

Unite to stop the BNP



The elections on 3 May confirmed the fascist and homophobic British National Party's growth since 2000. The BNP polled 292,911 votes in the English and Scottish local elections, the highest local election vote for fascism in British history. It missed being elected to the North Wales seat on the Welsh Assembly by just 0.6 per cent of the electorate. It stood an unprecedented 744 candidates in the English council elections, double that of last year. It expanded its geographical reach, consolidated its hold on seats and polled a ten-fold increase in votes in the Scottish Parliamentary and Wales Assembly elections. It won 10 council seats in these elections and lost 9; and whilst its average share of the vote fell from 18 per cent last year to 13.6 per cent, around one in eight voters voted BNP. If the BNP's trajectory continues unchecked, it threatens to take a seat on

the London Assembly next year, which it came within 0.1 per cent of the electorate in 2004. Such a breakthrough would give it a significant platform. LAGCAR believes that all those who oppose homophobia, racism and fascism can play an invaluable role in stopping the BNP making the gains it craves.

Whilst the cutting edge of the BNP advance is racism the BNP also targets the lesbian and gay community

The BNP is a fascist organisation that is growing electorally by whipping up racism and homophobia. In the areas that it targets, racist attacks increase. In Barking and Dagenham it now has 12 councillors, and is the official opposition on the council. Racist attacks have increased

by 30 per cent in the area, while elsewhere in London racist attacks have fallen to record lows. Its campaigning promotes a local racist myth that African migrants disproportionately benefit from access to housing grants.

The BNP is a fascist party which admires Hitler, whose murderous policies saw the annihilation of millions of Jews, Roma, lesbians and gay men and others. The London nail bomber David Copeland, who targeted London's African Caribbean, Asian and lesbian and gay communities, illustrates where the BNP's hate-politics lead. His aim was to spark a race war and increase support for the BNP.

Whilst the cutting edge of the BNP advance is racism — against multiculturalism, immigration, asylum seekers and the Muslim community — the BNP also targets the lesbian and gay community. It drove a gay

(continued on page 2)

we all stand to lose when the BNP gains

(from front page)

pub landlord out of business in Burnley where it made significant council gains, and attacks same-sex civil partnerships. It describes books which depict lesbian and gay relationships in schools as 'brainwashing'.

The embedding of fascist parties in mainstream politics across Europe is a warning to us all. Fascist MEP Alessandro Mussolini stated on Italian television it is better to be a fascist than a 'faggot'.



The BNP's politics of homophobia

- *The Armed People — The Ultimate protection against invasion or tyranny* states that the 1996 Dunblane massacre of 16 school children and a teacher was carried out by 'a homosexual paedophile' (*BNP General Election Manifesto 2005*)

- It calls Sexual Orientation Regulations 'a charter for gay rights activists...to threaten, persecute, intimidate, silence and maliciously sue...moral minded people who do not view the practice of homosexuality as a legitimate and equal way of life'. (*BNP Website 2007*)

- The BNP website states its view on homosexuality: 'the BNP is not blinded or cowed by political correctness and recognizes that homosexuality, which affects less than 2% of the population, is not the norm and that homosexual relationships do not produce offspring — essential to the survival of a people and a nation.'

- On the nail-bomb attack in Soho: 'Dozens of "gay" demonstrators flaunting their perversion in front of the world's journalist showed why so many people find these creatures so repulsive' (Nick Griffin — *Spearhead* June 1999)

- The BNP openly target lesbian, gay and bisexual people: 'We promise to bring back legislation forbidding homosexual acts — thus driving these revolting practices back into the closet where they belong.' (*BNP General Election manifesto 1997*)

- The BNP on AIDS: 'Nature is at last taking revenge against the nauseating proliferation of homosexuality' (*Spearhead* July 1983)

- Banning the 'promotion of homosexuality' — 'Homosexuality is wrong... We believe that the promotion of homosexuality should be banned not just in schools but also in the mass media' (*Identity* — the BNP's 'Official Monthly magazine')

- 'We believe that young boys should be protected from the attentions of older perverts by returning the age of consent for homosexual sex to 21.' (*Identity*)

- 'This does not mean that we want to persecute individual homosexuals...but neither are we willing to grant them the "right" to flaunt their deviancy and to try to win new recruits to their sad, disease-ridden lifestyle.' (*Identity*)

In Eastern Europe, the electoral rise of parties openly espousing policies of intolerance and hatred are being accompanied by a rising tide of racist and homophobic attacks. Poland's Education Minister has announced new measures to forbid 'homosexual propaganda' in schools.

Pride events have been banned or attacked in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Moldova and Romania. London Mayor Ken Livingstone has stated his condemnation of these attacks and asserting 'the basic human and civil right of LGBT people to peacefully demonstrate.'

LAGCAR works with Unite Against Fascism, a broad alliance of trade unionists, Jewish, Muslim and black communities together with all those who oppose the BNP, to challenge the racist and homophobic lies on which the BNP grows, and to turn out the vote of the majority of people who oppose fascism.

This strategy has defeated the BNP in areas such as Oldham and played a significant role in restraining the BNP's growth this year. LAGCAR and UAF worked with the NUS LGBT campaign to produce specific materials highlighting the homophobia of the BNP and calling on the lesbian and gay communities to use its vote.

With the BNP targeting the London assembly next May and future elections in the European parliament, we call upon lesbian and gay communities, and all those who oppose the BNP, to register to vote and use their votes to defeat it.



- For further information visit www.uaf.org.uk
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Equality now!

The Discrimination Law Review — set up over two years ago to look how anti-discrimination law could be made more effective — has just published its overdue Green Paper, which has been met with dismay by equality campaigners.

At the moment anti-discrimination law is inconsistent — it is legal to discriminate on certain grounds and certain parts of life: discrimination in immigration control can take place without any legal protection; older people can be legally discriminated against by service providers.

The current law is incoherent, with different rights, standards and levels of protection for different groups of people: the public sector is under new duties to positively promote equality on grounds of race, gender and disability — but not on sexual orientation. Meanwhile the private sector — where most people work and increasingly

get services from — has no such obligations!

But the Green Paper's proposals would weaken key levers for equality in the public sector while doing nothing to tackle discrimination in the private sector.

It is hard to access justice and the law is poorly enforced — with thousands of cases never making it to justice due to lack of representation and funding. Even where law exists, employers and service providers can get away with repeated acts of discrimination because the powers of tribunals and courts are mainly focussed on compensation (generally low), not intervening to stop discrimination.

The realities of inequality show why we should all be pressing for the government to act.

Research carried out by the University of Cardiff (for Stonewall) in 2004 found one in five workers still felt unable to reveal their sexuality, despite the introduction

of the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, reflecting the need for requirements on private and public sector organisations to be subject to positive equality duties in relation to sexual orientation. The 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey showed that a significantly larger proportion of Muslim residents lived in a socially deprived area than any other faith, reflecting the need for law to protect against the direct and indirect discrimination that shapes this.

We need to use this opportunity to ensure the law fully protects against homophobia and racism in all parts of society and that when discrimination does happen it is much easier to stand up for your rights.

The consultation period on the Green Paper is until 4 September. Anyone can submit a view. LAGCAR and NAAR will be responding — contact us on lagcarinfo@gmail.com or 0207 247 9907 for more details.

Unity against homophobia and Islamophobia

LAGCAR works with the lesbian and gay community to promote a broad alliance to defeat the far right and racism. Racist and homophobic hate crimes continue to rise, calling on all minority communities to work together to challenge hatred. LAGCAR believes it is important that this alliance includes the Muslim community who face an unprecedented rise in Islamophobia. Last Autumn, mainstream media and politicians targeting Muslim women who wear the Niqab, was followed by a spate of violent racist attacks on Muslim women. Both homophobia and Islamophobia result in violent attacks. The *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain* report for the Cabinet office equalities review in Autumn, found comparably high levels of prejudiced views against both

Muslims and lesbians and gay men. These reactions ranged from fear and anger to disgust. Furthermore, black and Muslim lesbian and gay people will feel the impact of both racism and homophobia.

Elements of the press have promoted the divisive agenda that Islam is uniquely reactionary on homosexuality, when the reality is that leaders of all major religions have similarly regressive views on this issue. Demonising Islam in this way impacts upon Muslim lesbians and gay men. Furthermore, vilifying any minoritised community facing discrimination undermines the capability for finding a common experience between the communities facing homophobia, racism and Islamophobia.

Dialogue on issues of disagreement and defending communities where they are

under attack breaks down prejudices. We welcome the recent stance by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), when it supported the new Sexual Orientation Regulations, as part of the new Equality Act 2006. This legislation enshrined equality for lesbians and gay men in the provision of all goods and services. Whilst some elements of the religious lobby tried to defeat these regulations, no major Muslim organization supported these attempts.

LAGCAR was also invited to speak at the National Rally to Defend Freedom of Religion, Conscience and Thought, which was supported by representatives of all faiths and none, and initiated by Liberty and the British Muslim Initiative in response to the racist debate on a woman's right to wear the hijab.

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