

Leicester: action needed against EDL

THE ENGLISH Defence League (EDL) is coming to Leicester on 9 October to attempt to stir up division in one of the most culturally and racially diverse cities in Britain.

Steve Score
Leicester Socialist Party

They claim they are only opposed to Muslim "extremists", yet in reality they scapegoat all Muslims. On their previous demonstrations, violence has not just been restricted to Muslims. Their racism is a threat to all.

The danger they pose if they get a foothold was indicated by a recent attack on a Mosque in Leicester, where a group chanting racist abuse were reported to have attempted to break in.

At a time when we need a massive, united movement of working class people to defend ourselves against attacks on our public services, jobs and living standards, the EDL are attempting to divide us.

Counter demo

THERE WILL be a counter demonstration to the EDL to show that we will not accept this. It seems likely that marches will be banned but static protests will be allowed. Scandalously, the police have allocated an area for the EDL in the vicinity of a number of Kurdish shops and close to the very culturally mixed St Matthew's estate.

The Socialist Party does not call for state bans on marches by the far right because they are often used against workers' organisations. Instead we need to mobilise massive numbers to oppose them. At the time of writing it appears there may

be a three month ban on all marches in the city. If this is enforced it would mean that the Leicestershire Against the Cuts demonstration on 30 October would be illegal.

The police and council have conducted a massive campaign to deter people from coming into the centre of Leicester on the day.

Political alternative

THIS INCLUDES mass leafleting with a statement that says: "Don't come to the city just to show you oppose what the protesters (EDL) stand for. The best thing you can do to support the unity and cohesion of the city is to come along to one of the planned celebration events that are happening on the two days either side of Saturday 9 October".

This appeal is backed up by so called faith 'leaders' and Hope not Hate campaigning against the counter demo.

Numerous events have been organised over the weekend to distract attention - anything to keep people away from the counter demo! Many people feel that we cannot allow the EDL to be unopposed. Why should they be allowed to wander the streets of our city whilst we hide away?

Praying for peace in the cathedral will not answer the lies of the EDL. The Socialist Party in Leicester will be supporting the counter demo. We plan to form a contingent using the slogan 'jobs and services, not racism' alongside other trade unionists and members of the 'stop racism and fascism network'. We will counter the EDL's racism with a political alternative.

Meet 11.30am, 9 October, by the Virgin Media shop near the Clock tower.



Anti-EDL campaigners in Nuneaton.

photo Bob Smith

Nuneaton: community must organise against racism

RECENTLY IN Nuneaton, Warwickshire, there has been a flurry of activity by the racist and hooligan English Defence League (EDL).

Tom Sidwell
secretary Nuneaton Anti-Fascist Action and Nuneaton Socialist Party

On 12 September the Royal Fusiliers army regiment were granted freedom of Nuneaton and Bedworth borough. There were rumours of a local EDL presence on the day to cheer home the troops as the pre-ceremony parade marched through the town centre. Some 40-50 EDL supporters from across the Midlands turned out.

Later that day at a local pub near the heart of the Asian community, there was a tense standoff between Asian residents and EDL sympathisers. The police arrested an EDL member who threw a bottle.

After this incident, local socialists, trade unionists and anti-fascists formed Nuneaton Anti Fascist Action (NAFA). We organised a public meeting to prepare for

the EDL's impending return on Sunday 26 September for a similar parade of the Gurkha regiment.

The meeting was well attended by representatives of many parties, religions and trade unions, despite internet threats by the EDL to disrupt any meetings we held.

We organised a rally in the Asian community to show solidarity and to show that the EDL's brand of ignorant hatred would not be tolerated in our town. Approximately 30 people turned up for the rally including local young people. We forged links to discuss further action to keep the EDL and other far right groups at bay in the future.

While we were engaging the community, the town centre was an extremely unpleasant place to be. There were around 150-200 EDL supporters with a huge police presence and small pockets of EDL walking around abusing anyone Asian they saw. There were seven arrests on the day (all EDL) for public order offences, two of which featured offensive weapons.

NAFA will continue to meet and organise against far right activity in our usually peaceful town.

Campaign defeats BNP in Stroud

THE FAR-RIGHT, racist British National Party (BNP) has retreated from its plans to set up a national propaganda HQ (media centre) in Stroud.

Just a few hours before an anti-BNP meeting of 150 people was due to take place the BNP sent out a press release blaming the Socialist Party for the decision. The packed meeting welcomed the news but stressed the need for vigilance in case it tries to raise its head in the area again.

In just two weeks Gloucestershire Socialist Party had organised local anger into a successful campaign. Coverage went out on TV screens across the south west and on the front page of the local paper. Strangers have been coming up to Socialist Party members to thank them for their efforts.

Action

THE CAMPAIGN is backed by the Gloucester and District Trades Council and has constantly recognised the need to organise against the vicious Con-Dem government cuts because they will create conditions where the racism and division of the BNP could fester.

The former Labour MP, seen by many as a genuine local campaigner, also spoke against the cuts. But others explained that the actions of Labour-controlled councils speak

louder than words, like Rotherham which has just announced £11 million cuts.

Services are being cut and privatised and establishment politicians and the media use immigrants as scapegoats for the attacks on jobs and services.

This gives some respectability to the obscene ideas of the BNP. It is left to socialists to explain that when virtually no council housing is being built, when private funding sucks the life blood out of the NHS and education, then pressure builds on underfunded public services.

BNP supports cuts

IN THE absence of political representation for the working class, the BNP can pose as a party for British workers. Yet their councillors support cuts and privatisation. In Rotherham their councillor advocated sacking a quarter of all council staff saying no one would notice!

Many at the meeting in Stroud signed up for the anti-cuts as well as the anti-racist campaign.

What we really need are trade unionists, anti-cuts campaigners, anti-racists, socialists and others to come together as a step to undercutting support for the BNP by developing a working class political alternative.

Chris Moore
Gloucestershire Socialist Party

YFJ and PCS unite against cuts in Leeds

ON 2 October, 30 trade unionists and anti-cuts activists gathered outside Leeds Art Gallery to highlight how the cuts of both the Con-Dem coalition government and local Labour councils (in Leeds and Kirklees in particular) are affecting young people.

Iain Dalton
Yorkshire YFJ

The rally was jointly organised by Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ) and the PCS (civil servants' union) York-

shire and Humber Young Members Network (YMN). Speakers included the local YMN coordinator Matt Meehan and Leeds Metropolitan University Unison young members officer Holly Prosho.

Springboard for solidarity

I ENDED the rally by highlighting that although small, it had brought together the young members' officers of six branches across three unions as well as other young trade unionists.

This could be the springboard for supporting each other in the many upcoming struggles against the savage cuts.

Matt and I were interviewed on several radio stations in the run-up to the rally and Look North (local BBC news) covered the protest.

YFJ and the PCS YMN are also jointly hosting a gig on 9 October at 8pm at the Packhorse Pub, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds to raise funds for the Trade Union Rights Campaign-Pakistan appeal to help victims of the floods in Pakistan.

Manchester: young workers against cuts



Emily Kelly (PCS National Executive Committee and Socialist Party member) addresses the PCS initiated 'young workers united against cuts' regional protest in Manchester on 2 October.