

**IN FOCUS: STEVE SILVER** explains the background to this week's BBC documentary which uncovered the foul true face of the racist British National Party.

# The secret agent

**T**HE British National Party's respectable mask was lifted and truly lifted on Thursday night when the BBC broadcast *The Secret Agent*, a documentary about the BNP that was centred on its Bradford branch.

On screen, BNP members were caught bang to rights admitting carrying out vicious racial attacks and harassment.

Among other things, we saw one BNP member admit to carrying out a horrendous racist attack for which someone else was later convicted, a council candidate admit that he wants to shoot "Pakis" and former BNP youth organiser Mark Collett describe asylum-seekers as cockroaches.

With hidden cameras, we saw inside BNP meetings with both leader Nick Griffin and founder John Tyndall making speeches that may be actionable under incitement and race relations laws.

All the protestations by Griffin that the party is not racist any more were shown to be a sham.

The programme received so much publicity before it was aired and the evidence in it was so compelling that it begs the question how much damage this would have done to the BNP if it had been aired before the June 10 elections.

One thing that Morning Star readers will not know is that, in fact, this could and should have happened.

The programme was ready to go in May, but the BBC top brass decided that it had to be committed to political "neutrality" and so chose not to air it

until after the elections.

If this was a programme about a normal political party, then perhaps that argument would hold water.

But the truth is — and this was perhaps the strongest thing that came across in the programme — that the BNP is a criminal organisation of racists masquerading as a political party.

The BNP is not a legitimate political party and should not be treated as such by the BBC or anyone else.

It was in the public interest for the British people to know about BNP criminality before the elections took place.

Bradford was a good place to make the programme, as it was a key target area for the BNP in the local elections and, subsequently, it managed to win four seats on the council for the first time in June.

If it had not been for anti-fascist mole Andrew Sykes, the BNP would have almost certainly got more people elected in the locality.

Sykes ran the Bradford branch and ensured personally that more than 10 seats were not even contested by the BNP.

It was Sykes who then got BBC journalist Jason Gwynne into the organisation to make a good documentary.

What was not revealed in the programme or the accompanying publicity, but is something else that will be of great interest to Morning Star readers, is the role of the Bradford TUC in the whole affair.

In spring 2002, as pioneers of the TUC-backed strategy of organising locally in BNP target areas on issues wider than simply opposition to fascism, the trades council in Bradford decided to hold a free family fun day.

It was organised in Ravenscliffe, an area that the BNP considered ripe for its own propaganda.

The idea of the event was to show local people that trade unionism was relevant to them and was prepared to do something for the community.

But, of course, there is one organisation that doesn't like anyone having fun and it planned to scupper the event.

While children had their faces painted and families and friends listened to music and shared food off of the stalls, BNP members hoped to launch a violent assault on the event. Sykes was asked to co-ordinate the attack.

Already sickened by the riots the previous year in Bradford and the fact that BNP members had participated gleefully, Sykes had realised that, far from helping local communities, it was quite happy to destroy them.

When the fun day got into swing, Sykes did go down there, but with a very different mission in mind to the one that he had been asked to carry out. He stood around watching to see who was in charge of the event.

Paul Meszaros, the anti-fascist co-ordinator for Bradford TUC was, in his own words, "busy ordering people about" and was obviously in charge. Sykes approached him and so began two years of working undercover for the anti-fascist movement.

"Andy is remarkable for his ordinariness, yet tremendous courage," remarks Meszaros, paying tribute to a man who had the guts not only to admit that he had been wrong to join the BNP but

who was prepared to stand up to it afterwards, regardless of the repercussions.

Meszaros, who co-operated with Searchlight throughout the two years that Sykes was a mole, believes that good intelligence on what the fascists are up to is crucial to organising a successful campaign against them.

With the unique knowledge that they had of BNP plans, Bradford TUC produced numerous local leaflets which were specific to local wards that dealt with some of the myths and lies that the BNP was spreading.

In addition to that, the local trades council also delivered tens of thousands of copies of the Bradford edition of the Searchlight tabloid newspaper.

Even though the BNP did make an electoral breakthrough in Bradford in its target areas in the city, such as Queensberry, its proportion of the vote actually went down.

This was because of the specialised ward-specific material that the Bradford TUC put out. The BNP would have done far better and gained more councillors

if it had not been for the anti-fascist campaign. This was also the case nationally, where similar activity in BNP target areas, often led by trade unionists, reduced the BNP proportion of the vote by an average of 5 per cent in those particular areas, in marked contrast to its general advance across Britain.

In a world where large workplaces are the exception rather than the norm, engaging with local communities on issues like fascism and racism may well hold the key to the development and future of trade unionism itself.

Certainly, Bradford TUC has shown that trades councils can be a dynamic force in our localities and play a leading role in the fight against the fascists.

● Steve Silver is editor of the anti-fascist publication *Searchlight*.

**'Sykes realised that far from helping communities the BNP was happy to destroy them.'**

## Christopher Hitchens, moral degeneracy and the United States 'digital brownshirts' You've got mail

**I**'LL never forget when Christopher Hitchens called me a moral degenerate. I was in Washington to hear him speak about Kissinger.



### THE FIFTH COLUMN with PROFESSOR JONATHAN FARLEY

I asked Hitchens whether his new pro-war bedfellows would have supported the escalation of the Vietnam war or its cessation. And that is when he said it.

"Only a moral degenerate would compare the war in Afghanistan with the war in Vietnam," he replied, as I recall.

He hastened to add that he wasn't actually talking about me — just, presumably, anyone with views identical to mine. I felt like acquainting him with two weapons of mass destruction, tightly clenched.

Of course, he got away with it, as he always gets away with his outrageous statements in support of the war and against its opponents. Contrast this with the love letters that I get.

"Get a bodyguard or carry (a) gun," writes Christopher Barwick, adding: "You will need it."

"Forget Iraq" — this from Jay and Pam Simms — "we should call in an air strike on (Farley's university) department."

Or the subtle Henry Maston. "I hope someone kills and rapes your white, race-traitor wife and/or girlfriend as well."

I'm not seeking sympathy. The United States' "digital brownshirts" — so-called by Al Gore — have made victims of many.

In April, a US football star named Pat Tillman was killed in action in Afghanistan. After September 11, Tillman had eschewed a \$3.6 million sports contract to volunteer for the army rangers.

Not only was he a star and selfless, he was so ruggedly handsome that he could have played himself in the Hollywood movie about his life — had he not, of course, been shot by his own troops.

Writing in a college newspaper, Massachusetts university student Rene Gonzalez objected to calling Tillman a "hero," pointing out that he had not died defending his own country from

invasion, but had instead volunteered to kill other men in theirs.

Within two days, death threats forced Gonzalez to go into hiding. Websites went up with his personal details — email accounts, telephone numbers, even his home address.

One site urged the reader not to send Gonzalez death threats, "coz they're illegal." You could almost hear the "wink, wink, say no more, say no more."

Did the university rally around Gonzalez, circling the wagons in the face of terroristic threats against one of their own? Far from it.

University of Massachusetts president Jack Wilson called Gonzalez's essay "a disgusting, arrogant and intellectually immature attack on a human being who died in service to his country."

The legislature of John Kerry's state of Massachusetts — one of the most liberal states in the US — officially condemned Gonzalez in a resolution.

Without a trace of irony, the cowardly Wilson added: "We are fortunate that so many people like Pat Tillman have made the sacrifices necessary to protect the free speech rights of Mr Gonzalez."

What about the American Civil Liberties Union, the nation's most stalwart protector of free speech? Missing in action.

Perhaps it was too busy defending nazis and paedophiles to take a stand for Gonzalez. He soon apologised, his career probably ruined.

This is why dissent barely exists in the US. Sure, there's Michael Moore, but Moore is outnumbered and outgunned.

When Moore, who supported Wesley Clark for president, called Bush a "deserter," Clark

responded with a lame "That's Michael Moore's opinion."

Clark had won medals for valour in Vietnam, but even he was afraid to take on the digital brownshirts.

For every Moore, there's a Moorewatch.com, a FreeRepublic.com, another watch.com that targets liberal academics, Fox News, the Washington Times or the Wall Street "Opinion" Journal online.

For every theatre playing Fahrenheit 9/11, two more aren't and many in the Mid-West simply won't.

So what to do? To quote from Thomas Jefferson — let's forget about his committing incest with his slaves for now — "I think it to our interest to punish the first insult, because an insult unpunished is the parent of many others."

In short, Propaganda Minister Nick Cohen, harpy Julie Burchill and The Guardian's David Sonovovitch write what they do because there are no consequences.

I long for the day when some right-wing US lunatic crosses the line and 1,000 of your closest friends email him and set up a website or three.

But you don't resort to name-calling — the scum aren't worth it — you don't send them any threats and you don't try to get them fired from their jobs.

Maybe then, lives could be saved in Iraq and around the globe. All thanks to a bunch of moral degenerates.

● Professor Jonathan David Farley is a mathematician currently visiting Oxford University and a recent recipient of the Harvard Foundation's Distinguished Scientist of the Year Award. He can be contacted at farley@maths.ox.ac.uk

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