

Searchlight Information Services

SPECIALIST RESEARCH INTO RACISM AND FASCISM

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PRESS RELEASE

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For the attention of News Editors, Home Affairs Editors, Political Editors and Crime Reporters

Voters reject the BNP

The British National Party failed to make its much vaunted breakthrough at the polls on 10 June.

Across nearly the whole of the North and Midlands the BNP was routed, losing three sitting councillors and failing to retain one ward in Burnley. In towns such as Oldham and Sunderland, where the BNP had high hopes of winning seats, voters decisively rejected the fascist party.

Only in Bradford, where it gained four seats, did the BNP make any new inroads in the North. With all-out elections in many councils – meaning that even third place could secure a seat – this was a significant anti-fascist victory. This was an historic opportunity for the BNP and it failed miserably.

In the rest of England, with the exception of Epping Forest in Essex, where the BNP gained three councillors, the result was a disaster for the fascist party, with another sitting councillor lost in Thurrock, Essex.

The BNP claimed before the election that it was on target “for a political earthquake”, but hardly made a rumble. The fascists went into the election with 17 councillors and came out with a mere 21.

In the London Assembly elections, in which the BNP claimed it would gain several seats, it won none. And the fascists failed to get elected in any European election region.

Anti-fascists all over the country can be proud that the immense amount of hard work – including the delivery of nearly 1.4 million copies of the *Searchlight* newspaper and several local bulletins – paid dividends. However it is very worrying that over 788,000 voters gave their support to the BNP in the European elections in England and Wales. Although we have won the battle for democracy, for hope not hate, the war is far from over.

Searchlight has fought Nick Griffin’s allegedly new-style BNP without let-up since the 2002 local elections, when the BNP won the first of its present batch of councillors, but we have not fought alone. A great deal of support has come from the trade union movement, faith groups, all three main political parties and our colleagues in Wales Friends of Searchlight, who include representatives of all the main Welsh parties.

But above all the people of Britain must thank those who have fought the BNP tooth and nail at community level, as this was the front line in the battle against racism and fascism. Those who showed their respect to the veterans of D-Day last weekend understood the link between the war waged against Nazism then and the fight against the BNP today. The Searchlight team extends our gratitude to all those we have worked with in this campaign for the incredible contribution made in stemming the rise of fascism and racism in Britain.