

# Peter Hain MP for Neath

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Dear friend

Unless the rest of us get our act together, the fascist British National Party could easily win three seats - and quite possibly six or more - in June's European elections. To win in North West England it needs just 8 percent of the vote, barely 1.5 points more than it got in 2004 - the days of near full employment and before the credit crunch; in the West Midlands only an extra 1.6 points; and in Yorkshire and the Humber just 4.3 points more. Recently the party has won council seats in by-elections, polling - according to the BBC - an average of 14 percent in 60 wards: close to the threshold necessary to get a seat in almost every European constituency in Britain.

Winning European seats would secure an unprecedented platform, and entitle the BNP to draw hundreds of thousands of euros from Brussels indirectly to buttress its full-time personnel and organisation. It would also be able to work with other far-right and fascist parties in Europe, as Jean-Marie Le Pen's party has done from its base in France since winning 10 European seats in 1984.

Thirty years ago rising unemployment and economic decline saw the BNP's predecessor, the National Front, also do worryingly well in elections. I helped to found the Anti Nazi League in 1977 to target the National Front, and a mass campaign helped to put it out of business a few years later. The lesson of the Anti Nazi League's success is that the BNP needs to be confronted wherever its supporters march or appear in public; and they must also be denied platforms to spread their hate. This was the lesson of the 1930s when Blackshirts led by Oswald Mosley targeting Jewish communities in London's East End were physically stopped in Cable Street in October 1936.

All the main parties, Labour especially, must shake off their complacency and take on the BNP directly. Its poison should be combated on the doorstep, through leafleting and campaigning. Labour candidates and campaigners should work with those from Unite Against Fascism ([uaf.org.uk](http://uaf.org.uk)) and Stop the BNP ([stopthebnp.org.uk](http://stopthebnp.org.uk)). Both organisations are mobilising a new generation of activists and concerned people from trade unions, churches and other organisations.

The aim should be simple but clear: to stop the BNP gaining seats anywhere in Britain, but especially in Europe on June 4.

Yours sincerely



**Peter Hain**  
Labour MP for Neath