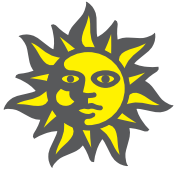


# Beyond the BNP



A new direction for HOPE not hate



# The future of HOPE not hate

By NICK LOWLES

The HOPE not hate campaign has become one of the largest and most successful political action groups in the country since it was founded in 2004.

Over 165,000 people have participated in our campaigns. We over 50,000 supporters on Facebook, 8,000 followers in twitter and up to 35,000 people visit our website every day. Over 10,000 people have donated to us online.

This incredible level of support has enabled us to achieve some fantastic successes. Our constant and localised grassroots campaigning has seen the BNP defeated in many of its heartlands, most notably in Barking & Dagenham (2010) and Stoke-on-Trent (2011). The campaign in Barking & Dagenham saw 1,500 different people get involved, including 541, 385 and 176 on three days of action in the final three weeks of the campaign.

We have consistently brought communities together, around positive shared identities, to resist the hatred of the EDL. In March 2011, we convinced the *Daily Star* to stop its favourable reporting of the EDL. And, in August 2011, we helped persuade the Metropolitan Police to request a ban on an EDL demonstration in Tower Hamlets. It was the first time the Met had ever asked for a demonstration to be banned.

Guiding and underpinning these campaigns has been an excellent research and media team. By analysing and understanding the organisational priorities of the BNP, we were able to assess and challenge BNP targets, trends and activities. The current problems of both the BNP and the EDL owe much to our ability to combine research and intelligence gathering with both localised and national campaigns. Internationally, we work

closely with like-minded individuals and organisations across Europe and North America and this international cooperation proved both essential and effective following the Breivik murders in Norway.

The HOPE not hate campaign was launched as a direct response to the emergence of the British National Party as a political force in the northern mill towns. HOPE not hate – with our logo of the smiling sun – was established as the perfect antidote to the BNP's politics of hate.

While we have traditionally focused on the far right, we also recognise that hate and organised intolerance can come in other forms as well. Just as we stand up to white extremists whose views divide and spread fear amongst communities so we should have the courage to oppose others who seek to spread hatred and intolerance.

The HOPE not hate campaign can be proud of its practical achievements but for many of our supporters it has become something far more important, in that it encapsulates a vision of how society should respect one another. HOPE stands for decency, tolerance, fairness and togetherness. Hate represents division, fear, intolerance and superiority. What began as a snappy slogan to appeal to mainstream voters in the northern mill towns has become something far more significant.

***"I was born in India,  
sculpted in Canada and  
enriched in England. I live in  
London with an Italian partner, and  
feel that someone like me has a  
voice, a story, a reason, because of  
Hope not Hate. There was a time  
when I wanted to blend and be  
silent. Not anymore."***

**GOLDY NOTAY**





HOPE not hate brought communities together in the face of a threat from the EDL in Bradford

The greatest success of the HOPE not hate campaign has been the reality of local communities uniting together. When the EDL planned a demonstration Bradford, in August 2010, it was clear that by marching through a predominantly Asian part of the city they were hoping for a violent reaction. Instead, Bradfordians rallied around in a positive and united way that had not been seen for many years. In Norway, Anders Breivik hoped to ignite a wider battle against multiculturalism, which he blamed for allowing Europe to be taken over by Islamists but instead, Norwegians stood tall against this violent hatred and the racist vote slumped at subsequent regional elections. More recently, we have seen local people come together during the riots, both to clean up their areas and to ensure hatred did not tear their communities apart. As politicians and police argued about tough responses and police numbers, ordinary people were uniting together in hope.

We come from – and remain part of – a proud anti-fascist tradition but we are acutely aware that defeating the hatemongers today requires more than simply firefighting. We currently deal with problems once they appear rather than attempting to stop them occurring in the first place. Whilst we will continue to prevent the BNP from winning council seats and stopping the EDL from setting our communities alight, we also want to be more

***We come from – and remain part of – a proud anti-fascist tradition but we are acutely aware that defeating the hatemongers today requires more than simply firefighting.***

proactive and unite communities around a positive, united vision of society. We need to be more vociferous in defending basic human rights and promoting a civic identity in which everyone has a place regardless of race, religion or ethnic or cultural background. Standing up for our values – decency, fairness and tolerance - will become ever more important as fear and hatred rise as economic conditions worsen.

When we adopted a “Plague on both your houses” position towards the EDL and Muslims Against

Crusades, an Islamist extremist group which has glorified terrorism and is against women’s equality, is homophobic and anti-Christian and anti-Jewish, we were inundated with messages of congratulations, including from many Muslims, who were relieved that at last people were willing to speak out. We have concluded that it is vitally important that we must speak out against all those who preach hate, from whichever quarter it comes. Just as we challenge white racists so we must be prepared those who peddle hate

***“The HOPE not hate campaign proves to the world that each of us counts and a single contribution changes lives and minds! Collectively we can do anything. That’s totally awesome people power. And the email encouragements to be a better human each day makes me proud and smiley.”***

**KATIE BROUGH**

in the name of Islam or, indeed, Christianity. It was, after all, the theory of Eurabia – a belief that Muslims, who are viewed as one homogeneous group, are planning the destruction of Western civilisation, which is being peddled by anti-Muslim Christians and Jews, along with street gangs like the EDL – which motivated Anders Breivik in Norway.

Over the next few years local communities are going to have to stand up to fear and hate again. The growing economic crisis, which is now looking deeper and bleaker than many hoped, is undoubtedly going to lead to higher unemployment and insecurity and this will play out in the ballot box and in our communities. As our recent *Fear and HOPE* report graphically highlighted, there is a clear connection between economic insecurity and pessimism with suspicion and hatred of outsiders. There will clearly be some sort of right-wing revival, both at the ballot box and on the street, and the HOPE not hate campaign needs to be ready to meet this renewed threat.

To help us achieve all this HOPE not hate will be launching a series of initiatives in the New Year:

#### CAMPAIGNING

- In the 2012 elections we have identified 23 wards at risk to the BNP or ex-BNP members of the English Democrats where we will focus our campaign. In London, we will stop the BNP gaining a seat on the London Assembly by mobilising those communities we have identified as being anti-BNP.

#### PUBLICATIONS

- We will launch a new publication, the name of which will be shortly chosen by our supporters. This new bi-monthly magazine will be the journal of the HOPE not hate campaign and so mix reporting on the activities of hate groups with more positive stories of communities uniting against hate.
- We will supplement the magazine with more regular one-off publications, allowing us to explore in more depth specific areas of interest. We are currently producing a pamphlet on the current state of Holocaust Denial and in the New Year we will release a report by academics Matthew Goodwin and Jocelyn Evans into the views and motivations of BNP and EDL supporters.
- We will start producing a weekly on-line *International Digest* to give our supporters up-to-date news about extremism across the world.

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#### PUBLIC POLICY

- We will be seeking to engage more actively in public policy debates, such as Prevent and Integration strategies, in a more innovative way that involves our supporters in discussions and developing responses. We believe that our years of campaigning in local communities give us a unique perspective that is often missing from some politicians and think tanks.

#### RESEARCH

- We will expand our research team to monitor a greater range of hate groups. This work will continue to inform and direct the other elements of our HOPE not hate operation.
- We will conduct further research into the vital Identity Ambivalent (IA) tribe our *Fear and HOPE*



HOPE not hate has brought hundreds of women into anti-racism

report identified. This group, made up of the skilled and semi-skilled and public sector workers, is worried about immigration because of their economic insecurity rather than for pure racist reasons, so we must build a firewall to stop them going over to far right. This research, which will include a heat map of England to locate IA communities within our society, will shape our work for the next few years.

- We will also begin a research project into the growing international anti-Muslim networks. This will look at the relationships between the financiers, the bloggers, the politicians and the street armies.

#### COMMUNITY

- Next summer we will host the “Great British Party” as an initiative to unite communities and help develop shared identities in the run-up to the 2012 Olympics. Backed up by over 100 local community newspapers and a new Community Champion award, this has the potential to be our biggest project yet.
- To build on the success of the HOPE not hate campaign, we will develop an online community organising project which will help train and advise local people to organise against fear and hatred in their own communities.

These are exciting times for the HOPE not hate campaign. We have come a long way from our simple beginnings in 2004 and in the process our initiative has caught the imagination, hope and aspirations of thousands of people. With the deepening economic gloom engulfing Europe it is also essential we are ready to face new and growing challenges. While our tactics have evolved, and our targets and vision have expanded, we will continue to do what our title suggests – namely to provide a positive antidote to hate.

**For more information on the HOPE not hate campaign or to get involved, please email Nick Lowles at [nick@hopenothate.org.uk](mailto:nick@hopenothate.org.uk)**