

# The fight goes on! 70 years of struggle against fascism in London

An exhibition by  
**Lewisham Anti-Racist Action Group**,  
affiliated to the national campaign  
**Unite Against Fascism**.



This exhibition is available for loan from LARAG:  
please email [larag@talktalk.net](mailto:larag@talktalk.net)

## **Acknowledgements:**

Dave Renton. "When we touched the Sky" — The Anti Nazi League 1977-1981. Published by New Clarion Press, 2006.

Half Moon Photography Workshop: CAMERAWORK — "Lewisham: What are you taking pictures for?", No.8 1977.

Unite Against Fascism — a national campaign with the aim of alerting British society to the rising threat of the extreme right, in particular the British National Party (BNP), gaining an electoral foothold in this country.  
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# The battle of Cable Street 1939



# East End of London 1930s — Media distortions

In the late 1930s, Jewish refugees escaping Nazi Germany arrived in Britain. Headlines in the British Press of the time sound familiar today.

“There is a big influx of foreign Jews, they are over-running the country.”

“Aliens who can hardly speak English are now driving London taxicabs and forcing British drivers off the streets.”

“Refugees get jobs, Britons get dole.”

“Alien Jews pouring in.”

Mosley’s British Union of Fascists decided to march through the East End to intimidate the local Jewish community. Below are some eye witness accounts of that day.

© Museum of London



Anti-fascist crowds gather to stop fascists from marching near Aldgate in 1937.



# The Battle of Cable Street — eye witness accounts

Professor Bill Fishman, now 91, was 15 on the day.

“I pushed myself forward and because I was 6ft I could see Mosley. They were surrounded by an even greater army of police. There was to be this great advance of the police force to get the fascists through. Suddenly, the horses’ hooves were flying and the horses were falling down because the young kids were throwing marbles.”

“I heard this loudspeaker say ‘They are going to Cable Street’. Suddenly a barricade was erected there and they put an old lorry in the middle of the road and old mattresses. The people up the top of the flats, mainly Irish Catholic women, were throwing rubbish on to the police. We were all side by side. I was moved to tears to see bearded Jews and Irish Catholic dockers standing up to stop Mosley. I shall never forget that as long as I live, how working-class people could get together to oppose the evil of racism.”





# The Battle of Cable Street — eye witness accounts

Max Levitas, now 93, was a message runner and had already been fined £10 in court for his anti-Mosley activities.

“I feel proud that I played a major part in stopping Mosley. When we heard that the march was disbanded, there was a hue and cry and the flags were going wild. They did not pass. The chief of police decided that if the march had taken place there would be death on the road — and there would have been,” he said.

“It was a victory for ordinary people against racism and anti-Semitism and it should be instilled in the minds of people today. The Battle of Cable Street is a history lesson for us all. People as people must get together and stop racism and anti-Semitism so people can lead an ordinary life and develop their own ideas and religions.”

Mick Mindel recalled:

“The victory on October 4th was very sweet... it made many young Jews recognise the need to stand up and fight and realise that together with non-Jews we could defeat the racists and fascists. Our experience was very much like that of young Asians today.”

Jewish Communist, Charlie Goodman is arrested after a mounted baton-charge at the Battle of Cable Street in 1936.



AP/EMPICS

## Sadly, the fascist threat to London would return

# The battle of Lewisham

## August 13th 1977

# Rise of the National Front — mid 1970s election results

At Leicester in April 1976, the Front won a total of 44,000 votes in local elections. Combined with the National Party, the total fascist vote reached 38 per cent in Blackburn.

In March 1977, the Front beat the Liberal Party in a bye-election at Stechford in Birmingham, and pundits warned that the NF could displace the Liberals as Britain's third main political party.

The NF received 119,000 votes in the May 1977 GLC elections, and almost quarter of a million votes across the country in that year's local elections.

During this period, the NF claimed to have up to 20,000 paid-up members.

The National Front stood 413 candidates in local elections in 1977, and promised to stand 318 candidates in the 1979 General Election.

(Extracts from *"When we touched the Sky – The Anti Nazi League 1977-1981"*, Dave Renton)



1976 Martin Webster leads a National Front march in its heyday



# The Battle of Lewisham — August 1977

**CAMERAWORK** – the photos in this exhibition of Lewisham on 13th August 1977 were produced in a special edition of *CAMERAWORK*, a publication from the Half Moon Photography Workshop which was designed to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, views and information on photography and other forms of communication.

This is how they introduced their special edition covering the events of 13th August 1977.

“On August 13th 1977 the National Front — proud of its racialism — attempted to march from New Cross to Lewisham, an area with many immigrants. Their march was halted in Lewisham High Street which was blocked by anti-racists. In this issue, we give evidence of what happened on that day, much of which has been ignored elsewhere.

Many photographers helped us to produce this issue, freely giving many more photographs than we could use. They work for magazines ranging from *Time* and *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine* to *Socialist Worker* and *Newsline*. “

Chris Steele-Perkins



The National Front march, Lewisham, August 13, 1977.

# The Battle of Lewisham

## — August 1977

The text describing the events on 13th August is taken from the **“When we touched the Sky”** The Anti Nazi League 1977–1981 by Dave Renton.

The events at Lewisham began when police arrested eighteen black youths in South London and charged them with street robbery. They were arrested in an apartheid-style raid: doors were knocked down, people grabbed from their beds. In the aftermath of this police action, Tony Bogues and Kim Gordon of the black socialist group Flame met up with David Foster, father of one of the defendants. According to Bogues,

“David was an ordinary, nice fellow who had believed in the early stages of his life the myths about British justice, but on arriving in Britain he was immediately aware of the question of race. We sat down and talked with him for days. His house became the community house. The question of self-defence from the fascists and the police came up in discussion with the youth. We spent a lot of time, persuading people to work with us.”

A defence campaign was soon organised, for the Lewisham 18, later the Lewisham 21. The Front retaliated by calling an anti-mugging march.

Homer Sykes



Achilles St. National Front set off.



# The Battle of Lewisham

## — August 13th 1977, 11am

Using published sources, interviews and press accounts, I have tried to create a timeline of what happened on the day.

August 13 began at 11am with a march called by the Communist Party, Catholic organisations, councillors and members of the All-Lewisham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (Alcaraf). Mayor Godsif of Lewisham and Mervyn Stockwood, the Bishop of Southwark led the march. Having taken part in the first demonstration, members of Rock Against Racism then handed out a leaflet calling upon the demonstrators to join a second protest, which would assemble at the National Front's planned assembly point. Red Saunders was part of the crowd who joined both the first and second demonstrations.

*".....we were all just milling about, when this old black lady, too old to march, came out on her balcony. She put out her speakers, as loud as they could, playing 'Get up, stand up'. That did it for me."*

Paul Trevor



New Cross Rd. Anti-racists meeting before NF march.



# The Battle of Lewisham — August 13th 1977, 1.30pm

According to the journalist John Rose,

“The whole of New Cross High Road and the top of the Nazis’ intended assembly point, Clifton Rise, was occupied by anti-fascists. It was then that the police made their first, unprovoked attack. Foot police tried unsuccessfully to clear a path for the Nazi march, and then mounted police moved in. They too, were soon forced to retreat – but not before the police had taken revenge by grabbing people at random. Unable to clear the top of Clifton Rise, the police finally made the Nazis move up onto the main road through a sideroad 200 yards along... Suddenly, hundreds of police and a score of police horses began to charge down the road clearing a path for the head of the Nazi column. The crowd of anti-fascists exploded. Sticks, smoke bombs, rocks, bottles, were thrown over the police heads at the Nazis.”

Paul Trevor



New Cross Rd. Anti-racists block route of National Front.

# The Battle of Lewisham

## — August 13th 1977, 2.30pm

By 2:30, this large contingent had arrived at Central Lewisham, about the mid-way point in the National Front's planned route. In this way, they were able to occupy the ground before the Front had arrived. According to Charli who was also on the march:

"When my contingent reached the police we couldn't turn round because at that point the demo came to a complete halt... We were the first banner, and marching with no police 'escort' at all, but by the time we'd done half a mile there was a group of black youth, generally in the 14 to 20 age range, demoing ahead of us, and this group grew until it was maybe 400-strong as we went along. Big contrast between the all-black youth ahead of us and the 95 per cent plus white contingents from the original demo. There were people hanging out of windows and waving and cheering as we went along."

Peter Marlow



New Cross Rd. Anti-racists



# The Battle of Lewisham

## — August 13th 1977, 2.30pm

At the same time, the bruised remnants of the National Front march had reached Lewisham Station. The marchers could then look South, where the whole of Lewisham was occupied by the largest group of anti-Front protesters, outnumbering the police and the Front combined.

Not daring to continue along their planned route, the Front headed instead North, towards Blackheath, where they stopped in a car park, and NF leader John Tyndall gave a short, concluding speech, calling for the police to be armed with guns. His followers slunk away.

Peter Mallow



New Cross Rd. National Front lines are broken by anti-racists.



# The Battle of Lewisham

## — August 13th 1977, 3pm

By 3pm, the Front had been dispersed. Yet the police were still determined to clear all anti-fascists from the streets. Ted Parker was now at Lewisham Clock Tower.

“There was a tide of people blocking the road. There were no signs of the police, at all. Marchers were even redirecting the traffic. Then the police began to appear.”

The Sunday Times blamed the subsequent fighting on the left, ‘The most violent scenes came when some 3,000 demonstrators realised that a secret arrangement between the police and National Front had allowed the NF marchers to slip away. Enraged left-wingers rioted along Lewisham High Street, smashing windows, wrecking police vehicles.’

It would be more accurate to say that people were defending themselves from the police.

Phil McCowen



Lewisham High St.  
Police charge  
anti-racists.

# The Battle of Lewisham

## — August 13th 1977

- ➔ A third of the entire Metropolitan police force was on duty that day.
- ➔ It was the first time that they had used riot shields in England, and even on their own terms, the police hardly knew what to do.
- ➔ The officers charged, in broken lines, arresting more than 200 demonstrators. People were clubbed, as they stood, grabbed and taken.
- ➔ Activists were determined to halt the National Front, and prevent them from gaining control of the streets.
- ➔ On that day, around six thousand anti-fascists, including large numbers of local black youths, prevented some eight hundred supporters of the National Front from marching through Lewisham.



Clifton Rise. Arrest.

Peter Marlow



New Cross Rd. NF march broken.

Phil McCowen

## Victory for the anti-fascist majority in London 1977!

Today it is the fascist British National Party which presents Londoners with a different but even more serious threat...

**The battle  
to stop the BNP  
in London today**



# The ugly truth about the BNP

**The British National Party (BNP) are the largest fascist party in Britain today. Do you know what they are really about?**

## ➔ The BNP denies the holocaust

Six million Jewish people were murdered in the Nazi holocaust. In total 15 million Jews, trade unionists, gypsies, Slavs, black, lesbian, gay and disabled people were murdered as a result of Nazi Germany's murderous policies. Nick Griffin, the BNP leader, was convicted for inciting racial hatred after a magazine he published denied the Nazi Holocaust.



"Having lost many members of my family in the Holocaust, I do not want to see a repetition for the Nazis systematic annihilation of many communities who spoke up against their evil policies. That is why I am determined to fight the BNP who are trying to copy Hitler's method of coming to power.

**The late Henry Gutterman addressing a UAF conference**

## ➔ The BNP and racist violence

Racist attacks increase in areas the BNP targets. In Barking and Dagenham — where the BNP has 12 councillors — according to figures from the local Race Equality Council, racist attacks increased by 30% between 2002 and 2004. This corresponds with increased BNP activity in the area.

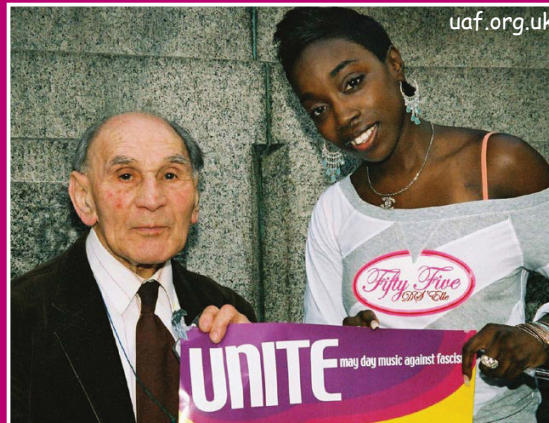
## ➔ The BNP has terrorist connections

Jon Laidlaw, who told the police he was a BNP member and wanted to kill all black people, was convicted in February 2007 after a shooting spree on the London underground. David Copeland, a former BNP member who carried out the London nail bombings in Brixton, Brick Lane and Soho said: "My aim was political. It was to cause a racial war...then all the white people would go and vote BNP."

# The ugly truth about the BNP

## ➔ The BNP is a fascist organisation

The BNP tries to pose as a respectable political party. However, beneath the surface lies a fascist organisation. The BNP has its roots in the openly Nazi organisation the National Front and has links with the white supremacist, and neo-Nazi groups around the world. Mark Collett, the BNP's former youth leader, was caught on TV praising Hitler and saying that Nazi Germany was a better place to live than some parts of Britain.



Holocaust survivor Leon Greenman with Estelle, campaigning with the UAF in east London

## ➔ The BNP – a homophobic organisation

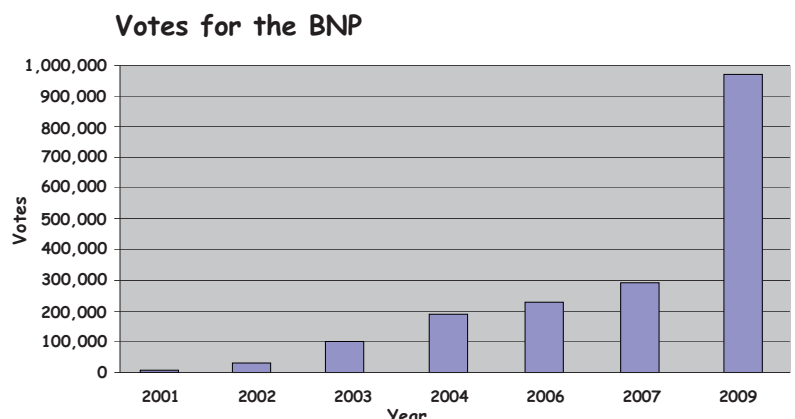
In response to the nail bombing of Soho in 1999, Nick Griffin, BNP leader said "Dozens of 'gay' demonstrators flaunting their perversion in front of the world's journalists showed just why so many ordinary people find these creatures so repulsive."

## ➔ The BNP is against the health service

It opposes migrant workers in the health service – the NHS would collapse without the contribution of migrant workers.

## ➔ The BNP vote is rising

Recent elections have confirmed the continuing growth of the British National Party (BNP) over the past decade. The BNP has accumulated 54 councillors since 2000... bringing the total to 55 seats across 18 councils.



# The BNP — the ugly truth and how to stop them

## ➔ BNP lies and hate

The BNP increasingly uses Islamophobia and the vilification of refugees and asylum seekers to try and gain support for their politics of hate.

## ➔ Campaigning must expose the racist myths

In Barking and Dagenham the BNP gained its seats following a racist campaign claiming that migrants gain funding for housing which it branded “Africans for Essex”. The truth is that... allocation policies along with national immigration policies make housing for migrants difficult, even for those in acute need.

## ➔ The BNP can be stopped

The most effective strategy for stopping the BNP advance is exemplified by the campaign in Oldham. 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. The campaign strategy centred on tackling head-on the racist myths the BNP were taking advantage of and building a broad coalition of all those opposed to fascism, including the communities targeted by the BNP. This mobilised the majority who oppose the BNP.



“The BNP spread their lies which lead to increased racist attacks on all minority communities — we all have to register and use our vote so their policies of hate are not given any platform.”

**Ruqayyah Collector, then National Union of Students Black Students' Officer, at an anti-BNP protest in East London.**

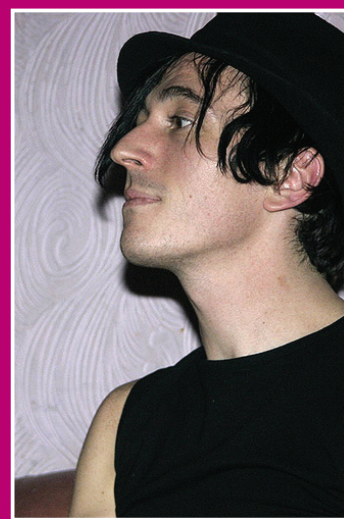
## To roll back the BNP, campaigning will need to demolish their racist myths and lies.

# Celebrate London's diversity ...



"Multicultural Britain should be celebrated. Immigration is not to blame for unemployment or housing problems, and does not negatively affect the economy. The BNP, however, tell us this is the case. We want them to know they are not fooling us."

Drew McConnell of Babyshambles.



Unite Against Fascism is a national campaign working to alert British society to the rising threat of the extreme right, in particular the British National Party (BNP), which is gaining an electoral foothold in this country. We aim to unite the broadest possible spectrum of society to counter this threat, bringing together Black, Jewish, Muslim communities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, MPs, trade unionists, celebrities, students and young people.

Until recently this country has not seen the kind of rise of fascism that has blighted many countries elsewhere in Europe. However in May 2008 the BNP gained a London Assembly member, and in the June 2009 Euro-elections the BNP polled nearly a million votes and gained two MEPs in England.

Unless challenged, the BNP's current level of support means there is a real danger that it will increase its presence in elected institutions.

The BNP can be defeated if the majority of people in this country who abhor fascism use their vote. Join our campaign to maximise opposition to fascism.



# The BNP and the

# June 2009 euro-elections:

## The biggest electoral breakthrough for a fascist organisation in British history

**On June 7th it was announced that the BNP had won two Euro seats, the biggest electoral breakthrough in the history of British fascism.**

**This is the first significant breakthrough by a British fascist party in a national election.**

Any electoral advance by the BNP encourages their supporters and enlarges the space for their racist views in the political mainstream. Winning seats in the European Parliament threatens to normalise the presence of the BNP on the political scene in a similar manner to Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National in France.

This puts pressure on other political parties to accommodate so-called legitimate concerns reflected in their vote by adapting to racism. Most brutally, it gives encouragement to the thug on the street to engage in racist, anti-Muslim, antisemitic and homophobic violence.

### ⇒ **Unity required in the fight against the fascist BNP**

The lesson of history is that unity is essential in the fight against fascism. Within that unity it both possible and necessary to discuss the most effective strategy and tactics in the light of experience.

First, we stand for the unity of all of those threatened by any rise of fascism and the extreme right. That alliance extends through minority communities, the trade unions and to every genuine democrat.

Second, as against those whose anti-Muslim or other prejudiced hysteria assists the BNP, we believe that all of these constituencies must be united, whatever their views on other issues. We promote the unity of Muslims, Jewish and other people, against fascism because they are all threatened by the rise of the far right.



*BNP leader Nick Griffin egged by anti-fascists*

# Who are the people who voted BNP in the 2009 euro-elections?

Channel 4 published a YouGov poll before the European elections to examine what drove support for the BNP. Here are a selection of the findings. The full tables are well worth a look here: [www.channel4.com/news/media/2009/06/day08/yougovpoll\\_080609.pdf](http://www.channel4.com/news/media/2009/06/day08/yougovpoll_080609.pdf).

- The overwhelming majority of BNP supporters wanted all immigration stopped – 94% agreed with the statement. For the rest of the public it was 61%.
- BNP supporters were also most likely to put immigration as the top issue facing the country. 87% picked it as a major issue. Amongst the public as a whole it was chosen by 49% of people.

## **Looking at other statements on race or immigration, BNP supporters tend to contrast even more strongly with supporters of other parties.**

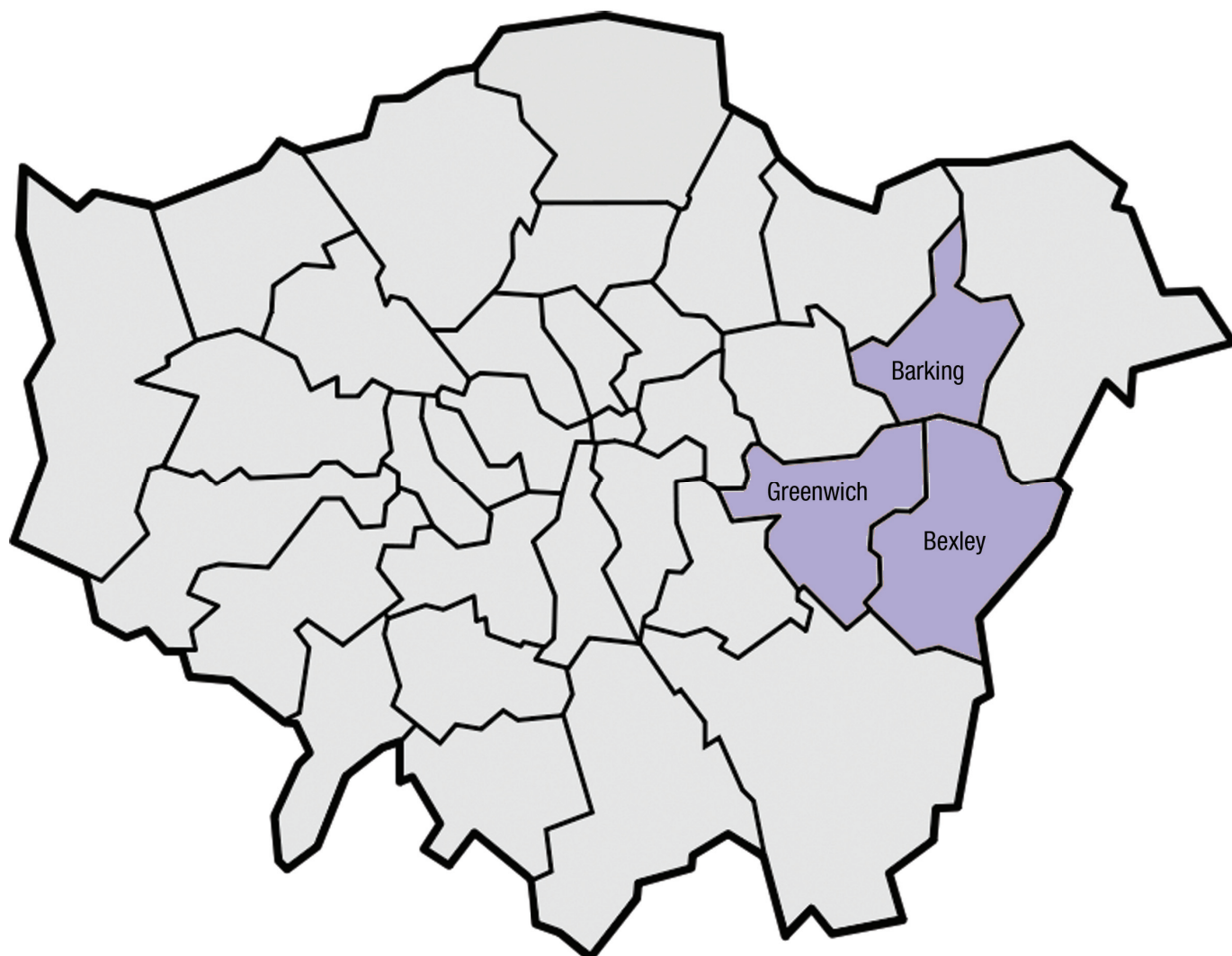
- The majority of every other party's voters agreed with the statement that "non-white British citizens who were born in this country are just as 'British' as white citizens born in this country", but only 35% of BNP voters did, with 44% disagreeing.
- Large majorities of every party's supporters agreed that there was no difference in intelligence between black and white people except for BNP supporters, where only 41% agreed.
- Almost half (49%) of BNP supporters thought employers should discriminate on grounds of race in favour of white people (compared to 11% in the general population).
- 58% thought most crime was committed by immigrants (22% in the general population). 72% of BNP supporters wanted the government to encourage voluntary repatriation, compared to 27% of the country as a whole.

# Lewisham Anti-Racist Action Group

**Lewisham Anti-Racist Action Group**, as part of **Unite Against Fascism** and with its supporters in South East London, is working to bring together anti-fascists across all of London, particularly East and South East London.

As well as in Barking and Dagenham, where they have many councillors, the fascist BNP and National Front got large votes in Bexley and Greenwich (over 4000 BNP votes in each borough) and particularly Bexley, where they got over 7500 votes.

**Please sign up if you want to become a part of this South East London united front to defeat the BNP. We need your help now to stop fascism making further advances.**



# The growth of the BNP over ten years

## European elections 2009 – a qualitative breakthrough on the national stage

### 2009 compared to 2004

Party	Votes	%
Conservative	4,198,394	27.7% (+1.0)
UKIP	2,498,226	16.5% (+0.3)
Labour	2,381,760	15.7% (-6.9)
Liberal Democrat	2,080,613	13.7% (-1.2)
Green	1,303,745	8.6% (+2.4)
BNP	943,598	6.2% (+1.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,625,823</b>	

Region	min TO WIN European seat		Results		
	Target % '09	2009 %	2004 %	1999 %	
Yorks & Humber	9.4%	9.8%	8.0%	1.2%	
North West	7.9%	8.0%	6.4%	1.3%	
West Midlands	10.6%	8.6%	7.5%	1.7%	
North East	17.6%	8.9%	6.4%	0.9%	
East Midlands	12.3%	8.7%	6.5%	1.3%	
East of England	9.8%	6.1%	4.3%	0.9%	
Wales	12.8%	5.4%	3.0%		
London	9.1%	4.9%	4.0%	1.6%	
South East	7.1%	4.4%	2.9%	0.8%	
South West	10.1%	3.9%	3.0%	0.9%	
Scotland	10.4%	2.5%	1.7%	0.4%	



# Lewisham Anti-Racist Action Group

## For the latest information on the campaign against fascism today:

- ➔ Please make a stand: join Unite Against Fascism — [www.uaf.org.uk](http://www.uaf.org.uk)
- ➔ Please sign our contact sheet: keep informed of local activity, email [laraginfo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:laraginfo@yahoo.co.uk) or go to <http://naar.org.uk/larag/>
- ➔ Please take leaflets — help get the message out!



“Make sure you go and use your vote when the elections come up. Votes are so powerful... use your vote and make a difference in your area.”

— **Lethal Bizzle,**  
**MOBO award**  
**winning grime MC**

“The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.”

**Albert Einstein — Refugee to Britain from the  
Holocaust in Nazi Germany**


# Uniting against fascism

Urging people to use their vote

1	"Honestly now, would you prefer your kid growing up in Oldham and Burnley or 1930s Germany? It would be better for your child to grow up there." Mark Collett, leader of the Young BNP on Channel 4 in 2004
2	"Meanwhile, the indigenous side in the low-to-medium level civil war brewing in this country is getting its training... it's all going to get very messy!" Nick Griffin's blog on BNP website
3	"Rape is simply sex. Women enjoy sex, so rape cannot be such a terrible physical ordeal... [It] is like suggesting forcing a woman chocolate cake is a heinous offence." Then BNP London organiser and GLA candidate, Nick Eriksen
4	"AIDS is 'a friendly disease because blacks, drug users and gays have it.'" Mark Collett, leader of the Young BNP on Channel 4 in 2004

**STOP the BNP**  
use your vote: 4 June

020 7833 4916  
www.uaf.org.uk






present

**Jon McClure aka The Reverend (Reverend & The Makers) live performance**  
+ screening of footage from the LMHR Carnival at Victoria Park and hot off the press film of Kaiser Chiefs in Rotherham

**Unite to stop the BNP in 2009!** TUC Conference fringe

**Monday 8th September 2008** 8pm-10.00pm Club Revenge, 32-34 Old Steine (opposite Brighton Pier), Brighton BN1 1EL

Featuring live performance from Jon McClure aka The Reverend (Reverend & The Makers) + plus others

Speakers include: Derek Simpson, Unite the union - Billy Hayes CWU - Glyn Ford MEP - Christine Blower NUT - Martin Gould SEUUC - Sabina Callaghan UCU - Jerry Bartlett NASUWT - Hugh Lanning PCS - and Wes Streeting MTS, who will be announcing next year's Carnival and anti-fascist campaign to stop the BNP in June 2009 European elections.

TUC Conference delegates free with ID, others donations on the door



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Getting the truth out to young people

Getting the truth out about fascists

**BARKING AND DAGENHAM unite against fascism**

**Oppose the racist myths on housing — oppose the fascist BNP**



The fascist BNP is spreading racist housing myths to suggest people who are in housing for reasons other than the fact that they have a job and a family are a burden on the state. The BNP have a long history of spreading such myths in order to divide the community and get voters to vote for them. The BNP have a long history of spreading such myths in order to divide the community and get voters to vote for them.

**The fascist BNP opposes plans for new housing in Barking & Dagenham**

Fascist BNP councillors have spent the last few years of their term in office trying to block the plans for new housing in Barking & Dagenham. They have done this by spreading racist myths about housing and by attacking the council's plans for new housing.

**Exposing the racist myths on housing**

The myths that the BNP are spreading about housing are based on a number of racist myths. These myths are designed to divide the community and get voters to vote for the BNP.

This exhibition is available for loan from [larag@talktalk.net](mailto:larag@talktalk.net)

Local anti-fascist activity

**Stop the fascist BNP**



Use your vote in Downham ward on Thursday 19th February




Join Unite Against Fascism!



— [www.uaf.org.uk](http://www.uaf.org.uk)