

# Y Fanner Goch



UNISON Newsletter for Merthyr Rising 2017

- CwmTaf Local Government Area Branch
- University of South Wales Branch
- Cwm Taf Health Branch

UNISON  
Public Services Union

# Merthyr Rising 2017



*The Sandinistas performing for UNISON Young Members*

Special Edition UNISON Newsletter for

## Merthyr Rising 2017

The festival of music, arts and ideas, celebrating the history of radicalism and resistance at the birthplace of the Red flag, Merthyr Tydfil, 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

**Pretty Vicious / Stereo MCs / Alabama 3**  
Music, comedy, politics, cinema and more



# Keeping the Red Flag Flying



*UNISON activists keeping the Red Flag Flying in Merthyr Tydfil*

**The South Wales valleys have been in decline for several decades now. Walking through the valleys today you would be forgiven for not realising they were once the beating heart of the global industrial revolution.**

Coal from the Rhondda powered ships to steam their way all over the world. When they got there they weighed anchor with giant chains forged in Pontypridd. Cargo would then be loaded onto steam trains, invented in Merthyr, running on track, forged in Blaenavon.

Coal and steel resulted in incredible wealth for the iron masters and pit owners - extracted from the blood sweat and tears of the downtrodden workforce.

Perhaps it was therefore inevitable that the area would also become a hotbed of radical working class politics. Fighting against oppressive working conditions and pay, workers rose up against their employers in a series of disputes, culminating in the Merthyr Rising in May 1831, when the red flag was flown as a symbol of protest for the first time anywhere in the world. Demanding the right to vote, Chartists marched on Newport in 1839, resulting in two dozen shot dead by troops. Even in the twentieth century, Winston Churchill had to send troops in to quell rioters in Tonypandy in 1911, again fighting for better working conditions.

This constant ferment also led to the valleys being at the heart of the organised labour movement. Merthyr Tydfil elected the first ever Labour Party MP, Keir Hardy, in 1900. Tredegar lad Nye Bevan gave birth to the NHS in 1948 and the valleys gave us two leaders of the Labour Party, Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock.

This legacy is something trade unionists in South Wales are proud of. When UNISON was given an opportunity to sponsor the Merthyr Rising Festival, commemorating the 1831 rising, it did not hesitate.

Merthyr Rising is a festival of music, arts and ideas celebrating the history of radicalism and resistance at the birthplace of the Red flag, Merthyr Tydfil from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Pete 'the punk' Crews, UNISON Regional Convenor said: "It was perfect for UNISON, we are about much more than just representing individuals at work, we are about members families and communities. So this community event, mixing politics, music and entertainment for families is the perfect scenario for us".

Festival Director Lynn Williams is grateful for UNISON's support: "The event simply would not be going ahead without the support of UNISON. Simple as that. Last year we came up against it with funding. UNISON came to our rescue and I think we have formed quite a strong relationship with them, both parties being able to see the potential benefits to the community of the festival. UNISON's involvement gives us stability and I hope this will continue going forward".

Last year, the event was sponsored by Cwm Taf Local Government Area branch of UNISON. This year, South Wales University and Cwm Taf Health branches of UNISON were keen to join in, resulting in a joint sponsorship deal for 2017.

Mike 'the mod' Crimmings, Cwm Taf Local Government Area Branch Assistant Secretary stated; "We feel that the cause that those brave men and women were fighting for almost two hundred years ago still goes on and UNISON are still fighting for workers rights and will continue and we will keep that tradition going".

## **Branch websites**

<http://unisoncwmtaflocalgov.wales/>

<https://unisonuswgroup.org.uk/>

<http://unisoncwmtaf.com/>

# Alabama Three

## Larry's coming home

The Merthyr Rising will be something of a homecoming gig for the Alabama Three – or at least for their singer, Larry Love. Despite the name, there are eight of them and they aint from Alabama. Larry Love, AKA Rob Spragg, is a Merthyr Tydfil lad, so he felt perfectly at home when we met up in a Newport pub a while back.

How long is it since Rob left the land of song? “I left about thirty years ago, I come from a family of Mormons and I am the only one that has rejected the way of the lord. I met the devil one night down at the crossroads, up in Blaina, I sold my soul and that was it, rock ‘n roll here we go”.

The Alabama Three sounds more like a trio of guys locked up in some dirty Deep South penitentiary for a crime they did not commit, than eight guys from Brixton. “Yeah, you’re right, I knew about the Alabama Two, here were two black guys that were wrongfully convicted of raping a white woman in the thirties, then ya got ya Birmingham Six and Guilford Four. Add to that the fact that I am a Welshman, so rather than play America under the ‘Brit Pop’ banner and talk with a Welsh accent we pretend we are from Alabama just to cheese everyone off”.

With the massive success of the Sopranos, there can be few in the English speaking TV watching world that have not at some point heard ‘Woke Up This Morning’, even if they do not know who recorded it. Some bands would milk this, some would find it a millstone around their neck, The Alabama Three take it in their stride. “Well, we were having trouble getting marketed because we were getting accused on the radio of being drug dealers and all sorts.

But the Sopranos was one of the best TV programmes to come out of America for years, so people aint so scared of us now”.

“It is ironic that the theme tune is by a band that is only pretending to be from Alabama, with a singer from Merthyr Tydfil. We have also been on the Simpson’s. Now the Simpson’s and the Sopranos are the two best examples of American families I can think of, it’s nice to be associated with both of them”.

With a dozen studio albums under their belts, their music has been used in movies, TV shows and video games, but they do not rest on their laurels. They have built a massive reputation on the festival and club circuit that is due entirely to the depth and quality of their catalogue and live performances. The Sopranos is just a footnote in the Alabama Three story.

Over the years the Alabama Three have worked with a number of rebels and outlaws. “The famous Howard Marks, Paddy Hill, Bruce Reynolds, half the Hells Angels in the country,” Larry tries to rattle off a roll call of some of the infamous names that have served time in the Alabama Three.

“Bob Dylan said ‘to live outside the law you must be honest’ and sorry, but we are here to stir things up, musicians have always had that role, we get away with murder, with songs you have a little bit of leeway to say things others might not get away with and I like to think we do”.

Resistance and rebellion are one thing, but there is a fine line to be drawn between working class heroes and villains. “There is a certain amount of valid criticism of us for glamorising so called violent people”, Larry accepts, “but one thing I know about Bruce Rey-

nolds, who has not been involved in criminal activity for many years - is that he is old skool, a gentleman, he is a really intelligent man and me and him really got on. The reason he robbed the Brighton train was because after all the war years and poverty; he had been brought up with movies with cowboys robbing trains and he thought to himself ‘that’s never been done in this country’, so he read up on all the Jessie James stories and it was executed like a military operation. So yeah, he was a real outlaw, but he has a certain dignity about him. With all the liars in our government, who are the criminals?”

Clearly The Alabama Three have an underlying political edge, from the subtle, and sometime not so subtle lyrics, to appearing at events like the pro-cannabis event ‘J-Day’ and anti death penalty gigs. “We are political but the main job of a Saturday night band is to get the ladies arses moving left to right and the gangsters at the back feeling alright, all night. In the process of getting the ladies to move their arses if you can mention things like ‘do you remember the miners strike’ and remind people, you can have a political conscience without being like these posturing pop stars who just make themselves look a bit weak”.

“I would rather ask questions and let people find the answers themselves, than preach to them as if I have all the answers. We respect the audience”.

So on Sunday night, we will have an old Merthyr Lad on stage, getting you swinging and sticking to fingers up to the establishment. What more could we ask for?

*(The original, unedited version of this interview first appeared on [www.peppermintiguana.co.uk](http://www.peppermintiguana.co.uk))*

# The only good system is a sound system

Mixing music and politics



Cosmo, Playing to a crowd of 80,000 at TUC Demo

*Clash* at the Rock Against Racism gig in London's Victoria Park and not come away inspired to tackle racism head on?

From Woody Guthrie to The Sleaford Mods, musicians have always put conscious lyrics together with catchy rhythms to create beats for heads hearts and feet.

Music is blind and can be enjoyed by everyone, no matter the colour of your skin. Many of the most enduring musical styles have their origins in black communities but are enjoyed by white people. Blues, reggae, jazz and soul for instance. Perhaps this goes some way to explaining why anti-racism and anti-fascism has been one of the most enduring themes of political music.

Formed at a time when the likes of the National Front were taking their racist neo-nazi message to the ballot box and to the streets, Rock Against Racism was an antidote to hate and division.

The country was already in turmoil in August 1976, when Eric Clapton, a man who had made a name playing his version of black music, including a cover version of Bob Marley's 'I Shot the Sheriff', spouted a racist rant from the stage in Birmingham. His bigging up of the infamous Enoch Powell was the final straw. A small group of music loving political activists got together to write to the *New Musical Express* declaring their outrage at Clapton and calling out for musicians to join them to form Rock Against Racism.

The rest is history. From 1976 till 1982, RAR put on gigs all over the country with the likes of Misty in Roots, the Clash and The Ruts. RAR spread the word of the evils of the far right, empowered many music lovers and got them thinking about the bigger picture. Together with the original Anti-Nazi

**Music has been a cultural expression since the first Neanderthal discovered that you could get a groovy beat from banging a bone on a hollow log. Since then it has provided the soundtrack to everything, from weddings, to funerals; from making love to going to war; from selling cars to saving the rain forest. And politics.**

Yes, the main aim of music is to get your feet moving and your heart beating, but there is no reason why it can't get your head thinking as well.

A song called 'Stand Down Margaret' could have slipped off into obscurity if *The Beat* had not given it such a catchy hook to hang on. Whilst most of us realise that war is a bad thing, if *Edwin Starr* had not asked us in such a funky way, millions of hip young groovers might not have started asking themselves what war is actually good for. And whilst most of us realise that it's a dog eat dog world with a 'them' and 'us', without *Billy Bragg* asking us, many of us might not have realised we have to decide 'which side we are on'.

Okay. Thought provoking

lyrics with a catchy beat. So what? Music can't change the world. Well, perhaps not, but it is possible for a song to change someone's life and if enough people change the way they think, movements can grow and the course of history can be given a nudge in the right direction.

*The Specials* did not single handedly 'Free Nelson Mandela', but there is no doubt they raised the profile of the struggle and played a part in the end of South African Apartheid.

For many reggae is just a soundtrack for a good time, but reggae was, and in many ways still is, the voice of the oppressed. Reggae went a long way to uniting the different factions in Jamaica in the seventies. Here in the UK, who could have heard *Bob Marley* sing, 'Get Up, Stand Up for your Rights', without at least thinking about what our rights are?

Punk rock may have been a three chord noise to some but it was one of the few things that managed to cross the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland; it brought catholic and protestant kids together without shooting each other. And who could have gone to see *The*

League RAR was a major factor in the decline of the Far Right threat of the day.

Although RAR folded in 1982, its spirit was revived to fight new threats from the far right with the formation of Love Music Hate Racism in 2002.

The Right Wing are also aware of the power of music with organisations such as Blood and Honour and Rock Against Communism being the major source of funding for some of the nastiest of the far right groups.

A lot of political music can find itself ghettoised and ignored by the mainstream, but there are several examples of mainstream artists making a stand and raising awareness of causes that might otherwise have been ignored; such as Lady Gaga at the Super Bowl and The Beatles at the Royal Command Performance. And whilst Frankie Goes to Hollywood and Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark are remembered as 1980s good time dance acts, with 'Two Tribes' and 'Enola Gay' respectively, we had warnings about nuclear war topping the charts.

Whilst getting a big audience can increase the awareness of a cause, support from the music industry can be a double edged sword. They call it an industry because that it was it is, a system set up to make a profit from a commodity. The big record labels have a nasty habit of signing bands they don't understand and sanitising them to the point they become a shadow of their former radical selves. Who can forget Chumbawamba's disastrous flirtation with EMI.

In the case of 1980's rave a whole scene was colonised. One minute raves were non-commercial spaces for free thinkers, the next they were super clubs that charged an arm and a leg to get in.

Capitalism did not colonise rave culture on its own though. The idea of people having a party in the open air for free was considered such a threat the government

brought in legislation. Section 63 (1)(b) of the 1994 Criminal Justice Act ridiculously gives police officers the power to remove people from events at which music "wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats" is being played.

In a classic example of the law of unintended consequences, this attempt to legislate against music saw the radicalisation of a whole generation of the 'cheesy quavers' that would otherwise have been happy throwing shapes, gurning and wearing dodgy flares. Alliances were formed between bands of outlaws such as ravers, travellers and environmental protestors. Camps opposing major road projects became cool places to be and through Reclaim The Streets dance music became a tool to protest about environmental damage, with huge flash raves blocking off major roads in London and elsewhere.

Road protests and RTS parties were pivotal in a massive reduction in the building of major road schemes. But while ravers were mixing with environmentalists and anarchists at these protests, they were being exposed to other progressive ideas and many have gone on to other political activities, such as the Occupy movement and UK Uncut, which have been fighting Austerity in recent years.

Recent proposals to develop Womanby Street in Cardiff have threatened many of the music venues in the street and thousands of young music lovers have turned to politics to save the street. The Full Moon has been re-opened as a workers co-operative and local politicians have been drafted in to support the campaign, including a march on City Hall that dwarfed the traditional trade union May Day rally this year.

It is often claimed that 'young people are not interested in politics'. But the truth is, they are just disillusioned by mainstream politics. Music is one way that young people can express their political voice and political activists are waking up to the idea that music can be a way with engaging with young people.

In recent years UNISON in Wales has held several events mixing music and politics, including RCT branch releasing an anti-war CD and a tour to go with it; Captain Ska playing a birthday party for the NHS and in May this year a Young Members Charter was launched with a gig by The Sandinistas.

Merthyr Rising does not aim to indoctrinate anyone, but through its mixing music and politics, some of those attending will be exposed to progressive ideas and may take home more than just memories of dancing in the open air.



*Local MPs join fight for the right to party*

**26 - 28  
MAY 2017**

**PENDERYN SQUARE  
MERTHYR TYDFIL**

# MERTHYR RISING 2017

Sponsored by UNISON

- CwmTaf Local Government Area Branch
- University of South Wales Branch
- Cwm Taf Health Branch

**UNISON**  
Public Services Union

# Put on your dancing shoes

**FRIDAY 26<sup>th</sup> MAY**

15:00- 22:00

**Pretty Vicious + Guests**

Pretty Vicious take stage at 6:30pm

**SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MAY**

12:00 noon till 22:00

The Contrast  
Chapel Row  
Thee Faction  
Chris King  
Digital Criminals  
Dole Age  
Upbeat Sneakers  
Florence Black  
Sandinistas

**Stereo MCs**

**SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup> MAY**

12:00 noon till 22:00

Homegrown  
Fire Road  
Tracey Island  
Adrenaline Animals  
Plasterscene  
Ed Tenpole Tudor and Agent 13  
Moon Birds  
Buck and Evans

**Alabama 3**

**PLUS: Local Craft Ales / Local Street Food Stalls / Camping + more**

**Weekend Pass £20**

**Daily Pass £12.50**

Tickets, updates and general info

**www.merthyrrising.uk**

To listen to an interview with Directors of the festival and to hear many of the bands playing, go to <http://peppermintiguana.co.uk/merthyrrising/> - the radio show sponsored by Cwm Taf Local Government UNISON

# Feed Your Head

Debates, walks, talks, comedy and theatre - all in THE RED HOUSE (unless stated otherwise)

## FRIDAY 26<sup>th</sup> MAY

- **12:30 - 13:30 CUBA. WHAT NEXT?** The Cuban Ambassador to the UK Her Excellency Teresita Vicente Sotolongo discusses the future of Cuba since the death of Fidel Castro and the election of Donald Trump.
- **16:00 - 16:45 MERTHYR AND IMMIGRATION:** Lesley Hodgson (Chair), Shavanah Taj (PCS), Amarjit Singh (CWU), Sian Louis Sanders (WRC), Huw Williams (Aber Arts), Eleri Williams (City of Sanctuary)
- **17:15 - 18:00 THE MERTHYR RISING OPENING CEREMONY 2017** with Roger McKenzie
- **19:30 - 22:00 BREATHE** - A play by Anthony Bunko
- **19:30 - 20:30 JOHN MCDONNELL** – Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer – speaking in Castle Hotel

## SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MAY

- **10:00 - 11:00 THE DIC PENDERYN TRAIL (Starts from Redhouse):** Discover the history and stories of Merthyr Tydfil's past with local historian Viv Pugh who'll lead you on a narrated trail across the town centre
- **11:00 - 11:45 RENEGADE INC. WITH ROSS ASHCROFT** - 'can we avoid another financial crisis?' TV chat show for RT: Ross Ashcroft films his new RT chat show 'Renegade Inc' live at Merthyr Rising 2017. In the first show Ross talks with Steve Keen (Debunking Economics) and Joel Benjamin (Move Your Money) about whether we can avoid the next financial crisis
- **12:00 - 12:45 RENEGADE INC. WITH ROSS ASHCROFT AND RT** - 'Fake News'
- In the second 'Renegade Inc' show Ross Ashcroft discusses the phenomena of 'fake news' with former UK ambassador to Uzbekistan Craig Murray and Kerry Anne Mendoza (The Canary)
- **13:00 - 13:45 RENEGADE INC. WITH ROSS ASHCROFT AND RT** - 'Creating Freedom' with Raoul Martinez - Raoul Martinez and Ross Ashcroft discusses his new book Creating Freedom and what the word 'freedom' means in the modern world.
- **14:00 - 14:50 THE RED POETS** - A mixture of radical poetry by the Red Poets win English and Welsh.
- **15:00 - 16:00 THE MINERS PENSION SCANDAL** - Leading lawyer, activist and journalist Peter Stefanovic and Wayne Thomas (National Union of Mine Workers) discuss the shocking plunder of the miners pension fund.
- **16:00 - 16:45 FEMINISM DEBATE** - Harriet Protheroe Davies (Chair), Dawn Bowden (AM), Sian James (Pride & LGSM), Claudia Boes (Cardiff Sisters of Solidarity), Xenia Brunel (Trans Activist), Puleng Letele- Crawford (Local Activist)
- **17:00 - 18:00 MUSIC WITH DAVID ROVICS** - Music by American indie singer songwriter and anarchist David Rovics
- **COMEDY WITH FRANCESCA MARTINEZ (Extra Ticket Required)**

## SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup> MAY

- **11:15 - 11:45 UNION BANNER MARCH WITH MERTHYR TYDFIL TUC** (Starting from Llys Janis Rowland)
- **12:00 - 13:30 MEWN UNDEB MAE NERTH - UNITY IS STRENGTH** - Speakers from unions across the UK discuss the challenges and battles ahead.
- **14:00 - 14:50 MUSIC AND POLITICS** - What type of influence does music have on politics and vice-versa. Clint Evans of Peppermint Iguana speaks to Dave Randall (musician and Author of 'Sound Sytem': the power of Political Music), Daniel Rachel (Author of Penderyn 2017 Music Prize winning 'The Walls Come Tumbling Down') and Efa Supertramp (political activist and singer songwriter).
- **15:00 - 15:50 TRIDENT: Deterrent or Disaster?** - In a country where austerity is hurting the most vulnerable can we justify spending over £150m on replacing the Trident nuclear weapon system? Debate with Daniel Blaney (Vice Chair, CND) and other speakers TBC
- **16:00 - 17:00 MERTHYR RISING FREE SPEECH ZONE** - We round off the Waun Common Debates 2017 with an open invitation to express your opinions on matters discussed at the festival, or anything else you see fit. Just remember: the right to speak freely is not the right to speak unopposed...

# Everything you ever wanted to know about UNISON ..... but were afraid to ask



**UNISON is one of the UK's largest trade unions, serving more than 1.3 million members, with more than 100,000 members in Wales alone.**

UNISON represents and acts for members working across all public services and utilities. We represent members, negotiate and bargain on their behalf, campaign for better working conditions and pay and for public services.

The union is structured so that it organizes itself with local branches throughout the country. Most branches are tied to a main local employer, such as a health board, university or local council. However, with many members working for small employers, most branches will cover many other employers, as well as the main employer.

**Cwm Taf Local Government Area Branch formed following the merger of Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil Local Government Branches in 2016. The new branch reflects the closer working relationship between the two local authorities and the increased number of cross bor-**

**der 'shared services' being provided.**

Peter Crews – Branch Secretary of the new Cwm Taf Local Government Area Branch, states; "This is a golden opportunity. We have been working together across both Council areas for some time, as the Local Authorities collaborate on more and more services to their communities and this will continue. So it was common sense to bring both branches into one. We will cover not just our members directly employed by each Local Authority but members who are employed in the private sector who deliver services on behalf of the Local Authorities".

"Our new branch will have over five thousand members covering sixty employers. This collective strength will be positive for our members, for UNISON in Wales and it will help secure a strong voice for defending the future of Public Services in Wales".

Both the former branches and the new branch have faced, and continue to face many challenges as a result of austerity measures driven by Tory spending

cuts in Westminster. Many services our communities rely on have been cut and staff have had their terms and conditions reduced. UNISON has fought to minimise the impact of these cuts and protect services.

Through pressure on Councillors, UNISON secured an agreement that no staff working for RCT or Merthyr Councils will be paid less than the Living Wage and thousands of women have secured increases to their pay as a result of 'equal pay' claims brought by UNISON.

In the run up to recent elections UNISON has been putting pressure on politicians via its own manifesto calling for an end to outsourcing of public services to private companies and an end to councils spending taxpayers' money on private consultants who then advise on making cuts.

**UNISON University South Wales (USW) Group is the largest UNISON branch of Higher Education workers in Wales, with almost 700 members. It came into fruition when the University of South Wales was created from the merger of the University of Wales, Newport and the University of Glamorgan in 2013.**

The branch has a fast-growing membership in the Further Education sector via its Merthyr College workplace with over one hundred members in the college alone. Those members play a full role in the Further Education Sector committee. The branch is spread over seventy five miles, covering Merthyr Tydfil, Pontypridd, Cardiff and Newport.

The branch is a very active part of the Higher Education sector in Wales and has provided leadership

on many campaigns such as Pay disputes, Higher Education reorganisation, widening access and the Diamond/Hazelkorn reviews.

The branch's main campaigns recently have been demanding university cleaners get paid a decent wage, the removal of zero hour contracts and appropriate staffing levels in the outsourced areas. This has led to an increase in pay levels and increased staffing numbers though the pay being offered is still well short of the foundation living wage.

The branch is currently defending its members from a cost cutting drive that is putting five percent of the university workforce at risk of redundancy. This includes a move to remove the crèche service and a systematic attack on all frontline services whilst leaving a bloated management chain in place.

The branch has vowed to fight any and all compulsory redundancies by any lawful means at our disposal.

The branch fully supports the Merthyr Rising Festival and we're proud to be part of the UNISON group that is sponsoring this great event.

Dan Beard the USW Group Unison Branch Secretary stated; "As a son of Merthyr Tydfil I am very proud of the traditions of our movement and the history of radicalism in my hometown. The Merthyr Rising in 1831 was the first time the red flag was flown and from there and other areas the trade union movement in Wales took shape. My branch organises in the University of South Wales which has its links to Merthyr via the mining school and it is our privilege to showcase that support and to honour those that came before us".

**Cwm Taf Health Branch represents all UNISON Members who work for the Cwm Taf Health Board, as well as staff from care homes, health centres, and clinics.**

Membership consists of staff from all levels including, nurses, health care assistants, porters, therapists, maintenance workers, community workers, office workers, technicians, managers, supervisors and many others.

The branch has close to 4,000 members and daily deals with their issues around pay and terms and conditions of their employment.

With Health Service changes and the British Government failing to adequately fund the NHS in Wales, savings continually need to be made the Welsh NHS so we have a constant battle to retain safe effective services for our members who after all are our patients.

The branch has had to support members through the South Wales plan with the greatest effect being changes to Maternity Neonatal and Paediatric Services. This is far from resolved but the Labour Controlled Welsh Assembly has now financed the rebuild in Prince Charles Hospital.

Changes have been made to how care is delivered with a drift to more community care in both Physical Health and Mental Health. UNISON has been tirelessly working to ensure protection for our members and the right services for patients.

Regionally the branch has delegates that meet with the Welsh Assembly ministers and officers to ensure Health Services in Wales continue to be free at the point of delivery and continue to fight to

keep 'privatisation' from the front door.

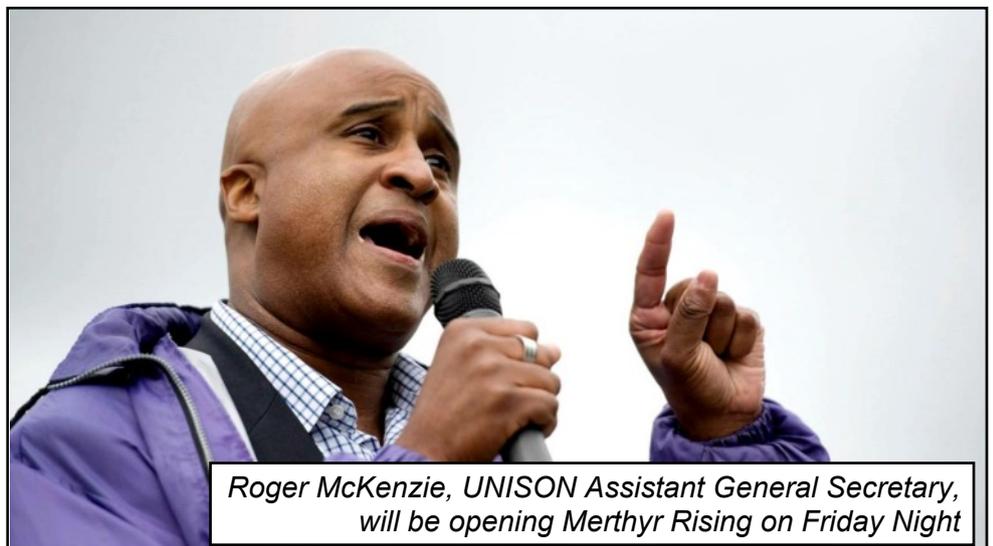
Ian Cathrew Branch Chair, commented on Merthyr Rising: "Its an honour for Cwm Taf Health Branch of UNISON to be able to sponsor and participate in such a great event"

"The 'Merthyr Rising' saw the 'Red Flag' first raised as a symbol of suffering and socialism. UNISON is proud to keep that 'Red Flag' flying and the Branch to this day continues to fight for its members rights.

**Representatives from UNISON's regional Equalities Committee present at Merthyr Rising.**

Jane Gebbie, Vice Chair of the committee stated; "UNISON values are that equal opportunities are at the forefront of every campaign that we run and believe that every individual has a just right to have the same opportunities, irrespective of where, what and whom they were born, whether they have or have not a disability and the Equalities Act 2010, consolidated and harmonised all legislation that sought to assist those with protected characteristics to ensure that each individual had access to opportunities".

Whilst things have improved since 1831, there are still serious challenges to be faced and UNISON is proud to keep the spirit of 1831 alive - and continue fighting for a better world for workers to live in.



*Roger McKenzie, UNISON Assistant General Secretary, will be opening Merthyr Rising on Friday Night*

# Singing Down The Government

Selected political/music crossovers to watch out for this weekend



Thee Faction rocking Newport's Le Pub

**Merthyr Rising is a festival of culture and politics, with Music on the UNISON stage in Penderyn Square and political debates in the Red House - the historic venue where Keir Hardy, the first ever Labour Party MP, made his inauguration speech. There will, however, be many times when politics and music will overlap.**

On Sunday there will be a debate in the Red House looking at the overlap between Music and Politics, with Dave Randall, Daniel Rachel and Efa Supertramp.

**Dave Randall** will be discussing his new book 'Sound System: The Power of Political Music'. The book goes back to before the invention of recorded music and touches on the rebelliousness of classical composers and the revolutionary roots of the original slave carnivals; through the folk troubadours of 'Dust Bowl' America in the 1930s and the rise of Afrobeat in Nigeria before journeying through hip hop, rave culture and eventually bringing us bang up to date with some stories of his own experiences.

As well as touring the world with Faithless, Dido and Sinead O'Connor Dave formed agit-pop outfit Slovo and has performed for

the Stop The War Coalition, Love Music Hate Racism and the People's Assembly. He is also a patron of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

**Daniel Rachel** will be discussing his new, award winning book, 'Walls Come Tumbling Down'. Through the voices of campaigners, musicians, artists and politicians, Daniel Rachel charts an extraordinary and pivotal period between 1976 and 1992, following the rise and fall of three key movements of the time: Rock Against Racism, Two Tone, and Red Wedge, revealing how they both shaped, and were shaped by, the music of a generation.

Completing the panel is **Efa Supertramp**. Originally from North Wales, having spent several years in Cardiff, Efa now lives in London - but seems to spend most of her life on the road taking her brand of protest folk punk all over Europe and beyond.

Social justice is never far from her lyrics, which are often sung in her mother tongue, Welsh. As well as a singer songwriter she also publishes her own zines and runs her own DIY record label AFI-ACH, which has also released a number of political benefit albums.

On Saturday afternoon polit-

ical talks will be halted to allow comrades to head out to the UNISON stage to catch London's **Thee Faction**.

Their unique brand of socialist RnB is a prime example of how you can have serious fun when campaigning for a better world. With Dr Feelgood's first four albums under one arm and the works of Karl Marx under the other, they defy logic by demonstrating that you can dance to lyrics inspired by dead bearded blokes.

With five revolutionary discs to their name they have rocked the Leftfield stage at Glastonbury, the Tolpuddle Festival, the Matchwomen Festival and Le Pub in Newport.

Rumour has it, when John McDonnell takes time off from opposing the government, he sits down with a glass of red (obviously) and puts on one of Thee Faction's albums.

Another rebel rousing troubadour to watch out for will be **David Rovics**, flying in from the USA to play Merthyr Rising on Saturday night. Rovics is a widely travelled guitar toting anarchist with over thirty albums to his name, filled with songs about the things that trouble him, from war and globalisation, to rampant capitalism and social injustice.

Whilst he is hardly a household name he is known all over the world to those that know their political music. His down to earth approach sees him encouraging sharing of his music for free and being happy performing to thousands at a festival in France one day or performing to dozens in Cardiff the next.

Whilst Merthyr Rising is first and foremost a party with good music, we are certain that everyone will come away inspired by stories from the past, and empowered to keep on keeping on - and keep the red flag flying!

# Join UNISON — essential cover if you work in public services

Simply complete the form below and post it to the freepost address on the back

## 1 Tell us about you

Title	First name	Date of birth
Surname/family	/ /	
Home address	Postcode	
email		
Phone number (please indicate if home, work or	National insurance number (from your	
Please give your ethnic origin: (tick one)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Black UK
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Black other
	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> White other

## 2 Tell us about your job

Employer's name
Your job title/occupation
Workplace name and
Postcode
Payroll number (from your

## 3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

Annual pay	Your subscription
Up to £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £1.30
£2,001 – £5,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £3.50
£5,001 – £8,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £5.30
£8,001 – £11,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £6.60
£11,001 – £14,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £7.85
£14,001 – £17,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £9.70
£17,001 – £20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £11.50
£20,001 – £25,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £14.00
£25,001 – £30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £17.25
£30,001 – £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £20.30

## 5 Choose how you wish to pay Please tick ONE box only

### EITHER deduct from salary:

- I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions from my pay by my employer.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please go to [unison.org.uk/privacy-policy](http://unison.org.uk/privacy-policy) to see how we will protect and use your personal information

### OR pay by direct debit:

please complete the direct debit form below

- I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions by direct debit

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON, 130 Euston Road London NW1

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

Bank/building

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account

Bank/building society account

Branch sort

Service User

9 7 0 0 5 0

Reference number (for office use only do not

Please pay UNISON Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

Signature re(s)

## 4 Choose your political fund

One of the ways UNISON works on your behalf is through political campaigning. Your subscription includes a political fund payment so you won't pay any extra, but in UNISON you choose how you want that money to be used.

- Our Affiliated Political Fund takes UNISON members' views directly into the Labour Party, working to promote UNISON policies.
- The General Political Fund is used to pay for branch, regional and national campaigns but is independent of any



# TEN GOOD REASONS TO JOIN UNISON

1. **YOU CAN EARN MORE:** Year on year, UNISON wins pay rises for its members. Average earnings are around eight per cent higher in unionised workplaces.
2. **YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO GET EQUAL PAY:** UNISON is campaigning to bring women's pay into line with men's. Workplaces with union recognition are 20 per cent more likely to have an equal opportunities policy.
3. **YOU GET MORE HOLIDAY:** UNISON has won increased leave for many of its members wherever they work.
4. **YOU GET MORE AND BETTER TRAINING:** UNISON provides courses to help you learn new skills, improve existing ones and develop your career. Since 1994 UNISON has won agreements with employers to pay for courses and provide time off for employees to attend them.
5. **YOU GET MORE MATERNITY LEAVE OR PARENTAL LEAVE:** If you belong to UNISON, your employer is more likely to have parental leave policies which are more generous than the statutory minimum.
6. **YOU'RE LESS LIKELY TO BE INJURED AT WORK:** UNISON health and safety stewards are trained to minimise the risk of workplace injuries and ensure that employers meet their legal obligations.
7. **IF YOU DO GET INJURED AT WORK, YOU'LL GET BETTER COMPENSATION:** UNISON wins millions in legal compensation for people who are injured or become ill at work.
8. **YOU'RE LESS LIKELY TO BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST:** UNISON campaigns for tougher laws to make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, disability or sexual orientation. Black and Asian trade unionists earn 32 per cent more than non-unionised colleagues.
9. **YOU CAN HELP KEEP OUR PUBLIC SERVICES PUBLIC:** UNISON campaigns against all forms of privatisation, including PFI and foundation hospitals. Where our members have been transferred to the private sector we have won them pay and employment protections.
10. **YOU'RE LESS LIKELY TO BE SACKED:** Trade union members are only half as likely to be sacked as non-members.

## Three simple ways to join UNISON today:



Fill in the form on reverse of this page and post to

Freepost RSKU-RRCA-HHSJ  
UNISON  
UNISON Centre  
130 Euston Road  
LONDON  
NW1 2AY



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Good value, great values

Lines are open Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm. Calls may be recorded. For Text Phone: first dial 18001.  
UNISON acts as an Introducer Appointed Representative to the Liverpool Victoria group of companies for General Insurance.

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