



JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN 50P SUMMER 2019

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# blaming the poor...

IT'S THE SAME THE WHOLE WORLD OVER,  
IT'S THE POOR THAT GET'S THE BLAME  
IT'S THE RICH THAT GETS THE PLEASURE,  
AIN'T IT ALL A BLOOMIN SHAME.

**T**HIS old music hall song sums up perfectly the impact of ten years of government austerity policies.

According to the Equality Trust the richest 1,000 people in Britain increased their wealth by £66 billion in the past year alone (2017-2018) and by £274 billion in the past five years (2013-2018).

At the same time the number of people living in poverty has increased to over 14 million, one fifth of the population. Britain may be the fifth richest country in the world but the wealth is in the hands of a tiny proportion of its people.

Professor Phillip Alston in the United Nations Report on Poverty in Britain, published in May 2019 compared Conservative welfare policies to the creation of 19th century workhouses and made it clear that "much of the glue that had held British society together since the Second World War had been deliberately removed and replaced with a harsh and uncaring ethos". He also made the point that at a local level this was "damaging the fabric of society". He said that austerity had "deliberately gutted" local authorities, shrinking libraries, youth, police and park services to the extent that it was not surprising there were "unheard of levels of loneliness and isolation" and called on ministers to reverse local government funding cuts.

Central government funding to local councils in England fell by nearly 50% between 2010/11 and 2017/18 and will fall by a further 56% in this financial year. Since 2010 local councils in England have seen over £16 billion cut from their budgets. To make matters worse government funding has hit different areas differently with the top 10% of councils that rely heavily on central government grants, like Blackpool, Birmingham and Tower Hamlets seeing cuts of up to 33% compared to the 10% of richest councils where grants were reduced by only 9%. Even the Institute of Fiscal Studies said this funding system was unsustainable and the National Audit Office has warned that if councils continue to use their reserves at the current rate they will have nothing left by 2022.

But things look set to get a lot worse as the government is proposing to change the funding formula with allocations no longer weighted to reflect poverty and deprivation in an attempt to prop up services in Tory heartlands. Although councils in Wales and Scotland have been partly protected from having to make the same level of cuts because of devolution, they still face huge financial pressures and regional inequality is starker in many areas.

In her report for the Women's Budget Group, published in March this year,



Heather Wakefield showed clearly how cuts to local services impacts disproportionately on women, describing it as a "triple whammy" because more women than men work in local councils so job losses hit them hardest, women also use local services more than men so cuts increase women's unpaid work, notably caring for children and vulnerable relatives. The outsourcing and privatisation of care homes has resulted in an increasing number of women doing unpaid work looking after elderly and disabled relatives often at the expense of their own health and wellbeing. With an estimated 1.4 million people with unmet care needs and local councils spending 54% of their budgets on social care this has now reached crisis point. The closure of over 1,000 Sure Start centres since 2010 and the loss of 9,000 childcare providers because of lack of funding has forced many women to give up their job or prevented them from taking up work full time. Along with a myriad of other cuts

that have impacted on women and their families has been the closure of 350 playgrounds and loss of 608 public libraries since 2010.

Coupled with the plethora of austerity policies brought in by Tory led governments over the past ten years including changes to the benefit system and introduction of Universal Credit, the clock has truly been turned back on gender equality. Professor Phillip Alston summed it up in his UN Report when he said: "If you got a group of misogynists in a room and said 'how can we make this system work for men and not for women?' they would not have to come up with too many ideas that are not already in place". We know the answer to this problem, clear the room out – we just have to get on and make it happen.

EXTRACT FROM A SPEECH GIVEN AT THE  
NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION  
WOMEN'S NETWORK MEETING IN  
BLACKPOOL JUNE 2019 BY ANITA WRIGHT,  
NAW PRESIDENT

## IWD in **Stockport**

**W**OMEN from the Communist Party of Britain, the Labour Party, the National Assembly of Women and other socialist organisations met in Stockport on 10 March to celebrate International Women's Day.

Amongst other speakers we were honoured to hear Seema Simons speak about the women of Kerala and their struggle for equal rights to worship.

We heard with amazement about the millions of women who took part in the 620km long "Women's Wall" and the bravery of Bindu Hariharan and Kanaka Durga in entering Sabarimala temple, and all the other women who had previously attempted to do so.

We salute their courage.

You are an example to women throughout the world and we send our admiration and solidarity.

BY ANN PAPAGEORGIOU





# NAW members at the AGM



**T**HE annual general meeting of the NAW, which took place on 27 April, brought together women active in trade unions, local cuts campaigns, the international solidarity movement, peace and environmental organisations and gave us the opportunity to debate some of the key issues of the day and reflect on our own experiences.

In opening the meeting NAW President Anita Wright said that Brexit had inevitably overshadowed the ongoing impact of the government's austerity policies – which are biting even deeper, particularly for women. Despite more women being in work, poverty in Britain has risen by 500,000 over five years with four million workers living in poverty. A rise almost entirely driven by the increase in the poverty rate of working parents, particularly for lone parents, 91% of who are women. The deeply flawed system of Universal Credit had made it worse and paying for basics like food, housing, gas and electricity are a daily struggle which is taking its toll on women's physical and mental health.

She said that the current political chaos, prolonged periods of austerity and the increasing gap between rich and poor had led many people to become disillusioned with traditional social democratic parties. This didn't bode well for the forthcoming local elections in England where women candidates are few and far between. Currently two thirds of councillors are male and 96% are white. In these pessimistic times it is vital to restore trust and hope that a better future is possible. It is therefore vital for those of us who are committed to peace, equality and social justice to work together and secure the election of a government committed to these principles.

The meeting went on to agree the minutes of the 2018 AGM and discuss the 2019 Annual Report which included the accounts. Special thanks were extended to the Treasurer, Eleanor Lewington who was standing down after nearly 20 years as a member of the NAW's EC.

Delegates then had the opportunity to debate the five motions submitted before

the AGM, all of which were passed unanimously.

In moving the motion on the Global Threat of Nuclear Weapons, Pam Flynn made a special plea for NAW members and the EC to urge leading local and national politicians to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the ICAN Cities Appeal. Liz Payne moved the motion on Sudan, praising the bravery and resilience of the Sudanese women and the role of the Sudanese Women's Union in protesting against the brutal regime of President Omar al-Bashir.

The motion on Gambling showed how the TV and the media portray gambling as a fun activity but often leads to addiction, mental health and financial problems. TV adverts timed to coincide with live sports broadcasts also risk drawing in children to this damaging culture.

Children were the focus of the motion on Child Poverty. Over 4.1 million children in Britain are now living in poverty, damaging their health, mental wellbeing and education progress. The motion commended the work of the End Child Poverty campaign, supported by the trade unions in highlighting the link between government cuts and the rise in child poverty.

The motion on Women and Health and Safety, moved by Caroline Simpson praised the work of Unite and other unions in drawing attention to the specific needs of women in the workplace. H&S policies which focussed on risk prevention in industries like construction, engineering etc ignoring women in these jobs who are often given the equipment designed for men and facilities inappropriate for their needs. There is also the assumption that women's work is safer even though domestic work involves exposure to chemicals and risk of back problems and skin conditions.

Two emergency motions were also debated and passed unanimously. One on Protesters in Iran calling on the NAW to support the call for the release from prison of leading women's rights campaigners, and a second on the Climate

Emergency supporting the Young People's School Strike and Extinction Rebellion.

All the debates were lively and thoughtful with sisters sharing their extensive knowledge on both national and international issues. After lunch we were privileged to have as our guest speaker, Sam Webster-Moore a young Unite member who spoke passionately about her role as a senior shop steward in the Oxford BMW car plant. Having started work in the trim shop she was moved on to the production line ten years ago and was the first woman to work in the repair area. She explained how, with the support of her union, policies had been negotiated on appropriate work-wear for women; menopause policy and period dignity. She recognised that more women were needed on the shop floor and as negotiators and stressed the importance of women's committees and union equality training in building her understanding of negotiating skills, and that it has been important for her to have a network of women reps, both in the wider movement. She talked about the importance of building women's leadership in the workplace through strong union organisation, by encouraging more women to become reps in BMW they now have a strong group of women union reps that can keep equality issues on the negotiating agenda. Sam concluded by thanking the NAW for the invitation to speak and talked about the value of the National Assembly of Women. She said she will ensure that her own and other branches affiliate to the NAW as an organisation that can support women activists in the work place. The meeting responded to Sam's inspiring speech with a warm and heartfelt applause.

The annual general meeting concluded with the results of the election for the NAW Officers as follows: President: Anita Wright, Secretary: Sandra Durkin, Treasurer: Caroline Simpson, and Executive Committee: Mollie Brown, Megan Dobney, Siobhan Endean, Bernadette Keaveney, Rose Keeping, Liz Payne, Yvonne Wasbourne.



# kingston hospital campaign



**N**HS cleaning, portering, catering and securing services are being tendered out to private providers up and down the country. NHS trusts are being stripped of funding by the Tories so they farm these 'non-core' services out to the cheapest bidder at the lowest cost. This means that wages and basic workers' rights like sick pay are eroded as costs are cut by private providers to secure the contract. The workers who apply for these jobs in the health service tend to be migrants and most are women from African countries, Asia and Eastern Europe. Privatisation in the NHS leads to a two tier workforce as existing workers are transferred over to the company on NHS terms and conditions but new workers coming in get reduced terms and conditions.

At Kingston Hospital NHS Trust the private company ISS employs cleaning, catering and security staff and is failing to provide adequate sick pay schemes and wages. GMB surveyed members and found that ISS sick pay scheme was so complex that many workers didn't understand it but anyone who went sick had to wait at least three days for any form of sick pay. Low paid ISS workers were forced to go into work sick representing a cross-infection risk for patients.

ISS also changed its payroll scheme, causing some workers to lose a week's pay and forcing them to accept a "bridging loan" which then had to be paid back to the company. Many faced the stark choice between paying the rent and buying food so in May the GMB helped set up a foodbank to provide essential items for ISS employees.

Paul Maloney, GMB Regional Secretary made it clear that "GMB will never accept this exploitation of the lower paid workers many of whom are migrant work-

ers. ISS need to face the reality that trying to gag staff supporting this GMB campaign against a two tier workforce will be called out."

Protests have included a march outside Kingston Hospital and a demonstration by GMB members outside the ISS building in Canary Wharf where they inflated a giant rat representing the health risk posed by ISS policies towards staff and patients.

Talks between the GMB and ISS reached a climax in February when the company threatened to break off negotia-

tions unless the GMB stopped their political campaigning on the issue. The dispute was raised at Ministers' Questions in the House of Parliament by Croydon North MP Steve Reed who represents some of the ISS employees involved in the dispute. David Lidington MP, standing in for Prime Minister Theresa May during the debate said that the Health Secretary would consult with Mr Reed and added that any attempt to block constituents' access to their MP might be considered contempt of parliament. The intervention by Steve Reed MP was welcomed by the GMB and a meeting has been sought with the Health Secretary. Meanwhile the GMB has scheduled talks with the Kingston Hospital Trust over fears that ISS employees could face destitution if the dispute continues.

BY HELEN O'CONNOR, GMB SOUTHERN REGIONAL ORGANISER  
[WWW.GMB-SOUTHERN.ORG.UK](http://WWW.GMB-SOUTHERN.ORG.UK)



## no more austerity!

**T**HE People's Assembly has been holding meetings around the country on the theme of "Britain is Broken – we can't afford the Tories". Speakers at the Coventry meeting held in June included PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka and NAW Secretary Sandra Durkin.

Sandra spoke about the changing world of work and the Unite report on the potential impact on women of robotics, artificial, intelligence and automation. She condemned the austerity policies that had resulted in the closure of Sure Start centres that so many women and children had benefited from and that 17% of childcare providers in the poorest areas of the country anticipate closing in the next 12 months citing the low level of government funding (average £4.98 an hour) and that some reported lowering food standards to save money. She also explained that the gender pay campaign continues but for women on low pay and zero hours contracts their pension contributions are low or non-existent and this is creating a gen-

der pension gap between 29 and 40% so older women are now living in poverty.

Referring to Lynn Henderson's "Step Aside Brother" campaign, Sandra said that men should engage more women into trade union activity as it's important not to let the government divide us and we need to work collectively for a better society for all. Sandra gave some background to the NAW and distributed copies of *Sisters*.





# princess alexandra hospital **victory**



**D**OMESTICS at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow, Essex, have won an amazing victory against NHS privatisation.

Their bosses had started market testing their service, claiming that antiquated equipment and insufficient monitoring doesn't provide 'value for money' to the taxpayer. This is in a hospital where the Trust has proudly plastered notices around the corridors boasting of having some of the lowest rates of infection and MRSA in the country. It should go without saying that the cleaners are the first line of defence of any decent infection control regime. And domestic services perform better when they're kept in-house. Research from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine published in 2016 showed that while privatised hospital cleaning is cheaper, it's dirtier too. Infection rates are higher where domestic services are outsourced, yet hospital chiefs still manage to keep a straight face when they claim contracts are put out to tender "in the best interests of patients".

And the domestics knew that it wouldn't just be their service that suffered if they were kicked out of the NHS – private companies aren't obliged to honour NHS pay deals and new starters could be

brought in on the minimum wage. Unison has recently won NHS pay rates for health workers employed by private companies in Doncaster, Liverpool, and Bolton. However, it is far better for staff and for patients if services aren't outsourced in the first place.

PAH had said quite openly that selling off its domestics would be just the first phase in its 'modernisation programme' – sending a message that all non-clinical staff should fear for their jobs.

So why did hospital bosses pick on this overwhelmingly female group of workers? If they thought the domestics were weak, if they thought the domestics were divided, if they thought the domestics could be picked off easily, they were pitifully wrong. The domestics stood together, voting almost unanimously to strike against the plans – 99% Yes on an 84% turnout. And they proved they meant business by committing to six days of action.

As Claire Evans, one of Unison's new domestic reps spurred into action by the plans, said after the ballot: "This vote is a clear message to our bosses that we don't want to work for an outside contractor – we are proud to work for the NHS and serve our communities. "We don't just clean the wards, we bring patients their teas, we make sure they get their dinners, we chat to them. We make sure they feel as safe and comfortable as possible while they're in the hospital because we care about them".

As the strike date approached there were plenty of examples of success we could take inspiration from. Last month (May), homecare workers in Birmingham won a two-year battle against plans to put their jobs at risk and threatened massive pay cuts they could ill-afford. After a staggering 82 days, the predominantly female

workforce forced the council to back down and abandon its unfair restructure. And Unison has been campaigning across the country to ensure outsourced health workers don't lose out when it comes to their pay, terms and conditions, winning at Doncaster & Bassetlaw, Liverpool Women's Hospital and elsewhere. But while workers can still stand up for their rights if their jobs have been privatised, the Harlow domestics knew that by making a big push now they could avoid the private sector penny-pinching and driving down of standards. They were getting ready for action, sourcing whistles and cagoules for the picket line, gathering thousands of signatures for their petition and building support in the wider trade union movement. The Trust showed no signs of backing down. From saying it would be making a decision on outsourcing at its June board meeting, it suddenly decided to kick the can down the road, telling staff it wouldn't be able to make a decision until at least August.

But out of the blue, with two days to go until the first strike day, the hospital caved. Bosses apparently managed to do their months of analysis in days and discovered that private contractors couldn't offer value for money. The domestics would remain in house. It was a shock victory, having started to dig in for a long struggle, we were able to turn the planned picket line into a victory rally. Even the weather forecasts of drizzle were proved wrong and glorious sunshine greeted the would-be strikers. It proves once again, that when workers stand together, we can win. We hope that victory in Harlow can inspire workers elsewhere to victory.

BY CAROLINE HENNESSEY, UNISON  
EASTERN REGIONAL ORGANISER



# nuala cameron "our Nu"



**PHILIPPA CLARK REMEMBERS  
NUALA CAMERON (PICTURED ABOVE [LEFT]  
WITH VICKY KNIGHT)**

**S**ISTERS and her many friends are shocked and very saddened at the sudden death of NAW member Nuala Cameron. Nu attended AGMs and our International Women's Day Celebrations. Undeterred by very stormy weather, bomb scares and her own health issues she came to the Socialist Women on Male Platforms (SWOMP) event at the 2017 TUC in Brighton – she was the official SWOMP photographer. This respon-

sibility she relished... as long as she was reminded where she had left her camera at the end of the evening!

Nuala was a trained librarian, a trade union activist and supporter of CND and the ANC. She worked for the Fire Brigades Union where she met her late husband – Ken Cameron. She was a supportive partner to Ken – living with a General Secretary of a trade union as politically active as Ken required a degree of patience and tolerance. Holidays cancelled because of industrial action, absences from home on international solidarity delegations, Nu took all this in her stride, they were a team. She was very much her own woman – always on marches against cuts, nuclear weapons, racism, supporting strikers. Even when her mobility became limited and painful she could still be found waving her crutches gleefully at protests and recently at the celebrations surrounding the raising of the statue to Mary Barbour in Glasgow. She was a stalwart supporter of the campaign for a statue of Sylvia Pankhurst and was so looking forward to its completion. She was also an enthusiastic participant in visits to our Workers' Stately Home, Wortley Hall.

Nuala was born a Tooting Gal (South London). Her parents were Irish and theirs was a very close family. She loved and was loved by her three brothers and enjoyed her extended Irish family. As an

adult she spent most of her life in Fulham until moving with Ken, by then retired, to Glasgow. She relished the city. One of her passions was the painter, architect and designer Charles Rennie MacIntosh and being Nu, she made sure his wife, Margaret MacDonald and the "Glasgow Girls" – painters – were not overshadowed by their male equivalents, the "Glasgow Boys" and were recognised for their artistic prowess. She enjoyed theatre, opera and Glasgow's arts scene and was soon, with Ken, an established part of Glasgow's "Left".

When Ken became ill she was the most loving and diligent of carers also reminding him with a smile that he had to "behave" or she would "report him to the Sisters". To quote W B Yeats, Ken truly "loved the pilgrim soul" in Nu.

Her friends in the movement remember so many fun nights... often well into the morning with various hilarious consequences. She was determinedly upbeat about her own health problems and full of plans for the future. A proud mother and grandmother she will be greatly missed by her son, granddaughters and brothers: Also by so many of us who "loved your moments of glad grace"\* and laughed with her, admired her and benefited from her loving and supportive friendship.

\* W.B Yeats *When You are Old*

# farewell rita pankhurst

**IRENE COCKCROFT REMEMBERS  
RITA PANKHURST**

**R**ITA Pankhurst, notable academic and women's rights activist, and widow of Richard Pankhurst OBE (1927-2017), passed away at her home in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 30 May 2019, aged 92. Rita leaves daughter Helen, son Alula, and grandchildren. The funeral was held on 4 June in Selassie Cathedral where Rita's late husband also is buried.

Rita's mother-in-law, British suffragette campaigner, artist, writer, and champion of Ethiopia, Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960) was accorded a state funeral attended by Emperor Haile Selassie in the same Cathedral, almost 60 years before.

In Sylvia's declining years, Rita supervised a special diet for Sylvia whose digestive system suffered as a result of hunger strike and brutal force feeding in Holloway Prison during the women's suffrage campaign.

In Britain, during the 1980s, Rita was appointed Head of Library Services to the City of London Polytechnic. In this capacity Rita was instrumental in acquiring the Fawcett Library which contained women's suffrage campaign records. The

Fawcett collection served as the nucleus for the internationally renowned Women's Library, now in the custodianship of the London School of Economics.

**PHOTO CREDITS:**  
RICHARD AND RITA PANKHURST © DAVID COCKCROFT, LONDON 2008  
RITA PANKHURST ADMIRING MAQUETTE FOR STATUE OF SYLVIA PANKHURST COMMISSIONED BY THE SYLVIA PANKHURST MEMORIAL COMMITTEE © V. IRENE COCKCROFT, LONDON 2010





# yes to peace, no to NATO



LIZ PAYNE REPORTS FROM THE BPA. LIZ IS CONVENOR OF THE BRITISH PEACE ASSEMBLY, BRITAIN'S ONLY AFFILIATE TO THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL AND A MEMBER OF THE NAW EXECUTIVE

**T**HE British Peace Assembly was one of a number of organisations recently gathered in Belgrade to mark the twentieth anniversary of the NATO attack on Yugoslavia. I had the privilege of being its representative.

In the spring and summer of 1999 thousands were killed during the 78-day bombing campaign. A poignant memorial to the youngest victims stands in the city's beautiful Tasmajdan Park. It bears four simple words – “We were just children”. The attack was nothing less than orchestrated terror. The devastation was inflicted purposefully and mercilessly on the people of Serbia by the US and its allies – including, shamefully, the right-wing Labour government of Britain and the neo-liberal establishment in whose interests it acted. The enduring legacy, as set out by speaker after speaker at the international memorial symposium organised by the Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals, has been one of irrecoverable loss. Lives have been traumatised and families torn apart. Communities have been devastated, the economy and infrastructure destroyed and the environment poisoned. Tens of thousands have been reduced to poverty and deprivation.

20 years on, we must ask ourselves why this came about. The answer is more straightforward than we are given to believe. In Yugoslavia, imperialism saw not only the opportunity of ridding Europe of any last vestiges of socialism, splitting the country into controllable and exploitable statelets and securing access to high quantities of mineral resources, including the valuable lignite deposits of Kosovo, but also of testing the potential strength of the NATO alliance, its strategies, its military hard and software and its potential to win the support of the majority of the population of member countries. Operation Allied Force was in fact a deadly experiment – a blueprint for future devastating interventions in countries across the world.

At the time, this was the largest military operation ever undertaken. It was the first time force was used against a sovereign state without United Nations approval in

violation of international law. The new imperialist approach to combat was tried out – no ‘boots on the ground’, sole reliance on air power, the most advanced technology and deadly weaponry. The debut of large-scale use of satellite technology in conflict. The first appearance of B2 stealth bombers in live combat.

Events in Kosovo posed no discernible threat to the national security of any NATO member country, yet public opinion in the West was won on the basis of a sophisticated and highly effective web of lies. It was said that Belgrade had not responded to the allies’ overtures and that the attack would take place on “humanitarian” grounds. The day before the first bomb fell, prime minister Tony Blair told parliament that Britain was ready to take military action “primarily to avert what would otherwise be a humanitarian disaster in Kosovo”. The military objective of weakening the army and so increasing its costs that it would be forced out of the province altogether, leaving it prey to Kosovan big business and its Western backers, was never mentioned. In truth, the aggression was long-planned and nothing Belgrade did or did not do could have changed the mind of NATO’s generals.

In Britain, due to deliberately deceptive news coverage, few people were aware then or have since become aware of what truly took place. They have little idea of the sheer scale of death and injury, of the numbers of refugees and displaced people, of the destruction of thousands of homes, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, airfields, oil refineries, factories, power and water plants, public buildings, the state broadcasting facility and national telecommunications networks. They are largely unaware of the poisoning of the environment by toxic emissions from bombed industrial sites and the widespread and long-lasting effects of depleted uranium. They do not know that all strategic military targets were destroyed within three days of the start of the campaign yet bombing continued for a further 11 weeks, with lethal cluster bombs rained down on civilians from early April. Neither do they know that civilian targets and places where it was known that civilians would be casualties were deliberately, not mistakenly, attacked and that subsequent rescue attempts and medical teams attending the injured were subjected to secondary ‘terror’ bombing. US General, Michael C Short, the chief of the NATO assault on Yugoslavia summed it up in two chilling sentences: “One cannot win a war without destroying the possibility of a normal life for the majority of the population. We must take away from them water, power supply, food and even the normal air to breathe”. But there has been no exposure of such war crimes and carnage neither have there been significant calls for justice and reparation.

For NATO, the aggression was a success by any measure. For the military-industrial complexes of the West, it was a vindication of investment, with the promise of trillions of dollars profit to be had from coming wars and threats of war. But for the people of the world, it was a tragic precursor of a whole new order of imperialist aggression – in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali and Syria – a prefiguring of its contemporary warmongering and a chilling warning to all peace-loving people. We must be warned!

Britain played a full and significant part in Operation Allied Force – in mobilising support for military action from the summer of 1997 and in detailed planning from then on in. During the campaign, from the outset, B52 bombers left from bases in England. HMS Invincible operated Sea Harrier jets and an array of British destroyers, frigates and war planes gave support throughout. British-made weapons, including cluster bombs, were dropped indiscriminately.

The peace and women’s movements and all progressive organisations and individuals must use this tragic anniversary to ensure that the people of Britain understand fully what was done in their name. It is our duty to bring the past and its significance alive to new generations of those in struggle.

This is especially true in the present era when the US government is threatening to bring down Venezuela, cut off Cuba completely, and make war on Iran. The potential for a conflagration of mammoth proportions overshadows the daily lives of millions and the clock is ticking.

In all of this our country is complicit, just as in Yugoslavia in 1999. The government of Britain is a foremost ally of the United States, with its toxic “special relationship” that Trump came here to cement and with its aggressive pro-war, foreign and military policies, dressed up as ‘defence’, ‘security’, ‘prevention of terrorism’ and ‘humanitarian aid’. Its bases and facilities, many once outposts of empire, are crucial to US-led NATO and its designs and there is no case of any kind that can be made for Britain to hold onto a single one of them.

Together with the British Peace Assembly and the wider peace movement, the National Assembly of Women must call for an end to our government’s foreign policy based on the “special relationship” of the British establishment with the most reactionary forces of the US, for the withdrawal of Britain from NATO and the closure of all British bases and their immediate restoration to the countries and peoples to whom they rightfully belong. We must campaign for a truly internationalist foreign policy to be at the core of an incoming left-led Labour government. We say “Yes to peace and no to NATO!” in the firm knowledge that without peace the fight for equality, justice and socialism can never be won.

# things to do...

## National Assembly of Women weekend conference

CHARTER FOR WOMEN – a campaigning programme to take us forward in the fight for equality

**Saturday 26 to Sunday 27 October**

at Hillscourt Education Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham B45 8RS (the NASUWT's national education centre)  
Speakers include Professor Mary Davis and Labour Councillor Lisa Eldret

The cost of the weekend (including en-suite rooms, meals, refreshments and all sessions) will be £60

Non-residential cost (Saturday lunch, refreshments, all sessions) is £15

The NAW is subsidising this event from the Val Duncan Memorial Fund

Places are limited and will be confirmed on receipt of a cheque payable to NAW. Bookings and enquiries to [megan@gn.apc.org](mailto:megan@gn.apc.org) or Bridge House, Newport Street, Hay on Wye, Powys HR3 5BG

## at Wortley Hall



### Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Lecture

**Saturday 10 August 2019** at Wortley Hall, Sheffield, 7pm

**RED CLYDE** – born in 1919 there followed a decade of industrial and community militancy

Speaker: **Jennifer McCarey**  
Chair of Glasgow Trades Council

[www.gn.apc.org/sylviapankhurst](http://www.gn.apc.org/sylviapankhurst)

### South Yorkshire Festival

**Sunday 11 August 2019**  
11am to 5pm

A free fun day for all the family at the Workers' Stately home, Wortley Hall, Sheffield S35 7DB

Stalls, crafts, food and a programme of entertainment all day for all the family

Car parking £3 with all proceeds going to charity

[www.wortleyhall.org.uk](http://www.wortleyhall.org.uk)

## what's on...

**NAW Executive Committee** meetings are open to *all* members. Next meeting **Saturday 14 September, London.**

If you would like to attend please contact the Secretary on [naw@sisters.org.uk](mailto:naw@sisters.org.uk) or at NAW, Bridge House, Newport Street, Hay on Wye, Powys HR3 5BG

## join the NAW now!

*I would like to join the NAW. Here is £20 for the annual subscription (£10 unwaged) which includes my subscription to **sisters**, the journal of the NAW.*

*Our organisation would like to affiliate to the NAW. Enclosed is:*  
£20 (local organisation/NAW branch), £45 (regional organisation), £60 (national)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: NAW, c/o C Simpson, Unite, 33-37 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB