

# KEEP EDL OUT!

## Fight for jobs, homes and services – not racism

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The racist and divisive English Defence League (EDL) planned to march through Tower Hamlets on 3 September. This provocative event has been scaled back to a 'static protest' following a Home Office ban on all marches in Tower Hamlets and four neighbouring boroughs for 30 days from 2 September.

EDL members have organised racist protests targeting Muslims and have also attempted to disrupt and attack labour movement, anti-cuts and socialist meetings and events.

Bans are not effective ways of defending working class communities. Last October, despite a similar ban in Leicester, the thuggery of the EDL was exposed when hundreds of them broke free of police control and attacked anyone who wasn't white as well as shops in Leicester city centre. It is therefore crucial that the anti-racist movement develops an effective strategy for fighting the far right.

And, as Socialist Party members warned, this ban is being used against the local community which was organising a mass demo to keep the EDL out, as well as against anti-cuts campaigns and East London LGBT Pride.

This outrageous attack on democratic rights, in reality a curfew on most of East London, must be fought with determination. In fact the EDL can still come to Tower Hamlets but



photo the Socialist

there could be no march to oppose them.

A determined campaign to force the police and Home Office to back down on this undemocratic ban, linked to the issues of fighting cuts, of decent jobs and access to education for everyone, could gain enormous support and be successful.

The EDL is not just racist. Anders Breivik, who carried out the right-wing terrorist attacks in Norway, was in contact with it. It has many right-wing extremists in its leadership, including former British National Party

(BNP) members such as EDL leader Tommy Robinson. These right-wing thugs see the EDL as an opportunity to develop a street fighting force that could in the future be used against striking workers or young people protesting to defend their education, as well as to whip up racial divisions in our communities.

Last year when the EDL threatened to visit Tower Hamlets a big campaign was launched and they backed off. 5,000 people marched to show we wanted them out of our borough. This is just a small taste

of what could have been organised this year.

The demonstrations of mainly local people alongside anti-racist and socialist groups which kicked the far right, racist BNP off Brick Lane in September 1993, or the mass demonstration of the local community, trade unionists, socialists and Communist Party members in Cable Street which defeated the British Union of Fascists in 1936 were organised in the teeth of enormous resistance from the police and the media at the time. It is a similar

movement that can stop groups like the EDL getting a base.

The social conditions which the far right exploits still exist in Tower Hamlets, the seventh poorest borough in the country. 55% of homes do not reach the Decent Homes Standard. Youth unemployment stands at almost 30%. And the council has voted through over £75 million in cuts to vital public services over three years. The fact that working class people are still without a real political voice of their own exacerbates this situation.

Tory, Labour and Liberal politicians want ordinary people to pay for the economic crisis and groups like the EDL want to use the recession for their own racist agenda. But it wasn't Muslims or asylum seekers who caused the recession, and it wasn't public sector workers or any working class people either. It was the bankers, the capitalist politicians who bailed them out and the profit-motivated system which they support.

By building local anti-cuts committees to coordinate the fight to save jobs and services the working class is developing its own, genuine, united 'defence leagues'. The divisive ideas of groups like the EDL would only harm such campaigns.

Despite the ban there will be an anti-racist protest on Saturday 3 September. A big turnout of anti-racist and trade union activists and young people will make it absolutely clear that the EDL and their divisive ideas are not welcome. Email [info@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:info@socialistparty.org.uk) for more information.

## 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 and 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

retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstate 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!