

# Street campaigning ideas

● Martin Hogbin

**Street campaigning has become a visual event enabling people to get high media coverage with innovative ideas and actions.**

The visual images too often are the police charging in full riot gear or protesters being carried away. Certainly the press in Europe runs these pictures time and time again. Seldom do we see the peaceful side of any protest, it just does not make good copy.

For this reason I suggest to you that the picture we need to generate must therefore be new and exciting. How you ask? Words on placards and banners if funny, hard hitting or clever invariably get some pictures. The bigger the banner, the bigger the attraction. Get thinking: what is popular in your area? Use it to make a play on words. The more exotic the location your banner is displayed the better.

One of my best media days for a banner happened when two campaigners climbed into the entrance way of a government department and unfurled a huge banner. It was probably as much the event as the fact that one of the protestors was a very pretty young woman that caught the press imagination. The next day newspapers were full of pictures. Is my advice to only use pretty girls? Well!!!!

On a more serious note: remember to always consider the safety of yourself and others. Good training and good preparation prevents accidents.

So how do you easily and quickly make a huge banner?

It is very easy. Get a huge piece of material, paint, a paint tray and roller and use that to create your letters. A little practice and layout skill will soon see you creating a banner of envy to others. Mixing pva with emulsion or poster paint can generate a cheap waterproof paint with high sticking power.

Watch out on windy days! To combat negative wind interference, consider cutting a series of small holes in your banner to reduce wind resistance (not so many your banner falls to pieces though!)

## Puppets (again!)

Why not try to make a puppet of your "favourite" politician. A large balloon inflated and covered in paper-mâché is the basic head of any puppet. Look for the distinguishing features of your chosen subject and exaggerate them. As a last resort you can always paste a picture of your targeted bad guy on the model.

Once the head is created drape material from the neck to the



ground, leaving plenty of room to enable you to walk, get under the puppet and most importantly, see. You can raise the head on bamboo poles or similar to give your puppet height and these must be secured to some arrangement to take the weight around either around your waist or on your shoulders. I have found an old backpack works really well for this.

A four metre Tony Blair often attracts attention here in London. Try it with one of your "favourites".

Campaigning for me must be fun as well as carrying an important message. I hope you can get your message across during your arms trade actions, whether at DSEI or beyond.

Have some fun at the bad guys expense and affect some change.

Martin Hogbin is the campaigns coordinator for Campaign Against Arms Trade

Notes: for detailed diagrams for making giant puppets, see previous PN tools section at <http://www.peace-news.info/media/tools/download.php?id=23> this is a two-page pdf document and includes excerpts from a very comprehensive puppet website and guide on how to construct large puppets for use on demos, street protests etc. Includes step-by-step diagrams and instructions.

For top tips on banner making (and other campaigning tips) see <http://www.eco-action.org/rr/ch3.html> or <http://www.carbusters.org/magazine/no8.php#regular3>

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# tools

