Photo of the Day



UConn students and horses on Horsebarn Hill in Storrs, Conn. on March 4, 2026. Horsebarn Hill is where UConn's livestock are kept. PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Unite the Emerald Isle:

THE CASE FOR IRISH SOLIDARITY

by Ayden Mirabella
CONTRIBUTOR
HE/HIM/HIS
zwj24003@uconn.edu

Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone. Those six counties are all that stand between Ireland and unity. The call for a fully united Ireland has been heard throughout the ages. From the early life of the Republic of Ireland all the way to the present day, the Irish have called for the British Crown to end the occupation of the Emerald Isle. Now the time has come for that decrepit monarchy to end their claim over Irish lands. From Cork to Derry, Dublin to Belfast, let the Union Jack fall away and give light to the flag of the Republic of Ireland.

With the trend of European countries apologizing to African, Asian and American countries for their history of colonization, the British should follow suit. Their first priority should be ending the divide of Ireland. The island should not be brushed under the rug in the history of colonization. Ireland has faced many hardships brought about by the British crown. It is important that we don't forget that the British have a long history of anti-Irish sentiment. The British looked down upon Ireland for many reasons. The U.K. has changed the island forever. The 1697 Banishment Act highlights this change. The act attempted to force all bishops, priests and other Catholic orders to leave Ireland by May 1, 1697. This act, along with other laws introduced around the same time, became known as The Penal Laws. These laws targeted Catholic Irish. They were barred from voting and holding office. They were not allowed to teach in schools or enter professions like law. Even though many of these laws were repealed in the 1800s, the seeds of resentment had been planted.

In 1922, the Republic of Ireland was founded; since then, the republic has dealt with a divided country. Through the years, violence has erupted across the northern-occupied counties. This violence has included British forces shooting and killing protesters, as well as Irish radicals planting car bombs in the North. These events became known widely as The Troubles.

Beginning in the 1960s and lasting until 1998, this period saw the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) clash with British Forces and Unionist paramilitary groups. Many innocent people were needlessly killed. If the Brits had left the island in the 1920s, then the violence that gripped the nation for so long would have never occurred. The main reason for much of the violence was the unjust treatment of Catholics in the six counties of the North. If the British left, then the Troubles could have been avoided because the nation would have been united under one banner.

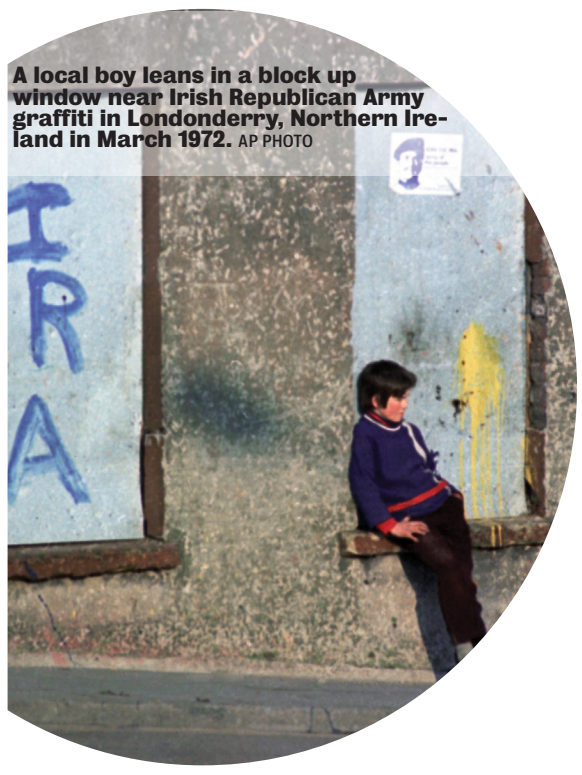
Now, there is a growing sentiment to unite Ireland. Even though the majority of Irish in the North still do not approve, a poll from The Irish Times shows that from 2022-2024 the amount of people who would vote yes for unification has grown from 27% to 34%. Even though this is a positive sign, it is worth mentioning that you can clearly see the religious divide in voters. In 2024 Catholic northerners were at 63% for yes, while their Protestant counterparts were at 7%. A united Ireland would look much different. Even if the majority of the Irish in the North were to vote yes, there would still be a large minority who would be against it. So, a fully united Ireland would have to ease the fears and concerns of those who would vote no. Even then the British might still have sway with those who dissent from a unification vote.

This brings up a huge issue that has been present since the reign of King Henry VIII. England is majority Protestant, while Ireland is majority Catholic. This is a problem because Irish Catholics have a long history of going against the Crown of England and the crown has a long history of subjugating Catholics. The Crown has used this to play up the fears of Protestants in the North to reject unity with Ireland. The U.K. knew that if the northern counties, which are majority Protestant, believed that the majority Catholic Ireland would subjugate them, then they would be more hostile to the idea of a united Ireland.

However, this does not change the argument that Ireland should be unified. The Irish of the North must realize that keeping in line with the crown and king of a dying empire is a losing battle. It is time to strip off the Ulster Banner and embrace the Tricolour of Ireland. May this long-overdue goal of reuniting Ireland bring many Irish who were impacted by this British occupation closer to true representation. May this dark chapter for Ireland no longer cast a shadow across the Emerald Isle.



A young boy lays flowers at the site in central Belfast, Oct. 24, 1993, where an Irish Republican Army bomb exploded in a crowded shop. The bomb killed at least nine people and injured over 50. AP PHOTO



A local boy leans in a block up window near Irish Republican Army graffiti in Londonderry, Northern Ireland in March 1972. AP PHOTO

Comic



COMIC BY ALEXA PAPPAS, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Irish children play around heaps of ruins burnt out cars and trucks, now serving the purpose of barricades in the Bogside area of Londonderry, Northern Ireland in April 1972. AP PHOTO