

## Resolutions to Unity Conference – March 27<sup>th</sup> Page 1 of 4

(Amendments will be accepted to these motions on the day of the conference, up until the final plenary session – proposers are requested to take their arguments for amendments to the relevant workshops in advance of the final plenary session)

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### The EDL – what it is and how it should be opposed

1. The EDL (and its far weaker Scottish and Welsh satellites, the SDL and WDL) are racist populist organisations whose political staple diet is organising racist street provocations.
2. From the EDL's inception there have been organised fascists prominent in its organisation. The EDL's initial organisational base has been from nationalist gangs of football hooligans but it has been successful over the last year in pulling behind it a layer of working class youth. It has energetically attempted to claim that it is not racist and attempted to pull in black (Afro-Caribbean) youth and they have had people from the Black and non-Muslim Asian community speaking at rallies. Some of those in its periphery, particularly on the web, appear to be taken in by this.
3. The EDL however still has only a skeletal organisational structure and few policies other than crude anti-Muslim slogans and implicit anti-immigrant policies. As such at present it cannot be regarded as a fascist organisation. Whilst some in the EDL are members of the BNP, it is not a BNP front. Any unsubstantiated claims that the EDL is a BNP front, only weakens any argument against it.
4. Like organised fascist organisations the EDL feeds off the disillusionment in working class communities with politics, particularly the Labour Party and the lack of a fight by many trade unions. Even a limited growth in trade union activity and militancy would marginalise the racists of the EDL and their pretence that they genuinely represent working class dissent. But until and even when a revival in real working class politics happens, there is still a need to stop the racist activities of organisations like the EDL.
5. Whilst the EDL's demonstrations continue, they might provide the resources and personnel for a major growth of fascism in this country either by:
  - a) continuing to be a recruiting milieu for organised fascists of the BNP and NF; or
  - b) becoming a significant factor in a future fascist regrouping
6. The EDL contains many who have experience in street fighting and confrontations with the police. Legal bans, which we do not support, and attempts by the police to restrain them are even less likely to be effective than such action taken against the BNP or NF.
7. The EDL also pose an indirect threat, in that their slogans feed into the Islamophobia which has been pushed into the public consciousness by government institutions and the media when attacking the rights of asylum seekers, immigrants or justifying wars in Afghanistan, Iraq or Iran. This normalises the association of the Muslim community with extremism, fundamentalism, cultural dominance and terrorism and without the offer of an alternative perspective provides justification for supporting the BNP.

As communities/individuals already targeted by racism seek to distance themselves from those scapegoated by the EDL ( e.g . Asian speaker at EDL rally) it creates confusion by lending credence to EDL's claim to be non-racist. Such divide and rule tactics undermine attempts to organise against racism and fascism.
8. It is for these reasons, as well as our need to oppose those organising racist violence, that this conference agrees to network and organise along with other anti-racists to seek to have a mass mobilisation to prevent the EDL from gathering and marching.

## Fighting the British National Party

### We recognise that

1. The relative recent growth of the British National Party, its electoral successes and the threat it poses at the coming general election sound an alarm for all anti-fascists and anti-racists. In particular we recognise that the 'official' anti-BNP campaigns ('Unite Against Fascism' and 'Hope Not Hate'), funded by trade unions and enjoying mainstream political support, are inadequate to halt the BNP's growth.
2. The BNP has adopted a 'legitimate turn', mirroring similar efforts by European far right and fascist groups, concentrating on electioneering and building a party on this basis. They have been aided by the manifold political failures and attacks on the working class from successive governments, particularly New Labour.
3. The BNP and EDL feed off the racist policies of the establishment parties and peddled by the media. We need to challenge and educate against this racism whether it be against immigrant or other minority groups.
4. In conditions of large-scale political alienation, the collapse of the Labour Party membership and the recent economic crisis, the BNP has successfully adapted itself, exploiting the fears and hopes of working class voters, by claiming to offer an 'alternative' to the failed policies of successive governments and by harnessing and encouraging racist and nationalist sentiment against ethnic, national and religious minority groups.

### We believe that

1. The best way to organise is to mobilise the trade unions and working-class, community based campaigns.
2. Simply pointing out that the BNP and EDL are racist and fascist is not enough because they claim to offer an 'alternative' to the failed policies of successive governments.
3. Anti-BNP activists should expose the ideas of the BNP. This means offering alternative, working class political solutions, to the issues exploited by the BNP. Examples of such an approach are the use of the 'Jobs and Homes, Not Racism' slogan and the 'Our Alternative to BNP Racism' programme [see attached documents];
4. Wherever the BNP organises, anti-fascists should organise in opposition, building community-based anti-BNP campaigns on open and democratic terms, based on working class politics and campaigning to mobilise the trade unions;
5. Despite the BNP's turn away from open physical confrontation, they remain a threat. As such, where the BNP are trying to organise intimidatory activity or build a new base or hold special events and where the balance of forces allows, anti-fascists should, organise to disrupt and where possible prevent BNP activity by mobilising effective mass demonstrations and direct action when necessary such as mass pickets to block or take the ground of the BNP where appropriate.

## Organising a working class network against racism and fascism

### We note

1. the existence of 'Unite Against Fascism' and 'Hope Not Hate' anti-BNP campaigns and the national materials and organisational efforts produced by both;
2. that most national trade unions and mainstream political parties support one or both of these campaigns, utilising their materials and promoting their campaigns;
3. that where functioning, local anti-fascist and anti-racist groups exist, they often use national materials from UAF and HnH and follow their leadership on large-scale anti-BNP and anti-EDL mobilisations.

### We believe

1. that the best way to organise is to mobilise the trade unions and working-class, community based campaigns
2. that both UAF and HnH have shown themselves to be politically and organisationally unable to undermine the BNP and EDL because they
  - a) fail to challenge the specifics of the BNP's policies and
  - b) mischaracterise the English Defence League as simple 'Nazis' and
  - c) they operate without basic democratic norms and
  - d) in particular, the UAF fail to work in conjunction with independent local campaigns and
  - e) fail to adapt tactically to the threat of the EDL;
3. that an anti-fascist and anti-racist network, based on working class politics and democratic norms, can and should be established to offer an alternative framework for developing anti-BNP materials and campaigns and as a scaffold for effective action against both the BNP and EDL;
4. that such a campaign could attract the support of already existing anti-fascist campaigns, inspire the creation of new groups and win the backing of local trade union and other organisations.

### We resolve to

1. establish a network of anti-fascist and anti-racists groups and individuals;
2. form a representative committee to ensure regular communications and joint organisational efforts;
3. encourage and support the establishment of supporting groups and the distribution of resources and information to aid the fight against the BNP and EDL;
4. publish a simple and easily adaptable leaflet for local campaigns in the coming election and continue to share and develop materials;
5. organise a visible presence and co-ordinated group on forthcoming anti-EDL mobilisations, discussing in advance tactics and ideas for the day whilst not attempting to undermine any local campaign's plans;
6. try and work with and seek the support and cooperation from of local trade unions and campaign groups
7. ensure that on events that the network organises, it makes the necessary arrangements for communication, safety and effective action.
8. mobilise as widely as possible to protest against the 'Red White and Blue Festival' under the, 'Jobs and Homes, Not Racism' banner wherever the festival may be.

## **Additional Resolution on Bolton arrests**

The arrests of Weyman Bennett, Rhetta Moran and other anti-fascist activists in Bolton, and the charging of Bennett with conspiracy charges, is a clear attempt to intimidate the anti-racist movement against the EDL.

The UAF activities in Bolton were no different to those they carried out in protest at other EDL events and no more militant than the police would have expected.

The arrests can only be presumed to have been pre-planned, probably at a very senior level, and with a clear intent, that is to intimidate the UAF and other anti-fascists organising in protest to the EDL. They are part of a police operation on the day that was clearly engineered to provoke anti-fascists and maximise arrests of anti-fascists whilst leaving the EDL pretty much unmolested.

Whilst not necessarily agreeing with the tactics used by the UAF and having no confidence in its ability to organise democratically and inclusively with other working class anti-racist organisations, we unconditionally condemn these arrests and demand that all charges be dropped against anti-fascists arrested in Bolton.