

BNP defeated in Burnley and Halifax

Unite to stop the BNP gaining Euro seat

The two by-elections in Lanehead, Burnley and Mixenden, Halifax on 16th October have seen the BNP defeated. They currently hold 16 seats around the country. Two further by-elections are planned in Oldham and Birmingham on the 20th October. The BNP are standing in both. The Coalition Against Racism - Unite to Stop the BNP campaign is producing a leaflet to stop the BNP gaining their first seat in Oldham and will be leafleting the ward on **9th October**.



The campaign to stop the BNP is gathering pace in the run up to next year's European, local and London Assembly election on 10 June 2004. In three regions - the North West, Yorkshire and West Midlands - the BNP pose a real threat to gain MEPs. After their electoral breakthrough in local council elections in May 2003 the BNP have now set their sights on winning seats in the European Parliament in June 2004. The electoral system for the election means that with only 8.5 per cent needed in the North West constituency on the 1999 turnout of 19.4%, 7.5 per cent in London, and 10.5 per cent in Yorkshire, this is not a far-fetched target. On the contrary, the possibility of BNP success is very real and frightening. In London, the BNP could gain one seat on the Assembly with only 5% of the vote and two seats with just 8%. It is absolutely clear that only high turnouts can stop the BNP from making massive gains in next year's elections.

The European elections will be fought at a regional level and therefore the opposition to the BNP must also organise at that level. In the North West, a regional Coalition is being established with the regional TUC, black community organisations and MEPs to begin countering the threat. Success for the BNP in any region would propel the neo-Nazis further onto the national and European platforms. The reality of this threat cannot be underestimated.

It is increasingly clear that a broad national opposition to the threat of the BNP is necessary for the campaign to be successful. A national co-ordinated and unified campaign can be achieved with all those who oppose the BNP.

Racist police officers must be sacked and prosecuted, not allowed to resign

The BBC documentary the Secret Policeman sent out a chilling message: racism is endemic within the police and the neo-Nazi BNP is actively infiltrating the police. This, however, is no surprise to all those who have been campaigning relentlessly for the full implementation of the Lawrence Report recommendations. Institutional racism has dropped off the national agenda in the last couple of years. The documentary highlighted the urgency in redoubling our efforts to campaign against racism within the police and in the criminal justice system as a whole.

The documentary exposed the extent of extreme racist views by trainee officers at the Bruche Police Training College in Chester. Eight police officers serving in three forces were subsequently suspended and six of them have since resigned their positions. That their resignations have been accepted before any disciplinary action has taken place is unacceptable. None of the racist officers exposed in the documentary should have been allowed to escape without any charges or disciplinary action.

NAAR supports the call by the National Black Police Association for a full inquiry - "detailed investigation into the BBC's findings and seeking further undertakings from the Police Service to actively root out similar racism nationally". BNP membership is utterly incompatible with membership of police force. The BNP is a racist group, with the aim of a white only Britain, which can only be achieved through violent means.

Following the broadcast, Nick Griffin's claimed BNP members in the police force provided the BNP with intelligence on areas where there was racial tension so activists could move into the areas to pick up supporters. These claims must be fully investigated and the BNP must be forced to disclose the nature of any information and who it has been provided by. Police officers found to have abused their position in this corrupt manner must face dismissal.

Racism is endemic within police forces around the country and that not enough is being done to eradicate institutional racism and racist officers from the police. The National Black Police Association have consistently highlighted the failures of police forces around the country in eradicating racism. It is unacceptable that more resources have been put into investigating unfounded allegations against black police officers such as Ali Dizaei and Leroy Logan than pursuing and taking legal action against racist police officers.

New legislation will further restrict asylum rights

The Home Secretary has announced new proposals likely to be contained in yet another asylum bill further attacking asylum rights. Days before the announcement of draconian measures including prison sentences of up to two years for those travelling without a passport, the Home Secretary announced a major amnesty for those who applied for asylum before October 2000. The amnesty is likely to affect up to 50,000 people, giving them indefinite leave to remain in Britain. This is a vindication for campaigners who have stated that many of the government's proposals inflict misery upon asylum seekers while costing more than integrating asylum seekers into the mainstream benefit system.

The proposals also seek to further limit appeal rights even though many asylum seekers win leave to remain through the appeal system. Simultaneously, the government proposes to reduce legal aid to asylum seekers to 5 hours. Asylum seekers will have to pay privately for further legal support. A Law Society survey states that 48% of practitioners will stop providing support to asylum seekers as they would not afford to continue practising. The proposal will also limit legal aid on immigration to 3 hours.

Visit http://www.naar.org.uk/general/speak_out.htm to sign up to the campaign against the legal aid cuts.

Mayor of London's respect conference

Thursday 6 November, City Hall, London

Chair of the CRE Trevor Phillips, General Secretary of the TUC Brendan Barber and representatives from towns and cities across Britain are joining the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone in a major national conference of 'towns and cities celebrating diversity'. Other speakers will include Cllr Mohammed Afzal representing the Birmingham City Council, Paul Smart from the Scottish Executive, Kashmir Singh from the British Sikh Federation and Krishna Bimal Das from the National Council for Hindu Temples.

This is the first time such an alliance is being forged to promote the multiculturalism. It is hoped that the conference will be the starting point of ongoing exchange between towns and cities. For more information, contact NAAR office.

Roger Sylvester was 'unlawfully killed'

For almost five years, the family of Roger Sylvester have campaigned to find out the truth of how Roger, a fit and healthy 30 year old black man, died in the hands of the police on 11 January 1999 in Tottenham. The jury at the St Pancras Coroner's Court where the inquest into his death finally took place for almost five weeks reached an unlawful killing verdict. The verdict prompted the CPS to announce that they are to review their initial decision not to prosecute any of the eight police officers who restrained Roger and left him in the prone position - face down with hands cuffed above his head - for almost 20 minutes until he stopped breathing. Inquest, the organisation which has been supporting the Sylvester family expects the police officers to be prosecuted for manslaughter.

Deborah Coles, Co-Director of Inquest said: 'The same thing could happen tomorrow on the streets of London because the Metropolitan Police have failed to learn the lessons from previous deaths and incorporate good practice from other agencies. Roger's tragic death reveals the systemic failure of the state to learn the lessons from deaths that have occurred across different custodial settings. Unless there are clear sanctions against police who breach their own guidance the message will be sent that they can act with impunity.'

The Sylvester family will be speaking at the Student Assembly Against Racism conference on 8th November at University of London Union, Malet Street.

NAAR AGM Sat 6 Dec 10am – 5pm TUC Congress House

The AGM is open to paid up individual members and affiliate organisations. The meeting will discuss NAAR's policies and priorities for the coming year. If you are not yet registered to attend, please fill in the enclosed form and return to the NAAR office.

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