

FASCISM & FUNDAMENTALISM

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN



In recent months, the English Defence League have appeared on the streets of Britain. The group claim to be opposed to Islamic fundamentalism and, on the surface at least, try to sound like a reasonable and respectable response to the religious fanatics of Islam4UK and their kind.

Scratch beneath the surface though, and it soon becomes clear that the EDL is nothing more than a right-wing nationalist organisation intent on stirring up racial tensions and divisions in the UK. They state that they're only against "Muslim extremism" and deny being racist, hoping to deflect criticism and gain wider appeal. But their tactics clearly echo those of right-wing and fascist groups; using provocative rallies and marches, scapegoats (Muslims this time) and rhetoric based on fear and hatred.

While the EDL leadership tries hard to publicly distance itself from the fascist British National Party, it can't hide the simple fact that the group was co-founded by BNP members and activists.

Nazi-saluting BNP thugs and right-wing football hooligans shouting racist abuse on EDL demos have shown their true colours. With chants of "dirty Muslim bastards" and "We hate Pakis more than you", EDL members are singing from the same hymn sheet as fascist bigots everywhere. Their right-wing mobs serve to further the aims of the "respectable" BNP and to provide it with new recruits and more votes. By stirring up trouble between Asians and whites in local communities the EDL have taken nationalist politics back to the streets.

Like the BNP, the EDL have grown in the face of a political culture dominated by middle class values meeting middle class needs. The mainstream parties have never looked after working class interests, we've been abandoned by most of the "radical" left and traditional trade unions have largely lost the will to fight. It comes as no real surprise that a disempowered and pissed off chunk of the white working class, looking for a target for their anger and a voice that speaks for them, turn to the likes of the EDL.

And, like the BNP, the EDL will not solve working class problems. Its demands back up right-wing media hysteria and strengthen calls for ever more repressive government powers to 'deal' with militant Islam. We've seen how so-called anti-terrorist laws are used against us all, to keep us under control. For the authoritarian state, the EDL is a gift. They divert our attention away from targeting the real enemies of the working class - the bosses, bankers and politicians - and distract us from organising for ourselves, as a class, to fight for control of our lives and our communities.

The EDL and the religious lunatics they claim to oppose have far more in common with each other than they do with the rest of us. They are all small-minded bigots with a hatred for the traditional working class values of freedom, fairness and equality. Their racial, religious and cultural 'identity' politics are in complete opposition to our idea of a world where we can all reach our full and unique potential, and we reject them totally.

Bristol Antifa is dedicated to tackling fascism locally, nationally and internationally. Our position is simple: smash fascism by any means necessary! To find out more about our politics and how to support our work, please visit our website at <http://bristolantifa.org>