

# Vote to stop the BNP on May 1<sup>st</sup>!

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
AGAINST  
RACISM

**UPDATE**

*April 2003*

The neo-Nazi BNP are to carry out their biggest electoral assault at this year's local government elections, hoping to build on their gains in the last twelve months, particularly in the north west, north east and in Yorkshire.

There will be over 200 BNP candidates standing in seats across the country, with Oldham, Burnley and Sunderland being particularly targeted by the BNP. In Oldham there will be 10 BNP candidates, including the BNP leader Nick Griffin (Chadderton North) and Mick Treacy (Hollinwood), the other BNP candidate in the 2001 general elections. The leader of Youth BNP Anthony Wentworth is standing in the Alexandra ward in Oldham. In Burnley, they are standing in 12 of the 15 wards. The sitting BNP councillor for Rosegrow with Lowerhouse ward is moving to the Gannow ward, where the sitting BNP councillor is standing down this year. There will not be a BNP candidate in Rosegrow with Lowerhouse.

In Sunderland, the BNP are standing candidates in all 25 wards, attempting to exploit the recent rise in racism in the town, especially following the murder of the Iranian asylum seeker Payman Bahmani last September.

Other areas where the BNP are standing are:

**Yorkshire:** Bradford, Calderdale, Leeds (in 8 seats each), Kirklees (7), Doncaster (5), Hull (3), Wakefield, Sheffield, Barnsley (2 each);

**North West** in addition to Burnley (12) and Oldham (10): Ribble Valley (5), Pendle (4), Liverpool (3), Manchester, Tameside, Stockport, Allerdale, Knowsley, Wirral, Sefton (one each), Wigan (2);

**North East** in addition to Sunderland (25): Gateshead (8), Darlington (7), Newcastle, Stockton-on-Tees (3 each), Sedgefield, Derwentside, Wear Valley (2 each), Easington (1);

**West Midlands:** Stoke-on-Trent (5 and one anti-immigration independent), Birmingham (5 and 2 National Front), Sandwell (5), Dudley (4), Walsall, Worcester, Coventry, Oswestry (1 each);

**East Midlands:** Leicester (3), Blaby (2), Hinckley and Bosworth, Ashfield, Broxtowe, Erewash, Mansfield, Bolsover (1 each);

**Mid South:** Southampton (5), Bournemouth (1);

**South West:** Bristol (4), Torbay (4), Taunton Deane (2), North Devon, Teignbridge, Plymouth, North Cornwall, South Hams, North Wiltshire (1 each);

**South East:** Medway (4), Dover, Thanet, Reigate and Banstead, Guildford, Crawley, Brighton and Hove (1 each);

**East Anglia:** Basildon, Broxbourne (3 each), Southend on Sea, Bedford, South Holland (1 each)

The NAAR is working in the broad Coalition Against Racism to roll back their gains in the past twelve months and prevent them from gaining further seats.

The BNP are also standing in a by-election in the Barkingside ward in Redbridge, Essex on 10<sup>th</sup> April. NAAR is also leafleting in the ward on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April. Please contact the office if you can help.

## **Campaigning against the BNP**

It is absolutely crucial that campaigning against the BNP becomes the priority of all anti-racists in the next few weeks. Please contact the office to discuss how this can be done at a local level and any locally relevant information you may have.

## **Days of action in Burnley and Oldham**

In Oldham and Burnley, the Coalition Against Racism - Unite to Stop the BNP campaign organised several door-to-door distribution of the Vote to Stop the BNP on May 1<sup>st</sup> leaflet. There will be two further days of action in those towns on **Sunday 13 April in Burnley** and **Sunday 27 April in Oldham**. Please contact the office if you can help in any way.

## **Vote to Stop the BNP on May 1<sup>st</sup> leaflet**

The leaflet produced by the CWU and NAAR for the campaign has also been sent to a large number of areas targeted by the BNP. You will find it on the website and in this mailing. **Please order large quantities as soon as possible for leafleting in your area by calling the office.**

## **Press conferences**

The Coalition organised two successful cross-party press conferences in London and Manchester on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, calling on voters to turn out to vote on May 1<sup>st</sup> in order to deny the BNP further breakthroughs they are seeking to achieve. A report of the press conferences and messages of support from **Michael Meacher MP** Environment Minister, **Arlene MacCarthy**, **Claude Moraes** and **Gary Tittley MEPs** and many others can be found on the NAAR website at [www.naar.org.uk](http://www.naar.org.uk)

# **United Against Racism march, rally & concert**

**Organised by UNISON and TUC, supported by NAAR**

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April**

**Manchester**

**Assemble: 10.30-11.30am Castlefield Basin, Liverpool Road**

**Rally and entertainment: 12-1.30pm Albert Square outside the Town Hall**

This event is taking place in the week before the local elections to oppose racism, celebrate our multicultural society and support the fair treatment of asylum seekers. It is important to make it a success. UNISON is organising transport from different parts of the country. Please contact the NAAR office for further details.

Speakers at the rally will include **Bill Morris** Gen Sec TGWU, **Brendan Barber** Gen Sec TUC, **Lee Jasper** Senior Advisor to the Mayor of London on Equalities and Secretary of NAAR and many others, united in the fight against racism.

## **NUS Conference votes overwhelmingly to support the Unite to Stop the BNP campaign**

Clr Mohammed Azam topped the poll in NUS as a guest speaker and received a standing ovation when he called for students to help defeat the BNP everywhere they stand. He is fighting for his seat in the Alexandra ward in Oldham where the leader of Youth BNP is also standing.

Conference voted overwhelmingly to campaign to defeat the BNP in the forthcoming local elections and mobilise students for the activities against the BNP in the run-up to May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Student Assembly Against Racism held a very successful fringe meeting on the campaign. At last year's local elections, students played a crucial role in the campaign against the BNP particularly in Oldham. Contact SAAR at the NAAR office or by email at [contactsaar@hotmail.com](mailto:contactsaar@hotmail.com)

## **The government loses its appeal on Section 55 - and attacks immigration rights**

The government's was defeated in its appeal against the High Court ruling in February. The Court of Appeal in March upheld the initial High Court ruling against the government on the withdrawal of benefits to in-country applicants leads to asylum seekers being left utterly destitute. The government falsely claimed that, the Appeal Court judge's comments were an endorsement of their draconian and inhumane policy. Refugee charities called on the government to implement the Appeal Court's ruling and scrap Section 55.

Criticising the government's proposals to the European Union for the so-called 'zones of protection' announced at the end of March, Bill Morris the General Secretary of the TGWU said the proposals were a means to 'subcontracting out its moral responsibility to refugees'. Under the proposals, asylum seekers would be kept in regional refugee camps or 'transit zones' in the regions where they are fleeing from. These measures will, if implemented, totally undermine the 1951 Convention on Refugees, the international framework for protection of refugees, which the British government has been distancing itself from for some time. NAAR will shortly be publishing on its new website a pack for activists on dispelling myths on asylum, with model letters and advice on campaigns.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, the government introduced a measure to strip British citizenship from people with dual nationality who act in a way that is 'seriously prejudicial' to Britain's vital interests. This new measure will be a huge attack on tens of thousands of people with dual nationality, primarily on people originally from Commonwealth countries. In a statement, Home Secretary David Blunkett said: 'If we are to welcome those that aspire to and qualify for British citizenship; we must also ensure that those who acquire it by deception or prove to be abusing the privilege of that citizenship by acting against the UK's vital interests, are not able to retain it. That is why, under the new reforms in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act that come into force today (1<sup>st</sup> April), I will prepare a case to take action against anyone who has acted in a way which is totally incompatible with holding British citizenship.' Amnesty International criticised the new measure, stating that these new measures 'could lead to serious breaches of fundamental human rights'.

Further restrictions to appeal rights of asylum seekers also came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April. These include: removal of asylum seekers to other European countries where they may have lodged an application previously and stripping their rights of appeal against removal; a new five-day limit for detainees to lodge appeals; a power for the Immigration Tribunal to certify a vexatious or unreasonable appeal; a paper-based, fast and final review (called the Statutory Review) by an Administrative Court judge replacing Judicial Review for those refused permission to appeal to the Tribunal.