

BBC Mantra: Report the story if you must but not the source if it's UKIP

By Paul Wiffen

Those who followed with some glee the story of Baroness Ashton's rough ride through the EU Parliament last week may have not have been surprised that in early reports of her appointment, her friends at the BBC had managed to airbrush the Soviet connection from her track record <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8369730.stm>

Even more disturbing though is the fact that once the story about her CND past and potential Soviet involvement in funding, the BBC was very careful not to reveal who had researched and released the story.

Fortunately, David Charter, writing in The Times, was more honest and revealed in the first of several pieces on the story, that the source was the BBC Refuseniks' very own Chief Spokesman, Gerard Batten, London's UKIP MEP and a tireless seeker after truth <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article6932392.ece> So much so that Gerard actually employed Pavel Stroilov, sometime researcher and assistant to Vladimir Bukovksy to look into the roots of those in the EU with links in their past to Communist organisations and former Soviet governments. The process had started with Pavel's original article in the Spectator on Soviet collusion at the beginning on November <http://www.spectator.co.uk/spectator/thisweek/5504183/reaching-through-the-iron-curtain.shtml> in which he discussed several key Labour figures and their relationships with Moscow from documents he found in the Gorbachov archive.

The matter of Soviet complicity was first raised in the EU Parliament on Nov 23rd by Gerard Batten MEP in connection with Neill Kinnock's offers to Gorbachov to cancel Trident, using the targeted research he had paid Pavel to do on key EU Commission figures. At this point the entire British media was desperately trying to ignore the story and hoping it would go away, so it was only available from UKIP transfers of the video of his speech from the Parliament channel.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVx0E7aV3as>

The next day in the Parliament, Gerard tried, unsuccessfully, to make a similar speech about Baroness Ashton but was not allowed to speak, so he instead wrote to Barosso and released the details of his letter to the press, which is when David Charter picked up the story in The Times.

The next day Gerard gave the story to Nigel Farage MEP as he had additional speaking privileges as the leader of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group and Nigel was able to work it into a general attack on 'political pygmies' Rompuoy and Ashton. The cat was out of the bag now but Barosso was busy trying to stuff it back in and summoned Nigel to his offices to demand he retract the allegation. Nigel refused to attend and wrote that Barosso would be better asking Ashton for explanations of her behaviour. As the whole matter was covered by UKIP videos on YouTube which soon got thousands of hits

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8y2VrhjWj9E>, the British media was finally forced to follow David Charter's example and report on the accusations being made. Dan Hannan MEP, who presumably witnessed the whole thing first hand was the first to break the silence in the Telegraph on Nov 25th, exulting in Nigel being summoned to Barosso <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/danielhannan/100017929/ukip-leader-reprimanded-for-criticising-baroness-ashton/> and then the others slowly followed suit. When the BBC finally reported anything on the matter on Dec 2nd, it was Ashton's self-justifications and lame defence against the accusations that they majored on, presumably as they knew her from their days in CND as well http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8390224.stm.

Still, it was better than the Daily Mail, in whose report UKIP MEP David Campbell-Bannerman who questioned her over these allegations on Dec 2nd as seen on YouTube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOhib_SIs40 magically morphed into Conservative MEP Charles Tannock in the pages of the Daily Mail (who are still labouring under the illusion that the Conservative Party is a safe pair of hands for the UK in Europe) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1232673/Baroness-Ashton-quizzed-CND-past-day-EU-foreign-affairs-chief.html> Interestingly, as we compiled this piece today, the Sunday Times' Jon Ungeod-Thomas <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article6945940.ece> was trying to whitewash the allegations about Ashton using her You.Gov husband's admission he was approached by the KGB in the 1980s. I think we at BBC Refuseniks prefer David Charter's reading of the situation and we will favour the Times over the Sunday Times in future.

Meanwhile the Mail have finally started investigating the story themselves and uncovered a relationship with British Communist Party's Duncan Rees <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1233545/Baroness-Ashton-communist-lover-riddle-Moscow-gold.html> but no mention of UKIP of course. Have they been taking lessons from the experts at the BBC in UKIP-avoidance?