

LEGO blocks adverts on Daily Mail

[Jack Harmsworth](#) provides insight into the influence businesses' interests have over the messages sent out by the media as LEGO withdraws its advertising through The Daily Mail

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Image: Pixabay

The tabloids have long been seen as a powerful source of hate-filled propaganda by more liberal observers in the UK. In the past year alone, tabloids have doubled their vitriol over events such as the migrant crisis, IS terror and Brexit.

However, the power of such newspapers to preach hatred may soon be about to decline due to the growing social media campaign group 'Stop Funding Hate'. This group is targeting the tabloids' reliance on advertising funds to put an end to their unacceptable journalism.

The campaign group argue that the tabloid press have created a divisive narrative. That it is the weak who are to blame for your economic woes. That it is the Filipino nurse, Polish fruit picker or Arab neighbour who is to blame and not the multinational companies avoiding billions in taxes, nor unscrupulous landlords or a government destroying workers' rights through acts such as the Trade Union Bill. Supposedly this perfectly suits a press that is embedded with the government and run by a select few billionaires with an agenda to deflect investigative journalism from the powerful. This has left a 'free press' in the UK with only one national newspaper that could be legitimately described as 'left wing', (*The Guardian*) compared to five right-wing national newspapers.

The tabloids' vitriol reached a crescendo recently when *The Daily Mail* branded three High Court judges as "Enemies of the People". Many argued that this front page echoed Nazi propaganda. As a result of this and general divisive journalism, the group 'Stop Funding Hate' has been formed to tackle tabloids by

targeting their funding. The campaign group scored its biggest victory last week, when *LEGO* took the executive decision to stop advertising in *The Daily Mail*.

The Danish company's revenue exceeds an impressive \$5.4bn, making it easily the largest toy company in the world. This is sure to deal a significant blow to a newspaper which has a history of running advertising campaigns with the newspaper including free giveaways of *LEGO* merchandise.

The campaign group have managed to achieve this victory through a concerted social media campaign that has involved the mass sharing of an emotive video. The short film pleads with companies to extol the virtues included in their Christmas adverts in relation to the press they advertise with.

Some celebrities such as Gary Lineker have also endorsed the movement. Lineker himself witnessed the power of the tabloid press first-hand after being hounded for suggesting that the covering of the migrant crisis had been without compassion but instead with themes of racism.

He has used his unique position as brand representative for *Walkers* crisps to promote ending their advertising in tabloids such as *The Sun*. The 'Stop Funding Hate' campaign is providing a serious challenge to the dominance of the tabloid press due to one single fact; they need advertising money. If enough like-minded liberal people desire the demise of hateful journalism, then the objective could credibly become a reality. This is all the more important in these politically turbulent times, where the press has such significant powers in agenda setting and influencing public opinion.

Ultimately, it will take more than liberals active on social media to end the reign of tabloid power. The readership itself will need to stop buying into their narratives. This last objective may prove to be a much harder task.



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