

BNP on BBC

The recent decision by the BBC to invite the BNP leader Nick Griffin on to Question Time only proved once again that the show is a terrible forum for political discussion and in no way represents working class interests or concerns. The hype before the broadcast of the program became a debate on whether the BNP were entitled to have a platform on such a 'grand scale'. Sadly the BBC only helped to legitimise the views of the BNP by giving them such a platform, while the show itself showed the failings of Question Time to take on board any concerns affecting the general populace.

This show has been running since 1979, and describes itself as a, 'national institution, offering British voters a unique opportunity to quiz top decision-makers on the events of the day'. Question Time, being part of the BBC, claims impartiality in its politics, and hoped to prove this by inviting a far-right member of the political class to contest their views against the three main parties 'representing' Britain today. To anyone who watched the show, the supposed claim to impartiality couldn't be further from the truth.

The panel was decorated by members from the Liberal, Conservative, and Labour Parties respectively, followed by the host David Dimbleby, then Nick Griffin and beside him the playwright Bonnie Greer. Debating, or berating, the BNP was a 'challenge' taken up by the Labour representative Jack Straw. He had taken it upon himself to challenge the 'disgusting' politics of the BNP, and indeed he distanced himself, with the rest of the panel, from the BNP by claiming that the BNP was the only political party without a 'moral compass'. Jack of course has a fine moral compass that is in full working order, having deported more

immigrants from Britain than the BNP is ever likely to get the opportunity to.

Now, while I welcome the attack on the BNP it is crucial to point out the subtext that was underlying the panel's attack on the BNP and its racism. Whilst all members condemned racism there was a shocking amount of agreement that there is a 'problem' with immigration, there was absolutely no mention of the postal strike, and there was a disgusting affirmation that Winston Churchill was a figure to be revered. Hark back to Jack Straw's claim to a moral compass and it became clear over the course of the program that each major political party shared in the demonisation of immigrants. The postal strike was left completely unmentioned. Instead more talk was centred on Nick Griffin's past, attributed quotes and whether or not the BNP could claim the legacy of Winston Churchill.

As the show progressed there was outrage that the BNP could in any way hold claim to the lineage of Churchill. However if we hold Churchill's politics to scrutiny, then it is hard to imagine Nick Griffin's claim being false. Indeed if alive today he would probably fit neatly into line with the BNP's leadership. The historical claim by any party to the memory of Churchill is simply a matter of propaganda. The person who happened to be in charge when the Allies won the war was also a notorious elitist and racist. It is another striking example of spin politics.

Question Time does nothing to place in political focus the actual problems facing the working class. The spectacle only helped to serve the main political parties by drawing debate away from class issues and refocusing it on the program itself. The only thing that we can be sure about is that the BBC needed to up viewing figures on the failing show, and so they opted for the controversial move. The show itself was incredibly anti-climatic in terms of political debate, and only served to distract focus from issues that genuinely affect us.



Jack Straw - being tough on the BNP by being tough on immigration

BNP and Anti-fascists On the Streets



Poppies and sieg heils—BNP supporters in Belfast proving the party has 'moved away' from fascism

The decision to allow the BNP a platform on Question Time did not go unopposed, on the day of filming, 22nd October, and a week earlier, there were protests at the BBC in Belfast that also saw BNP supporters and neo-Nazis out to counter-protest the protestors.

Over 200 anti-fascist protestors faced about twenty fascist BNP supporters, most of whom hid their faces, behind masks, Ulster and Union flags and sieg heiled.

While the protest the previous week was initially outnumbered by fascists, who were outside the BBC first, this time better organisation ensured that people were there in strong numbers before the arrival of around 20 rag-tag fascists. The protest, called by the Anti-Racism Network, was stewarded by members of the Socialist Party and Belfast Antifa. One anti-fascist was arrested and held briefly at the end of the protest by police who, at both protests, seemed to be there to protect the fascists.

The number of fascists present quickly dropped to around 10 and they were heckled throughout the protest at the BBC.

The recently formed Belfast Antifa had numbers at both protests - mobilising significantly for the second. The group was involved in stewarding and gathering intelligence on the local fash.

The following is from a flyer the group were distributing to anti-BNP protestors:

The BNP are a far right 'populist' party that spreads racist propaganda, promotes the scape-goating of ethnic minorities and stokes and capitalises upon racial tension. Like other fascist parties the BNP seeks to deflect working class people from the real cause of the problems they face. The recession, lack of jobs, the running down of health and social services, and poor housing conditions are not caused by immigrant workers they are

caused by capitalism and the state. There can be no platform for the fascist BNP, there can be no debate with fascism. These people are anti-working class, homophobic, racist bigots who are trying to build credibility and organise. Where the BNP have organised there have been increased racist and homophobic attacks. They have gained seats in the European Parliament, not due to any increase in their vote, but due to lower voter turnout for other parties (itself the result of greater awareness that none of our alleged leaders can represent working class interests). Belfast Antifa was set up in the wake of the attacks on Roma people in our city - to physically and ideologically oppose fascism and racism. Groups such as the BNP cannot be allowed room to organise nor can they be allowed the scope to present themselves as a 'radical' alternative. Membership of antifa is on an individual basis. We are not a front for any political organisation or party but we are libertarian in organisation and based on a class analysis. We need a working class alternative that is opposed to fascism, capitalism and the state. If you would like to help us get in touch at the email address below:

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Deezer

