**AMERICAN BREXIT COMMITTEE**

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Editor

COMMONWEAL

475 Riverside Drive

New York , New York 10115

Dear Editor:

This is a response to Professor Connolly’s book review ( “A United Ireland?”) of **A Troubled Sleep** by James Waller and of Liam Kennedy’s **Who Was Responsible for the Troubles.**  Kennedy may consider himself an authority but he is first a British apologist from a stable that includes Ruth Dudley Edwards and the late John Spain. This review reflects a classic case of British obscurantism.

1. Kennedy claims there was no justification for the IRA resort to arms because ***“ systemic injustices were being dealt with via reformist policies from the late 60’s.”*** The anti-Catholic injustices ---voting, jobs and housing discrimination--- were already in place when King George V opened the Parliament in 1921. What did Kennedy expect from 70 years of Unionist/ British garrison rule, the careful crafting of Catholic ghettos prowled over by a sectarian lawless police force and the imposition of internment? Only when Bloody Sunday occurred and the whitewash of the Widgery Report didn’t work did they decide that some face-saving measures would be very gradually introduced.
2. Kennedy notes ***“the British learned a lesson from Bloody Sunday: it was not repeated.”*** It took almost 50 years before the British stopped lying about Bloody Sunday. One lesson they never learned was to tell the truth. The largest act of slaughter of the entire conflict came courtesy of the British Army two years **AFTER** Bloody Sunday in 1974 with the bombing of Dublin and Monaghan Towns. The target was civilian shoppers at rush hour. Thirty-three men, women and children were killed and 400 were wounded; some maimed for life. The prime suspects included three members of the Ulster Defense Regiment of the Army, a part time police officer, MI-5 agents and a British Army clandestine group called the Four Field Survey Unit. To this day the British refuse to cooperate with the Irish government in the investigation and have ignored several Unanimous Declaration requests from the Irish Dail.
3. In connection with a unity referendum that is to be conducted per the1998 Good Friday, Agreement, there is this observation. ***“The Irish case [for unity] mixes such standard expectations for national unity with unusual complexity and doubt.”*** The British are forever

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stating to their media friends how complex the situation is in Ireland. The reviewer fails to reference a fact that makes the re-unification of Ireland fairly simple. The British always governed Ireland as a nation until it suited their purpose to retreat to a six-county stockade where they could preserve loyalist prerogatives. The last General Election in the 32-county nation of Ireland was held by the British in 1918 and 73% of all the votes cast were for independence. If you are a democrat and claim to believe in majority rule that is a pretty convincing case for any debate about a nation.

1. The reviewer states at one point that ***“it is difficult to see how relationships of trust can be made to bear much political weight.”*** I commend to your readers British Command Paper 498 released in July,2021. The British are fearful that if the full extent of Army and police collusion with loyalist murder gangs in NIis revealed, the entire narrative of the conflict could change. This paper and a proposed statute reveal the British desperate attempt to bury that ugly truth about being labeled a State sponsor of terrorism. Nearly 1000 killings in NI were never or barely investigated because the British cannot be trusted to tell the truth about how many deaths their security services had a hand in. Obviously, many more deaths than they have admitted. The so called ‘amnesty’ bill will make sure that the victims’ families will never get the truth and will have no accountability. The British have shown themselves to be untrustworthy with the NI Protocol to the EU Withdrawal Treaty and the Good Friday Agreement but neither is mentioned.

I have long waited for American publications to take and independent and in depth look at the conflict in Ireland. Despite it flaws, I commend Commonweal for undertaking this effort and look forward to additional coverage in the future.

Sincerely,

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Michael J. Cummings, a native of Springfield, Mass. is a graduate of St. Anselm’s College (B. A., 1968) and New York University (M. P. A., 1970) . He established the American Brexit Committee in 2016 and served as Secretary from 2016-2021. He is a former member of the National Boards of the Irish American Unity Conference (1996-2013), the Ancient Order of Hibernians (2001-2008), and the Irish Northern Aid Committee (1988-1996). He also served as Chairman of the Capital District Irish National Caucus (1979-1982). He worked for the State of New York for 36 years in various capacities including as Assistant Deputy State Comptroller and Director of the Justice Court Fund. He served on the Peace and Justice Commission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

Cummings has appeared on American, English and Irish television and radio and his commentary and letters have appeared in major American, Irish-American, and Catholic print media. He is married 48 years to Nuala Hogan, a nurse and native of Ireland. They have five children and 7 grandchildren.