

"The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of race or sex".

Karl Marx

"The emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working classes themselves".

Karl Marx

"Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement".

Lenin

"The emancipation of the proletariat is not a labour of small account and of little people: only they who can keep their heart strong and their will as sharp as a sword when the general disillusionment is at its worst can be regarded as fighters for the working class or called revolutionaries".

Antonio Gramsci

In memory of Jo Walker and David Hague

AT ABOUT 9.30pm on Sunday 2 July, a minibus returning to Lancaster from our Workers' Liberty 95 summer school crashed on the motorway between Preston and Lancaster.

David Hague, a close friend of the Lancaster comrades, was killed outright. Other people suffered varying degrees of physical injury, but all recovered, except our comrade Jo Walker, who died after a week in intensive care on 10 July.

We print below our impressions of and tributes to David Hague and Jo Walker.

Jo as a comrade

By Lancaster AWL

JO WALKER joined the Alliance for Workers' Liberty ten months ago, after meeting Lancaster branch members as we were building for a student demonstration against grant cuts.

We were immediately struck by Jo's determination to keep herself involved in the campaign and to put in the hard work to build it.

Without any pressure from us, Jo would come up to the student union campaigns office every day asking for something to do. Far from being put off by the prospect of putting up hundreds of posters, she seemed to love doing it.

Jo got involved not only in her student union but also in the Labour Club. She recognised immediately that there was a far wider picture than student politics.

Jo, contrary to appearances, didn't really love poster and leafletting, but she still did it. This was another thing we saw immediately: that Jo knew that to get what she wanted the hard graft had to be done. She couldn't just sit back and wait for someone else to do it. If you needed something done, you could trust Jo to do it, and to do it to the best of her ability. Perfectionist is a good word for her.

It was not long after we met her that Jo was coming to AWL events, and she soon joined the organisation. She didn't moan and groan about losing her social life or what her friends might think.

Jo hated the poverty, exploitation and discrimination she saw around her, and when she understood how the system worked and how to change it she didn't hesitate about making politics a central part of her life.

Jo threw herself into youth work in Lancaster. She knew that organising young people will be the key to the future and the creation of socialism. We will always remember the wonderful speech Jo made at Young Labour conference in February 1995 in defence of Clause Four. She made it to the jeers of the right wing, but she spoke strongly and very movingly for socialism.

Jo was always eager to learn, and always wanted to know more about how and why things happened.

Jo slowly became more confident. One of the reasons for this was that she came out as bisexual. She began to speak out in meetings and had a lot of pride in herself.

Had Jo lived, we are sure she would have remained a respected, valued member of the AWL. However, Jo lost that fight. We must now go on and continue the fight for socialism, to put into practice the ideas Jo believed in and make a better world.

Jo as a friend

By Lancaster AWL

WHEN WE first met Jo, she appeared to be quite shy, but you could tell immediately that she was a hard woman who would fight her corner. She was also very good-natured, and willing to help out if you needed her.

Working with someone politically very quickly brings you close, and Jo was soon regarded as a good friend by us all.

We soon discovered that Jo wasn't all smiles and light. "Stroppy old cow" would be a good way to describe her on occasion, but we wouldn't have had her any other way. It was part and parcel of the Jo we loved.

Whilst she could be snappy, she could also be funny. Jo had a very dry sense of humour, and a lovely happy grin. She would always listen if you needed to talk, and she loved a good gossip.

One of the most important aspects of Jo's life was her relationship with her partner, Karina Knight. When Jo came out as bisexual, she relaxed a lot, and became more confident. When she began seeing Karina, that confidence grew.

Jo was constantly in Manchester, or, if she wasn't, she was on the phone to Karina. In Lancaster we began to wonder if she had defected to the Manchester branch.

She didn't often talk about her relationship, as she was quite a private person, but when we asked how it was going she'd get a happy but secretive smile on her face.

Jo became very interested in politics around sexuality. Her relationship and the fact that she felt so comfortable about her own sexuality resulted in a marked change in Jo. She became more assertive and had a lot of pride in herself.

Jo had a few habits that will always stick in our minds. When she was telling people about things that had excited her, she would waggle her body about and flap her hands around, and she was constantly scratching at her hands and fidgeting.

Where computers were concerned, Jo was a bit of an egotist. She was indispensable to our branch for anything that required more than just turning on the Apple Mac. You can be sure that no matter how well this tribute is laid out, Jo would have said she could do it better.

We could go on forever about Jo as our friend and as Karina's partner, but it is enough to say that we will never forget her. We have a thousand memories of her, like her excellence at logic puzzles, her vegetarian phase, and her smelly feet.

Jo was our comrade and our friend, and we will never forget her.

Jo, my daughter

By Alex Walker, Jo's mother

JO FOUGHT in life to achieve for herself a number of things, but her motivation was always to be in a position to help others less fortunate to obtain a better quality of life. Jo had just started to settle into the political beliefs that I am sure would have continued to be a driving force in directing her work and leisure for the future.

As a mother I loved her, a very precious daughter. Not only that, I also respected and admired her independence, strength of character and intelligence. Talking to her friends, I realise that these elements of her character were admired by you all. It is a great comfort to me and the rest of Jo's family to recognise the number of people who have had their lives touched



Jo Walker

by Jo in such a short time.

In the end she fought for her own life, but the odds were stacked too heavily against her. Each one of us can build a memorial in ourselves to Jo, by fighting for our beliefs, whatever they may be, by espousing the causes of people that need an articulate representation that they may be unable to provide for themselves, and most of all to keep loving and to keep caring for each other.

We will all, no doubt, shed tears at the loss of a much loved and respected person. For Jo we must pick up our lives and set off again, safe in the knowledge that she will remain in our hearts forever.

I want to leave you with some words that Jo herself felt reflected the thoughts and feelings that she wanted to guide our lives. So much so that she had them mounted in a frame and gave them to me as a gift.

Don't ever

Don't ever try to understand everything — some things will just never make sense.
 Don't ever be reluctant to show feelings — when you're happy, give in to it! When you're not, live with it.
 Don't ever be afraid to try to make things better — you might be surprised at the results.
 Don't ever take the weight of the world on your shoulders.
 Don't ever feel threatened by the future — take one day at a time.
 Don't ever feel guilty about the past — what's done is done. Learn from any mistakes you might have made.
 Don't ever feel that you are alone... there is always someone there for you to reach out to.
 Don't forget that you can achieve so many of the things you can imagine.
 Imagine that! It's not as hard as it seems.
 Don't ever stop loving.
 Don't ever stop believing.
 Don't ever stop dreaming your dreams.

Laine Parsons

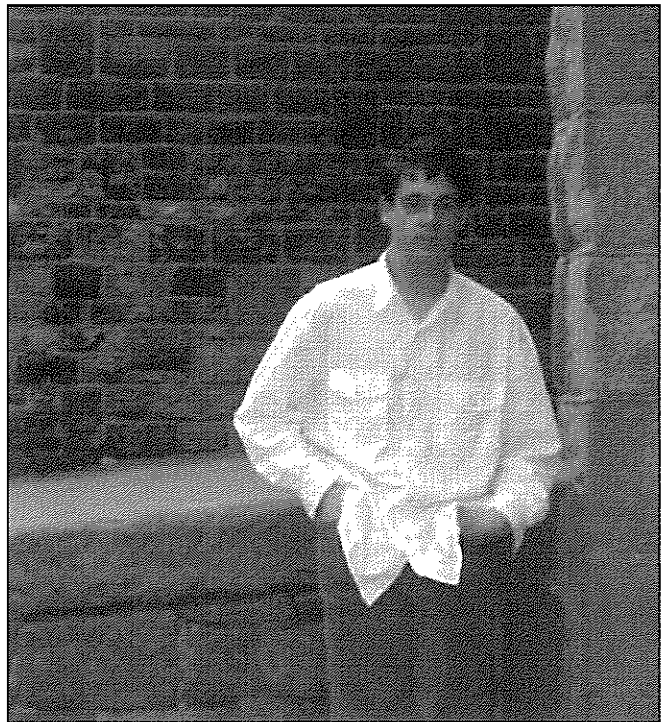
David Hague

DAVID HAGUE was an English student at Lancaster University. Originally from East Yorkshire, he was a big cricket fan. David was thought of by many people as a quiet person and a bit of a loner, but his partner Ginny Hall and his close friends knew him as quite a talker at times, with a sense of humour and a lot of conviction.

David was an active socialist who was involved in his local Labour Party and Young Labour Group.

Particularly angered by poverty and unemployment, David thought of himself as a revolutionary. David had written a poem about the docks near where he lived.

The poem is printed below.



David Hague

Dockland

By David Hague.

A dawn mist clogs the estuary and town
Where seven miles of solid, working docks
Provide the link from Yorkshire's heartland strength
To all the world beyond the bleak North Sea.
And through the fog, the ocean behemoths come,
From distant lands enriched with trade and wait
For swarming wonders, stark against the wharf
To sell their brawn in cargo-humping toil,
Day-long with curses, laughs and hardy risk,
The lucky ones, the young, the fit, the strong;
Some several thousand work the waterfront,
Returning nightly, sweat-drenched with sweated pay.

Those seven miles of working dock have gone,
Reduced and measured now in metric feet;
The one hundred and twenty-two above.
In books and film and dead museum piece
They live, their awesome industry a pride.
But I can take you there and show you round,
And show you where the docks are buried now;
The first is filled and flowers pretty bloom,
A garden where the students laze for lunch,
And old folks feed the pigeons and the gulls;
The gulls that might have wheeled about the ships,
Entranced by sound and smell of sea and cargoes rich.

And further down the line, the trawlers came,
With gluttoned holds from distant ragged seas;
From Labrador and Davis Strait out west,

To Bering's and the White Sea's eastern grounds,
The hoary waters, dangerous in flow;
Recall these names that sleep beneath the waves:
Roderigo, Gaul, Lorella "with all hands";
Bold men who braved the ocean's chilly keep,
And nameless now in history books; the dock
Is filled (though sinking fast) and built on now;
MacDonalds, Megabowl and U.C.I.
Stand glowing scornfully above the brooding flow.

And every night, the town's new prize is thick
With clean-cut kids from clean-cut bourgeois homes
Who spread their youth and parents' cash with joy
And ignorance of those who went before,
And those who share this town — the unseen life
Of council flat and bleak estate; the sons
of trawler-man and docker, driven out,
Their heritage sold out for progress' sake.
Each night against the bars, they drink their dole,
And fight and curse and mock their own small dreams
Reflected in the mirror of their friends;
Dreams of yesterday, and nightmares of tomorrow.

Tell me; when labour's all you've got to sell,
But no-one wants to buy — what happens then?
Five hundred years a port; what happens now,
What future for this town without the docks?
Read the crime statistics; the answer's there.
Or brace it in the unemployment graphs;
The answer's all around;
In shop-fronts boarded-up, in begging kids
Beside the shiny shopping malls; the sop
To ease the dying pains of this sad town.
Five hundred years a mighty port and proud,
Reduced to my pathetic, angry sixty lines.

April 1995.

The struggle for socialism does not die

WE LIVE in a world of enormous, apparently random, cruelty and misery — mass starvation amidst plenty, wars like in Bosnia and the Gulf, homelessness, unemployment, discrimination, loneliness.

We are socialists, advocates of working-class democracy and common ownership of the means of production, because we understand that the cruelty and misery are not random. They have a pattern. They are shaped by the central cruelty of capitalism — the reduction of human creativity to a commodity, labour-power, to be hired and exploited, or shelved, for the sole purpose of the profit and greed of the rich.

Because we understand that, we can do something about the cruelty. Through fighting for reforms, we can limit it even under capitalism. Through a socialist revolution, we can undercut it at the roots, and create a society based on free, equal, rational cooperation.

Yet the random remains. The deaths of Jo Walker and David Hague in an accident are more painful for us, their comrades and friends, than would be deaths in a class struggle, of which the revolutionary working-class movement has suffered and suffers so many world-wide. We make our best efforts to give shape and purpose to our lives; accident leaves jagged holes that can never be filled.

The conventional secular creeds of Tory Britain — work hard, exploit hard, play hard — have nothing to say about life and death. If conventional bourgeois secular thought has anything to offer here, it can only be the thought Voltaire gives to *Candide* at the end of his philosophical novel: "We must cultivate our garden".

Find a comfortable corner; work hard; look after yourself and those close to you; keep your head down — that is the wisdom. For better-off workers in a country like Britain, with some job security, it is still possible to live by it. But what when accidents destroy such plans and expose their shallowness? To live only day to day, enjoying the moment, is shallow because we know that society dominates individual lives, and society is what we, humankind, collectively make it. The collective product of millions all cultivating their own gardens is capitalism — a savage social jungle.

Even in Britain today, where few people believe in Heaven and Hell, or are systematically religious, religion dominates mainstream thought about death. The plain truth that human activity makes society and different human activity can remake it is put aside by conventional secular thought when it looks to the "hidden hand" of the market instead. Religion looks to the mysterious "hidden hand" of God to put right obvious evil.

"In the midst of life", it tells us, "we are

in death... Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery". We must spend our lives trying to placate the mean and vindictive imaginary father-figure, God, who brings these cruelties down on us.

The root of religion is fear and ignorance, the collapse into feeling that all ordinary human efforts are ineffective against mysterious higher powers. The scientific knowledge of nature has cut away part of that root. Knowledge of society and history — how people have changed society in the past, and how we can change it now — cuts away more. But to stand firm against all blows, even those where science tells us essentially nothing more than that they are accidents, calls for something more than book-learning.

It calls for the revolutionary spirit expressed in the defiant declaration of Eugen Leviné, leader of the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic of 1919, to the counter-revolutionary court which put him to death: "We communists are all dead people on leave".

We live in a mean, hostile society. Life is short and fragile. It could have been any one of us who died by accident on our way home from the Workers' Liberty summer school.

But as revolutionaries we live our lives so that every day's effort lives on as part of a struggle and a movement that continues after us — the struggle for a society organised around human equality, solidarity, and cooperation, without exploitation, poverty, and wars.

This way of life cannot bring us the spurious peace of bourgeois contentment or religious consolation. When Karl Marx wrote, in his criticism of religion, "Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain not so that people will wear the chain without fantasy or consolation,

but so that they will shake off the chain and cull the living flower" — he could have added that the living flower, unlike the imaginary one, is subject to accident, disease, and death.

Not spurious peace of mind, but the self-respect of knowing that, in fighting to help humanity raise itself out of subjection to blind economic forces, we also use to the best our individual human ability to raise ourselves from religious self-abasement or bourgeois cash-grubbing and domesticity — that is what the revolutionary movement offers us.

Today in Britain revolutionaries face not the firing squads which killed Eugen Leviné, but the milder repression of a great barrage of ideas on the theme that socialism is a dead, irrelevant utopia. For a young person to commit themselves to revolutionary politics — as Jo Walker did — or even to become interested, as David Hague did, is nonetheless harder than in Leviné's day. To defy derision and contempt, when our movement is weak and our everyday activities are humdrum, can be harder than defying firing squads when we see great successes near at hand.

Yet Jo committed herself, and David had started looking at our ideas. No-one can make good the loss of their lives. No-one can live their destroyed lives for them; only a few of us can help their close friends and comrades with personal support and friendship; and even that help is only a makeshift. What we can do is continue our movement in such a way as to vindicate the commitment and interest which they put into it.

The revolutionary socialist movement is two hundred years old this year. In 1795 Gracchus Babeuf organised his "Conspiracy of Equals" to try to bring real equality to the French revolutionary republic through a new overturn instituting common ownership. A revolutionary socialist movement has existed ever since then, in the form of conspiratorial secret societies (as in the age before Marx and Engels), big workers' parties, or small ideological factions like our Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

The movement is the product of the thoughts and actions of many thousands of revolutionaries, striving against the pressures of their environment, their education, and, often, material hardship. It has faced a rich, strong, resilient enemy — the capitalist class — and so far has been unable to seize and hold securely the openings given to us by spontaneous revolutionary upheavals. What we can do in future opportunities depends in large part on what we do now to prepare.

We can best serve the memory of Jo and David by continuing our work for working-class liberation with greater energy and tenacity.

"Our dearest possession is life, and since it is given to us to live but once, we must so live as to feel no torturing regrets for years without purpose; so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past; so live, that dying we can say: 'all my life and all my strength were given to the finest cause in the world — the liberation of humankind!'"