



Pull the Plugs on the BNP Campaign statement

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The British National Party (BNP) has announced its intention to stand more than 100 candidates in the coming General Election. The BNP is a fascist organisation, not a legitimate political party, with explicitly racist policies. By standing this number of candidates the fascist BNP hope to obtain the same level of television and radio party political coverage as the main parties – and broadcast their message of race hate and social division into every household in the country. In addition, each candidate will have their election literature circulated free of charge to every household where they are standing.

We believe the BNP should not be handed free broadcast opportunities to spread their message of hate. The BNP's politics "incite racial hatred", which is outlawed by the Public Order Act. The BNP should be barred from such free circulation of material because the right of everyone to live free from such incitement to hatred is fundamental and must be safeguarded. There is no legal obligation on the television and radio companies to broadcast the views of any political party simply on the grounds it is fielding a certain number of candidates. As the examples of what happened previously shows, broadcasters can either choose not to show the election broadcast or demand changes to them if they are likely to break the Programme Code.

History shows that fascism threatens the democratic liberties of every person in this country, and particularly those whom the fascists choose to scapegoat: the black and Asian communities, Jewish people, Muslims, lesbian and gay people, those with disabilities, trade unionists, Roma people and many others. In 1999, the bombings in Brixton, Brick Lane and Soho showed where the politics of racism and hatred can lead.

There are precedents to pulling the plug on the BNP:

- In 1997, parties needed to stand 50 candidates in the general election for a broadcast. The BNP stood 57 candidates. The broadcasters did not reach a unanimous view of the BNP broadcast and two versions were transmitted; in addition, the BNP was unable to make all the changes required by Channel 4 in the time available, so it was not transmitted by C4.
- In 2004, Channel 5 refused to show BNP film in the form supplied and finally showed a blanked out version of the broadcast. Some changes were also required to be made to the version shown in Scotland. Comprehensive editing was insisted on by S4C for the Welsh language version. The BNP's editing of their PEB for broadcast on S4C rendered most of it incomprehensible.

We invite all those who uphold the principals of equality and oppose the politics of race hate and fascism to call on:

- The BBC and independent television companies not to give air-time to the racist and fascist views of the British National Party (BNP) in the course of the General Election and local elections this year.
- The government to propose an amendment to the Representation of the People Act so that explicitly racist parties cannot have their election literature circulated free of charge.
- The Government to strengthen Part 3 of the Public Order Act of 1986 so that prosecutions for incitement to racial hatred will be easier to bring and more likely to succeed.

I/We Support the Pull the Plugs statement

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