

Build our own defence league to stop EDL thugs

STOP THE EDL IN LUTON 5 FEB 2011

On the 5th February, the fascists of the English Defence League are going to try to take control of the streets of Luton. The EDL is a dangerous threat to the workers, minorities, women and youth of this country, with previous demonstrations of theirs seeing attacks on Mosques, Hindu temples, Gay districts, Asian and black people, and anti-fascist activists.

Luton was the birth-place of the EDL, so this demo is going to be highly symbolic and very important to their own members. On their first ever appearance in Luton they smashed windows of Muslim-owned businesses, and attacked an Asian man in the street. While they claim to only oppose 'Islamic Extremism,' I doubt they quizzed this guy on his political and theological beliefs before beating him up.

Luton is a town where the far-right aims to take advantage of urban poverty, a lack of council housing and unemployment to gain support for their sick goals of attacking Asian people and anybody who dares to politically oppose them. Racial and religious tensions have run high in the town before: last year around a dozen Islamists from Islam4UK protested a troops' homecoming parade, and the right-wing press spun this story to make the entire local Muslim population seem complicit in the demo. Since then Luton mosque has faced repeated arson attacks and racist graffiti has been scrawled all over it.

The fascists of the EDL (and the BNP) aim to take advantage of government- and media-sponsored racism against Muslims, and organise the most backwards and reactionary groups of workers into a street army to fight for their agenda. They want to create civil war within the working-class, and divide our resistance to the bosses attacks. This is why we have to stop them in Luton.

In August last year, they tried to intimidate the Asian population of Bradford (known for its historic opposition to fascism) in a demonstration they called 'The Big One.' They managed to bring out less than a thousand supporters, and those few who decided to try and attack local communities were chased out of town by hundreds of anti-fascists. It was a great victory for the anti-fascist movement.

There are problems with the anti-fascist movement though. Unite Against Fascism (UAF) often calls counter demonstrations against the EDL, and is the main force to mobilise against them around the country, but mobilisations these are often billed as "multi-cultural celebrations", held away from the fascists; A dance party half a mile away is not going to stop a bunch of drunk, racist hooligans from thinking that smashing up an Asian neighbourhood is a good idea. In Bradford the UAF demo was

kettled by the police and played little or no part in driving the EDL out of the city. The way we have to stop these scum is through mass, direct action, and we have to build and organise our mobilisations on these principles, or we won't be able to stop the EDL.

The Socialist Workers Party, the main component of UAF, support direct action against fascists, but they are tangled in an undemocratic and unprincipled alliance in UAF which stops them carrying this out. The trade union leaders, politicians and community leaders which support and bankroll UAF, but don't support direct action against fascism, are the ones who determine it's politics, and limit it to liberal anti-racism and pacifism. We need a united front against fascism, involving both these leaders, and the mass of working-class members in trade unions, communities and workplaces, but we have to be critical of the leaders of these organisations when they hold back and impede our struggles, or try and limit the politics to what is acceptable to themselves. We must mobilise alongside them, but also be prepared to criticise them and break with them when they try and hold back our necessary action against the fascists.

We call on all anti-fascists, socialists, locals, migrants, trade unionists and the unemployed to come out and oppose the EDL. We can occupy and block their demonstration areas, where they try to march we shall stop them and where they try to attack us we must fight back. Self-defence is no offence. Turning the other cheek will just result in them ripping it off.

It was great to see the fascists run off the streets of Bradford, but if we want to beat them in Luton, and keep beating them every time they rear their ugly heads, then we need to be organised. The police attempt to stop us defending victimised communities through violence. The fascists attempt to crush us with violence. We need to prepare for the violence of the police and fascists by organising self defence. All organisations and individuals opposed to fascism need to coordinate with each other to jointly build a demonstration which is prepared to defend itself. We need to mobilise as many people as possible, not for a 'celebration of multiculturalism,' but to stop the violent bigots in their tracks.

The far-right have formed their Defence League, and we need ours. An Anti-Fascist Defence League organising the best, most militant fighters to protect our demonstrations, meetings, and festivals from their violent attacks. Every anti-fascist, whatever their political or religious beliefs, need to stand side by side. Its time for unity to beat the fascists.



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