
UKIP's unsavoury secrets

The British electorate once again resoundingly rejected the fascist BNP—but in their place has risen a new threat from the nationalist right.

This new group, the UK Independence Party, has even more unsavoury characteristics which its leadership are doing their utmost to keep quiet.

1. Far-right links

Both the BNP and UKIP are keen to deny their far-right leanings. UKIP co-founder Nigel Farage said in 2001, "We do not and will not accept members whom we know to have extremist views".

Yet, despite their denials, many senior members of the party, including current MEPs, are well-known ex-members of far right and ultra-nationalist groups such as New Britain and the BNP. Even more shocking is the list of former UKIP candidates and members who have graduated to the BNP.

And celebrity figurehead Robert Kilroy-Silk was sacked by the BBC in 2003 for anti-Arab comments in a national newspaper. In 1991, he had written in the *Daily Express*, "They [Muslims] are backward and evil and if it is racist to say so... then racist I must be – and happy and proud, to be so".

Dr Alan Sked, UKIP's founder, said in 2001: "When I founded the party, it had clear principles. It had no truck with racism or xenophobia. All these principles have been abandoned."

2. Useless MEPs

In 1999-2004, UKIP MEPs consistently failed to live up to any of their responsibilities as elected representatives.

On voting, Conservative MEP Roger Helmer said, "UKIP's record speaks for itself. Their three current MEPs have a well-below-average voting record in plenary sessions of the parliament. Often they have no idea how to vote. They frequently abstain. They have even on occasion asked for copies of the Conservative voting list because they have no idea what to do!"

And they rarely show up in committees, where key decisions affecting British interests are debated and effected.

On holding the executive to account, UKIP's MEPs asked a grand total of *one* question between them at parliamentary question time - in the past five years! (By comparison, Labour have asked 329 and the Tories managed 131.) And two of the three UKIP members have managed *zero* written questions to the commission (compared to Labour's 1089).

On writing reports for committee, they have written a total of *zero* reports between them (compared to Labour's 77).

The new batch of UKIP MEPs have already made it clear that they intend to follow in their predecessors' footsteps. Kilroy-Silk has said that he would "spend as little time in Brussels as possible".

3. Won't condemn terrorism

In 2004, MEPs from several parties and countries received letter bombs. The targets included Gary Tittley, leader of the Labour group, whose assistant was injured in the

attack.

UKIP issued a press release in which they said that they could “understand the reasons behind [the attacks]”.

Despite the widespread public outcry, UKIP then issued a statement in which they refused to withdraw their remarks and in fact congratulated their MEP Nigel Farage on making them!