

The Pitiful Demise of the Eminent Grey Lady

Posted by

Saturday, 30 April 2005 05:12 - Last Updated Saturday, 30 April 2005 05:12

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PEJ News- The BBC has suffered severe criticism since its initial boosterism of the Iraq invasion, and now for its continuing blind support for the laughably implausible Tony Blair's contortion of facts that led Britain to follow George Bush into the quagmire. -{|
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<http://www.lou2002.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/bbcnews24/BBC%20News%20Generic%201999%201.jpg>

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C. L. Cook

PEJ News

April 30th, 2005

Though their credibility lays in tatters at home, the Doyen's of the Beeb's international radio service, (rebroadcast weekdays through Camosun College's Village 900), seem unaware of just how low they, and the fourth estate generally has fallen in the eyes and ears of the public.

How else to explain the blatant propaganda-by-omission masquerading as news broadcast yesterday (Friday, April 29th, 2005) concerning the growing rift between allies Italy and the United States?

Clearly, the BBC must believe us all idiots, too preoccupied with sit-coms and shock jocks to see through their B.S.

It all stems from the infamous March shooting of Italian reporter, Giuliana Sgrena and her saviour, super-spy Nicola Calipari. Relying on the "memory hole theory," yesterday's BBC report failed to mention the fact that Sgrena, prior to the American assassination attempt, had been enduring the Iraq occupation not from the air conditioned terraces of an International Hotel, but with the families, women and children particularly, of Baghdad. The London scoops also felt mentioning her by name unnecessary, she was merely referred to as "an Italian national, kidnapped by terrorists."

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That Sgrena's reports home were an essential element in forming massive opposition to Italy's participation in the disastrous fiasco was apparently deemed unimportant; that there could well have been motive behind the malice of the attack ignored; that opposition to the war in Italy has, triggered in large part by the "friendly fire" incident, rocked billionaire PM Berlusconi's coalition government, and the lame joint Italian/U.S. military investigation reports on the incident has enraged the Italian street, making a hasty departure of Italian troops from Iraq a distinct possibility, too seems just so much floppo to the newbies running the Beeb.

Listening for the hourly repeat of the BBC International News, I expected the story to be fleshed out; I expected at least one "W" of the five would be added. You know, "Who?" But what I got was a repeat of the incomplete.

It seems, the BBC has no room to include the names of survivors who dispute the official line they so assiduously toe. It's as though Sgrena has been disappeared, kidnapped for a second time. Though it's Giuliana Sgrena being silenced by the ethically challenged BBC editors, it's the British people, and those dwindling few on this side of the Atlantic still wowed by the poshly accented credibility front projected by the venerable broadcaster who're being hooded.

Fortunately, friend David Cromwell over at MediaLens.org is watching and reporting on the many failings of the once trusted public broadcaster. It's an example we would be well to follow here in Canada, before the CBC too is deemed unbelievable, thus unsupportable.

Addendum

This article was inspired by an e:mail exchange between myself and the estimable Mr. David Cromwell of Medialens.org, reproduced below. **{Lex}**

Subject: Chris Cook-- re: BBC International Radio--Sgrena inquiry

Greetings again, David; This BBC service here is wretched. Today, they "covered" the commission fracas. Interestingly though, the good ol' boys of the beeb omitted Sgrena, and the entire "journalists as ducks" angle. They instead focussed on Calipari, barely noting the release of an "Italian national" he had negotiated.

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Perhaps she didn't survive afterall?

cheers

chris

David Cromwell:

Interesting to hear, thanks. They've been wretched, too, on the Attorney General's legal advice to Blair on war: and how all his caveats of 7th March 2003 disappeared but 10 days later.

The Cabinet did not see the full advice of 7th March, but only heard a verbal summary from the AG. Clare Short, a Cabinet minister then, said that questions weren't allowed. Blair is now saying, having been essentially forced to publish the full advice, that it's not the "smoking gun" that anti-war supporters had been saying (which is a strawman argument).

Andrew Marr, the BBC's political editor, has been saying much the same thing, i.e. toeing Blair's line. Scandalous. The next day, the BBC had decreed that the election campaign had "moved on from Iraq". I hope it's all been an eye-opener for yet more people about the abysmal journalism by the BBC.

best wishes,

David

Chris Cook hosts [Gorilla Radio](#), broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. He's also a contributing editor at PEJ.org News, a progressive Victoria news site. Check out his blog at: [Gorilla Radio Blog](#)

[The Gray Lady is an honorific for the New York Times, but I felt it also fitting for the failing BBC.]