

# Senior Reporter

News from the 60+ Council

**NUJ**  
NATIONAL UNION  
OF  
JOURNALISTS

## NPC in a black hole

Spring 2026



THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS' Convention (NPC) founded by trade union leader Jack Jones in 1979 has saved itself from the threat of insolvency by becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG).

Treasurer Steve Whitehead told a special biennial delegate meeting in London in February there was "no choice" because of the NPC's declining income from unions, little success from fundraising initiatives and the loss of £35,000 a year from Age UK - its main financial supporter. And they had "run out of time".

However, NUJ delegates were among a strongly-voiced minority of affiliates opposed to the move before details had been agreed about the CLG, including its structure, membership and fees. Many were angry they were being forced to vote before proposals from a "Next Steps" consultation (which the NUJ

*Continued on next page*

### FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Welcome to the latest edition of Senior Reporter, which has been produced by editorial team members Jenny Vaughan, Derek Forrest, Nicoletta Flessati, Jenny Sims and Jim Symons. We welcome articles (250 words max.) and letters (150 words max.) for publication. They should be sent to: [dereckforrest@gmail.com](mailto:dereckforrest@gmail.com)

**NPC protesters form new group**  
"I feel I've been robbed," said one of the NPC London region members who met to protest at the short notice given (less than a week) that their 26th March AGM had been cancelled.

The email from the region's chair, Bill Dale, also informed members that all the national officers had held a special meeting earlier in the month to discuss the resignation of their secretary, at which they had all resigned and all data and financial assets forwarded to the National Pensioners' Convention - in effect shutting down the region (in contravention of its constitution).

Since resigning, secretary Barry Todman, who cancelled this and all future meetings, has refused all requests from his nominated successor (unopposed) Gyta Nicola for the region's membership list and other documents.

Angry members turned up at the venue to find they could not gain access to the hall because of the cancellation. But they were able to then hold a meeting at Unison's HQ nearby and formed a new group, the NPC Solidarity Action Group.

Dale has since written: "To be clear, the Greater London Region has no serving officers and the region is 'mothballed' until such time as the directors of the company are in a position to begin dealing with the situation."

*Photograph © Amarjit Jammu*

## 'Crimes from another era' - an anti-Nazi memoir

RETIREMENT HAS ALLOWED ME to fulfil a promise to an old friend I had taught English to back in the 1960s.

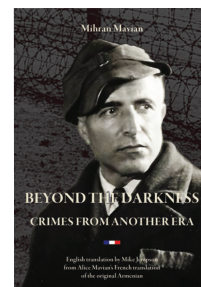
Alice Marietan died in 2024 soon after she approved my English version of her French translation of her father's Armenian memoir.

As a member of the French Resistance, Mihran Mavian survived three Nazi death camps and a death march to give evidence against his captors.

With the spectre of fascism currently haunting the streets of Europe and America, his story is a stark reminder of the depravity to which the Nazis sank.

Mihran was a Communist cobbler. He had survived the 1915 Armenian genocide as a teenager, and in the 1950s he was internally exiled by the French government.

The grimmest part of the book is set in Flossenbürg concentration camp near the Czech border. I visited it as part of my research. I also added more than 200 footnotes to the text for contemporary readers who might know little of the Armenian, German and French politics of the time. It was published by the Gomidas Institute on Holocaust Memorial Day 2026.



*Beyond the Darkness: Crimes from another era* by Mihran Mavian. Translated by Mike Jempson, £20 ISBN 978-1-909382-00-0. Available from: <https://www.gomidas.org/books/show/178>

MIKE JEMPSON

## Scottish television row

The NUJ and Scottish government have called on TV regulator Ofcom to reject plans by leading Scottish broadcaster STV for a news programme currently produced in Aberdeen for the north and north-east of Scotland to be presented from its Glasgow HQ. The plans are of particular concern for older people who are especially reliant on television for their news.

STV's move aims to save £2.5million (£200,000 losses were announced in the first six months of last year). Ofcom have yet to respond.

About the NUJ 60+ Council: <https://bit.ly/3021u5o>

## Righting wrongs for 3.5 million women



**WASPI chair Angela Madden accuses the government of ignoring “the harm and injustice suffered by millions of women”**

**Photo © WASPI**

IF UK GOVERNMENT MINISTERS thought their latest rejection of compensation for women affected by rises in state pension age would at least partially dampen campaigner’s spirits, they were mistaken.

Leaders of the WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) movement still have plenty of fire left in their bellies.

“Ministers have demonstrated their utter contempt for 1950s-born women, for parliament and for the parliamentary ombudsman,” fumed WASPI chair Angela Madden. She told Senior Reporter:

“The government kicked the can down the road for months, only to arrive at the

same conclusion it always wanted to. This is a disgraceful political choice by a small group of powerful people who have decided the harm and injustice suffered by millions of ordinary women simply does not matter.”

WASPI claims more than 3.5 million women who were born during the 1950s were not properly informed of a rise in state pension age designed to bring them into line with males.

Campaigners are taking legal advice in a bid to progress their case.

Angela told us: “All options remain on the table ... The parliamentary ombudsman says economic circumstances should not be used as an excuse to deny compensation. (It) has magically found billions to fund policies not made in their election manifesto, proving money can quickly become available if ministers consider something a priority.”

Determination to put right what is seen as an injustice is just as strong north of the border.

Linda Carmichael, co-chair of WASPI-Scotland, told Senior Reporter: “Our campaign is definitely not over and we are working with WASPI organisations throughout the UK in pressing for this injustice to be righted.

“We had a gathering outside Holyrood, followed by a meeting to which MSPs of every party were invited to meet with WASPI women from all over Scotland. Bill Kidd MSP secured a members’ debate in Holyrood on the WASPI issue, supported by Age Scotland.”

DEREK FORREST

*Continued from previous page*

responded to) had been published.

Under pressure, less than 24 hours before the meeting, the NPC published affiliates’ responses, enabling an NPC West Midlands member using AI to produce a summary and recommendations. It concluded: “If democracy, accountability and ... representation are weakened, members and organisations may disengage”.

Disengagement for the NUJ and other affiliates could mean leaving the NPC Company Limited by Guarantee. The NUJ could consider recommending NUJ branches affiliate to NPC regions. However, some regions have their own problems. (See picture and story on page 1)

The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) has pointed out the AGM has to be held by August, and currently the only people eligible to take part will be “the six individuals named as directors and members of the company as listed in the incorporation documents lodged with Companies House”.

The NPC CLG is now in a black hole. Openness, transparency, the publication of proposals for the structure of the CLG and a date set for a meeting to vote on it could help dig them out of it.

JENNY SIMS

## The pensions industry ‘needs to change’

**PENSIONS MINISTER TORSTEN BELL’S keynote speech at the TUC’s annual pensions conference on 4th March centred on the Pensions Schemes Bill, due to become law this year.**

The thrust of what he had to say was that to be more effective, the pensions industry needs to change. Smaller schemes should be amalgamated into larger ones, and give better value to their members. The purpose of a pension scheme, he said, is to provide an income in retirement – the existing system, put in place by the Conservatives, is essentially a savings scheme, with different priorities.

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20-million-workers-set-to-benefit-from-new-pension-schemes-bill>

The speech concentrated on workplace rather than state pensions. But the WASPI issue was raised from the floor. While clearly not satisfying the questioner, Torsten Bell gave an undertaking that any major changes would be flagged up more thoroughly in future.



**Pensions minister Torsten Bell**  
© House of Commons/Roger Harris

Torsten Bell told the conference that the Pensions Schemes Bill has the aim of making it easier for “millions of people across the UK ... to manage and get more “from their pensions”.

Independent pensions researcher Daniela Silcock emphasised the importance of pension scheme members becoming involved as lay trustees (younger ones as well as older) – the money involved belongs to the scheme’s members after all.

Lay trustees can be more imaginative about investments and get away from repeatedly doing things as they’ve always been done.

Echoing Torsten Bell, she emphasised that “a pension scheme is not just a ‘financial product’ – it belongs to its members.” See her report at :

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/member-voice-pension-scheme-governance>

JENNY VAUGHAN

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## Call for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

SPEAKING AT THE TUC Pensions Committee on 4th December, Ken Bluestone, from Age International outlined the need for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. Age International says: “In 2050, more than 2.1 billion people will be over 60 years old ... Yet older people worldwide are being subjected to daily violations of their .most basic rights”.

Ageism, he said, is endemic and attitudes need to be reframed. See: <https://www.ageinternational.org.uk/how-to-help/campaign-for-older-people/the-campaign-for-a-convention-on-the-rights-of-older-persons/>

## Pensions in Europe – how does the UK compare?

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED in comparing the UK state pension (and the minimum retirement age) with that of other European countries, a recent article in the Guardian pointed out some similarities and some differences. See:

[https://www.theguardian.com/money/2025/dec/29/pensions-timebomb-europe-social-contract-becoming-unsustainable?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2025/dec/29/pensions-timebomb-europe-social-contract-becoming-unsustainable?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)