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Britain

# Anti\*Capitalist Resistance (ACR) – a new political regroupment

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**It has been fairly rare on the left here to see a regroupment – even on a modest scale - rather than a split. Four months ago Socialist Resistance (SR), British section of the Fourth International voted overwhelmingly in favour of forming a new current called Anti\*Capitalist Resistance (A\*CR). It brings together SR with a group that was organised around the Mutiny website as well as a number of other individual comrades. The political dynamics in Scotland are different because of the national question so our co-thinkers there will be organising in a different way,**

In January the first of the two planned conferences, organised to found the new group, was held. It adopted documents on the British and international political situations as well as a constitution and statement of aims. All documents are available on the [ACR website](#). Sometime later this year we hope to hold a conference with physical participation (pandemic permitting) to conclude the process.

The journey towards this point began with discussions between some Mutiny and SR comrades on the ideas contained in [William Robinson's](#) books about the connection between neo-liberal capitalism and new forms of fascism. This resulted in a book [Creeping Fascism](#) written by comrades from both organisations. Since then some of the same comrades have written [System Crash](#) which builds on the ideas of the first book.

However the convergence has not come about just because of some agreement on global theoretical analysis but on a number of key political questions such as Brexit, Corbynism, ecosocialism, internal democracy, further regroupment on the left and internationalism.

In the debate about **Brexit** – whether Britain should leave the European Union – we all stood on the same line of a critical remain vote. We opposed groups like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) or the Socialist Party (SP) who argued for a progressive Lexit. The latter groups, the largest of those organised completely outside the Labour Party, saw Brexit as an “opportunity for the left”. They downplayed the reactionary consequence of the vote, that much of it was inspired by racist attitudes to migrants and a nationalist “little England” ethos. Events have shown their failure to mobilise any sort of progressive Lexit coalition and the further strengthening of a hard right agenda, today firmly entrenched inside Johnson’s Conservative party.

Our convergence is taking place amidst the **defeat and disarray of the Corbynist left** inside the Labour Party and the ascendancy of a new moderate leadership under Starmer who is carrying out a undemocratic witch-hunt of the left. We all enthusiastically joined in the Corbyn movement and we work today inside the Labour Party to defend the gains of Corbynism in terms of policies and those positions currently held by the left. At the same time we have drawn a common balance sheet. We share the idea that it is illusory to think you can build up a left social democratic majority in the party that will seamlessly win the whole party to those positions without there being a significant split. Today we still work with activists inside Labour but without the perspective of a left social democratic government and with a different balance between internal work and building mobilisations outside the Party. Conversations with Labour leftists about building a socialist alternative have changed.

Groups like the SWP and the SP mostly write off the efforts of the left inside Labour and just call on them to leave and join their groups. The ACR thinks this is sectarian and misunderstands the continued structural role of Labour in the overall labour movement as an “alternative” government and as an organisation integrating the trade unions. Our members are active in the defence of Labour party members “suspended” or expelled by Starmer and participate in important debates on issues like the Green New Deal or Proportional Representation.

## Anti\*Capitalist Resistance (ACR) – a new political regroupment

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Thousands of militants have left the Labour Party, angry with Starmer's rapid shift to the centre and even further towards the disastrous policies associated with Tony Blair. Setting up a new revolutionary current at this time could help us win over some of these, often younger, activists. How far to work in the local Labour Party entirely depends on how active the local party is and how tightly it is controlled by the right wing.

The strapline to the ACR website masthead is "**fighting disaster capitalism with ecosocialism**". Unlike most orthodox left groups we openly embrace the term ecosocialist. It underpins our regroupment. Our common analysis is that socialism is not just a question of breaking the capitalist state and having common ownership but is also about a completely different relationship between humanity and nature. The work we do in the leadership of the Zero Covid campaign is informed by our ecosocialist analysis of the causes of the pandemic.

Many of our members have long experience of the British radical left. We have seen how destructive a certain orthodox notion of democratic centralism can have on **developing a lively, rich political culture**. Combined with a top down command structure often enshrined in the body of one or two "guru" figures this has burnt out and wasted the talents of many good activists. Our alternative to that democratic centralism is **revolutionary democracy**.

From the outset the ACR wants to establish a broad and diverse political debate. We are not afraid of public disagreements between comrades and we do not expect people to defend positions they disagree with. While we will come to majority positions that will be expressed in the political decisions and actions we take, we will not close down debate or push people who are in minority out of the organisation.

Division and fragmentation on the radical left weakens our impact and alienates what is a growing audience for our ideas. We want to **actively pursue further revolutionary regroupment**. Our website, publications and meetings will reflect that approach. We do not see every left current or group as competitors but see many of them as potential components of a future revolutionary group which could have a real mass influence. Having a healthy internal debate where differences are tolerated is essential if we want to further regroup. Women, black and LGBT comrades also have the right to discuss together and play a full role in the group. British left groups have a poor record on their relationship to women running the gamut from leader sexual abuse, rape denial to low female participation.

**Progress** with ACR so far has been positive. We are on course to have a group nearly twice the membership of Socialist Resistance. Traffic on our website is increasing and fresh articles are published daily. Comrades are active in the leadership of the Zero Covid campaign which has organised zoom meetings with authoritative national and international speakers bringing several hundreds together each time. Internal groupings for trade unionists and women have been set up to organise our work. Public zoom meetings on Palestine, Eco-socialism and Women have drawn a public that is broader, more feminine and younger than SR has done in the recent past. A "critical university" series of political education is now into its second session. Local and regional branches are in the process of being set up.

Socialist Resistance members will be maintaining **membership of the Fourth International** and we hope to win the new organisation as a whole to affiliation in the future. It is not a coincidence that the strong **internationalist** approach of these comrades has brought them together with SR which has always placed internationalism at the heart of its politics. We are learning a lot from our contact with the new comrades and we hope in turn they will see the political importance and practical usefulness of our international current.

PS:

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