

STOP THE FASCIST BNP

A student briefing on the threat of the British National Party (BNP)

THE BNP – A SERIOUS THREAT TO US ALL

The fascist British National Party (BNP) has dramatically increased its support in recent years in a climate of racism — particularly towards asylum seekers and the Muslim community.

The BNP now has an unprecedented number of local council seats. It hopes to build on these, to gain a foothold nationally, by winning seats in the European, local government and Greater London Authority elections on 10 June. **This is the largest electoral assault by fascists ever in Britain.**

The BNP is not a legitimate political party but an organisation of racist thugs based on attacking democracy and dividing our society. Standing in the tradition of Hitler, the BNP is a fascist party. It is attempting to use the democratic process to present itself as mainstream, but racism and violence remain at its core.

Nick Griffin, the BNP's leader, has called for an 'all white Britain'. He has a conviction for incitement to racial hatred and is a known

Holocaust denier. The BNP also stands for the elimination of democratic and human rights. It is a serious threat to Black, Jewish, lesbian and gay students, students with disabilities and all who believe in a democratic inclusive society.

The focus for all anti-fascists is to stop the BNP in elections on 10 June. The BNP will be concentrating on winning European seats in the North West, in Yorkshire and Humberside regions, and an Assembly seat in London.

Any successes in the Euro elections would dramatically extend the BNP's influence, double its income overnight and allow it to claim, across Europe, to represent millions of people in Britain.

These elections take place under proportional representation. Based on the turnouts in the last European elections, the BNP will only need 8.5% of the vote to gain an MEP in the North West region and 10.5% in Yorkshire and Humberside. Only 5% of the votes cast is needed for a London government seat.

The BNP wants to emulate its allies in the French National Front, who used local electoral successes and then seats in the European parliament as a launch pad to gaining 6 million votes in the last presidential election. The racist ban on the Hijab, Jewish kippah and other religious symbols followed this growth in fascism. **However, we are not condemned to repeat the experience of France or elsewhere in Western Europe.**

THE BNP CAN BE STOPPED

The vast majority of voters do not support fascism. The BNP can be defeated by building the widest possible unity against it; and by mobilising the anti-BNP vote. A new national campaign 'Unite Against Fascism' has been set-up to achieve this. This approach has proved successful in other areas. For example, over the past four years, the BNP has continuously targeted Oldham.

Despite winning its highest vote there in the last general election, and gaining 27% of the vote in the 2002 local elections, the BNP was prevented from winning any council seats by active campaigning to expose the politics of the BNP and to mobilise the anti-fascist majority at the ballot box.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE NAZIS

ON THE NAZI HOLOCAUST: Nick Griffin, who is likely to be an MEP candidate in the North West said 'I have concluded that the 'extermination' is a mixture of ... propoganda, profitable lies and hysteria.' BNP publications have called the holocaust a 'hoax'.

BNP YOUTH: Mark Collett the party's former youth leader was exposed on TV praising Hitler, and saying Nazi Germany in the 1930s was a better place to live than Burnley or Oldham, areas with large Muslim communities. He opposed black people being in Britain saying 'it burns into me...thousands of ethnics passing me all the time' and called AIDS a 'friendly disease' because, in his view, it only kills black and LGB people.

RACISTS: As well as calling for an 'all white Britain', the BNP has launched a 'Campaign against Islam' and 'Islam out of Britain' posters to whip up further hatred against the Muslim community. The BNP has urged parents to pull pupils out of lessons that include teaching on Islam, and opposed Muslims having places of worship in Britain.

THE BNP IS A HOMOPHOBIC PARTY. Following the bombing of a gay pub in Soho by a BNP supporter which killed four people Nick Griffin said: 'TV footage of ...gay demonstrators flaunting their perversion in front of journalists showed why so many ordinary people find these creatures so repulsive.'

ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: Tony Lecomber a full-time BNP organiser called people with learning difficulties "sub-human" and people with disabilities "genetically inferior" and advocated Britain following a eugenics programme to create a super Aryan state.



STUDENTS CAN STOP THE BNP

There are over five million students in Britain. We have an important role in ensuring the overwhelming majority of students turn out and use their vote against the BNP.

Stopping BNP growth on campus is also a priority: increasingly the BNP is targeting students, hoping to win a new generation over to racism and violence. It distributed racist leaflets at the NUS anti-fees demonstration in October 2003 and claims to have support in 160 schools and universities. It has even begun contesting student union elections

There has never been a more important time for students to get active against racism and fascism. Everyone who values the multicultural diversity of Britain must get active over the next few weeks to stop the BNP.

BNP POLICIES LINKED TO RACIST VIOLENCE

The BNP opposes an inclusive democracy that protects the rights of all individuals.

Many fascists use the democratic process to further their neo-Nazi agenda but they are also prepared to resort to violence.

The nail bombings of Soho, Brixton and Brick Lane highlight the violent conclusion of fascist politics. *The Mirror* revealed that the nail bomber David Copeland was a former member of the BNP. Copeland said 'my aim was to cause a racial war... then all of the

white people would go and vote BNP'.

Violence is at the heart of the BNP

Leading members of the BNP have criminal convictions for inciting racist hatred and for violent attacks including bombings. The BNP policies also lead to violence.

Between April 2002 and March 2003 there were 237 reported racist attacks in Burnley — an area where the BNP is active. This is a 149% increase on the year up to March 2001.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 1. USE YOUR VOTE TO STOP THE BNP ON 10 JUNE.**
- 2. Work with the national 'Unite Against Fascism' campaign to maximise student and community voter registration and turnout. Model motions and a campaign statement are available from www.uaf.org.uk.**
- 3. Hold campus stalls informing people of the danger of the BNP and getting them to use their vote against the BNP.**
- 4. Campaign against the racism that is feeding support for the BNP. Join the Student Assembly Against Racism and get active at your college!**

For more information see www.uaf.org.uk and www.naar.org.uk/saar, email contactsaar@hotmail.com or phone 020 7247 9907

FASCISM ACROSS EUROPE

The BNP's growth reflects an alarming pattern of advances for fascist and extreme right parties across Europe, including positions in government.

In **France**, Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front received over 6 million votes in the last Presidential election. It polled 17% in the first round of this year's French regional elections.

Switzerland's far-right People's Party won the general election in October 2003 and holds two of seven cabinet posts. The UN refugee agency said the party's materials contained some of the most anti-asylum advertisements ever seen in Europe.

In **Austria**, the Freedom party — headed by Jörg Haider, who has praised Hitler — came second in the 1999 elections and won a place in government. Haider gained 43% of the vote in March when he won governor of the Corinthea province.

In **Belgium**, the Vlaams Blok party last year became the biggest party in Antwerp.

In **Italy**, the anti-immigrant Northern League was given three cabinet seats in Silvio Berlusconi's coalition government in 2001.

In the **Netherlands** in May 2002 Pim Fortuyn's List Fortuyn party captured 35 per cent of the vote in Rotterdam.

We must stop similar developments from happening in Britain.

Speak out against racism

A sharp rise in racism in Britain and across Europe is driving support for the BNP.

The vilification of Muslims and asylum seekers by politicians and sections of the media whips up racism and legitimises the extreme right. All anti-racists must challenge the racism on which the BNP thrives.

As well as campaigning against the BNP the Student Assembly Against Racism (SAAR) will be continuing to campaign for asylum rights and against the governments new legislation that will make asylum seekers destitute.

We are also working to challenge Islamophobia and are campaigning against the French governments ban on wearing the Hijab, and to prevent similar bans extending to Britain. We are active against institutional racism and are calling for anonymous marking throughout education and for an end to racist 'stop and search'.