

# Now more than ever Unite to defeat the BNP

## Vote to stop the BNP on June 19<sup>th</sup> in Hapton with Park in Burnley



The neo-Nazi British National Party won 13 seats in the local elections in May bringing their total up to 16 councillors in Town Halls around the country. On May 1<sup>st</sup> the BNP received 101,333 votes, 17%\* of the vote in the 218 wards it contested. (House of Commons RESEARCH PAPER 03/44) On May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2002 the BNP polled 30,998 votes for 67 candidates - 15%\* (\*percentage calculated using the best placed candidate for each party only, in line with standard practice).

This is the BNP's biggest break in first past the post elections ever and they are now the 'official' opposition on Burnley Council with eight councillors. However the BNP failed to win council seats in Oldham and Sunderland.

Clearly the BNP is emulating Le Pen's National Front in France – targeting local seats in order to gain a national platform. Next year there will be all-out elections in all of the metropolitan boroughs and elections to the European Parliament, which the BNP will be targeting. Only days before the election Nick Griffin met with Le Pen to discuss the future inclusion of the BNP in an extreme right wing group in the European Parliament.

The next twelve months will be crucial in the campaign against the rise of the BNP. The first hurdle is the Hapton with Park by-election on 19<sup>th</sup> June, where the BNP will attempt to gain their ninth seat on Burnley Council. Please help with the campaign on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> June. Call the office for details.

## Results analysis

In 2003 the BNP has increased the spread of its 'core' areas where it can pose a serious electoral threat. There are now 11 councils where the BNP received more than 20 per cent of the vote in more than one ward. Last year there were only two such councils – Oldham and Burnley.

### MAY COUNCIL ELECTIONS: KEY RESULTS

- **BURNLEY – BNP won seven seats** – Briercliffe, Brunshaw, Cliviger, Gannow, Hapton, Lanehead, Whittlefield wards – BNP are now the second largest party on Burnley Borough Council. They have two of the three councillors for Cliviger. BNP received 35.5 per cent of vote in contested wards.
- **SANDWELL\* – BNP won two seats** – Princes End and Great Bridge wards BNP received a 24.7 per cent average in contested wards.
- **DUDLEY\* – BNP won a seat** – Castle & Priory ward
- **CALDERDALE\* – BNP won a seat** – Illingworth ward. It already has a councillor in adjoining Mixenden ward. The BNP received 38.7 per cent in Illingworth.
- **STOKE-ON-TRENT – BNP won a seat** – Longton North and came within 27 votes of another ward. BNP polled 26.9 per cent average in 5 wards.
- **BROXBOURNE – BNP won a seat** – Crosedale ward, BNP received 29.7 per cent across contested wards
- **OLDHAM\*** – BNP fail to win any of 10 seats. Nick Griffin, leader of the BNP, was beaten in Chadderton North: Lab 1684, BNP 993. Mohammed Azam, national co-ordinator of the 'Coalition Against Racism – Unite to Stop the BNP' campaign beats BNP into 3<sup>rd</sup> place with only 17.5 per cent of the vote in Alexandra ward. The BNP received 26.9 per cent share of the vote
- **SUNDERLAND\*** – BNP fail to win any seats despite standing a full slate of 26 candidates – average BNP vote across Sunderland was 13.75 per cent. Significantly the overall turnout had more than doubled - from 22 per cent of voters to 46 per cent.
- **KIRKLEES\*** – BNP comes second in Thornhill ward (1456 votes, beaten by Tories on 1821) and Mirfield ward (1361 votes, beaten by Tories on 1802). Over 7 wards the BNP averaged 20.3 per cent.
- **BRADFORD\*** – BNP only required an extra 10 per cent votes to take Queensbury ward from the Conservatives. The BNP received 20.46 per cent share of vote.
- **PENDLE** – BNP come within 62 and 84 votes of victory in two wards and polled 26.1 per cent of vote in contested wards.
- **BLACKBURN\*** there were no elections in Blackburn\* this year. The BNP has one councillor.

NB Those councils marked \* indicate that they will have all-out elections in 2004

### **Burnley – 8 BNP councillors**

BNP received 8543 votes – 35.2% of the vote. Turnout in Burnley dropped from 53.2% in 2002 to 42.4% in 2003. The BNP now holds seats in: Hapton with Park, Lanehead, Gannow, Briercliffe, Whittlefield with Ightenhill, Brunshaw and two in Cliviger with Worsthorne. The BNP has taken over from the Liberal Democrats as the opposition to Labour, which now holds only 23 of the 45 council seats.

Immediately after the election results, the BNP leader Nick Griffin announced that they would be controlling their first council within the next two years. Burnley is not destined to have the first BNP controlled council. What happened last week can be reversed. The turnout in Burnley fell by 11% from last year, with over 50% of people not using their vote. The key to defeating the BNP is ensuring that the majority against the BNP turnout to vote. This can be done by combating the racist myths and hatred peddled by the BNP head on, and by addressing the political alienation of communities in some of the areas in which the BNP has gained ground.

### **Oldham - BNP kept out**

A united campaign against the BNP stopped the BNP from gaining council seats, including BNP leader Nick Griffin who was beaten by 691 votes in the Chadderton North ward. Significantly they were beaten into third place in Alexandra ward - 17.5 per cent (down from 23.6 per cent in 2002). A BNP candidate received 15 per cent of the vote in this ward in 2000 – they have now been beaten back to that level of support. In St James ward where they came within 91 votes of electoral success in 2002 they trailed by 352 votes. The closest challenge was in Hollinwood where they would have required an extra 344 votes to win.

Although the turnout in Oldham fell by 6 per cent (from 44 per cent to 38 per cent) the anti-BNP vote was mobilised. However the BNP share of the vote stayed at 26.9 per cent across the 10 contested wards (in 2002 the BNP received 26.9 per cent of the vote across the 5 wards it contested).

The campaign against the BNP in Oldham shows that, where the BNP was yet again denied a foothold. However in next year's all out elections in Oldham the BNP will attempt to break the opposition to them in the town.

### **'Asylum seekers driven by conflict not poverty': new report confirms that wars and repression cause asylum flows and attacking asylum seekers will only inflame bigotry Vigil for asylum rights, Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> June, 4.30-6pm outside the Home Office**

A new report by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) confirms that war, repression and human rights abuses drive more people to seek asylum in Britain than poverty. The report blasts public perception that asylum seekers are economic migrants who take advantage of asylum laws, calling on government to 'set the record straight on asylum' stating that 'its desire to appear tough simply fuels public prejudice.'

The report is published only days after a report by the Home Affairs Select Committee stated that the rise in asylum applications in the last twenty years, 'if allowed to continue unchecked, could overwhelm the capacity of receiving countries to cope, leading inevitably to social unrest. It could also, and there are signs this may already be happening, lead to a growing political backlash which will in turn lead to the election of extremist parties with extreme solutions'.

'The Sun and the Daily Express spun the Home Affairs SC report view to lead with headlines declaring 'asylum tearing the UK apart', 'Britain facing asylum anarchy', continuing with their inflammatory and racist campaign against asylum seekers. It is exactly this sort of negative and prejudicial coverage by sections of the media that has helped misinform the public on the real situation regarding asylum and stir up racist hatred. Neo-Nazis like the BNP thrive on such ignorance and racism.

Laying the blame for social problems in Britain at the door of asylum seekers will not stem the rise of the BNP. In fact, the history of the twentieth century as well as the recent experience of elsewhere in Europe shows the opposite will happen. In every European country where tougher immigration and asylum laws were introduced under far right pressure, these groups have increased their electoral influence - the most striking example of this was last year's French Presidential elections.

### **Shocking increase in disproportional stop and search of black people**

New research into stop and search shows that black people are 27 times more likely to be stopped and searched under Section 60 of the Justice and Public Order Act than white people. This section of the legislation is meant to deal with football hooliganism and other public order offences.

The figures confirm fears about the deepening of institutional racism in the criminal justice system. The continued resistance to the implementation of the Lawrence Report recommendations within the police is at the root of this situation. Section 60 and its use is akin to the 'sus' laws in the 1970s.

### **respect 2003 - 19<sup>th</sup> July, The Dome, Greenwich**

#### **Volunteer for NAAR**

Mayor of London's free anti-racist festival is to take place at the Dome this year, to mark the tenth anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence in Greenwich. NAAR is yet again organising the volunteers at the festival. Contact the office if you would like to help on the day and before hand with publicising the event.

This year's respect will be preceded by a week of anti-racist events across the capital in the context of respect week. A variety of events are being planned. NAAR will be holding a public meeting at City Hall. For more details, contact NAAR.