

We need: Jobs, homes and services — not racism



ANTI-RACISTS AND socialists don't shed any tears for Nick Griffin when the British National Party (BNP) leader is again called to court to defend his organisation's racist membership rules.

Ross Saunders
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The far-right racist BNP has been plagued by internal problems including the expulsion of Richard Barnbrook, formerly the only BNP member in the London Assembly.

Anti-racist campaigners welcome the BNP's setbacks. But we also recognise that the campaign to defeat the far right in Britain is far from over. The social conditions which the far right exploits still exist – the crisis in housing, jobs and public services and the fact that working class people are still without a real political voice of their own.

The Tory/Liberal coalition government is stepping up attacks on the working class. The BNP has not suffered a permanent defeat, and other

organisations are emerging which potentially pose an even more serious threat to ethnic minority groups and the wider working class.

English Defence League (EDL) members have organised racist protests targeting Muslims, have attempted to disrupt May Day demonstrations organised by trade unionists and have attacked labour movement meetings. It is therefore crucial that the anti-racist movement develops an effective strategy for fighting the far right.

Communities

WE MUST build anti-racist campaigns that are rooted in the organisations of the working class and in local communities and expose these racists as incapable of solving social problems. In the face of the most savage attacks on its living standards in a generation, the working class is today developing its own, genuine, united "defence leagues," by building local anti-cuts committees to coordinate the fight to save jobs and

services. We must explain that the divisive ideas of groups like the EDL or the BNP would strike a killing blow to the campaigns against cuts.

Anti-racist campaigns can include a range of different political opinions. But to uncritically give a platform to those who have been involved in cutting the living standards of those angry, disillusioned working class people to which the EDL etc are trying to appeal is a mistake which weakens the anti-racist movement.

For instance, New Labour politicians like Margaret Hodge and Peter Hain are given a platform to speak by Unite Against Fascism, despite the fact that New Labour's willingness to make public sector cuts is among the root causes of the rise in support for the far right.

Previously, instead of calling for adequate housing for all, Hodge has called for so-called 'indigenous' families to be prioritised on the housing list in her Barking and Dagenham constituency. This legitimises the lie that it is immigrants

who are responsible for the housing crisis – actually the result of a criminal failure by the previous Labour and Tory governments to build council housing.

Home building

A MASSIVE programme of house-building should be carried out to provide jobs and homes for all and a stimulus to the economy.

Such a programme sounds decidedly out of tune with the cuts-chorus of the three main parties. The issue of housing and all the other cuts policies of the capitalist politicians lay the basis for the social crisis in which growing support for the far right is rooted, and this should be discussed and recognised in the anti-racist movement.

Tory, Labour and Liberal politicians want ordinary people to pay for the crisis, while groups like the BNP are more concerned about using the recession for their own racist agenda. But it wasn't Muslims, or asylum seekers who caused the re-

cession, and it wasn't public sector workers or ordinary working class people either – it was the bankers, the politicians who gave them free reign to run our economy like their own private casino and the short-sighted capitalist system of production for profit which they support.

The far right have no solutions to offer to working class people defending themselves against these attacks: the anti-racist movement must make sure that it does.

Debate: How can we defeat the far right?
Sunday 7 November 1-3pm
Room 3E, University of London
Union, Malet Street, London
WC1E 7HY
Speakers: Ross Saunders,
Socialist Party Wales; Unite
Against Fascism (invited). Part
of Socialism 2010 – see page 2
for more details

what we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialist change – a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also fight, in our day-to-day campaigning, for every possible improvement for working-class people.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a democratic, socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

Work & Income

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retire-

ment pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstatement the link with average earnings now.

- Reject 'Welfare to Work'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

Public services

- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!

- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly-owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

Environment

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly-owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

Rights

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

New workers' party

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party!

Socialism and Internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Iraq and Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and banks that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neo-liberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!