

Interns' cashback

Since London Freelance Branch initiated the NUJ Cashback for Interns campaign, launched in early October, it has been causing quite a stir in the media world – in for example, *Media Guardian* (<http://interns.notlong.com>). Several former interns have already come forward to claim their earnings, with NUJ assistance. Fiona O'Cleirigh, one of the Cashback for Interns instigators, appeals to exploited interns to assert their rights.

DO YOU know anyone who has worked as a media intern in the last six years? If so, the NUJ may be able to help them claim back the National Minimum Wage (NMW). They could be entitled to up to £237 for every 40-hour week of the internship, if 21 or over.

The NUJ is launching a campaign to ensure that those starting out in the industry are paid a basic minimum wage. Anyone who has completed an internship within the last three months can claim the NMW through an Employment Tribunal, while in the county court there is a

six-year limit. NMW provisions do not apply to students on work experience placements, however.

The move to pursue the NMW is in line with the ruling of Reading Employment Tribunal in November 2009, which found in favour of a film



Nicola Vetta with BECTU's Assistant General Secretary Martin Spence

production intern. Nicola Vetta had agreed to work for expenses only. She later decided, with the help of the Broadcast, Entertainment and Cinema trade union BECTU, to claim back-dated NMW after the in-

ternship ended. The tribunal recognised that Vetta had been engaged as a worker, regardless of being designated an intern.

The NUJ would like to help other interns claim their entitlement, in conjunction with the union's legal team. An agreement to work for nothing, whether written or oral, will not affect an intern's statutory entitlement to be paid.

NUJ General Secretary Jeremy Dear says: "A campaign drawing together trade unions and other organisations opposed to this cheap labour merry-go-round is now essential and we will play our part in the campaign to bring exploitative employers to book."

Paid internships can provide valuable experience for those starting out in the industry, without exploitation. NUJ London Freelance Branch hopes to ensure that all future internships fall into this category. If you are an intern and would like the Union's assistance in claiming wages you may be owed, email interns@londonfreelance.org

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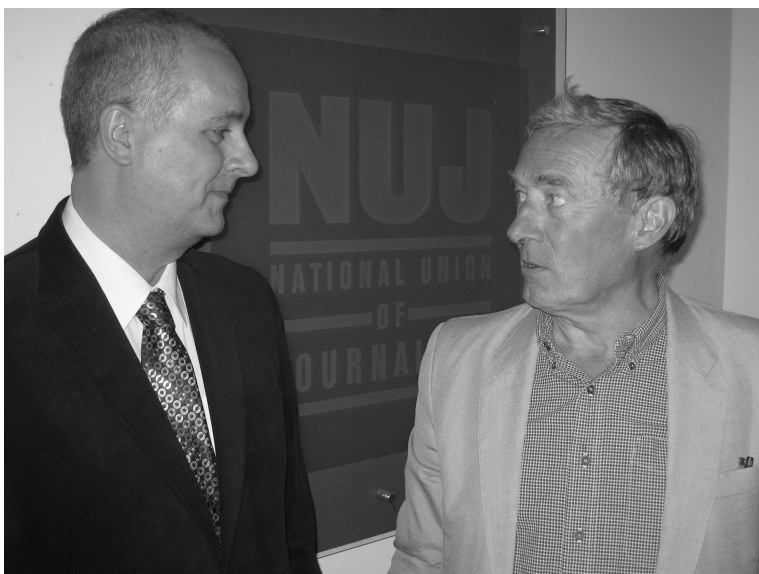
● There's a longer version online.

Al Jazeera freelances win paid time off

FREELANCES working for Al Jazeera have had their holiday pay restored after NUJ intervention. The company wrote to freelances and told that as they are self-employed they were not entitled to paid holiday.

The NUJ's Freelance Office responded by spelling out the definition of "worker" and explained that the freelances, all of whom work shifts, meet the definition.

Al Jazeera resisted at first, but we have to assume they took legal advice, as they then presented the freelances with a written contract acknowledging they are "workers" and giving them 12.1 per cent uplift on their hourly rate.



Is coalition government the end of spin? Nicholas Jones (right) a former BBC political correspondent who writes on party political PR and spin, was guest speaker at a joint meeting of Press & PR and London Freelance Branches in September at NUJ HQ. He spoke on his new book *Campaign 2010: The Making of the Prime Minister*. Also speaking was Iain Dale (left), political blogger, radio presenter, and publisher of *Total Politics* magazine.

Image © Mick Holder

The FA Premier League Licensing Scheme

THE NUJ is considering the potential for a complaint over the football Premier League licensing scheme.

The licences are issued (or denied) by Football DATACO Ltd, which acts as agent for the Premier

League. To make a case we need to produce evidence of the extent of the problem.

If we can collect enough evidence, we would then raise a complaint with the Office of Fair

Trading. Photographers whose applications have been rejected should answer the questions at www.londonfreelance.org/premierleague – your responses will be forwarded to the Freelance Office.