



Alan Walter



Always a fighter



He was concerned for the details, but set his sights very high. We ran a brilliant campaign on rents in Haringey this year, but Alan was critical that the policy focus was wrong, and I, metaphorically, put my hands up right away, and agreed with his criticisms.

I'm very sad to hear the news about Alan's death. I felt huge warmth and respect for him.

As one of the original founder members of DCH I know Alan will be missed by many people. I feel I know Joe because although we never met, Alan often spoke about you. I will never forget the many long hours we spent driving round the country together. We will never be able to replace him.

He put so much effort, work, principled arguments, diplomacy, skill, and tenacity into the campaign – everything that has kept the campaign on track.

Alan was someone I was warned against but I found his arguments made sense and often gave meetings a purpose and direction that no one else could. He cut through the crap, and I warned to him, and thought that the warnings I'd been given were groundless.

Why can't nasty bastards die young? I can't be at the memorial but I'll pick a row with a manager and think of Alan.

Our greatest tribute to Alan will be to work all the harder to win a resounding NO to privatisation in our forthcoming ballot in South Cambs – if we do, I will have no hesitation in dedicating victory to the memory of Alan Walter, a great campaigner and an immensely talented, but humble human being.

While Alan was always the first to insist we are a collective group, he was especially inspirational, and not only always went that extra mile, but more like an extra marathon.

I didn't always agree with Alan on some of the issues that he promoted, but I, like many others always admired and respected Alan's point of view, which was expressed with admirable clarity and sincerity.

I really respected Alan because he had a good grasp of theory and he did the practical as well. He was indeed a great campaigner. He championed the cause of the underdog, the working class, civil liberties, and much, much more.

I can think of no other comrade who influenced me more than Alan. From the early days selling Socialist Worker at the NDO post office until now he was an inspiration. He was full of ideas – campaigns to fight for new resources for local youth, paper sales at the jazz festival in Waterlow Park. A light has gone out with Alan's passing, but it was a light that lit a thousand torches that burn as bright as ever.

The working class have lost a hero. We will all miss him.

He did not, as far as I know, have any comfy political relationships with anybody. He argued with his comrades and tenant allies probably as much as he argued with his enemies, and we loved him for it. He was such a role model in not ducking arguments. He was not embarrassed about having a disagreement, and he did not expect anybody else to be.

I was impressed with his knowledge, commitment and tremendous modesty whilst holding the campaign together, producing excellent newsletters and supporting and encouraging others in the fight. What a tragic loss. But an inspiration. We will all miss him.

The tragic news was all the more shocking to those of us who recently were enjoying a drink with Alan after another of his inspirational and informative speeches at the Cambridge Trades Council – given kneeling on the floor, whilst in agony with a bad back. Typically, he was keen to offer all the help he could with our current battle against council house privatisation.

Alan was not only a tireless campaigner but undaunted, and a great human being.

We wanted to write a letter to whoever's fault it is – the Government, the Council, the Union bosses, the head of BT – who wore him out... Now look what you've done.

Alan did things his way and how few of us can say that.

Kentish Town DMC has lost its Champion, its Defender of justice and truth – he is irreplaceable and our meetings will never be the same again.

He was an inspiration to us all and we will make sure the fight for the rights of us all goes on.

I don't know of anyone who can fill his shoes. I have been proud to call Alan a friend and he will always remain so. I shall really miss him.

At Winchester and around the country, we will honour his memory by continuing what Alan started, and see it through till we get justice for council tenants- he deserves that from us all. Alan will go down in history as someone who cared for others, and never gave up on them.

He was a great fighter all his short life for socialism; for the fight against capitalism; for council housing and the rights of all men and women.

He will always be my comrade, my brother, my mucka.

Alan channelled phenomenal emotional energy into striving to make the world a better place, but despite this he could be incredibly gentle. Despite the impossible demands he placed on himself he always found time to encourage and enable others to achieve alongside him. He was always willing to learn from and promote the skills of other people.

I first met Alan in the early 80s and bumped into him many times over the years. He was always an inspiring, upbeat person with a great sense of humour. A superb class fighter and someone who made you proud to be on his side – fighting for justice and being a socialist. He will be sorely missed, but what a job he did while he was here!

We at UNISON are shocked and saddened by Alan's sudden death. Despite our occasional differences over policy, we appreciated greatly Alan's commitment and unstinting efforts on behalf of tenants and the homeless.

I WILL MISS ALAN VERY MUCH.

Alan was a very very special guy with an enormous heart who always made time for others. He was more than a developer and union rep, and was very trustworthy and a reliable guy and will be truly missed by all who knew him. He was a very open and honest friend and colleague and was the backbone of our office. He was one in a million if not billion. It makes me proud to have known Alan and honoured our paths crossed.

With the anniversary of the miners strike I have been remembering the trips up to Hatfield Main and the solidarity of those times. Alan taught me so much about organising as a socialist at work when I joined the SWP that year.

Personally I loved his slow smile and quiet ways. He was always approachable and always patient.

One of the things I most admired about Alan was his principled ability to work with people who did not share all his political beliefs.

The first time that I telephoned Alan, out of the blue, was ten years ago when stock transfer was first mooted in High Wycombe. What he said in about eight minutes has remained with me ever since. Alan had the strategic vision to lead DCH from an enthusiastic group of possibly small-time local campaigners, right into the mainstream of housing policy. He believed that we were talking sense, that we belonged in the mainstream, and he was determined to take us there.

When I was sacked last year, Alan didn't hang around for the official petition. We didn't have the same employer, but we were in the same union branch. Neither of these facts were relevant to him. There was someone trying to organise workers that had been victimised – that was sufficient for him to type up his own statement, get his fellow workers to sign it and fire it off to my employers. Frequently during the campaign, he would call to see how I was, have a chat about the next steps and 'oh and by the way – I raised it with such and such an MP, spoke to this trades council chair and emailed that CWU rep' before apologising that he had to dash off to another corner of the country to speak at a DCH meeting.

ALAN WAS SUCH A GOOD PERSON.

It would be a fitting tribute if various councils build new homes called: ALAN WALTER COURT / HOUSE / MANSIONS!

He was the most sincere socialist I had the pleasure of working with and meeting and will miss him.

I have never known a more genuine person, who worked for the good of the council tenants cause, not for self glory, but for what he could do for others. It is for this reason TACT at Winchester will endeavour to fight our corner in his memory, to achieve the outcome he was seeking. He was a true friend and inspiration to us all we will miss him, but never forget him.

On Peckwater Estate where Alan lived he got people to stand up for themselves. He was always for the common good, it wasn't personal. He always worked to bring people together across the whole community. He made people think, and they listened to him.

Although Alan Walter always talked up the achievements of the collective surrounding him, often playing down his individual selfless efforts, there is no doubt that he has single handedly been the binding glue of this collective.

His giant footsteps will be hard to fill, such was his dedication to his beliefs. Few can comprehend the tireless hard work that goes into running a campaign, organising conferences, workshops, editing newspapers and returning endless calls on his time with respect and unfailing politeness.

Dear Alan, I always loved you. Thankyou for helping me when I was younger. I liked to think of you on a beach somewhere sunny, hope they've got a good kitchen too!

PCS will be eternally grateful for the selfless commitment Alan gave to the cause of council housing. His efforts and achievements will remain an inspiration to those of us who will continue the fight to defend public services.

I am shell shocked to think such a great man should leave us so young. His enthusiasm was infectious his commitment unwavering. He will be missed by many.

The DCH campaign is just one example of the way Alan worked across divides but always with principle, to bring people together to build a real movement. It's an example too of the way he just worked tirelessly to defend working people against the onslaughts of capitalism.

I found him honest, open, committed and humorous – someone I could easily spend an hour on the phone with ruminating over the finer points of housing policy and other issues. I could never figure out how he managed to do so much – running DCH was a full-time job by itself but then he also a "second" job at BT where he was a CWU rep. Alan talked about his son on many occasions. 'A chip off the old block' was how Alan described him.

A man of such commitment will be sadly missed.

He was so passionate in his beliefs and a voice for the less knowledgeable and articulate in relation to Camden Council policies and its tenants – who will speak for them now?

There is so much to thank Alan for, personally I will always remember him reaching out to me when I was a lost and confused teenager. He was a loving caring man who went out of his way to help me when I really needed it.

We used to bump into each other at Cally swimming pool and chat about the union, DCH and politics in general. People at the pool talked about all the good Alan has done and agreed what a wonderful bloke he was. Alan was a good friend and a comrade to me.

Alan believed we have a world to win.

He was incredibly thought-provoking. If you had an argument with Alan or more likely the other way round, you may not have agreed with what he said, but you always thought differently about that subject afterwards.

Alan spoke at many of our meetings in Tower Hamlets during the 'Housing Choice' period and was a fabulous and inspiring speaker. He designed posters for us and helped at street level, with his car being taped up with posters and speakers, the paint came off the bonnet but he didn't mind! I remember him holding my daughter at a meeting in Bethnal Green when she was a baby; she looked so safe in his big arms. A very good and important person to go. So sad we won't be hearing his voice again.

Many tears are being shed in shock and grief for the sheer loss of his presence. He will leave an incredible legacy and he will be with us all – sitting by our shoulder when we will need to ask 'Alan would've expected x or y to be done'. A long road ahead for us all.

Alan had a commitment and integrity that everyone, no matter how much they disagreed with him, respected and admired.

He lived believing in council housing. It's our jobs to make sure the messages are continued and the changes are made in his memory.

A man of such commitment will be sadly missed.

The one quality about Alan that I will always recall was his total commitment and sincerity for the causes and issues that he thought mattered. He always spoke his mind about them, and didn't beat about the bush and got down to the knitty gritty.

The good die young.

"I have grown accustomed to viewing the historical perspective not from the standpoint of my personal fate. To understand the causal sequence of events and to find somewhere in the sequence one's own place – that is the first duty of a revolutionary. "

Alan always led from the front, and however much those of us around him felt driven by him he always drove himself harder. Working with Alan was the most difficult thing I have ever done and yet the rewards always far outweighed the cost.

Alan was a rare combination of talents. He had an ability to understand politics and see what needed to be done to change the world; coupled with a charisma which enabled him to inspire others; and the determination and commitment to work and go on working for what he believed in.

We are born. We die. It is what happens in the middle that counts.

Alan was a lovely, lovely man who always put the class first and never compromised. He was an inspiration to our Unison members in defending Council Housing. Alan will be sadly missed as a comrade and a friend.

The last time I visited Alan, we talked late into the evening about our children. Alan was so immensely proud of Joe.

I would like to extend sincere condolences from the Somali Community Centre to the family and friends that Alan Walter left. I feel for them as Alan was a character and will be really be missed.

We worked out campaign strategies on beaches, ate the best aubergines at Taa'yab, shared a parent's worries and pride, caught the best music from Abdullah Ibrahim. Then 'I just turned around and he was gone.'

His last words to me, the day before he died, were that we needed to focus on getting write-off of the historic debt, that is round the necks of council tenants in this country, and we discussed the arguments that we were going to use to make that happen. And we will make it happen.

It was because of Alan that I became a socialist. He spent so many hours organising and fighting because he really believed that workers have the power to change society. He wanted a bit more time with the simple pleasures that gave him such joy, but he would not have lived his life any other way than fighting for a better world.

So shocked to hear about Alan, he was a good friend. He was also a good friend of Bangladeshi community in Camden. Many people from the community knew him as 'Someone always on their side.'

Alan was a good friend and one of the best comrades I have ever worked with. I will remember him all my life.

Alan was a unique combination of the cantankerous with the diplomatic, who achieved so much and yet took so little credit for himself. He will be sorely missed by many, not least in our UNISON branch in Camden.

Alan was a remarkable political leader but also a great friend. Over the 20 or so years I knew him, I repeatedly sought his advice and not just on political matters. His door was always open and his phone always answered when I needed it. Alan had a certain political genius which enabled him to grasp very quickly the key issues.

