

# *Nothing to lose but your lollipops!*

The Left's sense of triumphalism after the recent elections is not only misplaced, it is perverse. It is also predictable. When Derek Beackon first received 20% of the vote in October 1992 it was, the ANL insisted, entirely due "to a low turn out". His subsequent victory only months later was put down to "special conditions" on the Isle of Dogs. On May 5th this year the turn out was 70%, more than might be expected for a General Election, and Beackon's vote went up by 560, an increase of 30%. So much for the "low turn out" theory. Now we are told that the Labour victory on the Isle of Dogs means that the ANL "has turned the tide". Once again, reality says otherwise. In the St James ward of Bethnal Green, the BNP candidate polled 653, a 700% increase on the last election. In nearby St Peters ward they got 889 to Labour's 2000. In the Borough of Newham two BNP candidates collectively polled 906, the equivalent of 80% of the total Labour vote. So much then for the "special conditions" theory peddled by sections of the media and the left.

Prior to Beackon's election Socialist Worker boasted: "the Nazis are on the run ... the ANL .. have done a brilliant job ..." The BNP vote went up again this time by 800. Later this BNP victory was described as a "blip". Some months prior to the launch of the ANL in February 1992, its SWP sponsors had dismissed the far right "as no more than a hard core of extremely isolated fanatics." Today little more than two years later, 10,000 votes for the BNP across London is being described as "turning the tide."

Unpalatable though it may be for some, the truth is that support for the far right is growing steadily and there is little the middle class left can do about it. There have been too many lies, and as a result the working class is largely immune to its propaganda. In many areas their tactics simply

make them an irrelevance, in other areas the only impact is to undo good work previously done by others. Their politics have little resonance in working class areas and the SWP knows it. Otherwise, instead of being mere cheerleaders for Labour they would stand candidates themselves. As a result of the ANL/YRE ("if you don't want a fascist as a neighbour, vote Labour") strategy, the BNP is now nationally regarded as the radical, and only, alternative to the establishment parties. The ANL campaign has made a difference: it has increased the Labour vote, but crucially - not at the expense of the BNP. The politics of the ANL is the politics of the SWP, and the politics of the SWP is still the shrill '60s style campus protest: slogans, placards, demonstrations. In simple terms, the SWP/ANL combination has been proved a failure; despite endless media promotion and seemingly unlimited resources it has not even curbed the influence of the BNP. The BNP can be stopped, and on many occasions up and down the country Anti-Fascist Action has physically stopped them. However, we are not blind to the fact that the fight is political and accept that the re-emergence of support for the far right is a symptom of a deeper malaise. We do not see it as our job to campaign for Labour.

It is not AFA's role to argue that change is not needed. The function of anti-fascism is not to see the electoral threat from the far right beaten back, so that Labour and the middle class left can, as happened between 1982-92, turn their backs on both the social causes and their own collaboration in the political betrayals that gave rise to the NF and the BNP in the first place. The ambition of militant anti-fascism is not simply to see the far-right defeated and removed from working class areas: the ultimate solution is to see them replaced there. The BNP's attack on Labour is from the right, and is racist, ultra conservative and anti-working class. Our primary role is to guarantee that a successful challenge to Labour comes only from the left.

Furthermore, and purely from an anti-fascist point of view, as the best insurance against any nazi renaissance, it would be the duty of militants to offer protection and encouragement to any genuine working class revolt.



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# anti-fascist ACTION

# STOP THE BNP



## SATURDAY 4th JUNE

**ASSEMBLE: 10:00am SHARP  
DAGENHAM HEATHWAY TUBE**

The BNP have called a National Mobilisation on 4th June at 10:30am (also at Dagenham Heathway Station) in support of John Tyndall, the BNP candidate in the Dagenham by-election.

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