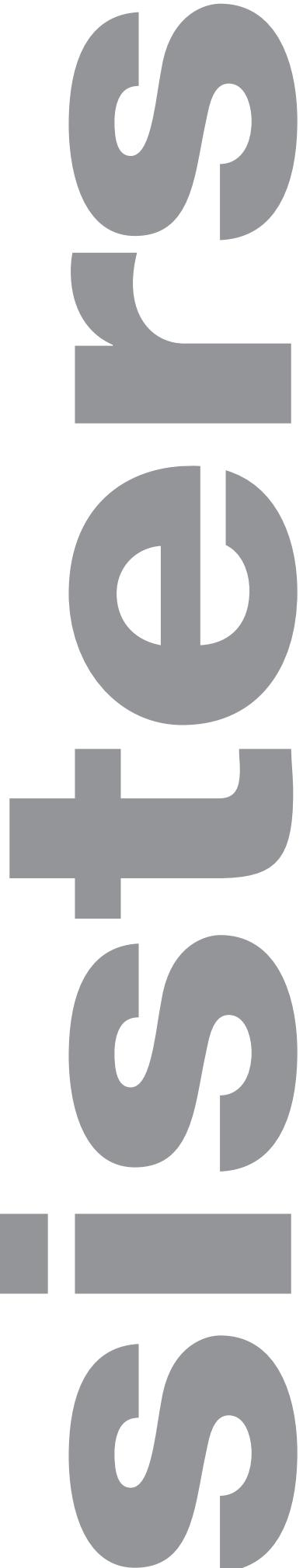




JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN 50P SUMMER 2017



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H&S: gender sensitive?



HOW GENDER SENSITIVE IS YOUR WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY? ASKS SUSAN MURRAY

SUSAN IS A NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISER FOR UNITE THE UNION.

WOmen's occupational health and safety has been in the news recently. In March *The Guardian* carried a full page article on the occupational hazards faced by hairdressers – a profession dominated by women – such as asthma, arthritis and cancer. *Construction News* featured "Where are all the women in construction?" The article highlighted a lack of flexibility, women not feeling able to return after having a child, and very traditional, some may say sexist, attitudes to women on-site.

High heels and workplace dress codes were in the spotlight in the House of Commons in March 2017 when the petition "Make it illegal for a company to require women to wear high heels at work... Current formal work dress codes are out-dated and sexist" was discussed. The 152,420 signatories indicated the strength of feeling about this issue.

This was initiated by a woman agency worker who was sent for a job as a temporary receptionist in the City of London. She was wearing smart black shoes but was told that she must comply with their dress code – a shoe heel height of 2 to 4 inches – for women, not men. When she refused she was sent home without pay.

A joint report by the Petitions and Women and Equalities Committee revealed a range of abuses mainly faced by young women in precarious employment, including having to dress in a way that sexualised their appearance or wear totally unsuitable clothing for the tasks they were being asked to perform. Podiatrists stated that wearing high heels long-term alters balance, reduces flexion in the ankle and weakens calf muscles, with the danger of ill-health effects in later life. The report also revealed that very few employers carry out health and safety assessments on this issue.

No action is being taken here, but things are changing in Canada!

Recently the government of British Columbia amended health and safety regulation to say employers cannot force workers to wear footwear with a design, construction or material that inhibits the worker's ability to safely perform their job. It says employers have to consider slipping, ankle protection, foot support, muscle or bone injuries, and electrical shock when considering mandatory footwear.

Sexual harassment has a serious psychological impact on women. TUC research in 2016 showed that more than half of all women at work have experienced some form of sexual harassment. In the vast majority of cases, the perpetrator was a male colleague, with some women reporting that their direct manager or someone with direct authority over them was the perpetrator. Worryingly, the majority of women did not report this to their employer. The evidence also showed that black and Asian women's experience of sexual harassment is often linked or connected with racial harassment.

A 2002 Equal Opportunities Commission research found a correlation between labour market casualisation and sexual harassment which explains why sexual harassment is more prevalent for younger women.

Gender stereotyping and discrimination, and making assumptions such as "women's work is light work" or "stress is for wimps" is still too common and is a barrier to good health and safety practice. And women and men doing the same tasks can be affected in different ways.

Gender segregation of jobs (for example manual/white collar work) can lead to false assumptions about who is, and who is not, at risk. The majority of managerial posts are held by men while women dominate in part time, low paid work.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) tends to be designed for men by men. As research on women's PPE commissioned by Prospect trade union, the TUC and women's organisations found, "a one size fits all" approach to workplace health and safety including PPE is wrong – and dangerous.

Health and safety discrimination can lead to women's risk factors being overlooked and missed opportunities for prevention of injury and ill-health. Issues which need urgent attention include the menopause and work, older women at work, the ill health effects of long hours and shift work, and reproductive health issues.

The "double workload" of work and family which overburden women's health continues to be reinforced by traditional stereotypes: men being the bread-winner and many women doing the additional (unpaid) work of run-

ning the home and taking on caring responsibilities on top of a physically demanding job; the low paid social care sector, for example, is dominated by women.

A further concern is the imbalance between men and women when it comes to occupational health research. Though research is improving for women, much more needs to be done.

The TUC has a Gender and Occupational Health and Safety Working Group and issued updated resources – a report and a checklist on addressing gender issues in health and safety – in time for International Workers' Memorial Day on 28 April 2017. This was in line with the TUC's theme of "Good health and safety for all workers whoever they are, with a focus on inequalities in occupational health and the role unions play in narrowing the inequalities gap".

The TUC checklist "How gender sensitive is your workplace?" aims to help union safety representatives address gender/health and safety issues at work with their employer. These include:

- the need for women's health and safety concerns to be discussed at health and safety meetings taking sex and gender differences into account in risk assessment pregnancy, breastfeeding and reproductive health
- ensuring gender based workplace violence (such as sexual harassment) is treated as a health and safety issue
- recognising domestic violence as a health, safety and welfare issue
- taking into account sex and gender differences when providing uniform and protective equipment
- ensuring sickness absence policies do not discriminate eg. in relation to menopause, miscarriage, pregnancy, menstruation
- encouraging reporting of injuries and ill health
- collecting separate data for women and men to help identify gender specific problems
- recognising the diversity of women

The guidance also discusses involving members, including encouraging more women to become union safety representatives, and including women in the joint health and safety committee.

THE TUC GENDER SENSITIVE HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCES ARE HERE:

WWW.TUC.ORG.UK/WORKPLACE-ISSUES/HEALTH-AND-SAFETY/GENDER-AND-OCCUPATIONAL-SAFETY-AND-HEALTH

THE TUC HAS ALSO PUBLISHED NEW GUIDANCE ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND WOMEN:

WWW.TUC.ORG.UK/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/PPE%20AND%20GENDER%202017%20PDF.PDF

let toys be toys



TESSA TRABUE REPORTS ON THE LET TOYS BE TOYS CAMPAIGN

BACK in 2012, some folks fed up with encountering "boys" and "girls" signs in toy aisles started a heated discussion on a Mumsnet discussion board. It wasn't the first Mumsnet discussion to take place on this topic, but on that particular night, several posters decided to take action. The Let Toys Be Toys campaign was launched on that thread and the group set itself up independently within hours. A survey was quickly organised to determine the extent of gendered signage across the UK, and the new campaign launched a change.org petition to retailers asking them to take down the signs and let toys be toys.

why do gendered signs and labels matter?

Time and time again we find that items labelled in this way are both based on and perpetuate arbitrary gender stereotypes, and these stereotypes can affect children's self-image and self-esteem. Toys and books marketed to girls mainly have themes around beauty, romance, domestic or caring activities (cooking, cleaning, and childrearing). But, as we know, girls enjoy a wide variety of active play and interests that aren't just reflected by these choices. We repeatedly find that toys and books aimed at boys on the other hand have themes of action, adventure, science, space and transport. Domestic or caring themes are usually absent, giving the impression that as a society we are reluctant for boys to enjoy play experiences and develop skills that will allow them to become good teachers, nurses, and fathers.

Children often like to follow rules, especially in the toddler and early primary years, and they can sometimes feel like they are committing a social transgression if they make a choice that is different from what the signs are telling them. Many children encounter 'gender policing' – not only from other children, but from teachers, family members and other trusted adults too. We hear countless stories

of boys whose parents wouldn't buy them a toy buggy or a Barbie, or girls who are told that football is only for boys. Through this stereotyping, children also absorb messages as to what is the 'right' way to be a boy or a girl, and also what occupations might be suitable for them.

Let Toys Be Toys successes

We have been very successful in our initial ask, with 14 major UK retailers, including Toys R Us, Sainsbury's, Tesco and M&S, agreeing to remove gendered signs from the toy aisles. Our 2012 survey showed gendered signs in 50% of shops, while our latest survey at the end of 2016 showed virtually no shops now had gendered signs. Gendered navigation on shop websites has also seen a 70% drop since 2012, with only a fifth of shops reviewed offering girl/boy menu options.

Let Books Be Books

In 2014, we turned our attention to gendered labels on books. On World Book Day, in collaboration with the inclusive children's booksellers Letterbox Library, we launched our Let Books Be Books campaign with a petition to publishers to stop labelling books as 'for boys' or 'for girls'. This was very well received, with two publishers, Usborne and Parragon, immediately responding positively to our request, and many high-profile authors, including Malorie Blackman, SF Said, Anne Fine, Neil Gaiman and Joanne Harris, giving statements of support. At the time of writing, 10 publishers including Scholastic, Penguin Random House and Egmont have agreed to let books be books.

Toymark scheme

We also feel it is important to recognise toy and book retailers that are marketing toys and books to children in an inclusive way, and have developed a good practice award scheme, called "Toymark". To date over 50 UK bike, book and toy retailers have received the award. A directory of Toymark retailers can be found on our website.

next steps

Let Toys Be Toys is a grassroots organisation and receives no funding. We are all volunteers fitting campaigning around paid work, families and other commitments. We have a core group of about 10, and we work as a collective. As well as campaigning over social media, we organise and manage our work online as well. We find that this kind of organisation allows many of us to get involved who might not have the opportunity to get to physical meetings.



We're pleased with our successes with toy retailers and book publishers so far, but what more needs to be done? We have found that, even when the signs have come down, in some stores there remains a pink/blue divide. Science, transport and action toys often come in blue packaging, while many dolls, and even arts and crafts materials, are increasing packaged in pink. Although Let Toys Be Toys strongly believes that all colours are for everyone, unfortunately, due to relentless marketing, children often read pink/blue as code for girl/boy, so we are keen to work with manufacturers to ensure that packaging is as colourful and inclusive as possible.

working with educationalists

One message we hear often is the need for gender stereotypes to be challenged at as young an age as possible. As MP Sarah Champion mentioned in her speech to the TUC Women's Conference earlier this year, "Children aren't born with expectations about their future careers, or beliefs about what their work is worth. But the stereotypes we see embedded from such a young age ultimately contribute to the inequalities we see in adult life, in the workplace and in the economy more widely". We believe that schools have an important role to play and, working closely with teachers and educational professionals, we have developed resources to challenge gender stereotypes both in and out of the classroom, ranging from lesson plans for teachers to advice for parents/carers who would like to raise an issue at their child's school. We are now looking for ways to bring our resources supporting good practice around gender equality to teachers throughout the UK.

how you can help

Let Toys Be Toys remains a grassroots campaign. Support us by liking our Facebook page and posts or by following us on Twitter at @lettoysbetoys. Let us know when you see gendered labels or marketing and we can follow this up with the retailer/manufacturer/publisher. Just as importantly, please tell us when retailers are getting things right by nominating shops with good practice for our Toymark award. For this and for more information, blogs and resources, visit our website at lettoysbetoys.org.uk

children's rights: it's all to play for

THERE ARE MANY MYTHS SURROUNDING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS. NAW ASKED CHILDREN'S RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER DR UTE NAVIDI TO HELP SHED SOME LIGHT ON THIS AND MAKE SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

what are children's rights?

Children's rights are often referred to as fundamental human rights. There is however a distinction. Human rights refer universally to all people. Children's rights recognise that younger people have particular vulnerabilities and experiences, and exist on top of universal human rights.

what is the UNCRC?

In recognition of children's special status, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted by the United Nations in November 1989. In 2000, two optional protocols were added to the UNCRC: one asking governments to ensure children under the age of 18 are not forcibly recruited into their armed forces, the second to prohibit child prostitution, child pornography and the sale of children into slavery. The UK signed the UNCRC in 1990, and it came into UK law in 1992.

The UNCRC enshrines four general principles: Non-discrimination (Article 1), Best interests of the Child (Article 3), Right to life, survival and development (Article 6), and Children's right to be heard (Article 12). It represented a major shift from perceiving children as passive objects of protection to regarding them as rights-holders and supporting the development of a culture of respect for children's rights. After 25 years, this shift has yet to be widely adopted in practice eg. by most children service providers. These rights of course extend to all children including disabled children, and migrant children but are often ignored. Disabled children having to wait unduly long for necessary equipment are denied the right to non-discrimination. Importantly, children are defined as persons under the age of 18. Thus 'child brides' would always be seen as children subjected to sexual abuse.

After the UNCRC's ratification by South Sudan, two countries in the world have yet to do so, Sudan and USA. Despite this, all countries violate children's rights to various degrees. According to Eurostat, children are the age group at the highest risk of poverty or social exclusion. The risk of violence against children, especially girls, remains present in every setting, including in the digital environment and in places where children should be safest, including the home. Corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment of children persist in all settings. All children's rights violations have a direct impact on children's lives.



can we learn anything from Europe?

The Council of Europe (CoE) has published its 2016-2021 Strategy *Children's Human Rights* (www.coe.int/children). This illustrates what has been achieved by collective action. For example, children, parents, professionals and policy makers were made more aware of the rights of the child through accessible tools, attractive audio-visual material and innovative campaigns produced by the CoE such as the ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children (see http://www.underwearrule.org/Default_en.asp).

ENOC – the European Ombudspersons for Children (<http://enoc.eu/>) – has, for example, spoken out about the limited powers given by the UK government to the Children's Rights Commissioner for England, in stark contrast to those in Wales and elsewhere in Europe. At a high-level meeting on Europe's challenge to ensure a rights perspective for children in migration on 24 April 2017 in Stockholm (Sweden), ENOC adopted a statement urging European institutions and EU member states to ensure a child rights perspective in the development of the new Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

example of UNCRC rights violations in the UK

A good example is children's right to rest, leisure, play and to participate in cultural life and the arts which is Article 31 of the UNCRC. This right is often called the 'forgotten right' and is violated around the world. This led to the International Play Association successfully lobbying for a General Com-

ment on the Right to Play which was agreed as GC No.17 by the UN Committee in 2013.

Under the last Labour government, then Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, the Rt Hon Ed Balls MP said: "I'm determined to make sure all children – whatever their age – have access to safe and fun play areas and the right staff to help them. My department is working to professionalise the sector's workforce...". The national play programme was the first victim of the incoming Tory government. The Association of Play Industries, in its report *Nowhere to Play* published on 13 April 2017, states that its research uncovered the extent to which children's playgrounds have disappeared: "between 2014/15 and 2015/16 local authorities across England closed 214 children's playgrounds, and when asked about future plans they admitted their aim to close a further 234".

Local Councils say they are committed to promoting healthy lifestyles among young people and recognise that access to playgrounds and sports facilities is important. However, in the face of unprecedented budget constraints, many councils continue to have to make difficult decisions about which services are scaled back or stopped altogether. Whilst cuts in the adult care services have rightly led to an outcry over the consequences, the same cannot be said for the continued onslaught on children's outdoor play opportunities.

This is a direct violation of children's right to play. Children's NGOs are taking this issue up, but there is little evidence of active campaigning from the opposition parties and trades unions.



Children do not have the vote (yet) but parents and carers do. Many unions offer generous support to children in need, but rarely contextualise this within a rights perspective. The Community and Youth Workers' Union, now a national section within Unite, has however taken up the right to play (see http://www.cywu.org.uk/index.php?id=8&type_id=24&category_id=19&article_id=481).

what can the NAW do to support children's rights?

- Integrate and promote children's rights in developing NAW policies that affect children and families.
- Support the UK movement of incorporating economic, social and cultural rights into domestic law; there are models from abroad eg. Belgium, Norway and Spain. This is important because when the principles are integrated in domestic law, the UNCRC starts to infuse decision-making in relation to children.
- Encourage the TUC and trades unions to offer and promote systematic children's rights training, in particular for public sector workers.
- Help ensure that there is a meaning-

ful mechanism for children and young people to seek redress for violations of their UNCRC rights in the UK. This is important as some UK Children's commissioners have limited powers.

- Support local campaigns against and reverse playground closures.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

NORTHERN IRELAND
WWW.QUB.AC.UK/RESEARCH-CENTRES/CENTREFORCHILDRENRSRIGHTS/WALES
WALES
WALES RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (WALES) MEASURE 2011
WWW.CHILDRENRSRIGHTSWALES.ORG.UK/SCOTLAND
WWW.CYPCS.ORG.UK/

**THE WEBSITE OF THE CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMISSIONER
ENGLAND**
WWW.CHILDRENSCOMMISSIONER.GOV.UK/UK
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD UK (ROCK), A COALITION OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS FROM ACROSS THE UK
WWW.RIGHTS-OF-THE-CHILD.ORG.UK/ABOUT-ROCK/EUROPEAN-UNION
EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS; COUNCIL OF EUROPE
WWW.COE.INT/CHILDREN-HANDBOOK-2015
FRA.EUROPA.EU/EN/PUBLICATION/2015/

HANDBOOK-EUROPEAN-LAW-CHILD-RIGHTS INCLUDES INFORMATION ON CHILD LABOUR AND PROTECTION OF YOUNG WORKERS

ALSO SEE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (2015), CHALLENGES TO CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TODAY: WHAT DO CHILDREN THINK? A DESKTOP STUDY ON CHILDREN'S VIEWS AND PRIORITIES TO INFORM THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE STRATEGY FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

EUROPE
TERRE DES HOMMES
WWW.TERREDESHOMMES.NL/EN?GCLID=CLN96OY53DMCFRJMGWODCOIAUW
INTERNATIONAL
UNICEF – INCLUDES THE FULL TEXT OF THE UNCRC
WWW.UNICEF.ORG.UK/WHAT-WE-DO/UN-CONVENTION-CHILD-RIGHTS/?GCLID=COTSW_223DMCFXMW0WODRRUC9A&SISSR=1

UTE NAVIDI HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY ON THIS SUBJECT BOTH IN THE UK, EUROPE AND INTERNATIONALLY AND PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND CASE STUDIES:
WWW.LOCALGOV.CO.UK/INNOVATIVE-PARTNERSHIP-FOR-CHILDRENS-PLAY/26696
AND EDITED THE BOOK THE ROLE OF PLAY IN CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT
WWW.MDPI.COM/BOOKS/PDFDOWNLOAD/BOOK/179/1

DR UTE NAVIDI, CHILDREN'S RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER: UK.LINKEDIN.COM/PUB/DR-UTE-NAVIDI/B/761/763

the NAW's 2017 AGM



GLORIA MILLS, Head of Equalities at Unison (*top*), triggered a round of applause when she said it felt like a dark cloud had lifted after the Labour Party manifesto was launched in the run up to the general election. Opening the 2017 annual general meeting of the National Assembly of Women, she said that the Labour Party's commitment to invest in homes, health and welfare gave real hope for a better, fairer future for millions of people. She said that the greatest social leveller was good quality public services, particularly for women, and argued for the care economy to be integral to re-building the economic and social infrastructure, noting that women save the care economy £25 billion because of their role as unpaid care workers. For too long, those women in work have been marginalised in low paid jobs and faced pensioner poverty because they had not accrued sufficient funds. This had to change as women power the econo-

my and contribute to economic growth. Outsourcing and privatisation had failed and impoverished women further through the rise in zero hours contracts.

Gloria made it clear that the trade union movement should be Brexit-ready and although this was a period of uncertainty we must articulate a new agenda for post-Brexit Britain with regard to employment and gender equality. In conclusion, she said that for once there was a vision of a brighter future for people and we had to be prepared for the challenge.

With only two weeks to go before the general election the discussion inevitably focussed on the devastating impact of Tory austerity policies and the need to maximise the Labour vote.

Reviewing the work of the NAW over the past year, NAW President **Anita Wright** paid tribute to members and affiliates who had been working tirelessly in the trade union and labour movement to protect jobs, services and pensions as well as sisters in the peace movement campaigning against the renewal of Trident.

She echoed Gloria Mills' call for women to be fully engaged in formulating alternative economic and social policies and said that the NAW 2016 seminar, held at Wortley Hall and led by economist Dr Faiza Sheehan, provided a real insight into how women's equality contributes to economic growth. It was agreed that the Charter for Women, which has now been passed to the NAW to take forward, should be reviewed to reflect the current economic, social and political demands of women.

Delegates attending the AGM unanimously passed motions on the Britain's withdrawal from the EU; Women refugees; Women and the far right, and Children and austerity.

The afternoon session gave delegates the chance to reflect on women in the workplace, in society and the wider world, with three excellent contributions from speakers **Vicky Knight** (*above*; Chair of TUC Women's Committee); **Alice Fonda-Marsland** (*right*; teacher and campaigner) and **Jackie Simpkins** (*above*; War on Want).

Vicky Knight said that only trade unions have the collective ability to stop employers getting away with unequal pay in the private sector and cuts in the public sector. She was concerned that only 9.3% of 21-30 year olds who are at work are in a trade union and said we need to do more to promote the importance of joining a union. She reflected on her life journey, and praised the trade union movement for playing a key role in her political and personal development.

Alice Fonda-Marsland spoke about the pressures on young women to conform to social media's version of womanhood. She said that young women on the cusp of adulthood are being bombarded with distorted and hyper-sexualised images which having a massive detrimental effect on them. Very young girls are fraught and distressed at the thought of not fitting in or conforming to so called norms. Alice said that this is seriously limiting the choices and aspirations of girls and young women – "It shouldn't matter if it's hot pants or hijab we should not be judged".

Jackie Simpkins noted that War on Want was one year older than the NAW, being formed in 1951 by Harold Wilson who famously said that the only war worth fighting was the war on want. She said that having a woman Prime Minister in Britain was statistically bad for women because their policies had made the social and economic situation worse for women.

the russian revolution



Theresa May's support for Trump, after he introduced the Global Gag policy, withdrawing funding from organisations that supported abortion advice and services abroad showed May's contempt for women's rights.

On a more positive note, Jackie talked about War on Want's work in Honduras, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Palestine and Bangladesh where women had been organising in trade union collectives, often meeting outside the workplace to avoid harassment by the employer. Workers have become more confident and now know their rights recognising that the right to organise is the best way to make progress. In Bangladesh, the campaign to get compensation after the Rana Plaza textile factory collapsed in 2013 that killed over 1,135 people still continues. The Edinburgh Woollen Mill Company at first denied it had contracts with the factory until garments with EWM were found among the debris. Jackie said that the relationship between brands, factory owners and workers is understood and we can play an important role in putting pressure on high street shops to understand the chain of responsibility for ethical trading.

The AGM concluded on a positive note with delegates feeling ready to face the challenges that lay ahead.

The AGM expressed its thanks and gratitude to **Barbara White** and **Yvonne Washbourne** who retired from the Executive Committee and wished them well for the future. The members nominated for the Executive Committee and Officers were elected unopposed.

For more details visit the NAW website: www.sisters.org.uk

CELEBRATE, STUDY AND LEARN FROM IT,
SAYS MARY DAVIS

WHY and how should we mark or celebrate the centenary of the Russian Revolution? It is easy to see why many seemingly unlikely organisations are keen to get involved in a commercially exploitable event.

But for those of us who understand that the October Revolution marks the first time in human history that the majority class (workers and peasants) took and held state power, this centenary holds a special significance. Hence the way in which we commemorate it is quite different, ideologically, from that of the British Establishment and its cultural institutions.

Thus, Marx Memorial Library (MML) was pleased to receive a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project examining the impact of the Russian Revolution enabling us to project a Marxist vision of the event. This includes a travelling exhibition (currently on display at MML), a website, publications and lectures.

The whole project is divided into integrated sections. The first covers the situation in Russia from 1917-22. This section includes Russia's participation in World War I (WWI); the two revolutions of 1917, the contrast between Menshevik and Bolshevik policy, especially relating to WWI; peace and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk; the civil war; wars of intervention and the founding of the Third International, which marked the final split between communists and social democrats.

We then examine the impact of the October Revolution in Britain and more briefly in other parts of Europe – in particular Hungary and Germany.

In the section on Britain, we contrast the hostility to the Bolsheviks displayed by the government, the capitalist class in general and the right-wing leadership of the labour movement with that of the mass of workers influenced by socialist ideas.

The former group supported WWI and were incensed by the Soviet withdrawal from it. They were even more enraged by the abolition of capitalism in Russia and the loss of their massive investments there.

In contrast, we examine left-wing

responses to the revolution and its aftermath citing archival sources from the British Socialist Party and its newspaper *The Call*; the People's Russia Information Bureau; and the Hands off Russia campaign, which opposed Britain's intervention on the side of the White armies in the civil war.

Finally, we appraise the formation of the Councils of Action. This organisation, by threatening a general strike, eventually forced the government to abandon its interventionist policy.

We have collected copious archive material and images from a range of sources including MML, RIA Novosti, the Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies and the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University. We are very grateful for their co-operation and generosity.

The most surprising fact about the Bolshevik Revolution is that it succeeded at all, given that 80% of the population of the Russian empire were peasants and mostly illiterate. In addition, Russia was heavily engaged on the Eastern Front in the inglorious WWI.

During the period between February and October 1917, the Bolsheviks were not initially in a majority anywhere, even in the soviets (workers' and soldiers' councils). Thus, they had only eight months to change things.

This change resulted in the almost entirely peaceful socialist October Revolution. Perhaps most remarkable of all is the fact that the revolution survived five years of civil war and foreign intervention. The revolution, its impact and its aftermath, is truly inspirational. We should certainly celebrate, study and, above all, learn from it.

It is to be hoped that all the elements of this project will assist in this process and help inspire confidence in the potential power of workers today.

events include:

- SCRSS, London: Exhibition 16-26 June. Lecture by Mary Davis, 23 June
- British Library, London: Lecture on Sylvia Pankhurst and the revolution by Mary Davis, 10 July
- Modern Records Centre, Warwick: Exhibition 25 September- 13 October
- PRONI, Belfast: Exhibition 23-27 October. Lecture by Mary Davis on women in the revolution 25 October



not one day more!



Sylvia Pankhurst Annual Lecture Saturday 12 Aug.
7pm Wortley Hall Sheffield



NAW stall at the South Yorkshire Festival! Sunday 13 Aug. at 12 noon to 5pm Wortley Hall, Sheffield



Do you pay your NAW membership by standing order?

If you currently pay your NAW membership by standing order into our Co-operative Bank Account we would like you to cancel it and take out a new standing order into our new **Unity Trust** Bank Account:

**Account Number 20364894
National Assembly of Women
Sort Code 60-83-01**

Membership runs from 1st January to 31st December

Please consider making a regular monthly contribution to cover your membership fee plus a donation to the work of the NAW

what's on...

NAW Executive Committee meetings are open to all members. Dates are currently being finalised for 2017-18. If you would like to attend please contact the Secretary on naw@sisters.org.uk or at NAW, Bridge House, Newport Street, Hay on Wye, Powys HR3 5BG. A colour pdf of Sisters can be downloaded at www.sisters.org.uk

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*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)

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