

# Far right not welcome in Brighton



EDL members were visible on the Brighton demo.

**J**UST DAYS after 700 protested in Bradford, the far-right English Defence League (EDL) marched through Brighton.

Bank Holiday Monday saw around 40 EDL marchers opposed by up to 350 people, including a large and well organised contingent of Socialist Party members and supporters.

Jon Redford

While the police ensured the EDL marched through the city centre - despite our efforts to block them - we marched ahead in a demonstration which dwarfed theirs.

The EDL are a far-right group which expresses a combination of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views.

The drastic cuts in government spending that the Con-Dem government is forcing on ordinary people will cause misery for the working class.

In this situation the far right seeks to scapegoat sections of our society.

But the cause of our problems is not immigrants, Islam or trade union resistance to the cuts; it is capitalism.

Socialist Party members were distinguished by our placards calling for 'jobs homes and services, not racism'. This slogan provides a working-class alternative to far-right groups by uniting ordinary people to fight the cuts.

We were very well organised and our stewarding prevented sections of the march from being caught in fights with the police at the front and back of the demonstration.

The demo was called under the banner of the English Nationalist Alliance (ENA) which is a fringe group on the far-right. However the only identifiable group was the EDL, who were openly present. According to the local paper they raised their hands in Nazi salutes, and chanted anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant slogans.

The march was a response to events in April this year, when a group called March for England, a nationalist organisation, marched

through Brighton. They have previously done so unopposed but rumours that the EDL would be attending this year led Unite Against Fascism and the Socialist Workers Party to call a counter protest.

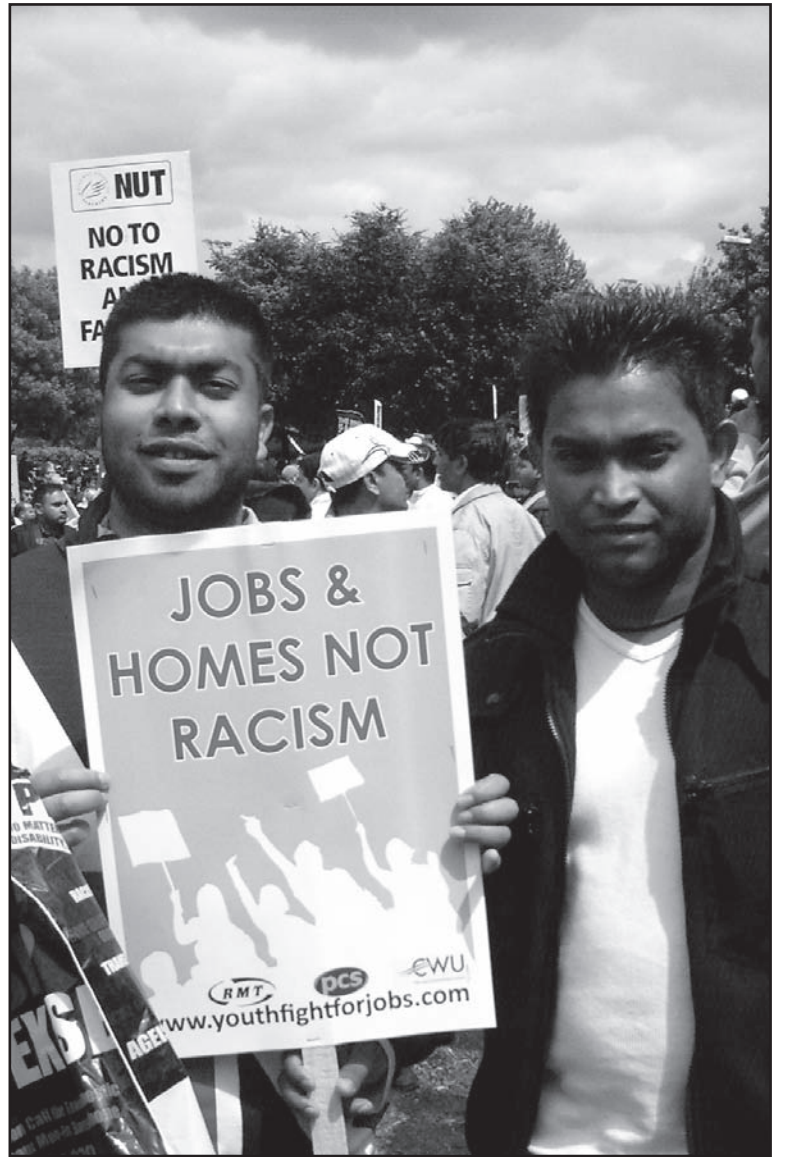
The march was not organised around any slogans which attacked sections of the community or even raised political demands; it was advertised as a family day out to celebrate St Georges Day. The Socialist Party pointed out at the time that this would be used as an excuse for the real far-right groups to march in Brighton.

This is what took place on Bank Holiday Monday. The ENA website said "We are heading for Brighton and marching in defence of our right to be English. On the 25th April the March for England families held their St George Parade and were abused by the UAF and left wing students."

Our opposition to the EDL on Monday showed that we will not accept any such marches in the future. It is important that anti-racist campaigns like this act together and not separately and that we debate the character of the event that is taking place to avoid the mistake of providing opportunities for organisations like the EDL to march.

We must stop racist and fascist organisations from marching and dividing working-class people in local areas. But we also have to counter the growing appeal of such ideas, including those of the British National Party (BNP).

As working class people face worse attacks than we did under Thatcher in the 1980s, any serious campaign against racism must also provide an anti-cuts, socialist alternative.



Tackling the far-right must include building an alternative.

## Con-Dems threaten EMA



We need a mass campaign to defend young people's right to education.

photo Dave Carr

**E**DUATION MAINTENANCE Allowance (EMA) is a weekly wage that students in further education get. It is designed to help pay for things such as bus fares, course materials and other necessities for studying. For many, this makes the difference between being able to attend education and not.

Ryan Preston

North-West Leeds Socialist Party

EMA pays between £10 and £30 a week and the amount that you are granted is dependent upon your household income. At present you can receive £30 a week for an income of up to £20,817, £20 for up to £25,521 and £10 for up to £30,810. Any student who comes from a household where the income is over this amount is not eligible for EMA.

This is a very flawed way to deter-

mine who should be granted extra support as it doesn't take into account any other expenditure that parents may have such as other children or mortgages.

Furthermore, the means testing system makes a lot of paperwork and red tape for students, parents and schools and colleges.

Although EMA makes a huge difference to a lot of students, it can often not be enough, with many college students also working in part-time jobs.

For some students it is the only source of income that they have and £30 a week doesn't stretch far. For example, a day bus ticket can cost up to £4 so students can be left with hardly anything after just paying to get to college!

If the cuts to EMA are carried out it will have a massive effect on the number of students who can attend.

For example, when the EMA was slashed by a huge 20% in Scotland, NUS Scotland estimates that over 8,000 students had to drop their studies due to financial difficulties.

The government has already attacked EMA by scrapping the two 'bonuses' of £100 each student used to get at the end of the first and third term.

They are also considering lowering the weekly amount paid per person so that many students will receive £10 less than they currently do.

Instead of cutting EMA, the government should be providing all students with a grant big enough to cover their full living costs.

Every young person has the right to attend post-16 education and we must campaign in every college and sixth form across the country to make sure this is defended.

## No to slave labour apprenticeships!

**T**HE LACK of college places means that those young people who find themselves among the 150,000 failed university applicants will now start looking for alternatives.

Before the election the Tories claimed that they would implement "a big, bold, radical scheme to get millions of people back to work". This included the creation of 100,000 apprenticeships to tackle the rising youth unemployment.

Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ) argued at the time that this was just an empty promise from the party that presided over a period of mass youth unemployment during the 1980s. And the actions of the government prove this prediction to be correct. The Tories are no different today to what they were then.

The schemes that have been rolled out by Iain Duncan Smith, the secretary for Work and Pensions, have been bold only in their strident attacks on working class youth.

Rather than apprenticeships, we have slave labour schemes where the unemployed will be forced to do "voluntary" work to receive benefits payments.

Rather than learning the skills needed to go into a trade and secure a long term future, young people will now find themselves stuck in a cycle of going from one low paid menial job to another.

One in five (almost one million) 16-24 year olds are not in work, training or employment. The government's promise to create

100,000 apprenticeships would only scratch the surface of this problem.

In the wake of the university places fiasco, apprenticeships are hugely in demand. In August, 24,000 people applied for just 221 apprenticeships at BT. Nissan has just opened up 75 places for apprentices, this just a year after shedding 1,200 jobs.

It is clear that to provide people with real apprenticeships on decent rates of pay will require a mass programme of public works and the nationalisation, under democratic workers control, of businesses like Nissan when they threaten to lay people off.

Even those that are lucky enough to get a place face an uncertain future.

Apprenticeships are usually unpaid with no guarantee that you will have a job at the end of the training period. Employers are clearly misusing apprenticeship as a way to bring in cheap labour under the guise of training young school and college leavers and then dumping them for a new batch of young workers before they have to pay them.

YFJ fights for the rights of all youth to a decent job and a decent education. We say that employers should be made to pay apprentices the going rate for the job they are doing and that it should come with a guaranteed job at the end.

We need to build a mass campaign to say no to slave labour schemes and rip off apprenticeships.

Paul Callanan