and while that record has become one of the most recognizable pieces of art in England, Europe, and the rest of the world, the most popular art in Derry, Northern Ireland are the murals painted throughout the city. The most famous are the ones that surround Free Derry Corner, a mural originally painted in 1969. Across the street there are several more, most of which carry messages about civil rights and are a tribute to Bloody Sunday, when British soldiers fired at unarmed peaceful protestors, killing 14 and injuring over a dozen more.

It was similar events, which fueled the hate my great-grandfather had over a century ago because he had been witness and victim to the same acts of violence. In 1919, Winston Churchill, who at the time was the Secretary of War created a special police force named the Royal Irish Constabulary, which had a special reserve more commonly known as the “black and tans.” The force was primarily filled with veterans from World War I and their sole purpose was to help aid in the fight against the Irish Republican Army.

Growing up, Barry routinely got into fights with the black and tans and suffered a chronic back injury after taking a kick to his lower back with their steel-toed boots. His hooliganism reached a breaking point when he and his best friends stole a prized bull from a wealthy Protestant family, after the theft they butchered the bull and ate it. The cops were after him following the attack which caused his sister Nancy to file paperwork without his knowledge and

in the middle of the night smuggled him out of Cork and into Cobh, where he was put on a boat to America, he wasn’t told where he was going and never saw or spoke to his friends again.

Two Countries

For many Americans, Ireland is viewed as nothing more than a country filled with a bunch of happy drunks that occasionally get into bar brawls and listen to folk music. The reality is that it is a nation filled with years of hardship that culminated with a four-decade-long guerilla-style war between paramilitaries and the British Army. From the lens of my family, I saw the more unfortunate reality, how hate could fuel ones to create crimes beyond human understanding.

Since May 3, 1921, the island of Ireland has been split into two separate nations: The Republic of Ireland, which represents the southern and central region, and Northern Ireland. The possibility of unification was thought to be dead and buried years ago after the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. However, the vote to leave the European Union, Brexit has opened to the possibility of a unified Ireland.

In 2016, 56 percent of the votes in Northern Ireland were in favor of staying in the EU, and according to the 2011 census in Northern Ireland, 48 percent of the population is or was raised Protestant, while 45 percent is or was raised Catholic. Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, a member of Sinn Féin and senator for the Industrial and Commercial panel who spoke with Central Connecticut students, believes that Brexit is the catalyst behind a unified Ireland and the possible end of the United Kingdom.

“The majority of people in Northern Ireland voted to stay and their wishes are not being respected,” said Mac Lochlainn of how Brexit will fuel the unification process for Ireland. “A few years ago Scotland almost voted for independence; it was 45 percent of the Scottish people. So it doesn’t take a huge swing for Scotland to say ‘right we’ve had enough of this.’ Brexit is a huge threat to Scotland: 63 percent of the Scottish people voted to stay in the European Union, and they were very exercised by Brexit. Brexit could be the dismantling of the United Kingdom, as we know it”

Family Troubles

Thomas Barry had a nephew, Frank Gallagher, who spent 10 years of his childhood living with him. Over time they grew close and Barry’s extremely pro-Ireland views

rubbed off on him. By the 1970s Gallagher, was a member of the West Hartford Police Department and a prevalent figure in a Connecticut-based Irish family organization.

From the outside, he was a genuine, principled member of society, when in reality he was smuggling weapons and munitions from the police force and funds from the Irish society to the Provisional Irish Republic Army. IRA quartermasters in Belfast were finding firearms and ammunition in pieces of furniture, while oblivious members of the society were donating money to help Irish widows and orphans – when in reality they were creating British ones. Gallagher’s involvement caused issues within the family While Barry never had the capital to financially support it, he was one of the few who believed in the ideology. His wife frequently vacationed in the British Virgin Islands, but Gallagher never joined. He left the country once to go to Ireland to visit friends and family but was followed by what was believed to be paramilitaries the entire trip. It left him so disturbed he never returned to the nation.

Debating the Future

While Mac Lochlainn is hopeful of a united Ireland, he understands the history of the Troubles and how unification must be done correctly in order to avoid the reoccurrence of violence.

“The numbers are tight, unionists know that this thing is not sustainable. This is their last stand it’s Stalingrad, but it doesn’t need to be like that,” said Mac Lochlainn. “We will have a united Ireland someday, absolutely no doubt about that. But it is how we get there. We are at that point now where it is obvious we are going to have it. And the painful conversations and the fear is setting in amongst the unionists here. So we need to be very careful here with how we handle it, we can’t go back into violence.”

While Mac Lochlainn and other members of Sinn Féin are hopeful, many loyalists have the exact opposite view. James Greer, a former loyalists combatant who fought in the paramilitaries against the IRA during the Troubles, views a unified Ireland as an inevitability, but not something that will happen soon.

“Northern Ireland doesn’t have any kind of industry, and that is where the problem lies. Britain can’t afford Northern Ireland because of the economics, and southern Ireland (Republic of Ireland) cannot afford Northern Ireland,” said Greer. “Southern Ireland would love to have

the Island reunified, and maybe it will happen. But it will not happen in my lifetime.”

While some unionists share that view, others believe it is not an inevitability, and it that it may never happen.

“A united Ireland? James says not in his lifetime. Certainly not in my lifetime certainly not in 100 years, I do believe that. You cannot enforce that rule on the majority of people. It’s a recipe for disaster,” said Nigel Gardiner, while sitting next to Greer, a former member of the British Army during the Troubles, during a discussion with Central Connecticut students. “We have an issue, it’s called international global terrorism. The United Kingdom needs its borders secured. It needs its river-ways secured. They cannot do without Northern Ireland. And on that basis, in I believe that Northern Ireland for the foreseeable, foreseeable, foreseeable future will remain part and partial to the United Kingdom,”

When I spoke with younger Irish men and women, the idea of a unified Ireland is something they do think about, but the focus is much more on economics than religion.

Danny Doherty lives in Buncrana, County Donegal, in the Republic of Ireland, and grew at the tail end of the Troubles.

“I do find religion is an older generation thing. It shows if you speak to people of an older generation and the stories you hear of them all saying the prayers and stuff like that,” said Doherty. “Ireland being reunited with the English, I’m not sure how I feel about it. I don’t think it will be a big thing as people make out it may be. I do feel that it could cause some issues with the older generation, but I think a lot of sensible people will see it as something that’s happened and just adapt and learn to live with it. End of the day most want to keep peace we’ve fought so hard for”

There has been peace in Ireland for over 20 years now due to the Good Friday Agreement. While unification is something many Irish-Americans want, and certainly something my family wants, it has to be done right if it were to happen at all. There is tension in all parts of Northern Ireland, from segregated housing complexes, to murals calling for the end of British Rule, to citizens correcting the name of certain towns depending on your religious preference. Brexit will change the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland in the near future. The only hope is that it isn’t the beginning of a second era of troubles.

Pro-Choice Woman Attacked For Her Beliefs

BY ANALISA NOVAK

Tensions are so high when it comes to the referendum in Ireland that violence has started to erupt. While handing out informational pamphlets about repealing the 8th Amendment, a supporter had them thrown in her

face.

A #prolife woman had seen her and the #prochoice storefront stand she was working on Grafton Street in Dublin.

The woman and her mother decided to approach the #prochoice supporter. She grabbed the pamphlets from her hand and threw them in her face, while she screamed

“murderers.” The woman was upset that abortion supporters would campaign on Mother’s Day. This also took place a day after tens of thousands of anti-abortion campaigners marched two blocks away.

The #prochoice worker, pictured above, cried that she’s used to getting a reaction, but this is the second time that it’s gotten physically violent for her.



Violence erupts over the Eighth Amendment.

ANALISA NOVAK

REPORTING TWO IRELANDS

Blurry Borders Breed Economic Uncertainty In Northern Ireland

BY RUTH BRUNO

In a small shop in downtown Belfast, Northern Ireland, Tracey McNally twists back a knob to unlock a glass door to patrons. The lunch hour has just ended, prompting McNally to re-open the shop for the day. A wall of chef knives clings to bolted magnets behind the cashier's desk where McNally takes her place as she's done every Thursday for the past 10 years of her employment at The Chef Shop. Though the routine seems secure—mundane even—McNally worries she won't be able to open the shop to customers for much longer as the economic impacts of Brexit loom on Northern Ireland's hazy horizons.

"We'll have to reduce staff members," McNally said as a direct result of the Brexit referendum. "Because we're an independent store, we can't incur every cost that comes in. It's been very demotivating."

Following a 2016 referendum by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, Northern Ireland finds itself under an obligation to follow along even though a majority vote of 56 percent in the region had voted to stay. The UK's decision to leave the EU is set to take effect by March of next year in accordance with Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty. Until then, small business owners, blue-collar workers and farmers are left wondering how the split will affect their businesses and the nation's economy as a whole.

"The border issue is massive here," said McNally, who identifies as a Catholic Nationalist and opposes the vote to leave the EU. "It's a huge deal to us because it's the English putting up their walls again and they asked for Brexit—they don't want to be part of the club so they have to secure their borders."

Exactly what kind of borders will be drawn, however, remains unclear. A major concern is the question of hard and soft borders and the impact a hard border could have on imports and exports. The border between the two Irelands is currently a soft one because both regions are in the EU, for now.

Currently, no checkpoints are in place if one were to cross the border. Passports are not checked, visas are not necessary and the exchanges of goods and services between the two countries flow freely. However, a decision for a hard border could change all of that. A hard border would mean the implementation of tariffs—a financial obligation that could be a hard hit to Northern Ireland's economy. Small and micro-businesses throughout Northern Ireland rely heavily on exporting goods to the Republic of Ireland.

The Chef Shop imports products from countries all over the world to supply their biggest customers—the major hotels and restaurants in Belfast—with cost-effective products. But with the threat of tariffs on imports and exports, McNally worries her customers will look elsewhere to find the same products for a cheaper price.

"If we have to put all the burden on our customers, well then, our customers go elsewhere," McNally said.

McNally said that she is frustrated by the prospect of a hard border and is anxiously awaiting a legislative decision as to whether such strict borders will be enforced.

"It could end up being very dangerous for small stores and businesses because the tax rates could end up being so high that it could end up costing us far



RUTH BRUNO

A poster in Derry relays opposition to Brexit

too much to be open as a store," McNally said.

McNally isn't alone in her concern or her speculation. A hard border would negatively impact approximately 15 percent of businesses in the region, according to The Financial Times. Furthermore, Northern Ireland's economy is heavily dependent on trading with the Republic—the destination for 30 percent of the region's exports.

Northern Ireland's agricultural sector is expected to suffer, as well, as the region is reliant on the Republic for more than 60 percent of its food and live animal exports, according to The Financial Times. With the implementation of tariffs and checkpoints, goods and livestock will be more expensive to export and transportation of these exports will be slowed.

Tommy McKearney, a freelance journalist, political activist and organizer associated with the Independent Workers Union, believes Northern Ireland will be left in a particularly vulnerable position, as the region does not possess a strong manufacturing or engineering industry.

"What we're left here is a flailing economy at best in Northern Ireland," McKearney said.

Due to Northern Ireland's history of unrest and violent disputes, McKearney feels that a hard border will be necessary in order to quell any friction that might erupt, but he maintains that the border will be detrimental to business.

Political Debate over Borders

In early February, officials from the UK and the EU began drawing up a plan to keep Northern Ireland in the single market and effectively avoid a hard border. Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, was quick to point out the inequity in such a decision. Sturgeon argues that if Northern Ireland were to be allowed to participate in the single market, it would leave Scotland at a disadvantage in trying to compete economically with Northern Ireland.

In addition to pressure from surrounding countries who will not be given any special exceptions to continue to compete in the single market, there are several prominent parties of Northern Ireland who are in favor of hard borders.

Legacy Of McAliskey Expressed In L/Derry Mural

BY ANGELA FORTUNA

The city of L/Derry is full of colorful and creative peace murals just like these. In the Bogside of Derry, the messages of many murals are different. The one above is about Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, a politician and activist since the age of 19 when she was a college student. McAliskey organized and participated in a number of protests for equal rights for Catholics, including the Bloody Sunday clash of 1972. In 1970, she was the youngest elected member of parliament at the time. Now in her 70s, she travels the world speaking as a feminist, activist and elder stateswoman.



ANGELA FORTUNA

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey was a Catholic activist who protested for equal rights.

Two College Students Rally To Repeal 8th Amendment



ANALISA NOVAK

Two university students participated in a massive rally in Dublin to protect the right to life.

BY ANALISA NOVAK

Like most Millennials, Alisha Yurma (left) and Nadia Bandenberg (right) spend hours staring at the glaring reflection of their phones. In the midst of scrolling through their feeds, which are filled with a sea of likable and carefully curated posts from their peers, the two students from the National University of Ireland Galway saw something that disturbed them.

"Pro-choice and repeal are all over social media so we want to make sure that students understand what they are liking," Yurma said.

The two, who participated in a massive rally in Dublin on March 10 to protest efforts to repeal the 8th Amendment, which prohibits abortion, says the message of abortion has been watered down by the irresponsible and immature mindsets of their generation.

"I think young people are only thinking about themselves, they are being very selfish. They want to have sex without having the responsibility of having a baby. They just want to get rid of it because they feel it is inconvenient and I don't think it's fair. An unborn baby has equal rights to life just as the mother does," Yurma said, as she clutched an orange poster stating, "Without the right to life, other rights are worthless," tightly to her chest.

The two young women plan to vote in the historic referendum on May 25. Despite efforts to persuade them to support the repeal, the two ladies walk side by side, their convictions certain. They only hope that their peers will do the same.

"Make up your mind if you haven't decided which way you are going, look at all the information and look at all the facts. Just make up your mind," Bandenberg said.

Free Derry Murals



DILLON MEEHAN

Mural in the Catholic sector of Derry depicts violence of The Troubles.

BY DILLON MEEHAN

"And the battle's just begun. There's many lost, but tell me who has won? The trench is dug within our hearts, And mothers, children, brothers, sisters are torn apart." -Lyrics from U2's "Sunday Bloody Sunday"

On January 30, 1972, the British Army fired on innocent Catholic citizens in Derry, Northern Ireland, killing 13 (a 14th would die from injuries sustained a few months later). At least a dozen more were injured.

For nearly four decades, the unjust killing of unarmed citizens was covered up by the British government until the results of a public inquiry were unveiled in 2010. The inquiry revealed that the killings were unjustifiable and that the soldiers corroborated and knowingly gave false accounts.

In the immediate aftermath of the massacre, support for the IRA and their cause amongst Catholics dramatically increased.

This mural was created by the Bogside Artists, a fitting name considering the attack and the murals are in the Bogside neighborhood of Derry. They protest the policies taken up by the mostly Protestant Derry Police and British Army, who knowingly killed and abused Catholics for decades during The Troubles.

Sinn Féin Attempts To Wrestle Religious Control From Schools

BY SARAH WILLSON

Religious segregation in Northern Ireland schools has been the reality for much of the country's history, according to Sinn Féin activist Tom McKearney. From the time children are the age of three, they are separated into primary schools based on whether they are Catholic or Protestant, creating what McKearney said is a lack of acceptance and tolerance for those of other faiths.

Despite the fact that there are both Catholic and Protestant education programs, the Catholics have "maintained their grip" in Northern Ireland, ultimately dominating the education system. Now, McKearney said Sinn Féin is working towards

integrating Catholic and Protestant students.

"We need to wrestle control of our education system from the Catholic and Protestant churches," McKearney said. "We need to educate our children in secular spaces that reflects what's supposed to be a secular republic. We have a big challenge, but we will get there."

Still, McKearney said, the biggest struggle in all of this will be receiving the support of churches. McKearney also said that while his party does support some religious education in school, it believes parents should have the option to educate their children with both Protestants and Catholics. The Protestant preschool shown here is located in a Protestant enclave that is surrounded by Catholic neighborhoods in Derry (Londonderry to Protestants). Most Protestants live on the other side of the river.



SARAH WILLSON

Religious segregation in Northern Ireland schools continue to prevail, with hopes for integrated schools.

REPORTING TWO IRELANDS

An Irish Language Act Could Transform Northern Ireland



ANGELA FORTUNA

BY ANGELA FORTUNA

Welcome to Ireland, or as the Irish would say: “Fáilte roimh chách.” Imagine going on a trip to Northern Ireland: the land is beautiful and the people are kind. The only difference now is there may be two primary languages in the country.

Students studying abroad in Northern Ireland may now discover two languages in the equation, as the country’s native Gaelic language could have equal footing with English due to the implementation of a proposed Irish Language Act.

Irish is spoken at home by only 0.2 percent of people in Ireland, with six percent having some knowledge of the native language, according to Gulf News.

In different parts of the Republic and Northern Ireland, the Irish language is spoken either very prominently or is utterly nonexistent. In the Republic of Ireland, Dublin features many signs and notices translated in both Irish and English. The capital city is known to feature more notices in public transportation, as many people travel there when visiting the Republic of Ireland.

Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, has a history of language that differs from Dublin. Belfast is primarily separated by two main roads, Falls and Shankill. On Falls Road, there are many local vendors and signs that translate into Irish. Switching over to Shankill Road, there are fewer Irish translations and more signs written in English. This is because more Nationalists, who are typically Catholic, speak the Irish language than Protestants.

Negotiations around the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union, known as Brexit, have given the language act more urgency because Irish language proponents, such as Sinn Féin, have made its acceptance one of the conditions of leaving.

UK leaders who support Brexit are also less inclined to support the ascent of the Irish language because of identity issues, and often imply the support of an independent Northern Ireland.

“You go to Stormont and there isn’t any Irish in the place. That is utterly



ANGELA FORTUNA

unacceptable,” Sinn Féin member and Senator Padraig Mac Lochlainn said of Northern Ireland’s language accessibility.

Talks of implementing an Irish Language Act in Northern Ireland have been carried out for many years, and little has been done to execute an equal representation of the English and Irish languages in the country.

The decline in Irish native speakers is why the Sinn Féin political party wants to restore the Irish language to equal footing with English. Centuries ago, the languages were switched: English was primarily spoken only in Dublin while Irish was spoken throughout the rest of Ireland. Sinn Féin hopes to eventually get Ireland back to this point.

Mac Lochlainn spoke on behalf of his affiliated political party and their stance on executing an Irish Language Act. While the Republic of Ireland is not directly affected by an Irish Language Act, there has been a growing interest in keeping it alive.

“An Irish Language Act was promised in the Good Friday Agreement 20 years ago,” Mac Lochlainn said. “There aren’t a huge number of Irish speakers in the Republic of Ireland. It’s something that we want to bring back. Our language is a part of our history.”

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement expressly requires that the British Government will take action to promote the Irish language, facilitate and advance the use of the language, while removing restrictions that discourage the expansion of the country’s native language, according to the Good Friday Agreement.

Sinn Féin is not satisfied with the way Stormont, the parliamentary buildings in Northern Ireland, is managing political issues and wants some say in what happens in the country in terms of politics. The Democratic Unionist Party is against what Sinn Féin envisions for Northern Ireland. The political differences between the DUP and Sinn Féin play a big role in the outcome of a proposed Irish Language Act, and whether or not it will be executed in Northern Ireland.

“What’s extraordinary is if you go to Wales in the United Kingdom, it is utterly bilingual [Welsh and English]. If you go to a parliamentary or council meeting, they literally speak in both Welsh and English,” Mac Lochlainn said. “Scotland is the same. You’ll see bilingual signs in the airports and other



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places.”

The support block for the reestablishment of the Irish language consists of an unexpected following from younger people, according to Mac Lochlainn.

“Ironically, younger people are fighting to bring back our language,” Mac Lochlainn said. “They’re really vibrant people. They are saying ‘I want my language to be reflected in my assembly. I want to be able to speak Irish. I want the option to go to an Irish language school.’ [The disappearance of the Irish language] has become a big issue.”

John Guthrie, a Derry native and Protestant, said it is rare for someone of his religion to understand and speak Irish. Guthrie said that he has experienced fewer and fewer people over the years speaking Irish in both the Republic and Northern Ireland.

The differences in religion make their way into newspaper reporting, as well.

The editor of the Londonderry Sentinel, Peter Hutcheon, took questions from and gave a tour to Central Connecticut students on behalf of the Londonderry Sentinel and the Derry Journal.

When asked about the religious divide between L/Derry, Hutcheon said that both newspapers try to avoid religious ties when reporting. However, the staff tends to take “more of a nationalist view” in editorial writing.

Hutcheon said that newspapers nowadays in Northern Ireland are steering away from printing Irish, including the Derry Journal and the Londonderry Sentinel.

“There is no value to us to put [the newspaper] out in Irish. There aren’t enough Irish speakers,” Hutcheon said. “Most people who speak Irish speak English as well.”

But for its proponents, the absence of Irish in key forums is why they are fighting.

“There will be no Unionist minister until they respect our culture, identity and language,” Mac Lochlainn said. “We will not accept our citizens in the North of Ireland as second-class citizens anymore. Those days are over. We demand our language act and we demand equality for our people in the North.”

Religious Segregation Lives On In Northern Ireland Schools Post-Troubles

BY SARAH WILLSON

Attending a Catholic school all of her life, Aoife NicShéain did not meet her first “Protestant friend” until she was 15-years-old.

“I lied [to my parents] and went out when I shouldn’t have been,” NicShéain recalled, saying that was the first time she made a friend who was of a different religious domination than her.

Growing up in the city of Derry in Northern Ireland, NicShéain said she did not have the option of attending a school that had Catholic and Protestant students. As a result, all of her friends shared the same religious values.

The 30 years of violence, also known as The Troubles, was due to the harsh segregation between Catholics and Protestants in school and other areas of society, that was seen as the normal day to day life of the country that came to be in the 1920’s.

Becoming more prominent during The Troubles, children, from the time they are five-years-old, are divided by their religion into educational programs. Despite the Good Friday Peace Agreement that formally ended the troubles in 1998, 90 percent of children in Northern Ireland still attend religiously segregated schools.

Although some blame The Troubles for the worsening of the divide, NicShéain said she blames the parents, who she believes are still part of the problem today.

“It’s total nonsense,” NicShéain said. “There’s still hate and it’s because kids copy what their parents do. The parents are absolutely the problem in this.”

Now working in a denominationally divided school as a Teaching Assistant, NicShéain said some of the kids, even at such a young age, have begun to question their denominational divide.

She recalled a time where a group of kids from a Protestant school on the other side of the river, where most Protestants live, went up to NicShéain and her colleagues during an integrated school party, questioning why their Catholic peers

from the other institution were speaking another language.

Upon hearing that question, NicShéain said the teachers got “a bit flustered and embarrassed,” trying to answer, as normally only Catholic schools teach the Irish language. The kid’s reaction, NicShéain said, was “why can’t we learn it too?”

“That was so powerful,” NicShéain said. “Nobody had an answer for them. [The students] did not care what religion their friends were. It didn’t matter to them. There’s an innocence to it.”

However, integrated schools remain an uncommon solution with only 62 non-denominational in existence in Northern Ireland, according to the United Kingdom Department of Education.

Like the students NicShéain mentioned, one student attending an educational institution based on his religion seems to have little to no opinion on the matter.

Christopher O’Malley, a Catholic high school student interview while at a coffee shop, said he has never given much thought to the topic.

“I haven’t really thought about it to be honest with you,” O’Malley said. “Depending on who you have [for a teacher], it’s all the same cards,” he said referring to the religious practices that take place throughout the school day.

Religious practices in schools include morning prayer and bible study, though some institutions, particularly secondary ones, have places of worship that students can USE attend if they choose to do so.

Although separated schools have been taking place before the time of the Troubles, it began to expand in 1969 after the time period began, impacting both schools and neighborhoods at the time, according to Northern Ireland native John Guthrie.

“It impacted schools in so far as you made sure that your child was going to the correct denominational school,” Guthrie said. It impacted on the intake of schools because there was a physical movement of all the Protestants from one side of the river to the other. Some people moved away

because they didn’t like that,” Guthrie said referring to the separation that took place in the late sixties.

It was because of the religious divide in schools, Guthrie said, that children were often victims of hate crimes that occurred while walking to school.

“Many idiots from this area [L/Derry], attacked [Catholic children] with petrol bombs and gas bombs and bottles filled with urine which they threw upon the children calling for them to get out and go back home,” Guthrie said. “[Because of this], children had to go to school a different way.”

Though the majority of hate crimes have stopped, Guthrie said there is only one solution to end it all: “Keep politics out of religion, religion out of politics and both out of schools.”

Now, the left-wing political party Sinn Féin is trying to do just that.

“We believe schools should be separate from church,” activist for Sinn Féin Grace McManus said. “We’re actively trying to campaign for that.”

Tom McKearney, a Senator and activist for Sinn Féin, agreed, speaking of how his party is advocating for separation of church and school.

“The Catholic church maintained their grip over education in the Republic of Ireland for many, many years,” McKearney said. “This issue of kids not being educated together is not unique,” he said in a presentation to a group of students from the United States learning about the divide.

“We need to wrestle control of our education system from the Catholic and Protestant churches and we need to educate our children in secular spaces,” McKearney said. “We have a great challenge but we will get there.”

NicShéain also said that, as a teacher, she also believes both Northern Ireland and the Republic are taking large steps to move forward towards integrated education.

“It’s getting better and better. I know for our generation and the generation coming forward that there are way more people are in the ‘we don’t care about it’ bracket anymore,” NicShéain said. “[But] there are areas where it’s going to take a long time [to get better].”

Browne Describes Conditions In Prisons During Irish Hunger Strike



ANGELA FORTUNA

Former Irish prisoner Don Browne shared his experiences of the brutal conditions in prisons during the Irish Hunger Strike.

BY ANGELA FORTUNA

During the Irish Hunger Strike of 1981, many Irish Republicans protested in their prison cells, where they were forced to stay 24/7. The Irish Hunger Strike took place during the violence of The Troubles and lasted for nearly five years.

Don Browne, former Irish prisoner during the Hunger Strike, shared his experience of the harsh conditions in prisons after spending many years there. Browne spoke to the Central Connecticut group in a table discussion, but felt as if he was unable to truly convey how horrible the conditions actually were in prisons during the Hunger Strike. He got another chance a couple of days later.

While exploring the city of L/Derry during St. Patrick’s Day, four CCSU students came across Browne in a small local museum. In the museum, there was a display of a prison cell in which Hunger Strikers had to stay during their incarceration.

In the picture above, the dark paint on the wall symbolizes the feces that prisoners smeared since they were unable to leave their cells to use a bathroom. Browne said prisoners did this so that the smell would be less potent in such a confined area.

Browne said that the pipes sprawling across the back of the cell were used as pillows by many of the prisoners since there were no actual pillows available for them to use; the pipes kept the prisoners somewhat warm, according to Browne. The prisoners were only provided with one blanket, which often had holes so cold air could easily get through.

REPORTING TWO IRELANDS

Catholics And Protestants Move Beyond The Troubles

BY KAYLA MURPHY

In the lively atmosphere of Peadar O'Donnell's Pub in Derry, Northern Ireland, 26-year old Ryan Kelley sips on a glass of Guinness as he and his friends enjoy the Ireland-England rugby game. Kelley, a pilot for Screwfix in Scotland, was born and raised in Derry; he grew up in a Catholic neighborhood and school.

"There's a lot of ex-paramilitaries around North Ireland that are just casually walking around. Like it's crazy to think they were blowing up people and buildings a few years ago," said Kelly.

In 2014, the Belfast Telegraph conducted a survey amongst 550 people ranging from 16-24 years old. The study concluded that more than 50% said they met someone from the other tradition frequently or very frequently.

"I never had any issue with religion. If you're a Catholic, cool. If you're a Protestant, cool. Makes no difference to me," said Kelley as his mates cheered during the game.

Northern Ireland's older generation still fixated on the past

"A colleague of mine was kidnapped on a Wednesday night. His name was Dave. They tortured him. When we found him, he was mutilated. His hands were tied with barbed wire. They cut his penis off, put it in his mouth, and tied barbed wire around his head," said former British army soldier Nigel Gardiner.

Gardiner spoke of the type of horrors that occurred during The Troubles. From 1968 to 1998, 3,600 people were killed as a result of tensions between Catholics and Protestants. During this time, the Protestant community was the majority of the political parties that governed Northern Ireland. Faced with housing and employment discrimination, tensions arose within the Catholic community.

Inspired by America's civil rights' marches, the Catholic citizens of Derry marched for equal housing, vote, employment, and wages, regardless of political group and religious faith.

John Guthrie, who grew up in a Protestant working-class community, admitted biases in the housing community between the Catholics and Protestants.

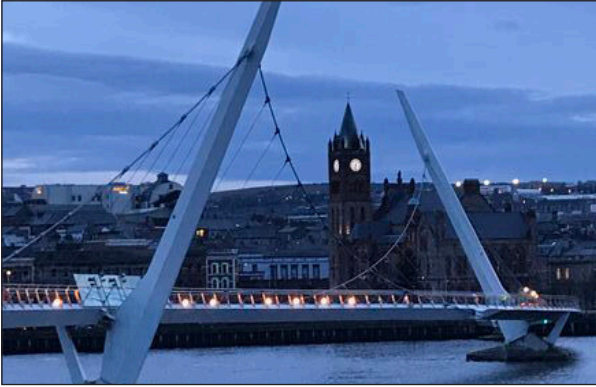
"There was a hatred being instilled in the Protestant community, a fear of the Catholic faith. At the time, if I was a young couple, as a Protestant, I would get a house before a Catholic family of seven," explained Guthrie.

Sipping his tea in the comfort of his countryside cottage in Northern Ireland, sat Tony Johnston. Johnston, who described himself as a "non-violent, Catholic supporter of a United Ireland," explained how gerrymandering affected politics in Northern Ireland.

"One man equals one vote, but the more businesses you owned, the more votes you had. If a Protestant-owned seven businesses, he got eight votes. The Protestants continued to beat Catholics in elections," said Johnston.

Johnston said that fear and hatred were taught at a young age.

"If we could just remove these two words, fear, and hate...," said Johnston, "I remember the first time I got close with a Protestant. She was a friend and neighbor of mine. I asked her 'why did you hate me?' And she said, 'My



KAYLA MURPHY

The Peace Bridge in Derry was open to the public in 2011 and served as a step forward to improve relations between the unionist 'waterside' and the nationalist 'city side.'
grandparents taught me to hate.' I told her 'My grandparents taught me to love.'"

Terrorism emerges

Two main terrorist groups emerged from the conflict, the I.R.A (Irish Republican Army), which consisted of Catholic, Nationalist members, and the U.V.F (Ulster Volunteer Force), which contained Protestant, unionist members. Other splinter paramilitary groups included the I.N.L.A, the Irish National Liberation Army, the U.D.A, the Ulster Defense Association, and the U.F.F, the Ulster Freedom Fighters. Since the peace process began, several sub-groups continue to operate, but their forces aren't as strong as they were during The Troubles.

John McCourt, a former member of the I.R.A, was actively engaged from 1969 to 1976. Joining at 13, McCourt lived in a children's home for most of his life and felt the need to be a part of something.

"I saw a lot of death and bodies and coffins," he said somberly, "I've seen people get shot three feet in front of me. I even saw one man blow up from an explosion."

McCourt said that books saved him. Readings about history, myths and legends provided him with warmth and safety after he left the IRA.

"Nobody will ever put the boot on the back of my neck again," McCourt said.

Now working to promote peace, McCourt travels to countries of conflict, such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Chile and Columbia, to help better educate citizens on ways of peace.

"We all have a past, but we don't all have a future," McCourt stated.

Lines and memorials represent peace

On June 25, 2011, the Peace Bridge in Derry was open to the public and served as a step forward in improving relations between the unionist "waterside" and the nationalist "city side."



KAYLA MURPHY

Free Derry Corner located in Derry, Northern Ireland stands as a symbol where civil rights marches took place.

But what about peace now amongst younger generations?

Aspiring folk singer and songwriter, 25-year-old Maryjane McIvor, plays her acoustic guitar in the bustling streets of Belfast.

"I'm a traveling musician. I hope to go to Munich, Paris, Milan and Rome this summer to play my music. It doesn't matter what one's religion is to me. Music is music and should be heard by all ears," said McIvor with a warm smile.

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, but living her life as a young musician in Belfast, McIvor has spent 7 years living in Northern Ireland's capital.

"I was surprised to see the walls," McIvor stated, "Maybe the separation is what's needed. Time heals all wounds. However, I really like the artwork. I think it represents Northern Ireland's history in a creative and expressive manner."

"There's still walls and gates that separate Derry, but I don't think it's nearly as bad as it was back in the day, especially my parents' age," explained Ryan Kelley, "I think there's a better future for Northern Ireland. I think older generations are a little more hesitant towards change."

Moving forward with peace

In January 2012 the International Fund for Ireland launched a Peace Wall funding program to support local communities that want to work towards removing the peace walls. By mutual consent, the Northern Ireland Executive committed to the removal of all peace lines by 2023.

"I'm now involved in community relations," Gardiner said, "I was asked to work for a program called From Prison to Peace. At first, I didn't want to work there. I would've had to work with former members of the I.R.A. They tried to kill me, why would I work with them? But, one night, I received a message from God. I applied for the position and got the job. People who were once my enemies are now my friends and coworkers. I've been working there for five years."

11-Year-Old Killed By Plastic Bullet



RUTH BRUNO

A newspaper clipping in Derry serves as a memorial.

BY RUTH BRUNO

Northern Ireland remains one of the only countries to authorize the use of plastic bullets as a form of riot control enforcement. A memorial tacked to a fence within "Free Derry" serves as an ever-present reminder of those caught in the crosshairs during The Troubles. Eleven-year-old Steven McConomy died after he was struck by a plastic bullet fired by a British soldier. Approximately 75 people were killed by plastic bullets during The Troubles.

Lack Of Government Continues To Plague Northern Ireland

BY TYLER ROAIX

In America, we are facing a very tumultuous and toxic time in our country's history. But despite constant debate and unrest, few realize that it can be worse. That is exactly the case in Northern Ireland.

Since January of 2017, Northern Ireland has been functioning, or at least trying to function, without a formal government. The collapsed government was a result of several issues. Sinn Fein, a left-wing political party commonly associated with the Irish Republican Army, and the Democratic Unionist Party, a conservative party, have disagreed on nearly every major issue, eventually causing Sinn Fein members to walk out on the assembly. The tension between the two parties runs so deep, a BBC journalist joked that they "can't even agree on how to make a cup of coffee."

Also, Martin McGuinness, a prominent Sinn Fein member who was serving as Deputy First Minister, resigned from his post amid the Renewable Heat Incentive scandal, which brought suspicions against Arlene Foster, DUP leader and First Minister. Per the Northern Ireland power-sharing agreement, McGuinness' resignation forced Foster to step down as well, leaving Northern Ireland with yet another hole in its government. McGuinness passed away in March of 2017, which was a big blow to Sinn Fein.

The Northern Ireland Executive was formed after the Good Friday Agreement,

with the hopes of having the parties work together to run Northern Ireland. Obviously, the exact opposite has happened. With one party, Sinn Fein, deciding that enough is enough, the whole system came crashing down. Without an executive, local politicians have been trying to run the show, but they can only do so much.

Differing opinions on issues like gay rights, a language act, which calls for the Irish language to have an equal prominence with English, along with the aftermath of The Troubles have been at the heart of political tension that has been building for several years.

Sinn Fein member and Senator, Padraig Mac Lochlainn, also cited Brexit, British control over Northern Ireland and a "weak British government in power with the DUP" as a root of the tension, while addressing students from Central Connecticut.

"It's deeply frustrating for us because our people want to be, and I imagine all people across the world, governed by politicians who you elect directly," Mac Lochlainn said. "We don't want to be governed by British, we want to be governed by those we elected ourselves. For all its limitations, you could at least take them out at the next election. That's the beauty of democracy. So, it's not good, it's not good at all that we don't have institutions in the North."

Mac Lochlainn also said he thinks Westminster's ability to control the taxation in Northern Ireland, and "the overall parameters of your budget are generally set" in Westminster gives too much power to an

institution that does not reside in the land it governs.

While he thinks Irish issues have been put on the back burner by the British, Mac Lochlainn did cite a deal that Sinn Fein had in place with Foster, who he said simply couldn't sell it to the MPs of her party.

"They see themselves as 'We are the power brokers. We hold up the British government. We don't need an assembly,'" Mac Lochlainn said.

This isn't the first time Sinn Fein has placed blame on the DUP for its handling of Northern Ireland's government. When the IRA initial 1994 ceasefire fell apart in 1996, Sinn Fein blamed British Prime Minister John Major and the Unionist MPs in the government for letting the ceasefire fall apart.

"We've been here before and we're here again," Mac Lochlainn said. "They're holding us ransom in terms of Brexit, in terms of the North, so we just have to be patient"

John Guthrie, a Derry native, also expressed his discontent for the DUP. Guthrie is a Protestant, which makes his views unique, since Protestants typically support the DUP. But even Guthrie realizes that the current political climate is not healthy.

"The DUP is so bedazzled by the fact that they're keeping the government afloat. 'We are the kingmaker,'" Guthrie said.

The lack of an executive in Stormont, Northern Ireland's parliamentary buildings, has trickled down into the smaller cities around Northern Ireland.

Peter Hutcheon, editor at the Londonderry Sentinel, said that their reporters have come across political issues as a result of the political turmoil. A report on the Sentinel's website from February showed how the collapse of the government has proven to be detrimental to local businesses. The report stated how the collapse at Stormont has resulted in "the greatest economic challenge of our generation," according to Jennifer McKeever, Londonderry Chamber of Commerce President.

While the future of Northern Ireland remains in question, the only thing that's certain is that the country needs to find a way to get a government in place and working again in order to stabilize the nation. But the 'when' in this is still very much in doubt. While it seems all parties want a government, no one is actually willing to budge to make it happen. But while Sinn Fein and the DUP fight for control, it is the people of Northern Ireland that suffer the most.

For Mac Lochlainn, the message is clear from Sinn Fein that the focus needs to be on representing the people.

"I'll tell you this now, there can be no Unionist minister anywhere in the North of Ireland until they understand respect for the Irish language and for our people, and when they do that then we'll be back in power and we look forward to that," Mac Lochlainn said. "I don't say that beating my chest. I say that because there can be no power without respect and equality. We feel exasperated by the situation."

Catholic And Protestant Combatants Dispute The Past

BY RUTH BRUNO

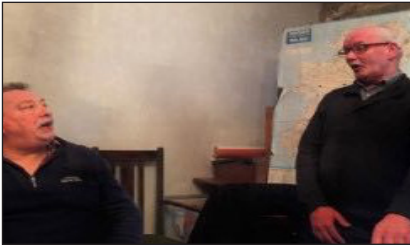
James Greer (left) and Nigel Gardiner recount their separate experiences as Unionists during The Troubles and beyond. "We oppressed the people who lived in those areas and to this day they resent us for it," Greer said.

In the late '60s he joined the Ulster Defense Associa-

tion, an organization which has since been placed on the United Kingdom's list of Proscribed Terrorist Organizations. "We were telling them where they could go, what they could do, what they couldn't do and what time they had to be home. We were dictators," Greer said.

Gardiner said he joined the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR) to combat the forces of the Irish Republican

Army (IRA). "My war wasn't sectarian. My war was to defend people from killing each other," he said. The UDR was formed as a branch of the British Army in 1970. Gardiner voiced his resentment towards the IRA and for what he perceived to be sympathy for the IRA from citizens in the United States. "My colleagues were being murdered in their work, murdered in their homes. I lost 34 friends," Gardiner said.



RUTH BRUNO

James Greer and Nigel Gardiner argue.