

STOP THE BNP

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Why the BNP is a fascist party

The BNP tries to present itself as a radical right-wing political party that is merely concerned about immigration and crime. However, the BNP is not really a legitimate political party in the same sense as other political parties. A combination of political violence, rewriting of history and unscientific race "theory" makes the BNP a fascist organisation.

Under Nick Griffin's leadership the BNP has argued that it has eschewed any nazi past. The expulsion of former leader John Tyndall, whose nazi past is irrefutable, is offered as proof of the BNP's sincerity. However, there are many others in the BNP with long fascist pasts. The recently appointed editor of the BNP journal *Identity*, John Bean, joined Oswald Mosley's Union Movement in 1950 showing no remorse for the genocidal crimes of fascism committed during the Second World War.

Since the Second World War Holocaust denial has been a key plank of fascists, and specifically nazis, worldwide. Griffin is one such person. He has denied that the Holocaust happened on several occasions in terms such as:

"I am well aware that the orthodox opinion is that 6 million Jews were gassed and cremated or turned into lampshades. Orthodox opinion also once held that the earth is flat... I have reached the conclusion that the extermination tales is a mixture of Allied wartime propaganda, extremely profitable lie, and latter day witch hysteria." (Carlisle Two Defence Fund Bulletin.)

Griffin has also made it clear why the BNP needed to abandon longstanding fascist policies. In the November 1998 issue of *Spearhead* he explained why the BNP policy of compulsory repatriation of non-whites should be abandoned. Instead the organisation should go to the electorate with a programme of halting immigration now and sending illegal immigrants back. The BNP changed their policy so to bring it more in line with the kind of thing that can be seen on any tabloid front page. Griffin was explicit that this was an electoral ploy and not a fundamental shift in BNP ideology.

A key distinguishing feature of the BNP is the continued involvement of its members in violence and intimidation against its opponents and people it doesn't like. BNP organisers and members supply the Redwatch internet hitlist site with photos, addresses and telephone numbers of their perceived enemies in the hope that people will be



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intimidated into withdrawing from activity. People have had their cars firebombed and received other forms of harassment as a result of their details being published on the Redwatch site.

The BNP wants people to believe it is a mainstream party and that those who call it fascist are merely using it as a term of abuse. We have to ensure that the local media, and ultimately local people, are given the true facts about the BNP's fascism.

BNP thuggery in the 2003 election campaign

The British National Party's political strategy was accompanied by a campaign of harassment, intimidation and physical violence against its opponents. Across the country, BNP thugs targeted anti-fascists and Labour Party councillors and members.

That these incidents occurred in so many places only emphasises the coordinated nature of this campaign.

In Barnsley, Joe Hayward, a Labour councillor and magistrate, was physically assaulted by three BNP goons, including the party's candidate, after he refused to hand over copies of the *Searchlight* tabloid.

"I saw the BNP at their worst tonight," Mr Hayward, 66, told Searchlight. "They showed themselves for what they are: thugs."

On Merseyside, the BNP targeted a longstanding Labour councillor from the Wirral. Her crime had been to attend an anti-fascist meeting in Liverpool organised to dent the campaign of the serial thug and gangster Joe Owens.

Shortly after the meeting the councillor was rung up at home and told there would be trouble if she remained involved in the campaign.

A few days later the BNP went out of its way to deliver a leaflet to her house and a group remained standing menacingly outside for some time. The party was not standing in her ward and it was a clear attempt to intimidate. Fortunately she remained resolute and the following night a squad of union shop stewards were on hand to see off further BNP harassment.

In Halifax, a mob of 60 to 80 BNP activists and known football hooligans threatened 20 anti-racist campaigners on the last Sunday of the campaign.

In what has become a regular occurrence, the local BNP, which now contains two councillors linked to the nazi terror group Combat 18, sought to prevent people from participating in legitimate political campaigning.

A photographer from the *Yorkshire Post* was man-handled after he attempted to take pictures.

The BNP were out again the following evening, but this time a small group of anti-

fascists changed their meeting point and were able to distribute several hundred leaflets before the BNP could find them.

But the BNP had not halted its campaign. On the eve of the poll, car loads of local BNP activists, including several candidates, preferred to spend the evening chasing anti-fascists across the town. In one incident a car was followed for over an hour.

Unfortunately, the attitude of the local police was appalling. They had been warned about the BNP mobilisation but despite a promise to enable people to participate in the democratic process, the one officer on hand refused to get out of his car until most of the anti-fascists had left.

It is an attitude local anti-racists have come to expect. People remember the police's failure to respond to a 999 call a few years ago when Combat 18 thugs attacked two schoolteachers in the town. If the police had bothered to attend, they would have found the culprits, with bags of racist material and CDs, happily drinking in another pub up the same road.

The last Sunday of April 2003 also saw the BNP harass and intimidate anti-fascists in Dewsbury. The local organiser and candidate, Nick Cass, spent the day trying to take photos of people.

All too often, these photos appear on the Redwatch website, which is linked to Combat 18. Several BNP activists, including Tony Wentworth, the Young BNP organiser, have taken photographs that later appeared on the Redwatch site.

In Devon, police issued verbal warnings to two South Devon BNP candidates, Peter Lucas and regional organiser Tony North, following their harassment of anti-racist campaigners in Torquay.

This followed an earlier incident when a nazi thug screamed "Sieg Heil" at anti-fascists after a leaflet was delivered to the house of the Newton Abbott BNP candidate, Darren James. James was forced out of his house to drag his "friend" inside.

In Birmingham, BNP activists harassed and photographed Labour Party activists as they campaigned over the final weekend. Again, the target appeared to be the distribution of the *Searchlight* newspaper.

On election night, BNP thuggery led to violent and intimidating scenes in Oldham town centre and at a count in Wigan.

It was not all plain sailing for the BNP. In Bradford, Paul Cromie, the party's candidate in Queensbury, tried to chase some anti-fascists who were distributing anti-BNP material to selected households. Unfortunately for the new South Bradford organiser, the anti-fascists appeared to know Bradford better than the candidate. Within minutes of the car chase, Cromie found himself in a predominantly Asian area. The anti-fascists stopped their car and began sounding the horn. Cromie was forced to make a quick getaway as local youths learnt that a nazi was in the area.

An angry Martin Salter, MP raised the BNP violence in the House of Commons shortly before election day.

"The BNP do not understand the process of government. They might be very good at getting elected by playing on people's fears and damaging race relations. They might also be very good, as they were the other week, at mobilising support for a bunch of football hooligans to go rampaging round the streets of Halifax ripping leaflets out of the hands of members of opposition parties. They might also be very good at mobilising thugs to cause the violence that we saw at the England versus Turkey game, but they are a cancer at the heart of British politics."

Despite all this, anti-fascists remained resolute. Four hundred thousand copies of the *Searchlight* tabloid were distributed, along with dozens of local leaflets.

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