

Dear Comrades,

Our dear friend and comrade David M Rothery died in early May after being taken suddenly ill.

David was a passionate internationalist, a life-long socialist and a true friend. David served as a member of Labour International's Executive, the LICC and was the Treasurer of Labour International.

Our thoughts are with him, his family and his daughters. We miss you loads, you are irreplaceable, dear friend.

Colin O Driscoll, on behalf of the LICC

David Rothery's sudden and very untimely passing has sent shock-waves in many parts of the world, testifying to his extraordinary reach and to the breadth of the friendships he made. I first met Dave in the early 1980s, when we were at the University of East Anglia. He immediately struck me as a being a big man with a big heart. Robert Moreland, another friend recalls Dave as a 'gentle giant' and a proud Yorkshire man who loved his rugby league and of course a drink or two. Robert also recalls that he was a CB radio enthusiast and happily communicated with people wherever he found them. I remember him for his solid support for the Labour Party and since he was a little older than many of the other under-graduates, a patient font of wisdom in meetings of UEA Labour Club. He played a particularly active role during the bitter 1984-85 miners strike, and was always there for the striking miners of Ollerton in Nottinghamshire -- the then pit village that Norwich had twinned itself with. Dave helped collect food and deliver it to the soup kitchens in our weekly convoys from Norwich. In the years since, I had lost touch with him, but last year, Ian Williams, the Chair of the New York Labour Party Branch said that he had been in touch with a 'Dave Rothery who lives and works in Germany'. Ian immediately became a Dave Rothery fan: 'I knew that he was a good-un from the get-go", Ian told me. And as a result, I was re-connected with Dave, who was as a enthusiastic and supportive of the Labour Party as he had been all of those years ago. He had also become involved with Momentum and had been gearing up to do what he could to support Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party in the General Election. To Dave's family, heartfelt

thoughts and condolences from all of his old friends and comrades from Norwich days.'

Mark Seddon (Mark is a former editor of *Tribune* and of the NEC)

As followers of this page (<https://www.facebook.com/BritishMigrantsInEurope/>) will now be aware, its creator, David Rothery, has passed away. As David seems to have given me admin rights, I thought I'd share a few thoughts about David and his relationship to this page.

The idea for the page was first mooted at a meeting of Labour Party members in Cologne, north-west Germany. From the very beginning, David was adamant that this should not be a party-political tool, but a resource for all British migrants in Europe, irrespective of who they voted for. Everything you need to know about David - his kindness, his modesty, his sense of solidarity and his passionate belief that all humans are equal - can be read in the mission statement pinned to the top of this page.

David first "went to Europe" at the age of 28, having grown up in a time and place where summer holidays meant catching a bus to Blackpool with the rest of your neighbours. It took him, he said, "all of five minutes" to realise that "they [continental Europeans] were just the same as us". From that moment on he was hooked: he used his holidays to explore different European countries, eventually changing his career so that he could make his home on the continent. Of his last home, Germany, David said: "this is the fairest place I've ever lived."

Despite his love of "abroad", David retained deep links with his friends and family back home and cared desperately about the fate of his home country. He was also a life-long socialist: both by instinct, and political conviction. Recently, David was elected to the Labour International Coordinating committee, where he was working to support Jeremy Corbyn's bid to become Prime Minister.

Generous to the core, David was deeply dismayed by the division and anger caused by austerity, Brexit and the dismantling of the NHS. "I've got to do my bit", he said. This page was a major part of that.

Our thoughts are with David's family - particularly his two children, of whom he was extremely proud.

Kate (Kate is a member of Labour International, North Rhine Westphalia and one of the administrators of the 'British Migrants in Europe' Facebook page, set up by David.)

I first met David last year at a Labour International event in Wiesbaden. When we discovered that we lived just a short journey away from each other, he enthusiastically jumped on the idea of setting up a Labour group in our part of Germany.

Without him, we'd have never got off the ground. He immediately recruited two fellow-members from his workplace, and arranged rooms for our meetings. He wasn't just there at every meeting, every demo - he was the first to arrive. At our very first meet, we all went to the cinema to see the film 'I, Daniel Blake'. After, the rest of us shuffled out. Not David - he'd made and printed out his own Labour leaflets to hand out to the audience as they left.

For David, socialism wasn't just an idea, not just a position. It was a fundamental part of his identity, a basic ethical attitude. Unlike many on the left, he was very open about the intersection between his politics and his faith. As he put it, the Christian values of the Gospel were those of British Labour movement. As a member of Momentum, his reaction to allegations that the organisation was a vehicle for Trotskyite entryists was typically forthright. **I - AM - A - DEMOCRATIC - SOCIALIST!**

And that was that. It was a statement of who he was.

David's greatest praise was always 'she (or he) - is really solid'. He valued consistency, reliability, loyalty - and embodied them himself, more than any other. When nominations opened for the Labour International coordinating committee, I couldn't think of a better person to stand.

His response was typically modest - only if you can't find someone better. He wasn't bothered about titles or posts - but what was best for Labour. When talk turned to how much time candidates would need to dedicate to the job if elected, David was forthright as ever: However much is needed. - 10 hours a week? I asked him. - Minimum! he answered, shocked at such a low number. I was genuinely delighted when he was elected. Because if David took on responsibility for something, you knew it was taken care of.

As such, it's perhaps typical that I only found out he was ill when he called me from hospital - not to tell me that he was sick, but to ask me to tell his fellow committee members from Labour International that he wouldn't be able to post some documents until he was out again.

He never once mentioned he was in intensive care. I texted him a couple of times, said I'd pop round the following week to visit. - That'd be nice, he texted back. From what I understand now, he must have been going through a pretty terrible time. David wasn't one to moan.

The day I was due to visit him, I'd been expecting a text back confirming he was still in hospital. I thought at first he must have been discharged.

Even now, I see his photo on our Facebook page and still can't believe he's gone.

David knew where he stood, and was proud of the the ideals he stood for: proud to be European, proud to be a democrat, proud to be a Methodist, proud to be socialist and proud to be Labour. More than anything, he was proud of his kids.

And we should be proud of him.

Because David - was really solid.

Steve Hudson (Steve is a member of Labour International, North Rhine Westphalia)

