



Bob Crow: 1961-2014

Best tribute is to fight on



Bob Crow speaking at one of the Socialist Party's Socialism weekends

"Members of the RMT loved him as a man who rebuilt our union along with other activists into a fighting trade union which was never on its knees and was prepared to fight and strike if necessary for our members.

He believed in building a socialist alternative to Labour and helped to initiate the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

"Bob was also closely involved in initiating the National Shop Stewards Network in an attempt to rebuild the left fighting traditions of the trade union movement.

"Our task is to honour our fallen brother by building the trade union and socialist movement.

Bob's 'old fashioned' brand of socialism and trade union militancy has been a resounding success resulting in thousands of our members receiving decent pay and conditions."

John Reid, RMT London Transport regional council president and National Shop Stewards Network

Eighth Annual NSSN Conference

5 July 2014

Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL

www.shopstewards.net

Bob Crow was an inspirational union leader who tenaciously defended his members' jobs, pay and conditions - head and shoulders above most other union leaders.

Bob also recognised, well before most other union leaders, that the overlapping austerity agenda of the big parties meant working people have to start again and build anew.

As part of his legacy on May 22nd, TUSC (the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition) will stand the largest number of left of Labour candidates seen in this country for over 60 years.

Dave Nellist, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition national chair

"Demonised in life by the right-wing media, in death his qualities as a fighter for his members are now given massive coverage.

"He showed that by firm leadership the decline in trade union membership could be reversed. Thousands of new members were attracted to a union that would fight on their behalf.

"Bob displayed courageous and implacable opposition to the cuts policies of the Con-Dem government. He recognised that the Labour Party embraced policies little different from the Con-Dems and no longer

represented the interests of the working class. He failed to understand why so few Labour councillors voted against Con-Dem cuts.

"Bob advocated the creation of a new mass party of the working class which he recognised was essential if workers were to have effective political representation.

"That's why he championed the formation of the electoral alliance the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC)."

Tony Mulhearn, Liverpool 47 and Socialist Party



www.tusc.org.uk

These are excerpts of tributes.

See www.socialistparty.org.uk and www.tusc.org.uk for full tributes

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Bob Crow - an uncompromising fighter for the working class

The Socialist Party is shocked and deeply saddened to hear of the death of Bob Crow, general secretary of the Rail Maritime and Transport union (RMT). The response to his death already once again confirms the major impact he had as a trade union leader - undoubtedly one of the best known, for his steadfast approach to standing up for his members.

Our thoughts are with his family. We also send solidarity to the RMT.

Bob Crow was a constant fighter for the working class and a champion of many important causes. The right-wing press tried to present him as a 'dinosaur' and a 'union baron' - but workers saw him as a hero because he frightened the bosses and under his leadership, as deputy general secretary and then general secretary, the RMT showed many times that the employers could be beaten.

The most recent example was the RMT's February strike on London Underground. It was a beacon for workers suffering under Con-Dem austerity and fearing a precarious future. Every attempt was made to undermine the union and to ridicule Bob - but the public support proved that a determined approach to defending jobs and workers' rights is hugely popular.

The RMT took the battle to London Tory mayor Boris Johnson. Even the capitalist press acknowledged that the union forced an utterly arrogant and intransigent Johnson to the negotiating table against his will. That battle must be continued to a victory for the RMT against ticket office closures and job losses.

Bob's approach to building resistance was reflected in the RMT's founding of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) to give trade unionists a body to fight for action against all the attacks raining down from pro-capitalist governments. Under his leadership the RMT was a tireless and almost peerless defender of trade unions rights alongside unions such as the PCS and the POA prison officers' union.

Political representation

As well as being a leader on the industrial plane, Bob Crow gave unremitting support to the battle for a political voice for the work-



Bob Crow speaking at the TUSC election campaign launch for the 2012 London elections
photo Paul Mattsson

ing class. The leading position the RMT plays in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) and in 'No2EU - Yes to workers' rights' is a very important step in that campaign.

Socialist Party members have worked with Bob in the RMT, in TUSC, and in the NSSN, especially around the demand for the TUC to call a 24-hour general strike against austerity. For his role in all of this and more, his death represents a huge loss.

Bob Crow always defended socialism as the necessary alternative to the rotten capitalist system. We often shared a platform with him, and he spoke at our Socialist Party annual 'Socialism' events on a number of occasions - including last November - receiving many ovations for his tenacious stance.

Bob's passing will be a major blow to RMT

members, among whom he had enormous respect and support for his uncompromising position to fight in their interests. When they come to the democratic process of electing a new leader we hope they choose someone who will honour Bob's memory by being a fighter for the working class, for socialism and for international solidarity, as Bob was.

Bob Crow's death will be a shock also to the wider working class. It is fair to say that if the trade union leadership was made up of fighters like Bob, or like Mark Serwotka and the left socialist leadership in the PCS, the battle to stop the cuts and kick out the Con-Dems would be in a much advanced state. But in his passing, Bob Crow also reminds us of the strength of the British working class to produce such fighters. He will be greatly missed, but we will fight on.

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