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UK: Rock against Racism founders call for a new movement

Friday 24 August 2018, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 15 August 2018).

Original founders of Anti-Nazi League and Rock Against Racism outline steps to defend multiracial and diverse society

All of us who are committed to a tolerant, multiracial and multicultural society face a growing and serious challenge from the racist and fascist right in the UK, encouraged by Donald Trump and his close associate Steve Bannon and now boosted by [the release from jail](#) of former EDL leader Tommy Robinson.

The storming of the socialist bookshop Bookmarks ([Report](#), 6 August) and the disturbingly large mobilisations on the streets of London, Leeds, Manchester and elsewhere underline the scale of the threat.

Boris Johnson's [recent remarks](#) are a calculated bid to appeal to the same audience and can only give them further confidence.

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell's recent [call for an Anti-Nazi League-type cultural and political campaign](#) is therefore very welcome and timely. We need a broader-based, imaginative and vibrant campaign that unequivocally opposes all forms of racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism.

As founder members over 40 years ago of the original Anti-Nazi League (ANL) and its sister organisation Rock Against Racism, we think that Stand up to Racism, Love Music Hate Racism and Unite Against Fascism have been established firmly within this tradition, and indeed these organisations have already provided essential and much-needed rallying points of opposition to the rising far right.

This is a process that, as John argues, now urgently needs to be deepened and extended, uniting all people and organisations of goodwill against the huge challenges we face over the next few years from the far right and fascists.

This will involve applying the ANL's tactics of mass propaganda, unrelenting opposition to the racists and fascists wherever they organise, and the cultural appeal that ANL/RAR pioneered, with large-scale music and similar events asserting the values of our multiracial and diverse society.

We believe this needs to be done with the utmost speed. [Tommy Robinson](#) and his international backers are likely to be preparing further national and international events in the autumn, seeking to build support and influence. Developments in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy highlight how urgent this is. Echoes of the 1930s are all too real.

Whatever our other political differences, we believe the time to come together against the poison of racism and fascism is now.

Collective

P.S.

We need to unite against the rising threat of racism and fascism in the UK

Peter Hain House of Lords; founder member, Anti-Nazi League

Paul Holborow Founder member and national secretary, Anti-Nazi League

Red Saunders Founder, Rock Against Racism

Roger Huddle Founder, Rock Against Racism

Jerry Dammers Musician, The Specials, 2 Tone, Rock Against Racism

Carol Grimes Musician, Rock Against Racism

Tom Robinson Musician, Rock against Racism

Mykaell Riley Musician, Bass Culture, Steel Pulse, Rock Against Racism

The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/15/we-need-to-unite-against-the-rising-threat-of-racism-and-fascism-in-the-uk>