

500 Word Essay - English Defence League

The English Defence League originally began as a group called "United People of Luton" which was formed in response to a March 2009 protest against Royal Anglian Regiment troops returning from the Afghan War. This protest was held by the Islamist group Al-Muhajiroun including members of the group Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah who heckled the soldiers calling them rapists and murderers. When the Luton counter-demonstration led to arrests, local football supporters, using social networking websites, collaborated with other football casual groups, to spread the news and to gather support.

A major turning point was a demonstration held in Birmingham in June 2009 by Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah that featured an 11 year old white English boy from Birmingham converting to Islam. An 11 year old called Sean was filmed repeating Arabic chants and swearing allegiance to Allah. This is what fuelled the anger within the EDL who started to rapidly attract members and now have a following of over 68,000 members on their facebook page.

The EDL are regarded by some as a racist organization. This is strongly denied by the leader of the EDL who goes by the name of Tommy Robinson, although his actual name is believed to be Stephen Yaxley-Lennon. This is written on the Hope Not Hate website where they claim that Yaxley-Lennon is a former British National Party Member. We can see how some peoples worries of the EDL being a racist organization might be justified after Yaxley-Lennons alleged links to the BNP were revealed.¹

It is claimed by Hope Not Hate that the EDL is full to the top with BNP members. There is little evidence to support this however photographs on the Hope Not Hate website do show a man named Alan Spence who was photographed with both the leader of the BNP and again

with the leader of the EDL although of course this doesn't mean that they are linked in any way.² This is strongly denied by both organizations who claim that they have no links to each other whatsoever. Nick Griffin, the leader of the BNP was quoted as saying "▲All British National Party members are reminded that the EDL was declared a proscribed organisation back in September last year, so to attend or to encourage attendance at any of its activities is a disciplinary offence " ³

The EDL say they march to oppose any threat to the British way of life and their top agenda is to keep British values. The EDL also say they aim to stop the "Islamization" of Britain and to put a stop to Muslim Extremist operating in the UK.

The EDL are reported to have Muslims and other people from all different cultural backgrounds in their ranks and welcome any person no matter colour or race as long as they are protesting to keep things how they are and are against Sharia Law.

The EDL were recently in uproar when Muslim extremists were seen burning the British flag on the streets of London.⁴ This is the type of thing that the EDL say they aim to put a stop to.

I can see why some people claim the EDL are a racist organization as unfortunately it attracts a minority of racists. The EDL claim that any member found to be racist in any way is removed and told that they are no longer welcome although it must be quite difficult to stop racists and trouble makers attending the demonstrations which can be attended by anyone. ▲All you have to do is take a look on the EDL Facebook page to see the dates of demos.

- 1) <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/The-BNP-past-of-EDL-leader>
- 2) <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/The-Extremist-Defence-League>

- 3) <http://thegreenarrow.co.uk/news/newsbnp/2303-bnp-leader-reminds-bnp-supporters-that-edl-is-proscribed>
- 4) <http://new-pakistan.com/2010/08/02/hyper-nationalists-flags-and-phony-sensitivities/>