

unite against fascism



# Thousands active against fascist BNP



*The BNP wants an all white Britain, which only be possible through violence and shutting down democracy*

## BNP threat remains following May election

The May 3 elections confirmed the continuing growth of the British National Party (BNP) over the past six years. The BNP is a fascist party which calls for an all-white Britain. It explicitly opposes mixed race relationships. It admires Hitler whose Nazi regime was responsible for the Holocaust — the systematic murder of millions of people. The BNP had accumulated 49 councillors since 2000 and made an overall one seat gain in the May elections, bringing the total to 50<sup>1</sup> seats across 18 councils. It gained 10 council seats (9 new gains and one re-election) and lost 8 seats it had held. It gained the largest vote ever for a fascist party in local elections, polling 292,911 votes — a 97-fold increase since 2000. Its vote fell by 3.5% in wards it also contested last year. The BNP spread its area of influence in May. It stood an unprecedented 744 candidates, arguing in the press that it was therefore “becoming a mainstream political party and (is) gaining support.” In four years it has doubled the number of councils it contests and almost quadrupled its candidates. It polled an average of 13% of the vote — approximately 1 in 8 of the electorate. The BNP narrowly missed gaining a regional seat on the Wales Assembly, coming within 0.6% of the electorate (2500 votes). In the elections to the Welsh and Scottish devolved governments its vote increased 10-fold since the last elections in 2003.

<sup>1</sup>One BNP councillor Mark Leat in Stoke on Trent has subsequently resigned from the BNP and became an independent.

## BNP advances on the basis of racism

The political climate before and during the election impacts on the BNP vote. The amount of positive and uncritical media coverage it obtains aids its efforts to claim legitimacy. The promotion of racism in the media and by politicians gives credence to the BNP's propaganda. In Wales and Scotland, it stood sufficient candidates to gain access to hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of communication including election broadcasts. Its election propaganda promoted racism, and included attacks on multiculturalism, migrant workers in the health service and Eastern European communities.

Over the last year there has been a torrent of racism in the media, with sustained tabloid campaigns against Muslims and Eastern European migrants. Mainstream politicians have also conceded to this agenda. All this has helped sustain the BNP's claims. However, the period immediately prior to this year's election did not see the racist frenzy of last year, when tabloids demanded the deportation of foreign nationals who had served prison sentences. This was a gift to the BNP, having the effect of equating Black communities with crime. In the run-up to this year's election, more of the media explicitly attacked the BNP's violence and fascist character than last year, and called for a vote against it. No press attended its local council manifesto launch. This year saw increased calls from mainstream politicians across the political spectrum to vote against the BNP.

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# BNP leader rejected at Bath University

**F**ascist BNP leader Nick Griffin was invited to give a lecture at the University of Bath on 14 May at the request of one student, whom the *Guardian* reported to be a BNP Youth leader. Local branches of UCU, UNISON and Amicus joined with the National Union of Students and Bath University Students Union and UAF to call



a protest and to issue a statement outlining the threat that the BNP's fascist propaganda would pose to staff and students on campus. Nick Griffin already holds a conviction for incitement to racial hatred for denying the Holocaust. The BNP craves such opportunities to give platform to its hate politics, giving them the veneer academic respectability. Support for the demonstration poured in from around the country and the region, with trade union general secretaries and the NUS nationally

lobbying the University to withdraw this invitation. This demonstrated the overwhelming and immediate opposition to the BNP's hate propaganda. Within one week, the University withdrew its invitation to Griffin, which was a victory for all who stand for the freedom to learn and work free from fascism.

• **Contact UAF for copies of our "keep our campus fascist-free" poster**

## Challenging the homophobia of the BNP and the NF

**W**hilst the cutting edge of the BNP's advance is racism, it also promotes homophobia. Nail bomber David Copeland attacked London's African-Caribbean, Asian and lesbian and gay communities. In its 1997 general election manifesto the BNP pledged to ban homosexuality "...driving these revolting practices back into the closet where they belong". When the BNP was first elected in Burnley, it ran a gay pub landlord out of business. UAF produced materials with lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans groups this May calling for a vote against the homophobia of the BNP, highlighting the threat it poses to the civil rights of the LGBT communities. UAF responded to the fascist National Front (NF) demo against London Pride this June — who were humiliated by thousands of Pride marchers who turned out against 5 fascists brandishing homophobic banners. UAF handed out hundreds of anti-fascist placards to marchers and spoke on the stage, raising awareness about the fascist, homophobic threat of the NF and BNP.



**UAF and London Pride marchers opposing the fascist NF**

• **Download leaflets at [www.uaf.org.uk/resources](http://www.uaf.org.uk/resources) and view our online picture gallery**



## Joint work with the MCB to oppose the BNP's Islamophobia

**T**he BNP are profiting from the media campaign which feeds a hostile climate against Muslims. The BNP called the 2006 election a "referendum on Islam"; and describes Islam as "a wicked, vicious faith", perpetuated by rape. It made its gains of four council seats in Bradford and Keighley in 2005 against the backdrop of racist allegations that exclusively Asian men were preying on under-age white girls, grooming them for sex. The police have stated that the BNP's claim



this crime was being committed by any particular ethnic minority is false. This May, UAF worked with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) to raise awareness amongst the Muslim community of the threat posed the BNP, producing a joint leaflet which was distributed to Mosques around the country, and promoting the campaign in Muslim media. Following the failed terrorist attacks this June, the BNP's website gloats that media hostility towards the Muslim community is helping it recruit. UAF stands with the Muslim community in condemning terrorism and the exploitative tactics of the fascist BNP which has a history of racist violence and terrorism.

• Download leaflets at [www.uaf.org.uk/resources](http://www.uaf.org.uk/resources)

## Pull the Plug on the fascist BNP

**T**he BNP stood full slates of candidates on the regional lists in the Scottish Parliamentary and the Wales Assembly elections. This gave it access to £670,000 and £410,000 worth of electoral communication respectively, including a party political broadcast and nation-wide mailings.

Its election propaganda whipped up racism and other hate-messages. Its Scottish broadcast portrayed stick figures of black people chasing a white person with heading "immigration is everywhere" and included homophobic messages. It was forced to change its broadcast in Wales for the BBC which originally perpetuated the lie that asylum seekers and the police attacked local residents in the Wrexham riots, who were actually convicted of attacks against asylum seekers in the area. A South Wales local newspaper also gave the BNP its first ever advert, having refused to print a UNISON anti-BNP advert. South Wales saw high votes on the Assembly for the BNP. UAF engaged its alliances from around the country to bombard the newspaper, resulting in the editorial on the day of the election, stating that it did not support fascist parties and calling for a vote against the parties fuelling intolerance.

At short notice, UAF linked up with trade union representatives including BECTU and NUJ to call 'pull the plug' protests outside the BBC on the day of both broadcasts in Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, we worked with STUC and other trade unions, the NUS Scotland, community, refugee and faith groups, political parties and many others to call one of the largest 'pull



the plug' protests, with less than 12 hours' notice on the announcement of the broadcast. Over 70 activists turned out to oppose the BNP and the BBC felt obliged to meet with representatives of UAF, Scottish TUC and NUS Scotland. UAF believes that fascist views should not be promoted at the expense of the tax payer and the licence fee payer and will continue working with activists in unions and around the country to challenge the BNP where it is given uncritical media coverage.

• Sign up to the Anti-Fascist Media Watch urgent action alerts at [www.uaf.org.uk/mediawatch.asp](http://www.uaf.org.uk/mediawatch.asp)

(from front page)

Notably, in Wales the BNP received its highest vote in the North Wales seat due to a high vote in Wrexham where it waged a campaign defending local racists who had attacked asylum seekers in 2003.

## Lessons to learn

The most effective strategy for stopping the BNP advance is exemplified by the campaigns in Millwall and Oldham. In Millwall the BNP, having gained one councillor, were resoundingly defeated in 1994 and have not been able to return. Oldham remains the most outstanding example of driving back the BNP. There, despite the BNP receiving its highest 2001 general election vote there, campaigning has driven back the BNP and stopped it from gaining a single councillor. It has more than halved its number of candidates from 10 in 2003 to 4 in 2007. In most other authorities it has increased its field of candidates. The campaign strategy in Millwall and Oldham tackled head on the racist myths the BNP take advantage of, building a genuinely broad coalition of all those opposed to fascism, including trade unions and critically, the minority communities targeted by the BNP, in order to turn out the majority of voters who oppose the BNP. This strategy should be adopted nationally. In Barking and Dagenham the BNP have 12 councillors and racist attacks rose by 30% in the year that the BNP targeted the elections. There, BNP has grown off a racist campaign claiming that migrants gain preferential



access to the small supply of social housing. This is not true, in fact, far from jumping queues, allocation policies along with the national immigration policies make housing for migrants difficult, even if they are in acute need. The lessons from Millwall and Oldham show the BNP advance can be stopped if such myths are systematically challenged. Mainstream politicians who give credence to these myths only help confirm the BNP's propaganda. In contrast to Barking and Dagenham, racist attacks are falling across London where no such myths are prevalent.

## Record anti-fascist activity

For the May 2007 elections, Unite Against Fascism engaged activists and different communities in gigs, rallies, leafleting and events around the country to raise awareness of the threat of the BNP and to turn out a vote against it. Everyone who campaigned against

the BNP helped stop it making further gains this May.

## Anti-fascist priorities

The BNP remains close to breaking on to the national political stage, and will be targeting the London Assembly in 2008 and the European elections in 2009. There must be no complacency in the anti-fascist movement – it must arm itself with the most effective strategy if it is to defeat the BNP, challenging its racism and turning out the vote of the anti-fascist majority.

• **Full analysis of the May 3rd election and all the results are available from the Unite Against Fascism website, or request a copy by calling us.**

# unite against fascism

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Unite Against Fascism, PO Box 36871, London WC1X 9XT

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