



Following Delegate Meeting, the union has a full work programme ahead and branches can play a full role in its plan for a vigorous recruitment drive and participate in its campaigns.

The messages of racist hate sent via social media to three black English footballers were beyond disgusting – fortunately many others took to the same platforms to pay tribute and offer solidarity to Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka.

Many journalists can sympathise from their own experience of being the target of abuse from people all too often hiding under the cowardly cloak of anonymity. A recent survey of more than 900 journalists carried out in 125 counties by Unesco found nearly three-quarters of female journalists had experienced online hostility of some sort, while a quarter had been threatened with sexual violence and death.

Filipina journalist Maria Ressa was receiving 90 hate messages an hour on Facebook alone and Ghada Oueiss, an Al Jazeera Arabic presenter, was getting at least one death threat every day she was on air. The UN report, *The Chilling*, said the intent is to “belittle, humiliate, shame, induce fear, silence and discredit” women and to chill their active participation in debate. The NUJ’s survey of members elicited a similar response.

Patricia Devlin, who the union has supported following numerous online death threats and vile abuse, will be sharing her experience with a meeting of the government’s National Committee for the Safety of Journalists this month, alongside three other journalists in a session I’ll be facilitating. The NUJ’s is also part of a sub-committee driving forward the committee’s action plan, so members will be hearing more about this important work in the coming

weeks and months. Part of that work will also be exerting pressure on the government to make the tech giants, which make billions from the very same platforms where these threats and abuse are found, remove this material as soon as it appears, or else receive punitive fines.

In this month’s NUJ Branch, former George Viner Memorial Fund scholar Nabil Mehdinejad explains how his bursary from the NUJ charity enabled him to take a journalism MA at City University and go on to make documentary videos shortlisted for awards. The fund was set up to broaden the diversity of journalists working in the British and Irish media and has been the backbone of the NUJ’s work to put its collective commitment to diversity and representation into practice. And it remains vital work

Latest figures from the National Council for the Training of Journalists show that our newsrooms comprise 92 per cent journalists from white ethnic groups. So much more needs to be done to encourage journalism students from a greater range of backgrounds. Nabil told NUJ Branch that when he started his course he was immediately realised how few students did not share his background and was even told that he sounded like Ali G. But he soon proved he could prosper and believes he can offer a different perspective when covering stories. The deadline for this year’s applications to the fund is Monday 19 July, so if you know someone who would benefit, make sure they apply now.

Branches are being encouraged to get involved in the union’s Hands Off Channel 4 campaign. The government’s



proposal can be seen only as an ideological attack on the public service broadcaster. In the government’s own terms it has successfully fulfilled its remit to show innovative programmes and champion unheard voices. And Channel 4 News’ mantelpiece is groaning with awards. Leeds branch, where the station has its headquarters, has already started to contact local MPs, mayors and trade councils. C4 has a base in Bristol and also Glasgow, which has a thriving indie production sector. C4 as a publisher/broadcaster has invested in hundreds of these companies and has acted as a catalyst to the creative sector – find out more about how we can collectively do battle to secure its future on page 5.

Global press freedom was a major DM topic and the shocking shooting of Dutch investigative journalist Peter R de Vries, the reports of intimidation of journalists in India, Belarus and Afghanistan show just how important it is to show solidarity with sister unions in these countries. This month’s issue provides a plan for branches to organise their efforts.

In Solidarity

Michelle Stanistreet

BRANCH

02

Dates for your calendar



Use the union's significant anniversaries and dates to provide ideas for meeting topics, debates and to choose guest speakers

2021

The UK will host the 26th **UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)** in Glasgow from 1-12 November. Make the topic of the month promoting green unions and branches and campaigning for local policies to combat the climate emergency.

International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

is Tuesday 2 November. About two journalists a week are killed doing their job but there will not be a successful prosecution in nearly nine in 10 cases. Link up with the International Federation of Journalists' campaign and hold a fundraiser for its safety fund: <https://www.ifj.org/safety-fund.html>, or commemorate the life of a named journalist - say Maltese journalist, Daphne Caruana Galizia, or Irish reporter, Veronica Guerin.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is Thursday 25 November. Good reporting can play a vital role in increasing understanding of violence against women and by holding governments to account for

their responses to the issue. For 10 ways to take action, see: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/11/compilation-take-action-to-help-end-violence-against-women>

2022

International Women's Day is Tuesday 8 March. Last year NUJ women spoke about why the NUJ was important to them. Invite one of them along or ask one of your members to lead a discussion on why women need a voice in the media... and the workplace. <https://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/international-women-s-day-2021.html>

World Book and Copyright Day on April 23 is a celebration of books and reading and an opportunity to recognise the rights of writers and creators. Invite a local author or publisher, or run a workshop on protecting copyright.

Workers' Memorial Day is on Thursday 28 April. More people are killed at work than in wars. Join the NUJ's Health and Safety Council and the TUC in promoting the union's health and safety campaigns. <https://www.tuc.org.uk/wmd>

World Press Freedom Day is on Tuesday 3 May. It is a time to think about journalists, editors, photographers and publishers who are being harassed, attacked and killed worldwide. Choose a country where press freedom is under attack and find a relevant speaker. <https://www.ifj.org/>

Mental Health Awareness Week is from 13 to 20 May. The NUJ's Disabled Members' Council and Health and Safety Committee say reports of members experiencing mental distress at work are increasing. Set up a branch wellbeing session with NUJ Training at nujtraining@nuj.org.uk and go to the website for resources <https://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/mental-health-week-2021.html>

Pride. Find out when your town or city celebrates Pride week or weekend and use it as a hook to promote LGBT+ union campaigns.

NUJ charities: Learn more about the work of NUJ Extra, the union's welfare charity, or invite one of the George Viner Memorial Fund scholars to tell members how their bursary provided a springboard for their career.

Email campaigns@nuj.org.uk if you need help finding speakers or materials.

The right to disconnect

Laura Bambrick, head of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' social policy, explains the new code in Ireland designed to counter the always-on culture



Work-life balance has always been a priority for trade unions; the eight-hour day campaign was one of our earliest and most far-reaching achievements.

In recent years, however, the short working day has come under threat from an always-on culture – a boom in employment contracts that require workers to be available on demand – and advances in communication technology.

While the push from unions around the world for a “right to disconnect” from work-related calls, email and other electronic messages out of hours pre-dates the pandemic, the huge swathes of workers suddenly thrust into remote working has catapulted the issue up the political agenda. Much of the same technology that enables us to work from anywhere, makes us reachable at any time.

When the occasional intrusion on a worker’s personal time becomes the norm, it becomes a health and safety concern. An overtired worker

is a danger to themselves and others. It was in recognition of this that existing EU legislation regulating working hours and rest periods was introduced. But these decades-old protections have not kept pace with new technology and modern work practices.

The Irish Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect was developed in consultation with trade unions and business representatives and came into effect in April this year.

There are three elements: the right of an employee to not have to routinely perform work outside their normal working hours; the right to not be penalised for disconnecting; the duty to respect another person’s right to disconnect [<https://bit.ly/3xkdQ4S>].

The code allows for legitimate situations that may occasionally arise when it is necessary to contact staff or work out of hours to meet the operational needs of a business as set out in an employee’s contract of employment. It also recognises flexible working is highly prized by workers.

It requires employers to engage

with their employees or union reps to tailor a right-to-disconnect company policy to the needs of the business and its workforce. It provides for reviews, equality checks, training, and raising concerns both informally and formally.

While failure by an employer to follow the code is not an offence, it is legally admissible in evidence in any proceedings a worker takes relating to their working hours.

The code is not without its critics. Some argue it goes too far – that it will stifle flexible working and deter investment from American multinationals.

Others claim it does not go far enough – that it falls short of the French exemplar of including this right in primary legislation.

Time will tell. Trade unions will be closely monitoring its operation. For now, our priority is to ensure its full and proper implementation in workplaces as part of our pushback against the chipping away of work-life balance.

• **Sign the TUC right to disconnect petition: <https://bit.ly/3hJu3vb>**

CAMPAIGN

04

Hands off Channel 4



Broadcasting organiser, Paul Siegert, examines the government's plan to flog off the station

If you enjoy Googlebox, Bake Off, It's a Sin, the Para Athletics or as a news junkie Channel 4's award-winning, hour-long news programme, then you will know the station will soon be celebrating its 40th birthday.

Or will it? Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden wants to move Channel 4 into private ownership. The broadcaster, set up in 1982, does not cost the taxpayer a penny, it derives its income from advertising and any profit is ploughed back into

the programmes it commissions. It spends half of its money outside London and has a new headquarters in Leeds.

The broadcasting watchdog, Ofcom, reported that it performed well and "regular viewers of Channel 4 value its offering as one that is high-quality and that demonstrates creativity... and Channel 4 outperformed the other public sector broadcast (PSB) channels in tackling issues that other broadcasters would not." Importantly it is boosting its digital offering on All 4 and last year increased its digital advertising revenues by 11 per cent.

So, if it isn't broke why fix it? John Whittingdale, minister of state for media and data, claims a new model of ownership is needed so Channel 4 can compete against the likes of Netflix and Disney+. But the whole point is that the station doesn't have to. Its job is to provide the sort of UK programming that a US-owned broadcasting behemoth has no interest in producing. Its job is to nurture home-grown TV stars, commission quirky, UK-based series, niche interests and sports. The government isn't going to

make a killing on the sale. Channel 4 does not have a programme library and most of its programme rights are held by its main suppliers - the independent producers who say the station has invested in hundreds of production companies and acted as a "catalyst for generations of entrepreneurs".

It seems completely counterintuitive, when there is the strongest evidence possible for a home-grown PSB which can connect with all citizens in the UK, to put it in a position where it could be sold off to a foreign owner.

The privatisation proposal was announced as part of a White Paper on the future of broadcasting to be published this autumn. Some of the ideas make sense, such as ensuring UK PSBs are given prominence on online platforms and smart TV guides, and plans to make the tech platforms take on the duties of traditional broadcasters in terms of accuracy, impartiality and not causing harm and offence. But privatisation of Channel 4 makes no sense at all.

Get your branch organised to lobby your local MP or mayor or get your local newspaper to back the campaign.

Consultation launched on potential change of ownership of Channel 4: <https://bit.ly/2UvUuLj>

Action

Send your MP the NUJ C4 briefing and ask them to lobby to save the station from privatisation: <https://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/nuj-briefing-on-proposed-privatisation-of-channel-4-1.html>

Ask your MP to sign the C4 early day motion 165:

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58608>

DIVERSITY



George Viner Memorial Fund

How the bursaries for black and minority ethnic students can make dreams come true

Nabil Mehdinejad mixes a mean cocktail. His tequila-based Blood on the Leaves, with its secret beetroot powder ingredient, has won him kudos among exotic drink aficionados.

But now he is being nominated for awards in another industry.

His video, *The currency of culture*, put him on the shortlist at the Royal Television Society's awards last month and he is up for Student Journalist of the Year at the Independent Radio News awards, winners will be announced on 15 July. In 2019, his film *Legitimising Inequity* took first place at the London Student Film Festival.

It was thanks to the NUJ's George Viner Memorial Foundation charity that he was able to start his career in journalism. It provided a bursary towards his Broadcasting Journalism MA which he studied at London's City University.

It came about after he attended the NUJ's event, An Evening with Gary Younge, then with The Guardian. Gary, now an NUJ Member of Honour and professor of sociology at the University of Manchester, was a hero of Nabil's for his writing in The

Guardian and books on civil rights and race.

Nabil said: "He said lots of encouraging things to me when I got chatting with him after he signed his book for me. I then got talking to BBC journalist, Saadeya Shamsuddin, who answered my questions about the George Viner scheme and encouraged me to apply."

Saadeya was a George Viner scholar in 2008 and has been a great supporter of the charity which was set up to broaden the diversity of journalists working in the British and Irish media.

Nabil never imagined he would have ever been a journalist. He said: "I thought you had to be from Cambridge or Oxford universities. I'm also dyslexic and have other learning difficulties but I was always interested in storytelling and even as a young teen I would be in the school library reading the papers and current affairs publications like The Economist."

After leaving school Nabil went into the hospitality industry, working for two years

at The Savoy and in a number of Michelin-star restaurants. He took a part-time job with the Royal Mail so he could complete his undergraduate degree at University of London's Birkbeck college, but it was the final year module on 'journalism and conflict' that interested him most.

It hasn't been ideal taking his journalism masters during the pandemic, but he has had plenty of work experience, shifts with Sky News and ITN among others, and had "heaps" of interviews. His ambition now is to be a producer in the newsroom, maybe on the foreign desk, and to uncover injustices.

Action

Invite a George Viner scholar to your branch meeting.

Contact GeorgeViner@nuj.org.uk

Make a regular donation to the charity:
<https://bit.ly/3hJalsH>

Encourage young black and minority ethnic would-be journalists to apply to the scheme.

Selling the union

John Millington describes the work of the union's Public Relations & Communications Branch



The NUJ is the union for press officers, public relations officers, communications specialists, in-house journal editors and editorial professionals in a wide range of related roles.

Prior to the pandemic, the PR & Comms branch had established a core committee, issued regular newsletters and was having monthly quorate meetings – a significant improvement on previous years. Our website was rebuilt and is now meets modern and professional standards and publishes blog postings from officers and lay members [<https://nujprcbranch.co.uk/>]

Since the pandemic even the most technophobic of us have had no choice but to embrace Zoom and other video-calling services to conduct meetings and social events.

As branch chair, I was concerned that Zoom meetings would present another barrier to participation, yet it led to an upsurge in attendance – with numbers sometimes doubling and new members becoming more involved.

The branch recently agreed to donate £500 to the union's welfare charity, NUJ Extra, to help

colleagues who were having a tough time because of Covid-19. We have put on a series of events with speakers talking about analytics and influencing in the PR and marketing world, among other topics.

{PR&C}

As part of trying to be professionally relevant to our members, we have a standing item on the agenda dedicated to discussing workplace issues.

When I go to media awards ceremonies or professional events for the NUJ, I always assume colleagues know almost nothing about the union. As well as explaining the list of benefits of membership, I always ask: "Would you drive a car without insurance?" Rhetorically I answer, "No of course not, because you might have an accident." I finish by asking: "So why would you go to work without insurance when you could be disciplined or face the sack?"

Everyone is at different stages in their relationship with the NUJ. Some people are prospective

members, some have just joined, and others are active reps and branch officers. The branch provides advice for workplace issues and we have trained caseworkers who, day jobs allowing, accompany members to meetings with management.

The branch is responsible for the union's code of ethics for PR and communications workers. The guidelines are not a set of rules, but an outline of the principles of good public relations. They promote the highest professional and ethical standards and support those working in professional PR and communications roles if they are faced with difficult choices [<https://nujprcbranch.co.uk/code-of-ethics/>].

Our most recent branch speaker Ella Minty spoke at length about trust in our industry and how we maintain and, in some cases, regain it in our workplaces. This feeds directly into the third principle in our code of ethics which is that we should not disseminate false or misleading information. It is both a practical and ethical guide.

Organising, recruiting and, most importantly, retention is the name of the game for everyone in the union and identifying workplace issues that can be collectivised will be key to upping membership figures and participation.

TRAINING

07

Reporting trauma

Former BBC journalist, Jo Healy, explains how her course can help journalists when interviewing vulnerable people



Across three decades of covering people's sensitive stories for newspapers, radio and TV, I have delved into the homes and lives of hundreds of people whose emotions were shredded – ordinary people to whom something extraordinarily bad or difficult had happened.

As reporters, we work closely with victims, survivors and interviewees who are emotionally vulnerable: grieving parents, orphaned children, survivors of rape, abuse and torture, people violated and attacked, people who've lost homes and livelihoods. More recently we have had to report on people affected by the pandemic and the stories of those involved in the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements.

We aren't there to hold people to account, but to hear their stories and represent what they say in the best way possible.

A few years back, I took a good hard look at what we do daily, not only at how vulnerable our contributors are but also how unprotected we and, indeed, our employers, were should

it all go badly wrong. I approached people who had chosen to share their painful experiences with reporters. I asked them to tell me what was helpful, unhelpful, comforting or damaging when working with journalists. Their responses were an eye-opener. Generously, many went on film to share constructive insights.

They were able to help me put together a Continuing Professional Development-accredited course on Trauma Reporting which I recently held for NUJ Training Wales. I address what we as journalists actually do when a tragic story breaks and apply trauma awareness and good practice at each step of the way. The expectation is journalists leave with a much clearer idea of how to go about covering these tough emotional stories and how they can cope themselves after hearing witnesses' harrowing and upsetting accounts. Always check the

facts; inaccuracy will cause distress. Take time. Even if your deadline is pressing, don't look as if you can't wait to rush off.

Melody is a survivor of child sexual abuse. She waived her right to anonymity when her stepfather was jailed for 18 years. Via my Trauma Reporting training, she shared her experiences of working with reporters. She told me: "As a child victim, I had no power. Being interviewed, I felt I was back as a vulnerable child having to relive it again. Through your training programme, I can share with journalists the need to give people like me choice, control and connection."

Info

Jo's website:
<https://traumareporting.com/>

Six-point guide for reporting domestic violence <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/ejn-launches-six-point-guide-for-journalists-reporting-domestic-violence>

Reporting on sexual violence in conflict:
<https://www.coveringcrsv.org/>

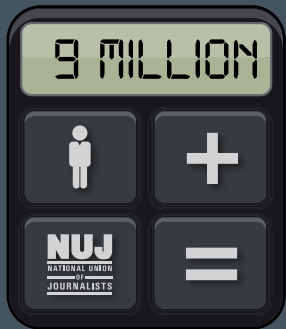
REASONS TO JOIN



The National Union of Journalists

Is the voice of journalism in the UK and Ireland for all media, communications and PR workers. It represents staff and freelances working in newspapers, news agencies, broadcasting, magazines, online, book publishing, social media, copy writing and as photographers and illustrators.

The NUJ supports members throughout their professional careers, provides a collective voice for industrial issues and freelance rights and defends press freedom.



Pay

It pays to be in the NUJ. In the past year – in deals that exclude collective pay awards – the NUJ secured more than £9million for its members; that's £25,000 every single day. The union negotiates on pay, freelance rates, pension terms, salary structures and paid holidays. It pursues companies over copyright infringements and non-payment of wages and fees. It wins equal pay cases and backdated salary, pension contributions, and pay-rises.



Ending the Gender Pay Gap

A Press Gazette analysis showed that 91 per cent of UK media companies paid men more than women and 85 per cent of men got better bonuses and it's a similar picture in Ireland. One magazine group's gap was almost 37 per cent. Opaque, unfair pay structures and unlawful sex discrimination are contributing factors. The NUJ negotiates on transparent pay structures, progressive work-life balance policies, better maternity and paternity deals and fair recruitment procedures.

Press Freedom

The NUJ lobbies for journalists' rights so you can protect your sources, have editorial independence and do your job safely and freely, without censorship from the state. As a member of the International Federation of Journalists we are part of a 600,000-strong community working to ensure the safety of media workers across the globe, fighting for freedom of information, open government and plurality of the media.



Ethical Journalism

The NUJ's code of conduct sets the benchmark for the profession's standards. The NUJ stands for responsible reporting and ethical behaviour across the media and public relations. It argues for press plurality, journalists' rights and supports public interest and investigative journalism. Democracy, whether at a local or international level, depends on a media that is trusted and properly resourced – and a union which fights for it.



Be Part of a Collective Voice

As a member of the NUJ you are part of a united force championing the rights of media workers and defending attacks on press freedom. Successful workplaces are those where the management and workers share the same aims and talk to each other. Being a member of the NUJ means giving yourself and colleagues a real voice at work.



Respect at Work

The NUJ challenges work cultures which lead to bullying and harassment. It will represent you if you experience this behaviour. It uses its collective voice industry-wide to argue that media workers are treated with respect. We promote workplaces where workers and managers are constructive with their criticism during the creative process, and the union publishes codes of conduct and dignity at work policies.

Are you keeping good company?

Join the NUJ today at

nuj.org.uk/join

You can contact the NUJ at:

info@nuj.org.uk

or for membership queries at:

membership@nuj.org.uk

Tel: 020 7843 3700

Follow: @nujofficial on Twitter

NUJ
NATIONAL UNION
OF
JOURNALISTS

www.nuj.org.uk