

Letters to the Editor

—MORNING VIEW—

Congratulations to GB News, showing up BBC NI on Twelfth

In a way it should not have been surprising that BBC Northern Ireland ditched its live coverage of the once-a-year Twelfth of July parades.

You only need to consider how the corporation covered the centenary of Northern Ireland, treating it entirely as a contested matter between those who want Northern Ireland to exist and those who do not.

This assumed they are even in number, when in fact determined opponents of the existence of NI are only ever 20 something per cent of those who vote in Northern Ireland elections (and even if they were even in number, BBC NI is the broadcaster for one of the four home nations so should not be neutral on the existence of a country that is its role to cover exhaustively, thus including its anniversaries of state).

BBC NI – which has such extensive Irish language and GAA broadcasting – failed at any point in the last year to run a straightforward celebration of the remarkable milestone of Northern Ireland turning 100.

It turned it into a centenary of ‘partition’. See the sleight of hand in such an approach? It would be akin to the Irish state, or RTE, in 2016 having treated the centenary of the Easter Rising as a neutral event – the 100th anniversary of two competing views: one pro, one anti that event. Which of course is not how nationalist Ireland commemorated its cherished rising.

The BBC did not even to cover extensively those who wanted to celebrate NI’s 100th. Its TV coverage of the 4.5 mile centenary parade, with 25,000 participants and 100,000 spectators, amounted to three minutes on the evening news.

Now, however, GB News has proven that its title does not mean that it just concentrates on the mainland, but in fact it covers one of the big spectacles of the UK – the glorious Twelfth (of July) in Ulster.

Congratulations to the young channel, only a year old. It does not have the resources of BBC NI, so might struggle to do justice to a day so widely celebrated across Northern Ireland. But it is trying, and visibly standing in where the BBC has left.

Protocol Bill is a con and does not advance the unionist cause

LEAD LETTER

Very nearly all commentators seem to have fallen

for the political sleight of hand that is the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill.

Sure, it throws red meat to Brexiteers and unionists in the form of promises to uphold the Act of Union, jettison EU State Aid laws, VAT and Excise duty rates.

The icing on the cake is its reference to the removal of the European Court of Justice as the supreme arbiter of the protocol. But all this British chest beating is belied by its last clause.

That states only the last six clauses of the bill will pass into law.

All the ‘good stuff’ trotted out earlier in the bill has no operative effect.

So, what do these last six clauses say?

Well, one of them wastes an entire clause to state that only six clauses, of which it is one, pass into law.

So that leaves five.

Of these, one authorises government to incur expenditure in implementing the act and another is a list of definitions.

The remaining three clauses describe how new regu-



It throws red meat to Brexiteers and unionists in promises to jettison EU State Aid laws and uphold the Act of Union

lations can be made once the bill passes into law. In summary, they state the government may itself pass statutory instruments and implement these unless a past act of Parliament is being varied – in which case the regulation must be subject to an affirmative procedure, ie be put to Par-

liament.

This is just a statement of how government business is done.

In short, any changes to the protocol would have to go through a completely new Parliamentary process.

This bill does not attack the protocol and it does not advance the cause of union-

ists in Northern Ireland, or indeed the union of Northern Ireland with Great Britain.

It is nothing more than an attempt to distract while the government again kicks the can down the road.

Ben Habib,
London SW1

TWEETS OF THE DAY



Isabel Oakeshott
@IsabelOakeshott

I can't believe the Bishops are in a lather over deportations to Rwanda! Where was the Church of England for its flock during the pandemic? Nowhere! Yet now they're exercised by the "suffering" of a handful of fake asylum seekers, AKA economic migrants, heading to Kigali?



Eilis O'Hanlon
@EilisOHanlon

Trending - Good Friday Agreement, Robbie Williams, and Jennifer Aniston. Are the 90s back?

Bashing the Order achieves nothing

This is a time for Orange Order bashing. Those given to bashing the Order (whether in the BBC NI management or not) should remember the attitudes within the Order did not arise in a vacuum. To spend time bashing the Order alone will achieve nothing.

Bashers need a reminder that until Vatican Council II young people in Roman Catholic grammar schools that made use of Archbishop Sheehan's book on Apologetics were taught that the 'tolerance' of the present age was not true tolerance but a tolerance based on indifference to the truth.

The Vatican II decree made it redundant – something a more with it Orange Order

at the time would have welcomed.

That Apologetic (defence) teaching was based on the Lateran Council decree of 1215 (the medieval church the mother of us all) dispossessing 'heretics' of their lands.

To jump centuries to the Battle of the Boyne commemorated on the Twelfth brings us, what with the Bill of Rights that followed, on the Boyne victory, to the opening of the way to par-

liamentary democracy. That can be celebrated by all.

That and the support of William's Dutch Guards, all Roman Catholic, who landed with him at Torquay in his invasion of England is nearer to the complexities of the time than the BBC's often simplistic description of the victory of the 'Protestant' king over the 'Catholic' king.

WA Miller,
Belfast 13

News Letter

News Letter, 2 Eskey Drive, Carn Industrial Area, Portadown, BT63 5YY
www.newsletter.co.uk



This newspaper and its website is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation, the regulatory body for the press, and abide by its code of conduct. If you have a complaint about editorial content which relates to inaccuracy or intrusion, then contact the Editor.

If you remain dissatisfied with the response provided, then you can contact IPSO at Gate House, 1 Farringdon Street, London, EC4M 7LG (Tel: 0300 123 2220) or e-mail: inquiries@ipso.co.uk

Editor:

Ben Lowry
ben.lowry@newsletter.co.uk

Deputy Editor:

Roderick McMurray
roderick.mcmurray@newsletter.co.uk

News Editor:

Damian Wilson
newsdesk@newsletter.co.uk

Political Editor:

Henry McDonald
henry.mcdonald@newsletter.co.uk

Features Editor:

Helen McGurk
helen.mcgurk@newsletter.co.uk

Sport:

sport@newsletter.co.uk

Farming Life:

Ruth Rodgers
ruth.rodgers@farminglife.com

Births, Marriages, Deaths:

028 38 447020
From 6pm to 8pm
bmds@newsletter.co.uk

Note:

Please try if possible to use email to make contact due to some staff working from home. There are phone contact numbers, 028 3844 6969 and 028 90897721, but email is best



FIND US ON FACEBOOK
www.facebook.com/BelfastNewsLetter



FIND US ON TWITTER
@News_Letter

ORDERING PHOTOGRAPHS

Copies of all pictures taken by News Letter photographers can be ordered in a variety of formats. Available photographs can be viewed online at www.newsletter.co.uk/community/buy-a-photo Available photographs carry a unique reference number when printed in the paper. You can order online or by contacting our reception staff on 028 9089 7700.

CONDITIONS

Our terms and conditions for editorial and advertising, which include use of editorial content submitted by the public, can be found at www.nationalworld.com/terms-conditions

PUBLISHER

Published by National World NI Limited. Registered in England and Wales no. 11573312. Registered Office: No 1 Leeds, 4th Floor, 26 Whitehall Road, Leeds, England, LS12 1BE. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Printed by Associated Printing (Carn) Limited

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Write To:
Letters to the Editor,
News Letter, Suite 303,
Glandore House, 41 Arthur Street,
Belfast BT1 4GB

Email:
letters@newsletter.co.uk

TEXT: 84555
Start your message with NLTEXT
For terms and conditions of submitting texts, see our website

Editor's Note: For the purposes of authentication, letter writers are asked to include their name, postal address and a daytime telephone number. Pseudonyms will be considered but preference will be given to correspondents who allow their name to be printed with their letter. Letters will be edited as to the editor's discretion.

Austen Morgan



EU misuse of deal is biggest threat to NI stability since '98

The government as expected — on 13 June, one week after D day! — introduced legislation on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The protocol forms part of the United Kingdom's withdrawal agreement of October 2019, made with the European Union, followed by the free-trade agreement of December 2020 ... some two thousand pages drafted in Brussels, which restored national sovereignty at 23.00 (Greenwich mean time) on December 31 2020.

There will be reference in coming weeks and months to the 1998 Belfast Agreement, which ended the Troubles in Northern Ireland ('NI') after thirty years.

Ironically, while the EU was legally incorrect to play the Belfast Agreement card, after the 2016 Brexit referendum, the UK government is right to now follow suit — as Liz Truss did in the commons on May 17 2022 — given the east-west Irish sea border created by the protocol.

The Belfast Agreement is in fact two agreements: one, a short treaty between London and Dublin; and the other a multi-party agreement — neither of which is called the Good Friday Agreement!

Legal obligations and political aspirations interact in the related text of the two agreements.

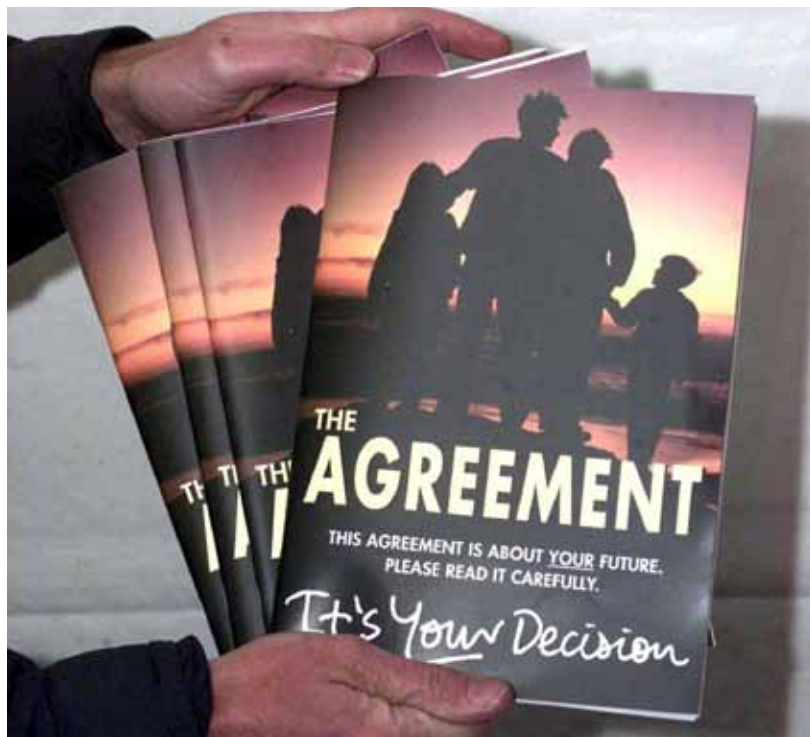
The noun border appears nowhere in the Belfast Agreement, which left the international frontier between the two states expressly unchanged.

This is because it was the 1986 Single European Act, which provided for the single — or internal (in EU terminology) — market.

At 23.00 on December 31 1992 (shortly after the Maastricht treaty), customs controls were removed by the EU on both sides of the Irish border.

I was one of those after the 2016 referendum who argued for a virtual border — advocating bilateralism between London and Dublin — to protect both the EU's internal market and the UK's single market while allowing trade (not that there was much) to continue flowing.

Bilateralism was legally arguable, because the Belfast Agreement had established the British-Irish intergovernmental conference: 'The Conference will bring together the British and Irish Governments to promote



The noun border doesn't appear in the Belfast Agreement, which left the land frontier unchanged

“
Michel Barnier adopted a nationalist interpretation of the agreement!

bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of both Governments.'

All levels.

All matters.

Enda Kenny (Taoiseach until June 2017) held to this position, until Leo Varadkar, his successor, took a EU-multilateral approach to Brexit. The Irish state finally admitted its destiny was EU dependency.

The two governments had a mutual interest in keeping a hard border out of Ireland, and it was practically doable. (The little-noted Irish walking away from the Belfast Agreement has been reciprocated by number 10: the Northern Ireland troubles legacy and rec-

conciliation] bill now before parliament was not negotiated with Dublin).

The economist Graham Gudgin has recently recalled the expert work done on an electronic Irish border, including by Lars Karlsson (former director of the world customs organisation in Brussels), the European parliament publishing his Smart Border 2.0 in November 2017 (*Spiked*, May 25 2022).

Michel Barnier — a Hibernophile French Gaullist — and his taskforce 50 within the commission adopted a nationalist interpretation (the Good Friday Agreement!) in the negotiations with the UK.

He was to claim, in his *Secret Brexit Diary*: 'My strategy has been to make sure that the British ... recognize their responsibility for the continuation of North-South cooperation in Ireland, set up under EU law, with EU funding, and supported by EU policies.'

This is simply untrue.

First, NI's trade was substantially within the UK; a mere 5% of turnover went to the Republic of Ireland, and a further 3% to the rest of the EU.

Second, Barnier was generalising from a special EU programmes body to six later north-south implementation bodies.

And third, these bodies were — relatively small — bilateral international organisations, legally belonging to the two states.

Neither Theresa May as prime minister, Gavin Barwell her unlikely Sancho Panza nor (Sir) Olly Robbins stood up to this Brussels Behemoth on the Irish question. Their contribution — a major failure of statecraft — was acquiescing in the Irish backstop of unblest memory. It took Boris Johnson, with Sir David (Lord) Frost, to replace the Irish backstop — related to a future trade agreement — with the NI protocol, followed by the trade and cooperation agreement without tariffs or quotas.

The October 2019 withdrawal agreement provided for an orderly withdrawal (which happened eventually) and legal certainty in the UK and EU afterwards, which shapes how we should interpret the NI protocol.

The protocol — with 19 articles and seven annexes amounting to 132 pages — is a drafting nightmare.

The UK has quit the EU, but it has left NI behind in the single market. The UK is recognised as a third county in the protocol, with its own customs territory, but the protocol scatters EU law (including customs but also regulation) across the province in five of the seven annexes.

The real problem is governance, with the UK acting as agent of the EU — whether light-touch EU customs controls on east-west trade or heavy-handed tracking of every consignment? There are better ways of preventing British goods leaking across the Irish border into the EU.

The so-called Irish Sea border is an imagining of popular unionism, not its political leaders. Trade from Great Britain to NI has become constitutional. In February 2022, the first minister (Paul Givan) resigned over the protocol. The assembly did not come back after elections in May 2022.

The lesson from history is clear: the EU's opportunist and confused use (with Irish support) of the Belfast Agreement — in order to shift customs functions from the Irish border to the Irish Sea — has led to the greatest challenge to stability and even peace in NI after 24 years.

Bien joué, Michel.

● **Austen Morgan is a barrister and author of Pretence: why the United Kingdom needs a written constitution, to be published this September**

ON THIS DAY

- 1215: King John put Royal Seal on Magna Carta near Windsor
- 1330: Edward, the Black Prince, eldest son of Edward III, born
- 1381: Wat Tyler, 1st poll tax protester, executed at Smithfield
- 1572: Harrow School founded
- 1621: 1st greenhouse in Britain erected in Oxford in preparation for predicted severe winter
- 1844: Charles Goodyear patents vulcanised rubber process
- 1846: 49th parallel established as US-Canada border
- 1860: Florence Nightingale began School for Nurses, London
- 1934: Dictators Hitler & Mussolini 1st met, in Venice.
- 1945: Family Allowance payments introduced in UK — no payment for 1st-born but 5 shillings (25p) a week for subsequent children
- 1996: IRA 3,300lb bomb in Manchester city centre caused huge damage but no deaths
- LAST YEAR: Queen held rare face-to-face audience at Windsor Castle — met Australian prime minister, who told her she was 'quite the hit' at G7 summit

Quote of the Day

'I know this storm will pass but in the meantime I know Jesus is with me'



Justin Bieber who has Ramsay Hunt syndrome (causes facial paralysis)

BIRTHDAYS

- Noddy Holder, singer (Slade), 76; Simon Callow, actor, 73; James Belushi, actor, 68; Helen Hunt, actress, 59; Courteney Cox, actress, 58; Ice Cube, rapper, 53; Jake Busey, actor, 51; Justin Leonard, golfer, 50; Neil Patrick Harris, actor, 49

READERS' CHARTER

This newspaper is built on a tradition of accuracy and fairness, giving you the information you need to understand our world, holding power to account and exposing injustice. Our trusted brand means we are the place where you can read and participate in honest debates. We are committed to giving a voice to those who struggle to be heard as well as those whose profession is crafting an argument. Our Readers' Charter spells out our commitment to you. You can read the Charter online at newsletter.co.uk