



North London Solidarity

6
June
2004

How to fight the fascists

For years, Britain's fascists were a marginal, street-fighting rump. Now suited and booted, they present themselves as 'respectable politicians', their racist and reactionary views feeding off the betrayals of Blair's Government. They now

stand a serious chance of winning seats from the votes of disillusioned working-class people.

When the fascists traded in thuggery, the answer was to mobilise the labour movement and local communities against that thuggery. Now they are swimming with the tide of the Express, the Sun, the Mail and the rest of racist press, the answers have to be different.

WHAT SHOULD OUR ANSWER BE?

Simply saying that the BNP are fascists, that they are racist, and that racism is wrong, is not enough. What will isolate the racists, what will swing around those who look to the illusory answers of the BNP, is a different kind of struggle.

The fascists win where voters see them more often than they see the labour movement and the socialists. The sad truth is that while the BNP has been putting in the work in local communities, our side has neglected this.

The fascists pretend to care about communities left to rot by the government and local councils. When the BNP tells people that immigrants and lefties are to blame, we need to knock on the same doors explaining that there is enough wealth to provide a decent standard of living for all: it is rich parasites who are hoarding it, not ethnic minorities. *Where the BNP gives racist 'answers', we must give working-class answers.*

We have to build campaigns in the communities where the fascists seek a toe-hold - for better housing, better schools and decent jobs for all. Campaigns that offer real hope can drive the fascists back into their sewers.

NO-ONE IS ILLEGAL

The BNP is buoyed by the anti-immigrant poison of Blunkett and Howard. BNP leader Nick Griffin has acknowledged the debt his party owes to the mainstream anti-asylum consensus.

We have to confront this head-on. *Racism lies behind every paragraph of immigration law.* Fighting against it is essential to fighting the fascists: the issues can not be separated.

The terrible conditions faced by migrant workers are at last coming under public scrutiny. When politicians and the press say the solution is to kick them out or stop them coming, our answer should instead be to make their jobs legal, with decent pay and safety standards. We should help them get unionised.



**Cable Street 1936:
When workers beat the fascists**
For a 12-page article about this, send £1 to
Workers' Liberty (address overleaf).

VOTE FOR ANYONE BUT THE BNP? No.

The Tory Party has no place in the kind of campaign we need. It may look superficially 'broad' to include Tories in an anti-fascist campaign. But it is counter-productive, alienating the working-class victims of the Tories. People who consider voting BNP have given up on mainstream politics, because it has only given them grief. Our job is not to persuade them to return to political respectability, but to offer a better form of rebellion: fighting for their communities and their class effectively, as part of a multi-racial working-class movement.

Do we want people to vote for 'anyone but the BNP'? No. We will not beat the fascists by helping the UK Independence Party or the Conservative Party to turn out its voters! That would simply re-sow the seeds from which the BNP grows.

This week's election sees a poor choice for working-class people. The Labour Party is openly serving big business. A year ago, we could have voted for the Socialist Alliance, but the Socialist Workers' Party has dissolved that into Respect - an unprincipled lash-up which has dropped socialism and working-class politics, and which we can not support. Our advice: vote socialist if you can, Labour if you have to.

Yes, we want unity against the fascists. Unity of the working class in all its diversity, unity of the labour movement both inside and outside the Labour Party. Not unity with parties who serve the capitalist class and who want to keep the respectable racist votes for themselves.

The campaign against fascism can be nothing but the campaign to build a fighting and campaigning labour movement. Without that focus of genuine hope, the politics of poison and hate will grow.

Resolution on fighting the fascists

adopted by Finsbury Park branch RMT

This branch believes that the fascist British National Party is fundamentally an anti-working-

class party: it is also racist, anti-semitic, sexist and homophobic. Everything that the BNP stands for is against the interests of the labour and trade union movement.

This branch notes that the BNP already has 17 councillors and is poised to make further electoral breakthroughs in the coming elections. We believe that two of the main factors that have enabled the BNP to grow are:

1. The Labour Government's betrayal of working-class people, and its abandonment of working-class communities;
2. The relentless attacks on immigrants and asylum-seekers from the Labour Government, other mainstream parties, and sections of the media.

We therefore believe that to effectively oppose the BNP, trade unionists need to:

1. Organise against the fascists, politically, ideologically, and - where necessary - physically.
2. Support self-defence by those communities targeted by the fascists.
3. Work alongside activists in working-class communities, campaigning on issues such as housing and local services;
4. Resolutely oppose all forms of racism, including the current demonisation of immigrants;
5. Fight for demands which will benefit and unite workers of all races. eg. for a higher minimum wage, against privatisation, for better pensions.

It is important that we have an urgent, united labour movement response to the BNP. We do not believe that bland condemnation of fascists, with no mention of issues such as those above, is adequate. Further, we believe that our campaign should not involve uniting with anti-labour-movement groups such as the Tory Party, as this would give them 'anti-fascist' credibility which they do not deserve, would prevent us from advocating the working-class politics that are necessary to win support away from the BNP, and would re-sow the seeds from which fascism grows.

Ideas for Freedom 2004

a weekend of socialist debate

**3-4 July,
London**

Discussions include: Alex Gordon (RMT) and Billy Hayes (CWU) in a forum on working-class political representation and the way forward for trade unionists # Abdullah Muhsin from the Iraqi trade union federation IFTU on the emerging Iraqi trade union movement # the 'pro-tyrant left' # What next for Iraq? # eye-witness reports from Kosova, Iraq and Israel/Palestine # socialists and the Muslim communities in Britain # the banning of the veil in French schools # how the left can campaign for secular principles # the crisis in Haiti and the fall of the Aristide regime # Free Trade and Fair Trade # the ideas of Toni Negri.

Highgate Newtown Community Centre, 25 Bertram St
Creche, food, and music from Robb Johnson
Contact us for details and tickets

workers' liberty london forum

Unite *whom* against fascism?

- a meeting with speakers and plenty of time for discussion -

Thursday 24 June, 7.30pm

Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross
all welcome

What's on our web page:

www.workersliberty.org/haringeyhackney

On our web page, you can see details of local campaigning events, and also:

- local trade union battles, including in the health service, the fire brigade and the civil service;
- more information and articles on **fighting fascism**;

- news from a **residents' campaign** to get Hackney Council to improve their estate, and campaigns against swimming pool closures.

You can post comments on any of the articles, and post news, reports and articles yourself.

You can link to the rest of the Workers' Liberty web site, with hundreds of articles about political issues and Marxist ideas.

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... is produced by the local branch of the **Alliance for Workers' Liberty**, a Marxist group campaigning as part of the trade unions, community groups and labour movement.

Politics is dominated by the interests of big business: we want a political voice for working-class people.

We want to replace capitalism with socialism - a society where the collective ownership of the productive wealth allows democracy, social provision for

need, sustainable development, individual freedom, and equality.

Please get in touch to find out more about the issues we have covered in this newsletter, if you would like to receive this newsletter regularly, or if you would like to come to any of our meetings and events.

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