

EDL intimidation fails in Barking

We need jobs, homes and services - not racism

An East London Socialist Party member

Roughly 100 supporters of the racist and divisive English Defence League (EDL) marched through Barking town centre in east London on Saturday 14 January. Protected by police, most of the marchers were bussed in from all around England.

At short notice over 80 anti-racist protesters turned out - including

trade union members - mostly from East London, to counter the EDL's so-called regional mobilisation.

If the EDL had expected support for their racist and divisive ideas in Barking, they were mistaken.

When the demo ended, the EDL hung around in potentially dangerous small groups. But by then many local youth and bystanders had gathered to stop these thugs.

EDL supporters then went to a pub near the East London Mosque

in Whitechapel. The large Bangladeshi community saw several hundred youth turn up to oppose the EDL after they stood outside the pub hurling racist abuse.

Alternative needed

Previously in Barking and Dagenham the far-right, racist British National Party (BNP) got 12 councillors elected, but they were all thrown out at the next election in May 2010. Their election was largely a protest against the anti-working class policies of New Labour.

The EDL are trying to capitalise on that anger. Attempting to present themselves as anti-establishment, they chanted "whose streets, our streets". But their policies of dividing the working class on racial, ethnic or religious lines will only weaken the potential united opposition to cuts.

Effective opposition to the the EDL must address the questions: Why are there so few jobs and houses? False and divisive propaganda, such as a report carried in the media recently which claimed that migrant workers were causing unemployment, must be countered.

The reality is that 700,000 public sector jobs are being destroyed by the Con-Dem government. And,



EDL demonstrators and 'stewards'

rather than creating employment as prime minister Cameron promised, big business in the private sector is also cutting jobs, such as at RBS and La Senza. We need to continue the building of a united movement against all cuts.

Furthermore, at the next election, working class people must not be limited to choosing between three pro-cuts parties or the far-right. We urgently need to build a new mass

workers' party to provide a no-cuts alternative. This is why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is standing in the 2012 London assembly election (see page 2).

The EDL announced its next mobilisation will be in Leicester on 4 February. It must be faced with a protest that clearly says "Defend ALL jobs and services, make the bosses pay" and "Jobs and homes for all - stop the EDL".



Victims of EDL abuse told to move on or face arrest

Save community schools - no to academies

A Haringey Socialist Party member

Six hundred parents, teachers, governors and other local residents were at a meeting at Downhills primary school in Haringey, north London, to build the campaign to stop the school from becoming a 'forced academy'. The meeting had been called by the Haringey Anti Academies Alliance and the NUT teachers union.

David Lammy, Labour MP for Tottenham and a former student of the school, said: "There are 2,500 schools around the country, in-

cluding 19 in Gove's own Surrey constituency, which are 'performing' worse than Downhills. Why has this school been picked to become an academy, along with three other primary schools in the borough?"

NUT general secretary Christine Blower spoke about the need to raise standards, not by forcing community schools to become academies, but by closer collaboration between schools, local authorities and the communities that they serve.

Fiona Millar, from the Local Schools Network, noted that forced academies flies in the face of the

coalition government's 'big society' rhetoric. The community school has the backing of parents, governors and staff. The government wants to take it out of local authority control and hand it to a private organisation.

"Standards have improved in some academies. But in many cases that has been because the admissions policies were changed to keep out students from poorer backgrounds," said Fiona.

Alasdair Smith, from the Anti Academies Alliance, highlighted the difference between his Alliance's campaign and the Labour

Party's: he was against academies on any basis - 'forced' or otherwise.

"We should be under no illusion. Gove wants many, many more schools to become academies. Education companies are lining up to take over 1,000 schools at a time, in order get their hands on the government funded academies."

Although Lammy called for continued support for the campaign, he also said that Gove should pick on other schools which have worse results than Downhills!

Teaching and learning improves when it is properly resourced.

Smaller class sizes would have a massive impact on the effectiveness of classroom teachers.

There is no 'level playing field' in education. There has always been a two-tier system, since independent schools have been allowed to coexist with state schools.

If Gove's academies programme continues, it will create a base for the wholesale privatisation of state education.

The Downhills primary campaign has called a demonstration through Haringey on Saturday 28 January to build further support to stop forced academies.

Protect women's rights - oppose the abstinence bill

Beth Granter
Brighton Socialist Party

In May 2011, Tory MP Nadine Dorries made an attack on sex education via a private member's bill. Dorries proposed that girls be given "information and advice on the benefits of abstinence from sexual activity" as part of their sex education.

Making abstinence education 'just for girls' positions women as the gatekeepers of sex, and men as having no responsibility.

Existing sex and relationships

education (SRE) in the UK is not statutory. Already some schools, in particular academies, 'free schools' and religious schools (ie schools outside local authority control), do not teach comprehensive SRE because they disagree with the apparently 'unsavoury' content.

Abstinence education has been proven not to reduce sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy. A review of US sex-abstinence programs involving over 15,000 people by Oxford University found that they do not stop risky sexual behaviour or help in the prevention

of unwanted pregnancy.

Dorries has made other attacks on womens' rights, such as trying to hand over counselling for women seeking abortion to religious anti-choice organisations, and trying repeatedly to reduce the time limit on abortions.

A few days after the first reading of her abstinence education bill Dorries went on the Vanessa Show and claimed that "if more children were taught to 'just say no' there would be less sexual abuse". This outrageous victim blaming is a total distortion.

Dorries' proposals, and the ac-

tions of her party, have nothing to do with helping women. For example, the Con-Dem cuts include:

- Axing £280 million of funding for a ten-year Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
- 40% cuts to domestic violence, while legal aid is also being cut
- Cuts in welfare, public services, public sector jobs, pay and pensions, which all disproportionately affect women

Socialists believe that women should have full control over their bodies through access to genuine sex education, birth control, and po-

litical and social equality. The Con-Dem cuts are increasing inequality between the rich and everyone else.

Join the 'Stop Dorries' abstinence for girls sex education bill' Facebook campaign, which now has over 1,900 members, at <http://facebook.com/stopdorries> Demonstrate against the abstinence education bill - 20 January, 10.30am, outside the Houses of Parliament, Old Palace Yard, Westminster. Facebook event: <http://on.fb.me/stopdorriesdemo>

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