

After collecting a number of actions (5 to 10 should be enough), add to each piece of paper, in a different colour, brief descriptions of what the 'message' that each action was setting out to give, either explicitly or implicitly: What's the story going to look like? How would the action or activity have been 'read'? What is the message?

Now, turn to the spectrum. Explain that the group has to place the different actions and activities on the spectrum, depending on how 'core' the message being given is to their campaign, and how 'newsworthy' that particular action has been (or could be) seen in the eyes of the media. Encourage debate, discussion and specificity. Hopefully, you will have a broad spread across the spectrum, of different activities with different messages. Use the results to reflect on the group's activities, how attractive their actions might be to the media, and how they could adapt their actions to make them more so.

■ Is the group putting media energy into 'core message' actions that are not newsworthy? What could the group do to make the action more newsworthy?

■ Are there any 'newsworthy' actions which are not carrying the 'core message'? In what way could the group make sure that their core messages are being heard in these types of actions?

■ Is the group trying to get coverage of any actions that are neither newsworthy, nor core message? Why? Would their media activity be better placed elsewhere?

■ What about the 'newsworthy/core message' actions; What could the group learn from these? Are they getting the coverage the group would like? If not, this might mean they need to improve their media work.

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## Forum theatre

**Time:** minimum 45 minutes

### Goal or purpose:

■ To provide a forum for people to find solutions and invent new ways of confronting oppression.

■ To explore and analyse different options in an oppressive situation.

### How it's done/facilitator's notes:

Forum Theatre is a form of role playing that can be used for public action or in training. The basic idea is to act out a scenario – which perhaps leads to an undesirable conclusion or violence – and then do the scenario again. The second time, either a participant in the role play or any other observer can shout 'freeze', and take over a role in the scenario to try to do something differently. The second time new players act out the scenario from the beginning. When the role play is

Nonviolence

Power and nonviolence  
Conflict  
Violence

Strategy

Education is freedom: popular  
education

Nonviolent actions

Dilemma actions  
Working in groups

Training

Role playing

interrupted with 'freeze', the role play stops, then resumes at the same point with someone doing the newly suggested action.

### ***A short forum theatre***

(There can be much more involved scenarios with many more players; here is a simple plot to begin with.)

**Cast:** two group members, one official, one official's receptionist

**Plot:** Two members of your group visit a relevant state official to report an act of violence against your group. The trainer might identify the official and attackers more specifically according to the situation. It is unclear whether there was collaboration between the police and whoever attacked your group. Before entering the office, the group members decide what documentation they have about the attack and what they are actually wanting to achieve. The official is briefed on the attitude to take (ranging from generally sympathetic through feigning that they will take it seriously, to outright hostility and counter-attacking on the provocative nature of the group) and also on motives (desire to keep group quiet, to find out as much about them as possible). The official should start by doing something to wrong foot the group and taking the initiative themselves (at least telling them how busy they are, and perhaps asking to see their identity cards). The official should also consider doing something friendly, or scary – friendly would be reminiscing about their activist youth, claiming friendship with parents of some group members: frightening would be showing knowledge of private lives of group members. Note in replaying the scenario, the official can introduce new challenges.

### **Discussion points:**

- What were reasonable objectives? How could they take the group take the initiative in the situation?
- How much did they want to divulge about the group and its members? Were they putting other group members or their families at risk?
- If they convinced the official to promise to do something, how could they firm that up into an agreement and make sure it was done? How could they have prepared better for this visit?

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