



PO Box 36871, London WC1X 9XT

Challenging racism and Islamophobia after the bombings

By John Campbell, Chair, Yorkshire and Humberside Unite Against Fascism

TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber visited Leeds in August to address a meeting organised by Yorkshire & the Humber TUC and Yorkshire Unite Against Fascism. It was one of a series of regional events he undertook to deepen the dialogue between the trade union movement and the Muslim community amongst others, following the escalation of racism and Islamophobia after the London bombings.

Brendan Barber said: "We are talking to Muslim colleagues to hear about the atmosphere in their communities and ways in which the union movement can play its part in preventing the divisions which organisations like the BNP would like to promote.

"They want to make ethnic minority communities scapegoats, making them responsible for all the problems of society.

"There is an old trades union saying — unity is strength. We have to make sure we deliver that, between young and old, men and women, but also unity with all the ethnic communities."

However, he warned that to avoid it being an empty slogan trade unions should "genuinely reflect the diversity of communities we seek to represent."

Referring to concerns about the growing electoral threat of the BNP Brendan Barber reminded everyone that the "UAF was brought together



in particular to challenge those who want to sow the seeds of hatred and scapegoat minority communities."

Faith leaders, students and community activists from across the region praised the TUC leader's recent opposition to "cheap calls for Muslims to integrate" which verged on them giving up crucial parts of their identity. He reiterated his belief that much needs to be done to overcome the serious consequences of widespread poverty, especially in communities of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin.

Brendan Barber also expressed his hope that the government would take serious practical steps to challenge discrimination in employment by opening up real opportunities in "a sustained engagement to change underlying problems."

In reply to criticisms about irresponsible and unsubstantiated comments by the West Yorkshire Chief Constable about the so called threat posed by 'Muslim extremist indoctrination camps' in the National Parks he underlined the responsibility of public figures and the media not to inflame the situation.

Consequently, this month's TUC congress will reaffirm its commitment to challenging racism and discrimination by placing those matters at the centre of its programme of action.

The meeting ended with a commitment by everyone to mobilise for the lobby of BNP leader Nick Griffin's Leeds Crown Court appearance on November 2nd. UAF is working with the TUC to mobilise trade unionists and other activists for this (see events listing inside).

Pete Doherty and Estelle say no to fascism



40,000 people came to Trafalgar Square for Unite Against Fascism's May Day rally & music event.

There were show-stopping performances by headliners Pete Doherty and Estelle, supported by Terri Walker, Metro Riots, Roll Deep, Skeme & Big P, Crazy Titch & J2K, Ras Kwame, Bigga Fish and Lady Sovereign.

Between the acts, speakers highlighting the need to fight racism and fascism who drew loud cheers from the audience included Holocaust survivor Leon Greenman

OBE, Paul Mackney General Secretary NATFHE, Pav Akhtar NUS Black Students Officer, Peter Turner TUC National Officer LGBT and Disability rights, Mick Connolly from SERTUC, Glyn Ford MEP, and many others representing the organisations of event partners the London May Day Organising Committee.

This event was part of Unite Against Fascism's campaign against the BNP in the run up to the general election. In addition to distributing over a quarter of a million leaflets, UAF activities included the "Pull the plugs on the BNP" campaign, where

we organised a protest outside the BBC against the BNP's party political broadcast and an ad van tour of Britain sponsored by UNISON and others, which stopped at Manchester, Burnley, Pendle, Leeds, Sheffield, Stoke, Cardiff, Swansea and London.



Eight months to stop 2006 local elections

The campaign to stop the BNP in next year's local elections starts now. The BNP currently has 21 councillors and will be hoping to increase their representation on local councils next year.

In this year's general election the BNP received a record high vote, saving their deposits in 34 constituencies compared to 5 in 2001. In 2004 the BNP only missed getting elected to the London Assembly and European Parliament by a hair's breadth and secured the highest vote ever for a fascist party in Britain. Next year the BNP will be hoping to turn these high votes into local council seats around the country. In recent by-elections, they averaged 14.6% in the by-elections contested since the general election. UAF mobilised dozens of people to campaign against the BNP in several of these by-elections. Their attempts to exploit the bombings to further their politics of race hate backfired in the Becontree by-election in Barking and in Willenhall South, Walsall by-election in July, where they received 19% and 7.6%

Stop the National Front

In August the NF stepped up their campaign to whip up hatred in communities.

The NF targeted Manchester Pride and Chatham in Medway at the bank holiday weekend. In Manchester over 100 UAF supporters turned up to show their support for Manchester Pride and to show their opposition



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respectively.

In June the BNP's only councillor in London was defeated in the Goresbrook by-election in Barking. UAF organised over 50 people to help with leafleting and canvassing and 150 people attended the gig headlined by MOBO nominated Gemma Fox and Donae'o in Barking, jointly organised by UAF and Love Music Hate Racism. Holocaust survivor Leon Greenman OBE also lent his support to UAF's campaign and urged people in Barking to use their vote to defeat the BNP.

UAF is concerned that if their vote trend continues the BNP could make a breakthrough into national politics. Unlike many other European countries, in Britain there is still a chance to stop the BNP making a breakthrough. This is why UAF will be campaigning throughout the next eight months to stop the BNP achieving their ambition of dozens more seats at a local level. For more information about UAF's activities in your area visit www.uaf.org.uk, email unite@natfhe.org.uk or phone 020 7833 4916.

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to the NF's attempts to whip up homophobia and hatred. Despite threatening to attend in numbers only five NF protested turned up with their banners and flags. The UAF's protest was supported by NUS LGBT campaign, Holocaust survivor Henry Guterman MBE and leading Labour Councillors in Manchester.

In Medway although the Home Office approved the banning of the proposed NF march from Rochester to Chatham, the police allowed the NF to assemble in Victoria gardens in Chatham. Over 60 UAF supporters joined the demonstration against the NF, which was covered in the Medway and Kent Messenger local newspapers.



> Forthcoming events



SEPTEMBER

12.45pm, Monday 12
TUC Anti-racism rally

Meeting Room 2, Congress Centre.

Speakers include:

● Claude Moraes MEP ● Billy Hayes
Unite Against Fascism ● Kamaljeet
Jandu ● Michael Abatan
Chair: Gloria Mills

5.00pm, Monday 12
"Stopping the BNP"

Unite Against Fascism fringe meeting at the TUC Congress.

Renaissance Room,
Thistle Hotel, Brighton.

Speakers include:

● Ken Livingstone, Unite Against
Fascism Chair Keith ● Sonnett,
Deputy General Secretary, UNISON
● Barry Camfield, TGWU Assistant
General Secretary

NOVEMBER

9am, Wednesday 02
Protest at BNP leader Nick Griffin's
court hearing, Leeds

Outside Leeds Crown Court,
Oxford Row,
Organised by the Yorkshire and the
Humber TUC and UAF.

12pm rally, Hedge Row, Leeds

UAF is also planning rallies and other
activities around the country,
For further details please
visit www.uaf.org.uk, contact
unite@natfhe.org.uk or phone 020
7833 4916.

7.30pm, Thursday 15
"Who Shot the Sheriff?"

London Premiere of Rock Against
Racism/Love Music Hate Racism/
Unite Against Fascism documentary
film with Hard-fi and Jerry Dammers.
The Scala, Kings Cross, London.

Speakers include:

● Jenny Brenner, London Region
AMICUS secretary ● Weyman
Bennett, UAF ● Lee Jasper, NAAR.

5.30pm, Monday 26
"Act now stop the BNP"

Fringe meeting at the
Labour Party conference.

Speakers include: ● Ken Livingstone

● Margaret Hodge MP for Barking
● Barry Camfield TGWU Assistant
General Secretary ● Dawn Butler MP
● Muslim Council of Britain

UNITE
AGAINST FASCISM

NATIONAL
CONFERENCE

10am, Saturday 5 November

TUC CONGRESS HOUSE, LONDON

Speakers include:
Ken Livingstone

Organised by: UAF and SERTUC



Employment Appeal Tribunal rules in favour of BNP

Companies that dismiss staff that are members or candidates of the BNP, could now face racial discrimination claims from the staff in question, following a ruling by the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT).

Arthur Redfearn claimed racial discrimination, when his employer found out he stood for election to Bradford council as a BNP candidate. West Yorkshire Transport Services (WYTS) dismissed him because of the fear he would offend other workers and customers.

The EAT however overturned the original employment tribunal saying "[There is] Nothing in the wording of the Act which makes it clear that the words 'on racial grounds' cover only the race of the complainant".

This ruling could lead to future companies facing such rulings for dismissing BNP members. UAF is very concerned at this development and will be urging government to make necessary changes to the law so that race equality legislation is not diverted in favour of racists, making a travesty of its intentions.

Make a contribution to Unite Against Fascism's fighting fund!

Stopping the BNP entering the mainstream of British politics is an enormous task that requires the mobilisation of the majority of British opinion. Financial support for this campaign is crucial for its success. This year trade union donations to UAF funded:

- the Trafalgar Square 40,000 strong anti-fascist concert on May Day with Pete Doherty and Estelle,
- hundreds of thousands of leaflets against the BNP distributed around the country before the general election and
- the "Pull the plugs on the BNP" campaign against the BNP's party political broadcasts.

In 2004 the money donated to the campaign contributed towards stopping the BNP getting elected to the European Parliament and London Assembly. Every leaflet distributed, every rally and other activities that UAF organised generated a lot of publicity and had an impact on the outcome of the elections.

Please help us stop the BNP, by making a donation, affiliating to UAF or setting up a standing order. Please complete the form below.



UAF is launching an appeal for its fighting fund to stop the BNP in the 2006 local elections.

unite against fascism

Please return this form to

Unite Against Fascism, PO Box 36871, London WC1X 9XT

Minimum membership fees

Standard £10 per year, **concessions** £3 per year

Organisations local £20, regional/national unfunded £40, national trade unions and other national organisations under 100,000 members £100, over 100,000 members £200

Name

Organisation

Address

.....

..... Postcode

Phone

E-mail

I am paying by [please tick box]

- cheque for £10 (standard)
 cheque for higher amount [please specify amount]
 cheque for £3 (concessions)
 standing order

Make cheques payable to Unite Against Fascism

Signed **Date** __/__/__

Standing order mandate (please give as generously as you can)

Filling this out will enable us to set up a monthly standing order with your bank. Standing orders can be cancelled at any time simply by informing your bank.

I wish to pay Unite Against Fascism by standing order [please tick]
 £2 £5 £10 £15 £20 £___
 per month

Monthly payments. First payment to be made on __/__/__

Bank name

Bank address

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Account holder's name

Account number Sort code __/__/__

Please pay HSBC Bank plc, King's Cross, 31 Euston Road, London NW1 2ST; account name Unite Against Fascism, sort code 40-04-07, account number 51336460, for the credit of Unite Against Fascism, the sum of the value indicated above

Signed **Date** __/__/__