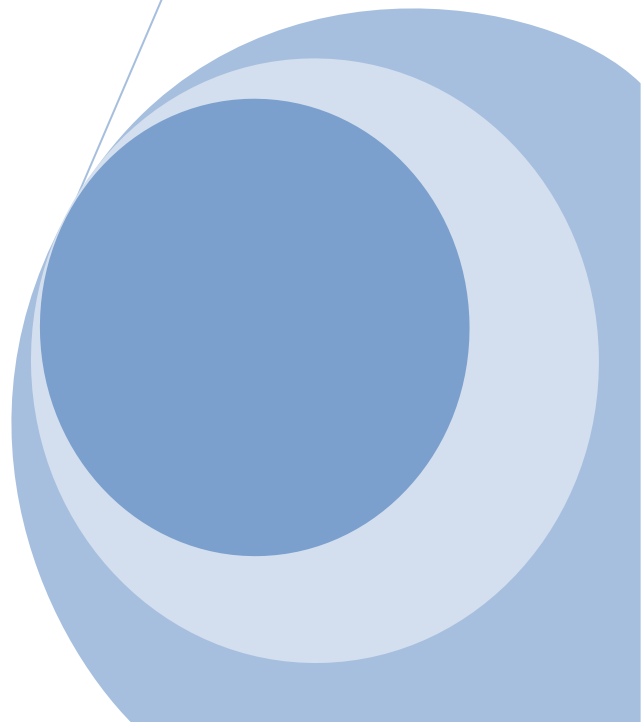


**THE SUCCESS OF THE
BRITISH NATIONAL
PARTY AND OTHER
EXTREME RIGHTWING
PARTIES IN THE
LOCAL ELECTIONS**



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Waterhouse Consulting Group is a multi disciplinary management consultancy that brings together the UK's leading experts to deliver services in equalities & diversity, counter-extremism training, research and executive search.

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**THE SUCCESS OF THE BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY
AND OTHER EXTREME RIGHT-WING PARTIES IN
THE LOCAL ELECTIONS ON 1st MAY 2003**

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1. Why should race equality workers be concerned about the activities and electoral successes of extreme right-wing parties?

The extreme right-wing parties are nationalist, racist and anti-Semitic political organisations, the antithesis of everything we in the race equality movement stand for or are seeking to achieve.

The British National Party, for example, does not believe in a multi-racial society but in preserving the (white) racial and cultural ‘purity’ of the British nation. If it came to power, in addition to introducing repatriation programmes, it would abolish the Race Relations Act and wind up, what it terms, the ‘race relations industry’, which, it believes, makes white Britons second-class citizens in their own country.

Even if it remains a minor political pressure group, it will continue to exert pressure on the mainstream political parties to adopt aspects of BNP policy, such as restrictions on immigration, asylum seekers and refugees, and abolition of ‘bureaucratic and unnecessary’ race relations legislation.

On the streets and at football matches, extreme-right gangs, drawing their inspiration from the values of the extreme right, will continue campaigns of violence and intimidation against the black and minority population.

2. What do the extreme right-wing political parties stand for?

Three extreme right-wing political parties stood candidates in the May 2003 local elections in the West Midlands. They were the British National Party, the National Front, and the Freedom Party. The British National Party was the most successful.

Like other political parties, the extreme right-wing political parties consist of individuals with a range of values and views. These views are accommodated and publicly expressed through policies which are formulated, in the case of parties contesting elections, with an eye to attracting the popular vote. A distinction can often be made between, on the one hand, the fundamental values and beliefs of the core members (which are often systematically related to one another to form an underpinning world view, or ideology) and, on the other, the publicly-stated policies of a party (which are developed and presented to be relevant and appealing to the electorate).

British National Party policies

The unashamedly populist policies of the British Nationalist party, as expressed in their leaflets, literature and door-to-door campaigning, can briefly be summarised as follows:

Nationalism

The BNP will put Britain and British people (that is the 'indigenous' white population) 'first'.

End to immigration

Immigration is undermining national identity and values and changing the face of Britain, making the native population aliens in their own land. British people will become an ethnic minority in their own country. Immigration must be stopped.

Restrictions on asylum seekers

The 'flood' of asylum seekers and refugees (who are bogus or who could find a safe haven nearer their home countries) must be halted immediately. The "£4 billion a year wasted on keeping asylum seekers" will be spent on the NHS, schools and pensioners.

Voluntary resettlement

Immigrants who are already in Britain legally will be given generous financial incentives to return to their country of ethnic origin. Their governments will be given aid to assist in this process (see foreign aid).

Deportation

Criminal and illegal immigrants will be deported.

Abolition of the Race Relations Act and similar legislation

'Positive discrimination' schemes which make white Britons second-class citizens will be abolished.

Withdrawal from the European Union

To save the nation from foreign domination (rule from Brussels) and to preserve the democratic way of life, Britain must withdraw from the European Union. The pound (and British Imperial Measurements) must be kept and the government conspiracy to take Britain into a federal state exposed.

Law and order

There has to be a crackdown on crime and an end to the 'liberal fixation' with the rights of criminals. Flogging should be restored for petty criminals and vandals. Murderers, terrorists and paedophiles deserve the death penalty.

Economy

British enterprise and industry must be supported against unfair competition from the corporate international giants. Farmers should be

protected against supermarkets and global enterprise. British fishermen should have the right to fish in exclusive British fishing zones.

Foreign aid

Foreign aid subsidises the incompetence and corruption of third world states. It will be abolished, with savings used to encourage voluntary settlement. Any left over will be spent on the Health Service.

Despite the apparent range of policy, it is difficult when examining the BNP's website, *Freedom* newspaper, *Identity* magazine and letterbox leaflets to avoid the conclusion that it is entirely fixated on matters of race and preoccupied with preserving a white British society.

National Front policies

The National Front is less public relations-orientated than the BNP and more openly racist, with a tendency towards street politics. Although sharing much in common, its flavour is even more rabidly racist.

Nationalism

It describes itself as a white nationalist movement, defending the many British victims of 'government-enforced multiculturalism'. Its website lists 150 white people killed by 'negroes' and 'half-breeds'. The nation state is conceived in racial terms.

Ending multiculturalism

The races are different and, for their mutual survival and benefit, must be kept separate.

Repatriation

Foreigners will be repatriated.

Democracy and devolution

Power will be devolved to local councils. Parents will be given control of schools. Working people will be given a say in running large companies.

Against the European Union

The Front does not want a European super-state or euro currency. It wants the British people to govern themselves without interference from French and Germans.

The Freedom Party

According to Nick Ryan (2003), the founding members of the Freedom Party broke away from the BNP some time in 2000. The Party won its first district council seat in the West Midlands at Wombourne, South Staffordshire, on 1 May

2003. It shares its name with Austria's neo-Nazi Freedom Party led by Joerg Haider, although the chairman of the Freedom Party, Adrian Davies, claimed the adoption of the same name was merely a coincidence. He agreed, however, that the party did have right-wing principles. Wombourne's new councillor, Sharron Edwards, said she agreed with these principles but was more interested in serving her electorate.

3. What do these policies have in common with Second-World-War Fascists and Nazis?

Parties which seek realistically to win the popular vote but whose core values are out of kilter with majority public opinion must downplay their 'extremism', presenting policies that are both appealing and different from those offered by existing mainstream parties. The deliberate creation of an acceptable political face by a party has to be accompanied by an inner internal discipline, avoiding the open expression of publicly-unacceptable core values.

Evidence of such core values can often only be gained from privileged access to the thinking of the inner circle of members, their political pedigree, their former track record, behind-the-scenes or off-the-record comments, or inferences drawn from the obvious connectivity of their policies. In the case of the extreme right-wing parties, there is plenty of this kind of evidence, enabling a relationship to be convincingly established between them and the pre-war Fascist and National Socialist movements. In his recent book (2003), the journalist, Nick Ryan, describes how he penetrated the public façade of the BNP, winning the confidence of its leading members and exposing their deep-seated racist and authoritarian beliefs, as well as their continuing adulation of the Nazi past. The brief history of the extreme-right (see separate RED supplement) also demonstrates the temporal continuity of this political tradition.

What follows is a sketch of some Fascist/National Socialist beliefs and values which, when combined, produce an extreme right-wing world picture or totalitarian ideology.

Nationalism

Fervent nationalism is based on a concept of a racial community, membership of which is allocated on the basis of ancestry. One's national identity is established through one's kith and kin.

Racism

As racial origin defines the quality of the nation, any trans-racial sexual contact leads to mongrelisation and a weakening of the nation. The so-called *old racism* saw racial groups as existing in a hierarchy, with Europeans (described variously as Ayrans or Caucasians) at the pinnacle of development. Interbreeding with 'inferior' groups would, if not

prevented, lead to degeneration and decline, not only of the race, but of its political manifestation, the nation state. The race could be improved by selective breeding (a eugenics programme), reproducing its best features and eliminating weaknesses. The *new racism*, to which the BNP openly subscribes, claims only that the races are different and that their qualities are best preserved by keeping them apart. The new racism is also deliberately ambiguous as to whether the differences are biological or cultural, although the suspicion remains that the lack of clarity disguises a continuing adherence to older forms of biologically-determined racial characteristics, as exemplified in the use of expressions such as, “you can take the negro out of the jungle but you can’t take the jungle out of the negro” (quoted in Roxburgh, 2002, p.227). It still follows, nevertheless, that the races – or nationalities (for the success of the nation is based on the quality of the race) do best if they live apart. As Leonard Starr, the recently-elected Burnley BNP councillor, expressed it: “I love to be touched by other cultures but my preference is to *travel* abroad to be touched by them” (quoted in *The Independent*, 3 May 2003).

Communitarianism

The extreme right is nostalgic for a golden age of community, when the people (defined racially, of course) led a healthy, self-sufficient and moral existence. The community’s noble self-sufficiency is being destroyed by international finance capitalism. Currently, this view appears to be manifested in rabid opposition to the European Union.

Anti-international capital

International finance capital undermines national capital and, in particular, the independence of small to medium-size business and the stability of professional people. Right-wing parties usually advocate economic protection of national industries. The damaging success of international finance capital, however, is believed to arise not just from its competitive edge, but because of an international conspiracy.

Anti-Semitism

The traditional extreme-right *conspiracy theory* holds that behind the scenes, pulling the financial levers, are Jews (conceived variously as consisting of American Jewish bankers and Russian Jewish communists) who are plotting world domination. The strength of the nation will be fatally undermined by allowing Jews to hold key positions in public life, or to mongrelise other races through interbreeding. The new version of this paranoia sees the United States’ foreign policy, banks, finance houses and mass media as controlled by Jews, still seeking world domination. US policy towards Israel is thought to be a self-evident manifestation of the conspiracy. The anti-Semitism to be found in right-wing literature is frequently disguised with coded terms, such as ‘Zionist’, ‘cosmopolitan’ or ‘alien’.

Those members of right-wing parties who continue to subscribe to virulent anti-Semitic beliefs are often outed when they spring to the defence of Nazi Germany or deny the Jewish Holocaust (*Did Six Million Really Die?*). The BNP, however, appears to have made a deliberate effort to downplay anti-Semitism.

Authoritarianism

The extreme right believe that the authority of the community is directed (indeed finds its highest form) through the state. The state protects and serves the community's interests with force, expressed through the armed forces and police. Great emphasis is placed on discipline, and punishment for those who damage the community in any way. Right-wing parties want a strong directive state characterised by law and order. Elements, such as trade unions, are often seen as internal enemies of the state aligning themselves with the state's external enemy: international finance.

Populism – mass mobilisation through political activism

The pre-war British Union of Fascists sought to win power, not only by contesting elections (it had little success), but by organising spectacular mass marches and rallies of its uniformed supporters. The same approach was exemplified in the Nazis' Nuremberg rallies. The aim of the strategy is to impress potential supporters with the energy and strength of the movement and to frighten and intimidate the opposition. The National Front has engaged in these kinds of street display, whereas the British National Party has tended to focus its efforts on the electoral process.

4. How did the extreme right-wing parties perform in the West Midland region's local elections on 1 May 2003? Did they do better than in 2002?

The British National party stood twenty-one candidates in the local elections held on 1 May 2003 in the West Midlands. Four were elected as councillors, one in Dudley, two in Sandwell, and one in Stoke-on-Trent.

The National Front and the Freedom Party stood a further four candidates. The Freedom Party won its first seat in South Staffordshire and came second in Tipton Green, Sandwell, with 26 per cent of the vote. The extreme right has progressed from a situation in which it had no council representation in the region, to one where it now has five council seats and seems well placed to win more.

In wards in urban areas where they stood across the West Midlands, the extreme right-wing parties gained, on average, more than a quarter of the votes cast on an overall turnout of 28 per cent of the electorate.

The 2003 results reveal not only a near fourfold increase in right-wing electoral activity, but an ability to build successfully on previous years' efforts. In the five wards that the BNP contested in 2002, it increased its vote in 2003 by over 60 per cent. This cultivation of the electorate on carefully selected patches has been adopted as a deliberate strategy and is not confined to the West Midlands, as is demonstrated by BNP successes elsewhere in the country, particularly in Burnley (see below).

In the West Midlands, the BNP contested the same five wards as in 2002, retaining in four of them the candidate who had campaigned there before. It won three of those seats. The successful candidates, Simon Darby in Castle and Priory, Dudley, John Salvage in Princes End, Sandwell, and Steven Batkin in Longton North, Stoke, had stood for the same wards in the 2002 local elections, each raising his vote respectively from 26 per cent, 24 per cent and 36 per cent to 43 per cent, 37 per cent and 38 per cent a year later. Previously, Steven Batkin had secured 19 per cent of the votes cast in Stoke's October 2002 mayoral elections, when he had beaten the Conservative candidate into fourth place.

Apart from winning five seats, four from Labour and one from the Conservatives, in the twenty-four wards in which they stood, racist right-wing parties came second in seven of the others, relegating Conservatives into third place on five occasions and still lower in one instance. The racist right also polled more than the Liberal Democrats in eleven of the fifteen seats where Liberal Democrats stood. In Weston and Meir North, the BNP lost out to Labour by only 27 votes on the possibility of a second seat on Stoke City Council.

5. How did the BNP perform elsewhere in the country?

After the May 2003 local council elections, the BNP had fifteen local councillors in England, ten in the north of England, four in the West Midlands and one in the south. BNP seats are located as follows:

Ward and number	When elected	% turnout	Seats per Council
Broxbourne, Hertfordshire			1
Cheshunt North 1	1 May 2003	27.02	
Burnley, Lancashire			8
Briercliffe 1	1 May 2003	44.3	
Brunshaw 1	1 May 2003	41.2	
Cliviger with Worsthorne 2	2 May 2002, 1 May 2003	63.4, 56.09	
Hapton with Park 1	1 May 2003	38.1	
Lanehead 1	1 May 2003	45.0	
Whittlefield with Ightenhill 1	1 May 2003	41.9	
Gannow 1	1 May 2003	41.5	
Calderdale, West Yorkshire			2
Illingworth 1	1 May 2003	36.5	
Mixenden 1	By-election 23 Jan 2003	37.2	
Dudley			1
Castle and Priory 1	1 May 2003	30.7	
Sandwell			2
Great Bridge 1	1 May 2003	25.9	
Princes End 1	1 May 2003	21.9	
Stoke on Trent			1
Longton North 1	1 May 2003	24.1	
15			15

On 1 May 2003, the BNP stood a total of 217 candidates in 71 local authorities in England and Scotland and polled altogether 100,000 votes, averaging 17 per cent of the vote in the wards it contested.

6. What happened in Burnley? Are there lessons to be learnt?

In 2002, the British National Party won three seats on Burnley Borough council. In 2003, it gained five more and now has eight councillors and is the second largest party on the council. Changes from May 2002 to 2003 in the political composition of the council are shown in the table below.

Burnley Council Composition 2002-2003			
Party	May 2002	Change 1 May 2003	May 2003
British National Party	3	Gain 6, hold 1, lose 1 to Independent	8
Conservative	4	Lose 1 to BNP	3
Independent	3	Lose 1 to BNP	3
Labour	27	Lose 3 to BNP	24
Liberal Democrat	8	Lose 1 to BNP	7
	45 seats	Elections for 16 seats	45 seats

The turnout for the 2002 local election was unduly large in comparison with local elections in the country as a whole, averaging 53.2 per cent overall, with 66,505 eligible voters and 35,373 completed ballot papers. In 2003, it had fallen to 39.6 per cent, with 69,779 eligible voters and 27,637 ballot papers.

In 2002, the BNP fielded a single candidate in 13 of the 15 three-seat wards, winning one of the three seats in three separate wards (Cliviger with Worsthorne, Gannow, and Rosegrove with Lowerhouse). In 2003, one seat in 14 wards and two seats in one ward came up for election, with the BNP standing a candidate in 13 wards. This time, it held one seat (Gannow) and won six more (Briercliffe, Brunshaw, Cliviger with Worsthorne, Hapton with Park, Lanehead, and Whittlefield with Ightenhill). (The BNP councillor in Cliviger with Worsthorne was elected in 2002 for a two-year period.)

The BNP gained one seat from the Conservative Party, one from Independent, three from Labour, and one from the Liberal Democrats. In addition to its six gains and one hold, it came second in a further six wards, in fact, taking first or second place in the thirteen wards it contested.

With its two-year seat from the previous year, the BNP now has a total of eight seats, making it the second largest party on the Labour-controlled 45 seat council.

In 2003, Labour stood in all 15 wards as it had in 2002, the BNP in 13 as in 2002, the Liberal Democrats in ten, one more than in 2002, and the Conservatives in nine (four more than in 2002). In 2002, the Conservatives had stood candidates in only five wards (and mounted a full state of three candidates in only two wards).

Conservative leader Cllr Peter Doyle, however, fulfilled his pledge, made shortly after the 2002 local election, to field more candidates (*Burnley Express*, 7 May 2002), to increase the electors' opportunity to vote Conservative. The absence from the ballot paper of the names of candidates from all three main political parties might initially have assisted the BNP. But a greater choice of candidate might also serve to divide the anti-BNP vote. It has been suggested that various kinds of alliance or electoral pacts may be needed to halt further BNP gains in a first-past-the-post system.

After the result in Burnley, the BNP leader, Nick Griffin, said that, by building on a foothold established in the 2002 local elections, the BNP was now within reach of controlling its first council within a couple of years (*The Observer*, 4 May 2003).

7. Is the BNP capitalising on voter apathy, with disillusioned mainstream party voters just not bothering to turn out to vote?

It has been suggested that BNP and NF candidates benefited from a low turnout. In the West Midland conurbation (excluding Stoke, because of difficulties of making direct comparisons between 2002 and 2003), the number of votes cast in wards fielding a BNP candidate rose by 0.4 per cent on 2002 figures, hardly an indication of any sudden radical disillusionment with the voting process, more a matter of voting as per usual. Typically, less than a third of the electorate turns out to vote in local elections as compared with two thirds in general elections.

In the 2003 local elections, the turnout in the twenty-two West Midland seats contested by the extreme right averaged 28 per cent, but there was a variation of as much as 15 per cent between the wards with the highest and lowest turnout, and the same variation was reflected in the wards where the BNP was victorious. For example, in Castle and Priory, Dudley, the turnout was 30.68 per cent and in Princes End, Sandwell, 21.94 per cent.

In Burnley in Lancashire, where the BNP gained its largest number of council seats, the turnout was well above average – 53 per cent in 2002 and 39.6 per cent in 2003.

BNP successes cannot be explained away on the basis of an increasing public apathy resulting in normal mainstream voters not bothering to attend the polls to cast their vote, thus allowing extremist activists a disproportionate influence over the result. The same people who normally vote for mainstream political parties may also choose to vote for the extreme right, yet it may also be true that increased turnout (as for a general election) reduces the chances of success of minor parties, particularly those seeking to win votes through making personal contact with the electorate.

Nick Raynsford, the Labour Local Government Minister, speaking in favour of experiments in postal voting, claimed that “the BNP thrives in areas of low turnout. If you increase turnout there is a better chance that they won’t get through” (*The Observer*, 4 May 2003). The local election results in the West Midlands and Burnley cannot be said to bear this out – at least in elections based on the average-sized ward.

8. Where did the BNP’s votes come from? Who voted for them?

On the basis of the electoral data available, inferences must remain tentative. First, although it is possible to combine the data for the conurbation as a whole, there is likely to be considerable local variation in voting patterns between boroughs and, indeed, wards. Local conditions, such as social and economic factors, ethnic and cultural mix of the electorate, the political history of an area, the particular slate of candidates offered by the parties and the idiosyncracies and persistence of the campaign teams, will all play a part in the outcome.

Nevertheless, overall figures for the seats in Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley and Sandwell where the BNP stood candidates in 2003 show that there was very little variation in turn-out levels between 2002 and 2003. The BNP, however, increased the seats it contested in these areas from four in 2002 to thirteen in 2003. In 2002, its four candidates polled a total of 1770 votes between them (an average of 443 votes each), while in 2003, its thirteen candidates polled a total of 7,859 votes collectively (the average rising to 605 votes each).

It is possible that a proportion of the votes were entirely new voters drawn from the two thirds of the electorate who do not normally bother with local elections and that they turned up to vote for the BNP, at the same time as supporters of traditional parties stayed away. As already noted, however, the overall turnout between 2002 and 2003 remained virtually constant, requiring new voters to have replaced old almost in the same proportion.

Another possibility is that, between 2002 and 2003, regular voters switched their party allegiance, revealed by the increase or decrease in the proportion of votes cast for candidates of the main political parties. It is not, of course, possible to know to which party a voter switched, but a noticeable decline in support for one party and increase in support for another might provide a clue as to the main direction of the flow of votes.

In the thirteen wards standing a BNP candidate in 2003, the three main parties suffered a decrease in their votes from 2002 levels of the following order:

West Midlands conurbation (thirteen wards in which the BNP stood a candidate in 2003)

Increase in votes cast, 2002-03	+ 0.4 per cent
Conservative decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 18.9 per cent
Labour decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 10.9 per cent
Liberal Democrat decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 19.6 per cent

Of course, in districts where, for example, Liberal Democrats did not usually stand, or had very little support, the pattern would be different. In recognition of this local variation, separate figures are presented for each of the four boroughs. Figures for Stoke-on-Trent are not comparable.

Birmingham (four wards: Longbridge, Northfield, Ascot and Weoley, in which the BNP stood a candidate in 2003)

Decrease in votes cast, 2002-03	- 3.8 per cent
Conservative decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 18.4 per cent
Labour decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 0.9 per cent
Liberal Democrat decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 25.7 per cent

While the Liberal Democrats made gains elsewhere in Birmingham, any increase in Liberal Democrat voting was not reflected in the four Birmingham wards in which BNP candidates were fielded.

Coventry (one ward: Woodlands, in which the BNP stood a candidate in 2003)

Increase in votes cast, 2002-03	+ 8.9 per cent
Conservative decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 15.7 per cent
Labour decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 22.8 per cent
Liberal Democrat increase in votes, 2002-03	+ 15.0 per cent

Dudley (three wards: Castle and Priory, Coseley East and Coseley West, in which the BNP stood a candidate in 2003)

Increase in votes cast, 2002-03	+ 10.8 per cent
Conservative decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 25.0 per cent
Labour decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 13.4 per cent
Liberal Democrat decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 4.8 per cent

Sandwell (five wards: Great Bridge, Langley, Princes End, Tipton Green, and Tividale, in which the BNP stood a candidate in 2003)

Decrease in votes cast, 2002-03	- 1.3 per cent
Conservative decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 17.4 per cent
Labour decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 18.2 per cent
*Liberal Democrat decrease in votes, 2002-03	- 47.2 per cent
Independent decrease in votes, 2002-2003	- 56.4 per cent
Increase in Other	+ 12.9 per cent

* Liberal Democrats stood in two of the five wards in 2002, but in one ward only in 2003.

Sandwell figures are also complicated by:

- (i) the intervention of the Freedom Party, polling 1084 votes in Tipton Green (2003).
- (ii) the candidature in Great Bridge of a former Labour councillor, standing as an Independent, polling 817 votes in 2002, and 732 votes in 2003. This resulted in a split in the formerly Labour vote, giving victory to the BNP candidate (772 votes).

9. What lies behind the BNP's electoral success?

Without a survey of BNP voters (together with a control group of those who did not vote or voted for other parties), it is not possible to give a definitive answer to this question. However, some or all of the following factors have been mentioned as playing a part.

Residual level of authoritarianism and racism in the general population

Various social psychological studies conducted over the last 40 years, show that as many as one in ten of the population has a predisposition towards authoritarianism and racism – an ‘authoritarian personality’ – which may incline them towards parties with similar values.

Policies appearing to reflect the popular political concerns of the moment

In regard to refugees and asylum seekers and, perhaps, in attitudes towards the European Union, the BNP's policies offer instant popular solutions, shared by significant numbers of voters.

Simon Darby, the recently-elected BNP councillor in Dudley, admitted that there had been only one issue on the doorstep during his campaign – asylum seekers: “This issue has infuriated them and typifies the way British people are being treated in this country. We are being afforded the status of non-people in our own country” (*Express and Star*, 2 May 2003).

Media campaigns

The popular press, particularly the mass-circulation *Sun* and *Daily Mail*, have been conducting a long-running campaign on issues relating to asylum seekers. They are also unremittingly hostile to the Euro and any further extension of European integration. These campaigns are reinforced by television images of would-be immigrants trying to board trains near Sangatte in France, or being detected hiding in the back of lorries at Dover.

The gist of the campaign and the emotion it is intended to evoke can be judged from the following quotation from the *Sunday Express* (25 May 2003):

ASYLUM WAR CRIMINALS ON OUR STREETS

Monsters hide their past to slip in as refugees

Britain is becoming a perfect hiding place for war criminals, murderers and rapists from around the world.

Ruthless foreign crooks have realised that the police have next to no chance of checking on their often appalling criminal records.

They are able to slip into the country as bogus asylum seekers knowing that their applications to begin a new life will not be blocked. Those arriving at UK sea ports and airports range from child pickpockets from Eastern Europe, who have caused chaos on the London Tube, to an African army chief believed to have massacred 100,00 in war-torn Rwanda.

Many other illegal immigrants have become major players in blackmail, prostitution, drugs and protection rackets. Senior police officer Chris Fox warned that Britain is in danger of being overwhelmed by a “tidal wave” of foreign criminals.

Perceived ineffectuality of the government and of the parliamentary opposition

This assessment of the ineffectuality of the government is in relation both to the general situation that many of the voters find themselves in and to specific issues, such as that of asylum seekers.

Wards in the West Midlands in which the BNP has won votes are generally shabby, deprived, run-down industrial areas: Castle and Priory ward, Dudley and parts of Sandwell and Stoke. In these areas, elements of the electorate are sufficiently down on their luck to be jealous of the meagre allowances and facilities provided for asylum seekers and refugees. Government is seen as having done nothing for local people.

As Leonard Starr, a recently-elected BNP councillor in Burnley expressed it: “Like a lot of local people, I just felt frustrated at the way the council railroad over people. There are areas where, rightly or wrongly, the perception of the people is that money is being spent on particular groups to the detriment of others” (quoted in *The Times*, 3 May 2003).

Lack of action on asylum seekers becomes the focus of a more general feeling that the needs of local people are being ignored and neglected. The *Wolverhampton Express and Star* (2 May 2003) commented as follows:

The loathsome British National Party has taken three council seats in the Black Country. No prizes for guessing how it happened. This was not so much a victory for bigotry as a defeat for mainstream politicians with their heads in the sand.

Year after year, Conservative, Labour and the Lib-Dems have refused to address the real concerns of ordinary people. Terrified of being labelled 'racist', they have pussy-footed around the issue of asylum seekers and illegal immigration.

... Today we see the outcome. Hundreds of people living in neighbourhoods which were once a byword for integration and racial harmony, have turned to an extremist party which believes in repatriation.

But it is not just the government that is seen as failing to take notice: the Conservative opposition is also perceived as failing to attend to the concerns of local people and is unlikely on its present showing to win back the initiative seized by the BNP. This did not stop Ian Duncan-Smith, the Conservative leader, blaming the Labour government for the rise of the BNP: "... the BNP have only been able to crawl from underneath their little rock because of rising crime and the shambles in the asylum system... The BNP exploit decent people's genuine concerns at Labour's chaotic asylum system and try to make it an issue of race – it is not ... we will create a quota system for genuine refugees only" (*The Guardian*, 29 April 2003).

The Conservative promise of a new quota system was hardly going to stop the BNP bandwagon on asylum seekers, nor to restore the impression of strong leadership and decisive action, apparent when Margaret Thatcher led the party. The BNP have clearly won over former Conservative voters by the 'decisiveness' of their policies.

BNP campaign strategy

The BNP has recognised the importance of gradually building up local trust and support at ward level in order to win seats and power in the council house. There is clear evidence in the West Midland wards, where they have been successful, of consistent persuasion of the electors through doorstep contact and of candidates committed to the long haul: standing in the same ward for more than one year at a time and allowing their faces to become familiar.

Simon Derby, the successful BNP candidate in Castle and Priory ward, Dudley, explained the campaign strategy to a *Guardian* reporter: "You're not going to harness any kind of support unless you tap into local sentiments. So you have to work. You have to knock the doors, deliver the leaflets, all kinds of things that we have never done before" (*The Guardian*, 30 April 2003).

He was able to claim that "as soon as I go into the ward, people know who I am because I have stood there before" (*ibid*). This kind of devotion is seen as

contrasting positively with that of mainstream party candidates, whom the electors accuse of being invisible between elections.

BNP candidates present themselves as respectable, friendly, avuncular characters, willing to listen to electors and take action on the issues – however minor – that they raise. Angus Roxburgh, in his excellent book on the rise of the far right (2002), remarks that he had found meeting the new extreme-right politicians disconcerting because outwardly, many of them were perfectly pleasant: “The message was extreme, but the ‘presentation’ - from the slick advertising campaigns to the smiling faces of the leaders - was persuasive.” He uses the expression ‘designer fascists’ (p.16, 2002).

Another aspect of the BNP candidates’ success has been their ability to present themselves and their policies as not ‘extreme’, but as reasonable and mainstream (what the average *Sun* reader thinks) and to disguise deliberately all evidence of National Socialist and Fascist links.

Evidence of the success of the BNP approach can be found in the turnout figures and in the increase from 2002 to 2003 in their percentage of the votes.

The BNP intend to continue with their painstaking local ward work. According to Nick Griffin, the BNP leader, the result in Burnley was built on last year’s local elections and has put the party “within reach of controlling our first council within a couple of years” (quoted in *The Observer*, 4 May 2003).

The alternative BNP message

Like many right-wing demagogues before them (for example, Enoch Powell in his ‘river of blood’ speech), the BNP consistently reiterates an underlying, deeply resonant emotional and paranoiac message made up of four themes:

- the enemy within,
- betrayal by other politicians,
- victimisation of ordinary people, and
- the brave stand of the BNP.

The message expressed in doorstep conversations goes like this.

Refugees and asylum seekers (or Moslems, or black and Asian people generally) are represented as an alien force, occupying whole areas of the country and increasing rapidly in number. Their different cultures and religions are regarded as socially divisive, undermining the unity of the nation. In addition to the mere fact of being alien, the outsiders are accused of actively and conspiratorially participating in an attempt to impose their own identity on the white British population itself. The outsiders have been given privileges by race relations legislation.

Thus, white British people have become strangers in their 'own' country, a persecuted minority, still proud of their democratic way of life, but betrayed by politicians and humiliated by aliens. Refugees and asylum seekers are treated better than local people by being given refurbished accommodation and big welfare payments, while the needs of pensioners, the disabled and single mothers are ignored. "Isn't it time we put our own people first?" (BNP leaflet).

White British people have been let down by the decision-makers, (never very clearly specified) through cowardice, ignorance, stupidity, insanity or misguided idealism. Unlike mainstream politicians, the BNP is speaking out bravely for ordinary decent people. It requires courage to speak the truth (as exemplified by the way the BNP is misrepresented in the press and vilified by the mainstream parties). But the BNP has a duty to listen to the electorate and to speak out whatever the consequences, because to remain silent would be a betrayal of the country and of the local people it represents.

Simon Darby, BNP councillor, Dudley, provides a typical example of this mind warp: "The people have had enough of being humiliated and ignored by mainstream politicians. As a people we can only take so much and we have reached breaking point" (quoted in the *Express and Star*, 2 May 2003). The politicians are 'them' while the BNP and the people are 'us'. It may be useful to ask why sizeable numbers of the electorate are prepared to see themselves as victims and to accept such a paranoid picture of the political world.

10. What, if anything, did the reports on race relations in the north of England: Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham, have to say about the growing threat from extreme-right racist political activity?

Bradford

The Bradford report introduced the key concept of *community fragmentation* on racial, cultural and faith lines, noting that relationships between different cultural communities were deteriorating. In the section on Bradfordian views, the following were noted:

- Inner city Bradford is seen as Muslim dominant and the rest of the District does not see itself as being part of the Bradford identity.
- There is resentment towards the Asian community by sections of the white community who perceive hostile and mono-cultural religious leaders as the advocates of segregation.
- Regeneration processes force communities and neighbourhoods to bid against each other.
- Parents are expressing their rights by taking their children out of some schools and even out of the District, often along racial lines.

- The current Bradford scenario is one in which white people feel that their needs are neglected because they regard the minority ethnic communities as being prioritised for more favourable public assistance.

The report recommended a ‘Bradfordian People Programme’ to build trust and confidence across all communities. While most of the recommendations were aimed at bringing separate communities together, none specifically dealt with the need for overt political mobilisation in the face of extreme right activity. The report was written before the April 2001 outbreak of violent interethnic disturbances.

Burnley

The Burnley report dealt more directly with the politicisation of race (p.48), prefacing that section with the quote “friends of ours who are good people say they will vote BNP, even though it’s against all their Christian beliefs, because that is the only voice they have now”.

The Task Force made it clear that some of Burnley’s white population had been influenced by the BNP, with local byelections showing a vote of 21 per cent for that party. In some parts of Burnley it was found that some young people held openly hostile views towards the Asian population. (This, it will be recalled, was written in 2001 – two years ago.)

The extensive appendix to the Burnley Task Force Report included a submission by the Burnley and Pendle branch of the BNP in which it blamed incursions by “Muslim Thugs” for the violence, and alleged it was no coincidence that the Duke of York public house was torched, as pubs were “the cornerstone of white working-class life”.

Discrimination against white people had to be acknowledged and addressed, such as in the disproportionate allocation of funds to Asian areas. The submission went on to claim bias against the BNP as instanced by the false accusations that the disturbances were BNP-inspired.

Among its recommendations, the Burnley Task Force urged the CRE to reconsider its decision to withdraw resources for race relations work in the borough and suggested that local authorities and voluntary groups should come together to encourage and support multi-cultural activities that cut across racial divisions. Understandably, however, there was no reference to the need to combat directly extreme right-wing propaganda aimed at articulating white discontentment.

Oldham

The Oldham report, too, recognised the segregation occurring between racial groups in housing, education, employment, health, policing, leisure, culture and community interaction, regeneration, governance and the media. It noted that since the riots, there had been ‘no real evidence of the parties coming together to form a strategy for community relations in the town’.

The Oldham Independent Review Team made 125 recommendations covering housing, education, employment, health, policing, leisure, culture and community interaction, regeneration, governance and the media.

Conclusion

The reports are laudable in focusing on the deeper structural causes of racial conflict. But even though they are written against a background of the manifestation of extreme-right political activity, they fail to address directly the political action to be taken in the face of BNP/NF provocation. The lesson from France, however, suggests that this, too, needs to be tackled, a message now reinforced by the BNP’s latest electoral performance in Burnley.

11. What can race equality councils and partnerships do about the threat to race equality from the extreme right?

Race Equality Councils have a chequered record of directly confronting the extreme right. Some have spearheaded campaigns to see off racist demonstrations, marches and other activities in their areas, while others have provided less overt technical support behind the scenes. On occasion, however, race equality councils have not provided the robust leadership required. There are a number of reasons why they have failed to live up to the expectation that they will act as local bulwarks against extreme right-wing racist political activity.

Some directors have exempted their organisations on the basis of the clause in the revised model constitution requiring them, in compliance with charities law, to be non-party in politics and non-sectarian in religion. Other directors have had very little experience of dealing with sustained political harassment and believe themselves to be ill-equipped to lead political campaigns against organisations, such as the BNP. In some areas, the responsibility has been passed to other groups specifically set up to expose the fascists, such as the Anti-Nazi League or Searchlight. Still others are fearful of the repercussions of taking on the extreme right, in the knowledge that they are likely to become the main targets of its hatred and violence.

While this last reaction is understandable, the history of the struggle against racism and other vested interests is, of necessity, one of bravery and sacrifice.

The American Civil Rights movement should be a lesson and inspiration to all who serve the racial equality movement. RECs do not just operate administratively. At some point, they have to take an uncompromisingly political stand if they are to earn the respect of the individuals and communities they have been set up to serve. The events of the last two years should make REC members and officers very wary of taking a back seat or a low-profile approach to local racist political activity.

Two approaches, perhaps best undertaken in combination, might be developed. The first, focusing on deeper **structural** causes of social alienation and division on racial lines, is discernible in the recommendations emerging from the ‘northern reports’ mentioned above. The second, equally important, but played down in official literature, is the need to engage in more direct **campaigning**, counter-propaganda, alliance-building and political mobilisation against the extreme-right racist political parties. A dual strategy along these lines needs to be collectively and systematically developed by West Midlands RECs, and adopted by their honorary officers, members, staff and volunteers.

The structural approach will involve mounting projects to reduce social fragmentation and increase community cohesion. RECs, for example, could be key players in local strategic partnerships, involving all the main sectors, such as housing, education, employment, culture and leisure. One proposal made elsewhere is that RECs should become actively engaged in youth and community projects aimed at bringing young people from different racial groups together in community development work.

The campaigning approach will not only involve the vigorous promotion of the benefits of a multi-cultural society, but be effective in thwarting the political inroads being made by racist politicians. Race Equality Councils need to be at the forefront of the struggle against the racist extreme right and in that position they can achieve a great deal.

From a superficial reading of the CRE’s *Guidance for Race Equality Councils on Election-Related Issues*, it can only be concluded that race equality councils and partnerships have little scope for action without running the risk of losing their charitable status, or their grants from the CRE, local authority, or Community Fund. It is, nevertheless, perfectly legitimate for race equality councils to engage in political lobbying to achieve their objectives. But their campaigning must be related to their charitable purpose. This should cause no problem as their charitable purpose is to work towards the elimination of racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations in accordance with the law of the land. The policy of the extreme right just happens to be the very opposite: to put “our own native white British people first”.

Race equality councils are also committed by their (model) constitution to be non-party in politics. This means that they should refrain from publishing anything

that supports or attacks just one political party, or that might be seen as promoting or opposing a point of view that can be identified as belonging to only one party (and not another).

Race equality councils can, of course, avoid the charge of being party political simply by working with *all* parties that agree with their objectives and by maintaining an appropriate programme of public information and education opposing the racially discriminating and prejudiced values and policies advocated by *any* party. Indeed, race equality councils cannot be said to be meeting their objectives if they do not take action against the policies of any political party, whether or not of the extreme right, if they believe them to be racist and discriminatory in effect.

Nevertheless, race equality councils need to be very careful in campaigning in those regulated periods restricting activity in the run-up to elections (but see the CRE guidelines if you want to be on the safe side).

How then should race equality councils go about dealing with extreme right wing activity in their areas? There are no definitive answers or guarantees of success, but the following eight practical steps might be taken.

1. Identification

Groups or individuals with views on the extreme right are not always readily identifiable. Some, in fact, do their best to disguise their opinions to give themselves more opportunity to become established. Others choose innocuous names under which to operate: eg 'Freedom Party', 'such-and-such Residents' Association', 'Campaign for Safer Streets'. You need to be vigilant.

A useful place to keep a look out is on the letters page of the local press, or by inviting members living locally to collect and send you suspicious campaign materials. Do not act on the assumption that because you do not know of extreme right-wing candidates standing in your area, there are none.

2. Information gathering

Make sure you, your members and your staff know about the values, policies and pedigree of extreme right groups and individuals and whether they are operating in your local area of benefit. If the extreme right are present (and they usually are), keep detailed records (including all press cuttings, campaign leaflets with dates) of *who* they are, *where* they are operating, *what* issues they are raising, *how* they go about campaigning, *who* is supporting them, their electoral successes, and any media exposure they receive. Gather accurate information comprehensively and systematically and be prepared to share and exchange with other anti-racist groups.

3. *Community awareness*

Supported by the information you have gathered, you should work to raise the awareness of local communities, to the danger posed by the extreme right to race relations and community cohesion.

There are people, including some from black and minority ethnic groups, who claim to be uninterested in politics and who may end up lending their support to the extreme right without realising what it stands for. Just as worrying, a few individuals, like the late MP, Bernie Grant, find the idea of being paid in their twilight years to return to their country of origin a quite attractive proposition. Race equality councils need to explain the downside of 'pay-to-return' repatriation policies to their local communities. They also need to convince them that the extreme right are merely using asylum seekers and refugees as a convenient stalking horse for a wider target: black and ethnic minorities generally.

4. *Liaising with mainstream parties*

Political parties, not race equality councils, put up candidates to fight elections. The mainstream political parties do not want to lose seats that they have previously held, or candidates to be humiliated by being displaced into second or third place by the extreme-right. They are likely to welcome the opportunity to discuss politics and tactics with race equality council officers or members.

RECs/REPs might initiate contact with local constituency, district and ward branches of the main political parties (as well as others sympathetic to race equality council objectives) and offer to provide a speaker at their meetings to give and gather information on the activities of the extreme right at local level and to discuss what needs to be done to counteract their racist and xenophobic campaigns.

5. *Developing political tactics*

Among matters which need to be dealt with in practical ways are:

- the identification of wards vulnerable to extreme-right incursion.
- the BNP strategy of building rapport with ward electorates by standing candidates over more than one year and working the ward consistently between elections. Some ward parties still select their candidates late in the electoral year.
- the need to pinpoint significant local factors (for example, a deselected mainstream political party candidate standing as an independent and splitting the vote, or a particular local issue such as the 'Tipton Taliban').
- the possibilities of forming local electoral pacts to share information or facilities in the face of the threat from the extreme right, or of producing joint statements/leaflets opposing the extreme right.

- improved collaboration on information gathering and sharing, a process in which the race equality council might play a neutral non-party political role.
- the provision of facilities for meeting with ethnic minority voters to convince them of the bona fides of mainstream parties in respect of both general and racial issues and of the need to maximise turnout to defeat the extreme right (but not to meet in the period after the election has been called).
- electoral strategy in the areas in which boundary changes mean that all council seats (three per ward) come up for election together, improving in theory the chance of the extreme right winning one of the three.

6. *Relations with the media and instant rebuttal*

Many race equality councils have good relations with the local press and radio and have regular contact with sympathetic journalists. It is important, of course, to sustain and develop these relations and to use them to mount campaigns which convince the electorate of the viability and attractiveness of the new multi-racial Britain. Letters pessimistic about the possibility of establishing good race relations or building a just multi-racial society need to be responded to – not necessarily in the name of the race equality council, but by members and supporters. In the course of the election, all hostile right-wing propaganda should be rebutted immediately it appears.

7. *Liaison with the police and local authority*

In multi-racial areas, extreme-right campaigning can lead to provocative displays by white racist thugs as well as black and ethnic minority reaction to racial insults and intimidation. There can be a real danger of inter-ethnic conflict, physical attacks and damage to property. This will be made worse if the extreme right decides to hold marches through racially-integrated areas or to organise rallies in church halls, schools or community centres used by multi-cultural communities. The race equality council should work with the police to reduce the possibility of this kind of provocation. It is also important in such a racially-charged atmosphere to monitor for any increase in the rate of racially-motivated crime and to draw incidents immediately to the attention of the police.

8. *Forming a united front*

The race equality council can act as the catalyst in the formation of a united front of political parties, faith groups, trade unions, voluntary and community associations, other organisations and individual local people against the racism of the extreme right. The race equality council can call on and arrange for eminent local citizens, publicly and collectively, to declare their commitment to, and belief in, our common humanity, the inherent equality of the races, and the vision of a just, tolerant and multi-racial society.

These eight suggested steps are not exhaustive. There is an urgent need for race equality councils to form a standing committee to examine and develop their role in dealing with the extreme right. If action to tackle the threat from the extreme right is not already a priority, it must become one.

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Table 1 West Midlands local elections, May 2002 and 2003: percentage turnout and votes for parties of the extreme right

ELECTORAL DISTRICT	WARD	LOCAL ELECTION 2003				LOCAL ELECTION 2002			GENERAL ELECTION		REC/REP
		% TURNOUT	PARTY	% VOTE	ELECTED	PARTY	% VOTE	ELECTED	CONSTITUENCY	% VOTE	
Birmingham	Kingstanding	20.98	NF	15.00	N	NF	9.00	N	Hodge Hill	3.4	B'ham Race Action P'ship
	Longbridge	24.88	BNP	11.60	N	-	-	-			
	Northfield	30.10	BNP	10.75	N	-	-	-			
	Oscott	28.46	BNP	16.00	N	-	-	-			
	Stockland Green	20.57	NF	11.90	N	-	-	-			
	Weoley	30.60	BNP	15.30	N	BNP	7.00	-			
Coventry	Woodlands	35.00	BNP	20.60	N				North East	2.0	Coventry REC
Dudley	Castle and Priory	30.68	BNP	43.00	Y	BNP	26.00	N	Dudley North	4.7	Dudley REC
	Coseley East	29.05	BNP	27.00	N	-	-	-			
	Coseley West	31.03	BNP	24.00	N	-	-	-			
Sandwell	Great Bridge	25.93	BNP	31.50	Y	-	-	-	West Bromwich - West	4.5	Race Equality Sandwell
	Langley	30.28	BNP	22.30	N	-	-	-			
	Princes End	21.94	BNP	37.00	Y	BNP	24.00	N			
	Tipton Green	34.06	Freedom BNP	6.00 15.60	N N	- BNP	- 8.00	- N			
	Tividale	27.20	Freedom BNP	26.40 30.20	N N	Freedom -	24.00 -	N -			
Shropshire, Oswestry	Gobowen	-	BNP	4.5	N	-	-	-	-	-	Telford & Shropshire REC
South Staffordshire	Wombourne South- West	30.00	Freedom	(40.54)	Y	-	-	-			N Staffs REC
Stoke-on-Trent	Chell and Packmoor	28.60	BNP	23.00	N	-	-	-	Stoke South	3.8	N Staffs REC
	Longton North	24.10	BNP	38.00	Y	BNP	(36.00)	N			
	Norton and Bradeley	34.20	BNP	22.00	N	-	-	-			
	Tunstall										
	Weston and Meir North	28.10 26.30	BNP BNP	24.00 28.40	N N	- -	- -	- -			
Walsall	Hatherton Rushall	28.90	BNP	26.10	N	-	-	-			Walsall SREP
Wolverhampton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Wolverhampton South East	2.0	W'ton REC
Worcester	Holy Trinity	26.20	BNP	24.7	N	-	-	-			Worcs REC

Table 2 West Midland local elections, May 2003: rank order of the parties

		BNP	CONS	FREEDOM	LAB	LIBDEM	NF	OTHER
Birmingham	Kingstanding		2		1*	4	3	
	Longbridge	4	2		1*	3		5
	Northfield	4	1*		2	3		
	Oscott	3	2		1*	4		
	Stockland Green		2		1*	3	4	
	Weoley	3	2		1*	4		
Coventry	Woodlands	3	1*		2	4		
Dudley	Castle and Priory	1*	3		2	4		
	Coseley East	2	3		1*	4		5
	Coseley West	3	1*		2	4		
Sandwell	Great Bridge	1*	4		3			2
	Langley	3	2		1*			4
	Princes End	1*	3	4	2			5
	Tipton Green	4	3	2	1*			5
	Tividale	2	3		1*	4		
Shropshire, Oswestry	Gobowen	5	1*		4	2		3
South Staffs	Wombourne SW		2*, 3	1*				
Stoke-on-Trent	Chell and Packmoor	2	6		1*	5		3,4
	Longton North	1*	4		2	3		
	Norton & Bradeley	3			1*	4		2
	Tunstall	3	2		1*			4
	Weston & Meir North	2	3		1*			4
Walsall	Hatherton Rushall	2	1		3			4,5
Worcester	Holy Trinity	2	3		1			

* Candidates elected

Table 3 West Midlands local elections May 2002, 2003: results for wards that had extreme right-wing candidates in 2002 and/or 2003

MAY 2002	MAY 2003
BIRMINGHAM	
Ward: Kingstanding (1 seat) George Harper (Lab) 2,213 Simon Cardinali (Con) 1,104 Mark Haddon (Lib Dem) 714 Donna McNeil (Nat Front) 384 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 4,415</p> (NF vote as a proportion of votes cast: 9%)	Ward: Kingstanding (1 seat) Peter Kane (Lab) 1,774 Simon Cardinali (Con) 896 Terry Williams (Nat Front) 567 Mark Haddon (Lib Dem) 560 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 3,797</p> (NF vote as a proportion of votes cast: 15%)
Ward: Longbridge (2 seats) Robert Ffello (Lab) 2,216 Steven Bedser (Lab) 2,183 Colin Barnhurst (Con) 2,134 Keith Barton (Con) 2,076 Marjorie Morrison (Lib Dem) 923 Trevor Sword (Lib Dem) 729 Louise Houldey (Soc Alt) 251 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 10,512 /2 = 5,256</p>	Ward: Longbridge (1 seat) Steven Bedser (Lab) 2,318 Nils Purser (Con) 1,783 Trevor Sword (Lib Dem) 693 Mark Cattell (BNP) 646 Louise Houdley (Soc Alt) 113 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 5,553</p> (BNP vote as a proportion of votes cast: 11.6%)
Ward: Northfield (1 seat) Leslie Lawrence (Con) 3,101 Gary Davies (Lab/Coop) 2,147 Andrew Moles (Lib Dem) 707 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 5,955</p>	Ward: Northfield (1 seat) Margaret Scrimshaw (Con) 2,394 Duncan Ross (Lab) 1,707 Andrew Moles (Lib Dem) 722 Lee Savage (BNP) 581 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 5,404</p> (BNP vote as a proportion of votes cast: 10.75%)

MAY 2002		MAY 2003	
Ward: Oscott (1 seat)		Ward: Oscott (1 seat)	
Margaret Sparrey (Con)	1,876	John Cotton (Lab)	2,052
John Jordan (Lab)	1,800	Diana Duggan (Con)	1,339
Jonathan Hunt (Lib Dem)	1,318	Sharon Ebanks (BNP)	741
		Jonathan Hassall (Lib Dem)	498
Total	4,994	Total	4,630
		(BNP vote as a proportion of votes cast: 16%)	
Ward: Stockland Green (1 seat)		Ward: Stockland Green (1 seat)	
Patty Primmer (Lab)	2,308	Penny Holbrook (Lab)	1,700
Philip Parkin (Con)	1,170	Philip Parkin (Con)	796
Iain Bowen (Lib Dem)	516	Philip Mills (Lib Dem)	679
Vivian Yates (Marxist)	173	Lee Salisbury (Nat Front)	429
Total	4,167	Total	3,604
		(NF vote as a proportion of votes cast: 11.9%)	
Ward: Weoley (1 seat)		Ward: Weoley (1 seat)	
Fiona Williams (Lab)	1,716	Raymond Holtom (Lab)	1,713
Adrian Delaney (Con)	1,634	Adrian Delaney (Con)	1,595
Peter Spybey (Indep)	573	Lee Windridge (BNP)	709
Steven Tomlin (lib Dem)	523	Steven Tomlin (Lib Dem)	593
Lee Windridge (BNP)	351		
Total	4,797	Total	4,610
(BNP vote as a proportion of votes cast: 7.0%)		(BNP vote as a proportion of votes cast: 15.3%)	
COVENTRY			
Ward: Woodlands (1 seat)		Ward: Wooldands (1 seat)	
Christian Cliffe (Con)	2,168	Diana Tuson (Con)	1,827
Joseph Clifford (Lab)	1,653	Jean Jackson (Lab)	1,276
Stephen Howarth (Lib Dem)	705	Stephen Howarth (BNP)	1,013
		Stephen Howarth (Lib Dem)	811
Total	4,526	Total	4,927
		(BNP vote as a proportion of votes cast: 20.6%)	

MAY 2002	MAY 2003
DUDLEY	
Ward: Castle and Priory (1 seat)	Ward: Castle and Priory (1 seat)
Arthur Fletcher (Lab) 937 Simon Darby (BNP) 549 Margaret Wilkes (Con) 423 Roy Broome (Lib Dem) 157 Paul Bolton (Soc AI) 37 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,103</p> (BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 26%)	Simon Darby (BNP) 1,069 Peter Hall (Lab) 896 Michael Woloham (Con) 356 Ann Lewis (Lib Dem) 182 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,503</p> (BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 43%)
Ward: Coseley East (1 seat)	Ward: Coseley East (1 seat)
Susan Ridney (Lab) 1,320 Terence Dickenson (Con) 870 John Wilkes (Lib Dem) 152 Timothy Fletcher (Lib Dem) 120 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,462</p>	Melvyn Mottram (Lab) 1,194 William Pinchers (BNP) 741 Terrance Dickenson (Con) 558 Colin Davies (Lib Dem) 117 John Wilkes (Lib Dem) 115 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,725</p> (BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 27%)
Ward: Coseley West (1 seat)	Ward: Coseley West (1 seat)
Julian Ryder (Con) 1,214 John Walters (Lab) 1,176 Robert Hiscutt (Lib Dem) 322 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,712</p>	David Simms (Con) 967 Jeffrey Jewkes (Lab) 884 Gary Woodall (BNP) 682 Lyn Davies (Lib Dem) 301 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,834</p> (BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 24%)
SANDWELL	
Ward: Great Bridge (1 seat)	Ward: Great Bridge (1 seat)
Derek Rowley (Lab) 1,105 Fred Perry (Indep) 817 Philip Mansel (Con) 409 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,331</p> (Ex-labour Cllr Fred Perry stands as independent)	David Watkins (BNP) 772 Fred Perry (2003 Commu) 732 Bob Patel (Lab) 674 Diane Meacham (Con) 273 <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,451</p> (BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 31.5%)

MAY 2002	MAY 2003
<p>Ward: Langley (1 seat)</p> <p>Patrick Sullivan (Lab) 1,601 Roland Hill (Con) 915 Yvonne Read (Lib Dem) 285 Jasvir Gill (Soc Lab Pa) 96</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,897</p>	<p>Ward: Langley (1 seat)</p> <p>Martin Prestidge (Lab) 1,395 Roland Hill (Con) 750 Alan Hipkiss (BNP) 643 Bahadur Shankar (Soc Lab Pa) 93</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,881 (BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 22.3 %)</p>
<p>Ward: Princes End (1 seat)</p> <p>Raymond Howes (Lab) 894 Richard Geddes (Con) 543 John Salvage (BNP) 536 Robert Roper (Indep) 128 Alison Jones (Indep) 79 Kevin Walker (UK Indep) 22</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,202</p> <p>(BNP vote as a proportion of votes cast: 24%)</p>	<p>Ward: Princes End (1 seat)</p> <p>John Salvage (BNP) 754 Elaine Giles (Lab) 717 Margaret Dixon (Con) 365 Alison Aitken-Jones (Freedom) 135 Kevin Walker (UK Indep) 69</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,040 (BNP vote as a proportion of votes cast: 37%) (Freedom Party vote as proportion of votes cast: 6.6%)</p>
<p>Ward: Tipton Green (1 seat)</p> <p>Ian Jones (Lab) 2,030 Stephen Edwards (Freedom) 1,070 Ian Davies (Con) 461 Malcolm Beckley (Indep) 394 Kenneth Salvage (BNP) 334 Surinder Sandhu (Soc Lab Pa) 154</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 4,443</p> <p>(BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 8.0%) (Freedom Party vote as proportion of votes cast: 24.0%)</p>	<p>Ward: Tipton Green (1 seat)</p> <p>Sayeda Khatun(Lab) 1,724 Stephen Edwards (Freedom) 1,084 Ian Davies (Con) 633 Terence Taylor (BNP) 526 Surinder Sandhu (Soc Lab Pa) 134</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 4,101 (BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 15.6%) (Freedom Party vote as proportion of votes cast: 26.4%)</p>
<p>Ward: Tividale (1 seat)</p> <p>*David Hinton (Lab) 1,205 Steven Hockley (Con) 676 Michael Davenport (Indep) 261 Roger Bradley (Lib Dem) 247</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,389</p>	<p>Ward: Tividale (1 seat)</p> <p>Maria Crompton (Lab) 1,079 Carl Butler (BNP) 788 Steven Hockley (Con) 459 Diane Gorton (Lib Dem) 281</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,607 (BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 30.2%)</p>

MAY 2002	MAY 2003																														
SHROPSHIRE																															
	Ward: Gobowen, Oswestry (3 seats)																														
	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">David Lloyd (Con)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">527</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trevor Davies (Lib Dem)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">477</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ronald Jones (UKIP)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">405</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Susan Crow (Lab)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">356</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mark Norwood (BNP)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">84</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,849</td> </tr> </table> <p>(BNP votes as a proportion of votes cast: 4.5%)</p>	David Lloyd (Con)	527	Trevor Davies (Lib Dem)	477	Ronald Jones (UKIP)	405	Susan Crow (Lab)	356	Mark Norwood (BNP)	84	Total	1,849																		
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SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE																															
	Ward: Wombourne South West (2 seats)																														
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Ward: Chell and Packmoor (3 seats)	Ward: Chell and Packmoor (1 seat)																														
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MAY 2002	MAY 2003
<p>Ward: Longton North (3 seats)</p> <p>Thomas Tolley (Lab) 907 John Huson (Lab) 894 Charles McLaren (Lab) 757 Harry Hassal (IO) 740 Alan Joynson (Lib Dem) 690 Steven Batkin (BNP) 686 John Hill (Con) 555 Brian Ward (IO) 551</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 5,780</p> <p>(BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 36%)</p>	<p>Ward: Longton North (1 seat)</p> <p>Steven Batkin (BNP) 948 Charles McLaren (Lab) 804 Conrad Lubinski (Lib Dem) 424 John Hill (Con) 308</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,484</p> <p>(BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 38%)</p>
<p>Ward: Norton and Bradeley (3 seats)</p> <p>Michael Salih (Lab) 1,192 Barry Cutherbertson (IO) 1,106 Neil Dawson (Lab) 1,048 Sheila Matthews (IO) 1,020 Robert Hopper (IO) 981 Mervin Smith (Lab) 817 Sharon Bowers (Lib Dem) 514</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 6,678</p>	<p>Ward: Norton and Bradeley (1 seat)</p> <p>Neil Dawson (Lab) 1,193 Sheila Matthews (NP) 835 John West (BNP) 675 Andrew Bowers (Lib Dem) 308</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 3,011</p> <p>(BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 22%)</p>
<p>Ward: Tunstall (3 seats)</p> <p>Charles Wanger (IO) 1,314 Margaret Bayley (Lab) 1,235 Ian Norris (IO) 1,025 Mohammed Latif (Lab) 1,002 Eddy Pollett (IO) 883 Charles Sutton (Lab) 865 John Perry (Lib Dem) 354</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 6,678</p>	<p>Ward: Tunstall (3 seats)</p> <p>Charles Sutton (Lab) 738 Parvez Akhter (Con) 628 Michael Coleman (BNP) 623 Ian Norris (Ind) 617</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total 2,606</p> <p>(BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 24%)</p>

MAY 2002		MAY 2003	
Ward: Weston and Meir North (3 seats)		Ward: Weston and Meir North (1 seat)	
Derek Bamford (Lab)	986	Terry Doughty (Lab)	724
Margaret Pyatt (Con)	858	Ian Clegg (BNP)	697
Seven Norris (Con)	808	Steven Morris (Con)	649
Marjorie Nixon (Con)	806	Stanley Pedley (Ind)	387
Terence Doughty (Lab)	797		
Paul Sutton (Lab)	605		
Mark Machin (IO)	521		
Zoe Whitehouse (IO)	434		
Total	5,815	Total	2,457
		(BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 28.4%) (Labour majority over BNP: 27 votes)	
WALSALL			
Ward: Hatherton Rushall (1 seat)		(Byelection 22 May 2003) Ward: Hatherton Rushall (1 seat)	
Arthur Clarke (Con)	1,545	Edmund Hughes (Con)	1,009
Ann Wilson (Lab)	1,062	William Thimas Locke (BNP)	746
Richard Clarke (Green)	239	Ann Wilson (Lab)	650
Jenny Mayo (UK Ind)	147	Lynette Benford (Indep)	268
		Louise Ann Bradburn (Soc All)	188
Total	1,062	Total	2,861
		(BNP vote as a proportion of votes: 26.1%) (The election was postponed due to the death of Socialist Alliance candidate, Olivia May Bradburn, in early April.)	
WORCESTER			
District: Worcester 2002 Ward: Holy Trinity (1 seat)		District: Worcester 2003 Ward: Holy Trinity (1 seat)	
Roger Berry (Lab)	555	Geoffrey Williams (Lab)	566
Lucy Hodgson (Con)	256	Martin Roberts (BNP)	271
Adrian Hughes (Indep)	155	Robert Campbell (Con)	259
Total	966	Total	1,096
		(BNP vote as proportion of votes cast: 24.7%)	

Table 4 **West Midlands local elections, May 2002 and 2003:**
list of extreme right-wing candidates

Steven **Batkin***, BNP, 2002, 2003, Stoke on Trent, Longton North.
Carl **Butler**, BNP, 2003, Sandwell, Tividale.
Mark **Cattell**, BNP 2003, Birmingham, Longbridge.
Ian **Clegg**, BNP, 2003, Stoke-on-Trent, Weston and Meir North.
Michael **Coleman**, BNP, 2003, Stoke-on-Trent, Tunstall.
Simon **Darby***, BNP, 2002, 2003, Dudley, Castle and Priory.
Sharon **Ebanks**, BNP, 2003, Birmingham, Oscott.
Sharron **Edwards***, Freedom Party, 2003, South Staffordshire, Wombourne South West.
Stephen **Edwards**, Freedom Party, 2002, 2003, Sandwell, Tipton Green.
Alan **Hipkiss**, BNP, 2003, Sandwell, Langley.
William **Locke**, BNP, 22 May 2003, Walsall, Hatherton Rushall.
Donna **McNeil**, National Front, 2002, Birmingham, Kingstanding.
Mark **Norwood**, BNP, 2003, Shropshire, Oswestry Gobowen.
Mark **Payne**, BNP, 2003, Coventry, Woodlands.
William **Pinchers**, BNP, 2003, Dudley, Coseley East.
Martin **Roberts**, BNP, 2003, Worcester, Holy Trinity.
Lee **Salsbury**, National Front, 2003, Birmingham, Stockland Green.
John **Salvage***, BNP, 2002, 2003, Sandwell, Princes End.
Kenneth **Salvage***, BNP, 2002, Sandwell, Tipton Green.
Lee **Savage**, 2003, Birmingham, Northfield.
Douglas **Smith**, BNP, 2003, Stoke-on-Trent, Chell and Packmoor.
Terence **Taylor**, BNP, 2003, Sandwell, Tipton Green.
David **Watkins***, BNP, 2003, Sandwell, Great Bridge.
John **West**, BNP, 2003, Stoke-on-Trent, Norton and Bradeley.
Terry **Williams**, National Front, 2003, Birmingham, Kingstanding.
Lee **Windridge**, BNP, 2002, 2003, Birmingham, Weoley.
Gary **Woodall**, BNP, 2003, Dudley, Coseley West.

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