

The sudden death of Richard 'Bruno' Brown in early July came as a visceral shock to all who knew him. If we all lived more than 100 years we could not cram as much into our lives as did Richard, who embraced politics, theatre, music and consultancy - all equally successfully and simultaneously! Those of us in Labour International who have worked with him are finding it hard to adjust to the loss of a comrade so reliable, authoritative, indefatigable and caring. We were indeed fortunate to receive the support of a man steeped in internationalism, agriculture, international supply chains, pesticide safety and the renowned WHO, whose performance skills doubtless came to his aid when addressing trade union audiences. It is so difficult to imagine LI without him.



Chair of the Germany and Switzerland branch, its representative on General and Executive Constituency Committees and invaluable member of working groups on Climate Change, he guided newcomers and working groups alike. In the inaugural year of 'UK to Zero', the Industry and the GND Working Group, he was ever present, offering advice or just reassuringly 'being there' in the wings. But his LI home was in LI for a GND Campaign Group, where he worked tirelessly to champion the principles of internationalism and climate justice within the party and beyond.

In the work he was doing when his life was so tragically cut short, Richard had been working closely with the General Secretary of the BAFWU, on a project to root ideas of climate justice in the union's approach to agricultural supply chains, authoring a report for them which is out this summer. Richard unhesitatingly took LI into the trade union arena hoping to secure support for climate justice supply chain campaigns. It is only to be hoped that LI GND groups will each in their way take this legacy on board and sustain the initiative in his stead.

Growing up in Norfolk, Richard was deeply influenced by two youthful summers spent working on local farms. He studied for a BSc at Sheffield in 1987-1990, staying on to gain a PhD in Pesticides. This led him into consultancy work, through which in 2020 and 2021 he participated in the 13th and 14th FAO/WHO joint meetings on pesticide management, presenting reports in his capacity as a Technical Officer with the World Health Organization (WHO), where he worked in the Chemical Safety and Health Unit in WHO Headquarters in Geneva, providing professional experience in toxicology, pesticide regulation and chemical risk assessment. He also participated as an observer in these

meetings – both as Carabid Life Science Consultancy’s Chief Consultant, and as a representative of the innovative Crop Life International. (He planned to dedicate 2023 to work on Agriculture.)

Richard had made his home in Basel, where he maintained an enthusiastic parallel existence at the heart of the theatre community. Co-founder of The Boutique Theatre in Basel, whose mission was simply ‘to do good work’, he was also Director of the English Pantomime Company, that performed annual pantos at Christmas. This company supported Starhe Girls Centre, an educational charity for young girls in Kenya. Richard was also a long-term member and former president of The Semi-Circle Basel, a “modern amateur theatrical community for actors, directors, stage managers, crew and more!” They recall how he brought out the best in cast and crew and was unafraid of challenging the status quo. Performer as well as director and sometime theatre manager, ‘Bruno Brown’, as his email address referred to him, once played Poppa the Bear! And just for extras, bass guitar too, in several Basel region bands. Reading the tributes from people who knew Richard in his life outside of politics, it becomes clear that he was valued for the same qualities that made him so special to us in LI: reliability, trustworthiness, kindness and knowledgeability.

One of the last recordings of Richard is from a meeting in which, in collaboration with Sarah Wooley of the BAFWU, he set out his vision for tackling climate injustice in supply chains. He concludes the meeting by reminding us that however much power big capital wields, we nonetheless “have our hands on several levers ... now each one of these levers is relatively small, but if we co-ordinate to pull them all together then we can start to make things move. So I think networking is incredibly important.” LIGND and the UK2Zero group will remember these words as we work to carry Richard’s legacy forwards.