

TEN TURBULENT YEARS

A Review of the Work of the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

"We are mobilising for what, hopefully, will be the last great civil rights struggle, and those who oppose us will be swept from the stage of history and become mere shadows of the past." (Liam Maguire, 1981).

The Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People (DCDP) was the first organisation of its type to emerge in Britain. It was set up in 1981 - the International Year of Disabled People - the same year as the formation of the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP) and the Disabled Peoples' International (DPI). The Coalition has played an active part in the establishment of both of the latter bodies. This kind of commitment stems from a view that the lead in the developing struggle by disabled people for self determination and social emancipation must come from disabled people themselves.

It is only in recent years that disabled people have come to examine the history of their own oppression and the growth of their own organisations. Early examples of this emerging interest can be found in Britain (Pagel, 1988), and in the development of DPI (Dreidger, 1989). However, when the Derbyshire Coalition first started out it had no clear idea of its place in the historical progression of disability affairs. Convinced though it was that disabled people must speak for themselves through their own democratic organisations, the Coalition was only dimly aware that it was part of a gathering social movement.

Social movements occur when a large number of people make an effort to solve, collectively, a problem they feel they have in common (Toth, 1965) and become effective when they have an ideology (Hollander, 1981) and good organisation (Snow et al, 1981). In the case of disabled people, this developmental process has been particularly slow, and can be argued to have progressed through a number of phases over the course of a century. The Derbyshire Coalition has come towards the end of what, on these terms, has been a very long gestation period.

An insight into this developmental process was provided by the sociologist Ralph Turner, whose words ring a bell with disabled people in particular, when he says that:-

"A significant social movement becomes possible when there is a revision in

the manner in which a substantial group of people, looking at some misfortune, see it no longer as a misfortune warranting charitable consideration but as an injustice which is intolerable to society." (Mner, 1969, p.391).

We can now see that a notable revision in the way disabled people looked at their situation came when a Royal Commission, set up in 1886, enquired into the conditions of people with sensory impairments. It uncovered so many "misfortunes" in their social situation, that disabled people at that time felt that they had little choice but to unite in defence of their own interests. This early banding together has been noted as being the formation of :-

"...the first campaigning organisations controlled by disabled people. The British Deaf Association (formed 1890) and the National League of the Blind (formed as a registered Trade Union in 1899) were founded to give an effective voice to the complaints which blind and deaf people had against the neglect they continued to suffer." (Pagel, 1988).

Whilst disabled people, as isolated individuals, have always struggled to overcome often terrible adversities, this was clearly an historic step. Those involved had become conscious of the need to take collective, democratically organised action under their own control. In the years that followed, the League took the struggle out into the streets in marches and demonstrations. But it was not until after the Second World War that significant numbers of new organisations of disabled people began to appear.

This early phase in the slow, halting growth of the movement was characterised by its appeal to the better nature of able-bodied society, often through petitions to Parliament for more or better "welfare". However, this approach was radically transformed in the early 1970's with a new emphasis on demands for social change and civil rights. This change has been seen (Oliver, 1990, pp. 112 - 130) as placing the disabled people's movement among the "new social movements" which have emerged in the late twentieth century.

Certainly, the Derbyshire Coalition was born into this emerging new phase in the movement's development, and shares many of its beliefs and values. Along with other disabled people's organisations, much of the Coalition's philosophy and practice owes a good deal to the struggles of other social groups. This has been noted (De Jong, 1978) in the concerns of the "independent living movement" and its links in the USA with the civil rights movement and with social trends such as consumerism, self help, demedicalisation, deinstitutionalisation and normalisation.

Founder members of the Coalition had, in some cases, spent many years of their lives incarcerated in State institutions, and readily identified with the segregation and discrimination endured by other minorities. The influence of, and similarities in method and approach with the women's movement was also recognised. Much of what one of its advocates, Elizabeth Wilson, has expressed could easily have been written about the Derbyshire Coalition:-

"The women's movement started from the important idea that 'The personal is political' and with the practice of consciousness-raising in small groups. Consciousness-raising is a political activity. Women talk about their experiences and thereby come to understand that their problems which seemed personal to them and part of their individual inadequacies or neurosis, are actually a part of the way women are defined and oppressed " (Wilson, 1980, p.36).

This kind of influence, the general relevance of the struggles of one oppressed social group to another and the mutual debt of solidarity involved, was later to find expression in the Coalition's Policy Statement:-

"The Coalition expresses solidarity with the struggles of other socially disadvantaged groups in society and, in pursuing its own aims will at all times encourage the work of women, ethnic groups and other socially disadvantaged people." (DCDP, 1988).

In any discussion about the disabled people's movement, it is important to be aware of the basic distinction between organisations of and for disabled people. Organisations of have constitutions which require control to lie with disabled people. Organisations for do not require this and are most usually run by non-disabled people, occasionally with a token disabled person in visible prominence. As such, they are seen as being outside the disabled people's movement with, in many cases, practices are antagonistic to the movement's aspirations.

Since the formation of DCDP, BCODEP and DPI in the early eighties, the growth of organisations controlled by disabled people has accelerated sharply. In June of 1981, when the first meeting to explore support for BCODEP (then proposed as a National Council of Organisations of Disabled People) took place, only 16 organisations controlled by disabled people could be found in the country as a whole. Now, BCODEP has a membership of over 80 organisations across Britain, and DPI has a membership of over 70 national assemblies across five continents.

The tenacity with which disabled people have pursued their legitimate demands is reflected in the fact that DPI now has consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO and the International Labour Organisation. This contrasts sharply with the struggle by disabled people's organisations to gain acceptance here in Britain. In a recent DCDP Newsletter the Coalition noted that BCODP's membership had risen to 82 organisations representing over 150,000 members, and that the Government's budget for voluntary organisations concerned with disabled people was over £2 million, however:-

"Of this, only about £80,000 goes to organisations controlled by disabled people. The rest - a staggering £1,920,000 or 96% - goes to do-gooding organisations which do good to us whether we like it or not. One of these organisations, RADAR, gets a massive £225,000 or thereabouts for representing what it thinks disabled people want to the Government.... by comparison, the hue democratically organised voice of disabled people, BCODP, gets a mere £30,000 a year". (DCDP, 1991).

For all these disparities, there is no doubt that the disabled people's movement is now well under way, and the Derbyshire Coalition is very much in the thick of the struggle.

CHAPTER 2

THE LOCAL CONTEXT - THE GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT IN DERBYSHIRE

Quite separately from these wider developments, disabled people in Derbyshire had been gradually struggling to become active on their own account well before the Coalition was set up in 1981. As was the general pattern elsewhere, this experience was at first an individual one. Disabled people had been struggling against great difficulties to gain control over their lives and circumstances to do what often seemed the most everyday and commonplace things.

Some, who had been forced through lack of facilities to live for years in segregated institutions, had fought to find homes of their own in the community. Some had made their own way in life in the face of opposition from their over-protective families. Others had worked their way through to University or into employment despite a poor education in special schools or hospitals. One man had set himself up in business, after years of living in a Home. Such experiences were typical among those who later came together to found the Derbyshire Coalition.

Some of those who were involved had already been keen to play some part in community life, or to pass on the fruits of their personal experiences to other disabled people. Often enough, they had been "groping in the dark" to try and find a way of being more active. Since there were no groups of disabled people, usually they got involved with the traditional organisations for disabled people or other voluntary groups. Those concerned had a wide range of different impairments, some from birth others acquired later in life.

For the most part, all this individual activity stayed separate and fragmented. The traditional organisations for disabled people were not about promoting self-organisation, political awareness or control by disabled people over their own lives. Their main role was to alleviate the symptoms rather than remove the causes of disability. Often they dealt with disabled people's isolation by herding them together in fortnightly social clubs and taking them on occasional group outings to the seaside. Although this provided a limited form of social contact, it served to reinforce rather than remove the overall social isolation experienced by disabled people in the County.

However, one of the unintended consequences of bringing people together in the various segregated clubs and facilities in the County was a sharing of

individual experiences and a process of discovery of the things disabled people had in common. This developmental strand in the growth of the local movement was supplemented during the 1950's by influences coming from the national level. About this time, a Sherwood-Peak branch of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) was set up by people with visual impairments. Later, some of their members were also active in forming a Derby branch of the Disablement Income Group (DIG) in 1967 and this was followed by a separate NFB branch in Derby.

When a second DIG branch was set up in Erewash, contact between disabled people in different groups began to increase. An Old Students Association of Portland Training College for the Disabled was formed and run by local ex-students, a number of whom were to go on to form the Coalition. An even stronger influence from the new developmental phase of the disabled people's movement at national level began to be felt locally in 1974, when members of the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS) began to meet inside Cressy Fields, a County Council institution.

This gradual process of coming together was accompanied by a slow build up of confidence in the validity of personal experience of disability as being the only reliable basis for practical action. The personal had started to become political. This development was boosted when the 1970 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act - the so-called "Charter for the Disabled" - raised hopes of change which never materialised. For some, there was a crisis of confidence in the idea that disabled people's best interests were safe in able-bodied hands. As this political awareness grew, the local movement began to take shape.

In the mid-seventies, the need for a local specialist information service became clear, and this led to the formation of the first Disablement Information and Advice Line: DIAL Derbyshire. This service, run by disabled volunteers from a converted cloakroom inside Cressy Fields with a grant from Derbyshire County Council, was a milestone in the development of the local movement. It put two important things in the hands of disabled people: resources and information. By 1980, DIAL Derbyshire had handled some 5,000 queries and was intimately aware of local concerns, local issues and the aspirations of local disabled people. The disabled activists involved were able to speak with authority about local problems - and had also developed clear ideas about solutions.

DIAL Derbyshire had become a base, a focal point of disability activity, and it took the gradual process of disabled people "coming together", which had been developing for over 20 years, an important stage further. Its link with the local authority also helped to pave the way for more comprehensive developments which were to come.

CHAPTER 3

GETTING STARTED - THE FORMATION OF DCDP

During 1980, activists in DIAL were told of plans by Derbyshire Association for the Disabled (DAD), the main traditional organisation for disabled people in the County, for holding a Craft Competition and a Coffee Morning at Chatsworth House as their contribution to the International Year of Disabled People (IYDP) in the following year. These ideas were so at variance with the proclaimed Aims of IYDP that they sparked off a series of events which eventually brought the Derbyshire Coalition into being.

The first step was taken towards the end of 1980, when Derbyshire Social Services Department agreed to organise a "Derbyshire IYDP Conference" jointly with DIAL. This took place in February 1981 and was attended by 120 people concerned with disability, either from organisations or as individuals. The central theme of the Conference was the IYDP slogan "full participation and equality", the intention being to encourage people to think more deeply about the aims of IYDP and to come up with proposals which would help to achieve them in Derbyshire.

Throughout the Conference, speakers referred to the need for a new approach to solving the problems of disability which were caused by the way able-bodied people had structured the world to serve and perpetuate their own interests. The Conference Report records the keynote speaker, Mary Croxen, as saying that although we had all the necessary knowledge, technology and capacity to create an environment accessible to all, it was basic that we:-

"..respond to the need for prior consultation and participation with those who have direct experience of the daily reality of disability. We need to remove barriers at the design stage rather than indulge in expensive adaptations later. All involved in planning, constructing and using the built environment need to learn to work together if right of access - which is basic to integration - is not to remain the preserve of the able-bodied elite." (DCDP, 1982a).

The Conference decided that the best way forward was to form Britain's first disabled "consumer coalition" along the lines of those already well established in North America. A Steering Committee was formed there and then from the floor of the conference, and it was agreed that meetings should be held in different parts of the County in order to involve as many people as possible. The Committee was charged to work to the following principles and objectives:-

- *"to form a democratic, representative body.*
- *to serve all people with physical, sensory and mental impairments.*
- *to support/encourage the self-help and activity of disabled people.*
- *to seek the fullest possible involvement of non-disabled supporters.*
- *to work from the basis of direct experience of disability.*
- *to secure services for independent and integrated living.*
- *to ensure disabled people have control in matters which concern them."*

*(DCDP,
1986)*

Over the ensuing months, the Committee produced a draft Constitution for a democratically organized body under the control of disabled people, but which allowed any group or individual, whether disabled or able-bodied, to join and add their weight to the new organisation. In restricting only people who were themselves disabled to vote or hold office, the Steering Committee ensured that the Coalition would be the true voice of disabled people themselves.

The Committee also set in motion a number of other important developments in the course of setting up the Coalition. In order to ensure that disabled people had an effective voice, approaches were made to Derbyshire County Council for financial support. Members of the Steering Committee met senior officers and members of the Council, and grant aid of nearly £20,000 was eventually agreed in order to make it possible for the Coalition to rent an office and hire its own workers.

The County Council was also issued with a challenge by the Steering Committee to make a public pledge to disabled people in the International Year. A draft "Statement of Intent" was produced and this was later considered by each of the main departments and committees before a final version was approved by the full Council. This document was important in revealing to the Coalition the extent of the County Council's policies on disability issues.

The Steering Committee also set in motion a debate on Centres for Independent Living (CIL's). Papers were written and circulated at meetings on the philosophy and purpose of CIL's, which were already well established in the USA. An exploration began of the issues involved in seeking to develop such a Centre in the different context of Britain's Welfare State. This debate helped the Coalition to give a high profile to the idea of a completely new approach to the way services were designed, delivered and controlled in the County.

As arrangements were being made for the Inaugural Meeting of the Coalition on

12th December 1981, an accessible office had been found in Clay Cross and Job Descriptions prepared for its first two employees. After its inauguration, the first Coalition in Britain emerged in good shape, and well prepared to meet the challenges which were to come.

CHAPTER 4

QUESTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND PRACTICE

The Coalition was thus carefully planned as a democratic, grass roots organisation, able to give a voice to all its members. It was also determined to embrace all impairments, a decision which stemmed from a belief in the effectiveness of people with different impairments pooling experiences and acting together in pursuit of Coalition objectives. Its members wanted DCDP to seek to increase collaboration between people in the County with many different impairments, something which had already been reflected in the composition of the first elected members of its governing Council.

The importance of this policy, both in terms of the development of the Coalition itself as well as the wider movement, lay in breaking down the historical tendency towards the division and segregation of disabled people into small organisations, each concentrating on only one form of impairment. The focus was no longer to be inward towards the particular needs of people with different impairments, but outward towards the ways in which society needed to change in order to secure the IYDP aim of full participation and equality for all.

The Coalition's Council emphasised the long overdue need to tackle the problems as directly experienced and collectively defined by all disabled people themselves, not as perceived by others such as able-bodied professionals. But it did not see itself as merely a talking shop. From the earliest stages, it was determined to direct its efforts towards achieving practical changes in the conditions of disabled people's lives. Its belief was that "actions will bring more improvements than words." (DCDP, 1988).

However, the Coalition recognised the importance of ensuring that disabled people did have a say wherever decisions concerning them were being made. It was determined to work towards providing a well informed accountable level of disabled consumer participation within the decision making processes of central and local authorities and other organisations. Achieving this aim would be in stark contrast to the kind of tokenistic consultation or involvement which was so common, so demeaning and demoralising to disabled people.

This was not just a problem in Derbyshire: -

*"So often you get committees, you get all these people who, I know it sounds dreadful, they think they are doing so much good, but they never stop and think 'Right, what do the disabled themselves think? and then when you say something, they get really very hurt that you are criticising all their hard work.... but if only they would have stopped and said 'Let's consult the disabled' because we're not all idiots! or what is just as insulting, like the statutory woman, have a disabled person on sufferance, but they don't really want to know what you think, they just want you there to make the numbers up and just be seen."
(Muriel, in Campling, 1981b, p.117).*

Changing this situation was important, but the Coalition was also aware that many such Committees might never have existed at all, had disabled people been able to shape the society in which they lived more effectively. An understanding was growing that, for at least two hundred years, disabled people had been squeezed out of mainstream economic activity and had been made dependent on the rest of society. The slow and fitful growth of the disabled people's movement, and the lack of a united, effective disability lobby was a consequence of the extent to which disabled people had been built out of almost every aspect of community life. Successive Acts of Parliament were viewed as reflecting little more than able-bodied interests, and participating in the bureaucratic decision making processes this legislation had spawned gave rise to very mixed feelings on the part of some Coalition members.

But, in coming together as a group, and relying on each other as disabled people rather than on able-bodied "experts", they were helping to lay the foundations for a very different kind of future society. They were now taking part in the important task of reversing the historical process which had left disabled people stranded on the margins of mainstream social life. The care they took in establishing a democratic, grass roots organisation, controlled by disabled people themselves, was an essential framework for building a new future, and translating their beliefs and values into reality.

In order to give consistency and coherence to the way disabled members developed the Coalition, the founder members built four important principles into its organisational aims. These principles were the cornerstones of the Coalition's strength, the foundation upon which all of its future activities rested. The key words underlying these principles were: participation, independence, integration and control. These were then written into the Coalition's aims and given expression in the DCDP Constitution:-

"to promote the active participation of disabled people in securing the greatest possible independence in daily living activities, full integration into society, and full control over their lives". (DCDP, 1988).

These aims, built on four principles, guided the Coalition in all of its relationships with others, and in all its activities. At each turn of events, the members of the DCDP Council were able to ask: does this new endeavour promote the active participation of disabled people; will these plans maximise our independence; will this idea take us in the direction of full social integration; does this agreement help us to gain full control over our lives?

Although it wasn't always easy to give clear answers to these questions, given the complexity of the issues raised by the Coalition's activities, this framework of principle helped to keep DCDP operating in a relatively clear and consistent way in the years to come. Having a reference point against which to measure the wisdom of their decisions, and the success of their actions, helped give confidence to its members, as well as giving the Coalition its own distinctive character.

CHAPTER 5

A SOCIAL APPROACH TO DISABILITY

Right from the outset, it was also a distinctive feature of the new Coalition to give a voice to, and give value to disabled people's own direct personal experience of disability. This was an important point for all of DCDP's founding members, but particularly so for those who were also members of the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation. It had been within UPIAS that disabled people's analysis of their own direct experience had led to a view of disability which was very different to that traditionally put forward by professionals. UPIAS defined disability as:-

'the disadvantage or restriction of ability caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities. Physical disability is therefore a particular form of social oppression.' (UPIAS, 1976, p.14).

This social approach to disability was later adopted by DCDP and it led the Coalition, along with other organisations in the growing disabled people's movement, to reject the so-called "medical model" of disability. This medical view located the cause of disabled people's problems not with society, but with their individual impairments. The Coalition saw this notion as deeply damaging because, in obscuring the real source of their problems, it led disabled people to see themselves as bearing the blame for all the difficulties they faced, with feelings of guilt and resignation experienced far more widely than among their members in Derbyshire:-

"a person with a disability will believe that s/he is inferior, has forfeited her/his right to a full life, cannot make decisions for her/himself, is the victim of malevolent fate (not a malevolent social system), is unattractive, a burden to society." (Mason, 1981, p.17).

In adopting the social definition of disability, and in aligning its outlook with that of the wider disabled people's movement, the Coalition was able to take up a strong crusading position based on a positive view of disability as being a social problem which could be overcome by social change (Davis, 1986).

This set DCDDP apart, not just from the traditional disability organisations in the County which took a static view of disabled people as unfortunate individuals in need of charity, but also from many professionals whose careers had been built on the medical model, and who tended to see solutions to disabled people's problems in terms of more or better welfare.

The Coalition considered that doctors, social workers and other professionals, however unwittingly, became part of the fabric of the social oppression of disabled people when they cast them into roles as dependent, helpless or passive patients or clients whose sole responsibility was to adjust to a restricted life, or "learn to live with" obstacles to participation, or "come to terms with" barriers to choice.

These views did not make the Coalition particularly popular or welcome with interests in the disability 'establishment' as it began to develop its role and work. However, other commentators on disability issues were beginning to raise questions which increased the pressure on, and began to erode the dominant "medical model" ideology of the professional controllers of disability policy. For example Shearer - despite regurgitating the language associated with the medical model - nevertheless thought that the medical model emphasis on adjustment by disabled people to society was now very much in doubt:-

"the real question is a different one. How far is society willing to adjust its patterns and expectations to include its members who have disabilities, and to remove handicaps that are now imposed on their inevitable limitations?" (Shearer, 1981, p.10).

Coalition members became aware that definitions of disability based on the "medical model", and the way they were applied in practice, were a major controlling influence over their lives. It was therefore crucial for the Coalition to be equally clear about what the social definition of disability meant in practice. The task before them was to identify the particular ways in which the various forms of social organisation prevented or restricted their ability to play an equal part in the daily life of their community.

It had become plain to the Coalition from the earliest stage, that dealing with disability as a socially defined phenomenon would require an entirely fresh approach to service delivery. In the early discussion papers about the development of a CIL in the County, the fact was clear that what had traditionally been provided under the "medical model" was very different from what was demanded by the social approach to disability. It was considered to be an issue of major strategic importance to develop a new approach to the whole idea of services for disabled people.

CHAPTER 6

PREPARING FOR ACTION

The Coalition's first staff - a Co-ordinator and Clerical Assistant - were hired, in position in an office which had been formerly the headquarters of DIAL UK, and beginning to organise and support the development of DCDP in the opening months of 1982. Meetings of the Steering Committee had now become meetings of the Interim DCDP Council until elections at the first Annual General Meeting later that year. The Interim Council met monthly, and continued the practice of moving around the County, to make them open to any disabled person who might wish to attend.

Meetings were intense of affairs: every item of business received the closest scrutiny. In many ways, each meeting was an open forum, where information was shared, issues were debated, tactics were considered, and where strategies took shape.

They were the source of the Coalition's strength, the wellspring of its energies and the very democratic heart of the organisation. They were a place where people with different impairments learned about each other's difficulties, a school for personal growth and development in organisational skills and disability politics.

The earlier initiative of the former Steering Committee when it drafted a "Statement of Intent" and challenged the County Council to turn it into a public pledge, now began to bear fruit. They found that their draft had been accepted in its original wording, in all spheres except education where the phrasing was "watered down". The full version of the Statement, as adopted by the County Council, is reproduced on page 19.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Recognising the principles and aims of the Year as proclaimed by the United Nations, and accepting the rights of disabled people to full participation and equality of opportunity, the County Council reaffirms its existing policies and, in particular, pledges to participate with disabled people and other agencies seeking to achieve the following objectives:

1. To actively involve disabled people on all advisory and consultative committees as defined in section 15 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1971 and in other activities where their advice would assist the County Council.
2. To promote the full integration of disabled people through the creation of a barrier- free built environment.
3. To develop and promote integrated independent living arrangements for severely disabled people in conjunction with Housing Authorities, Voluntary Organisations and Housing Associations.
4. To assist in the development of a co-ordinated public transport network accessible to all disabled people.
5. To secure integrated education at all levels for all disabled people for whom this would best meet their individual needs and wishes.
6. To assist in the dissemination of information and advice and the provision of practical help, advocacy and supportive counselling for disabled people and others with interests in disablement.

SIGNED (S F COLLINS) CHAIR. (DCC, 1981).

In taking the initiative in this way, the Coalition had shown for the first time in the County that disabled people could set the agenda for the Council, rather than always reacting to what the Council itself chose to do. In doing this, a graphic illustration had been made of the way disabled people's lives were not the sole province of the Social Services Department, but that their interests were intimate to most aspects of the Authority's work. The very process of agreeing the Statement of Intent through each of the main Committees of the Council, had helped break down the kind of local authority lassitude which is highlighted by a quotation attributed to Colin Groves, Assistant Director of Social Services for the London Borough of Islington:-

"There tends to be an inertia when you bring it up, 'Oh well, we've got a Social Services Department to deal with that.... We want to remove that assumption and put disablement on to everyone 's agenda". (Francis, 1986, p.17).

The Coalition's action in proposing the Statement of Intent had clearly anticipated something which kept cropping up again and again. For example, Sue Wallis of Lambeth ACCORD is reported as seeing the need to extend disability awareness and action across agencies as well as across departments, in saying "We are working to get each agency to extend its vision so they don't treat disability as a 'special case' beyond its remit". (Hemsley, 1985, pp.18- 19).

However, the DCDP Council was aware that intentions do not amount to achievements, and that the Statement of Intent pointed up just how much work needed to be done. But, for the first time, the Coalition knew where disabled people in Derbyshire stood in relation to those with power over their lives. It set the tone for a significant way of working within a major public body.

Throughout 1982, the Coalition continued to clear the ground for action. Membership was beginning to grow and it was planning to produce its own newsletter, "DCDP News". It was also formulating the ideas which were to be built into DCDP's own Policy Statement and beginning to voice demands for action aimed at turning those policies into practice. The following policy points emerged at this time, with the proviso that these might be revised or added to in the light of developing experience and new issues that arose in the future:-

"1) The Coalition will work to provide a Centre for Independent Living from which supports will be available to help disabled people and their families throughout the County to achieve independence and integration in their local communities. The Centre will seek to promote local solutions to local needs wherever possible under local control, but in participation with existing services provided by statutory and voluntary

organisations.

ii) We will press for facilities which ensure that disabled people in the county have equal rights and opportunities to live where and how they choose, with control over their own lives.

iii) Support will be given to measures which give equal work opportunity for disabled people, whether by integrating them into workplaces for ordinary employment or by developing full equivalent home-working alternatives.

iv) We will press for the development of a transport system which will serve all persons in the county who have restricted 'mobility, and will also bring pressure to bear on local and national public transport operators, to provide a truly public service.

v) We will strive to promote unhindered access in town and countryside and will oppose any proposals which restrict access and integration. To this end we expect to be involved in all planning and design matters Countywide.

vi) We will strive to secure provisions which will enable people with hearing, sight and speech impairments to communicate more effectively with other people, which improve their access to information, and which raise public awareness of their problems

vii) We will support continued moves toward integration of disabled people at all levels of the local education system.

viii) The Coalition will do all in its power to support disabled victims of segregation, discrimination, prejudice, and intolerance in and outside the County. We will press for effective anti-discrimination legislation and local programmes of positive action". (DCDP, 1982b).

As a way of developing and refining these objectives, the Coalition began to hold "teach-ins". Venues were typically public buildings such as leisure centres and community centres which were both central and accessible. These informal gatherings had a business agenda, and achieved it, usually by brainstorming around a central theme. They always turned into vigorous discussions. Often, it was as if a tide of past injustices had been undammed and people were just grabbing the opportunity to explore crucial quality of life issues before they disappeared. In the process, the kind of actions or approaches needed to translate ideas into practice were teased out

and made explicit. Such events were powerful consciousness raising affairs which, as has been noted elsewhere, were:

in awakening people to their enslavement and in freeing them to choose active opposition in its stead." (Mullender and Ward, 1991, p.4).

Alongside these discussions and the growing confidence which came from them, as the year wore on the Coalition sought and obtained representation on outside bodies. No invitation was refused as DCDP worked on raising its public profile and this was a time of near frenetic activity for those who were most involved. For example, membership was obtained on key sub committees and monitoring groups of Social Services and Community Health Councils, with a view to getting the Coalition more widely known, to influence the social work and medical professions, and to make available a first-hand experience of disability in different forums. But for political reasons also, the Coalition needed, and achieved a visible presence. Its Council worked hard to hold all these strands together whilst keeping the overall administration of the Coalition in good order.

At the same time, the Coalition was gradually making headway towards the achievement of its major project of establishing a CIL in Derbyshire. At the beginning of 1982, the Social Services chiefs agreed to set up a Joint Working Party with representatives of the Coalition, with the remit of examining the kind of disability services currently being provided, comparing these with the kind of facilities offered by CIL's in the United States, and exploring the issues involved in pursuing CIL type services in the very different context of Britain's welfare state.

CHAPTER 7

LINKS WITH THE WIDER MOVEMENT

Separately from these activities within Derbyshire, the Coalition continued to build links with other newly emerging groups within the disabled people's movement. A series of contacts were made with disabled people in Hampshire, for instance, who were also working to develop a Centre for Independent Living in their own County. *It* was through their links with this group, that the Coalition had earlier launched a major lobbying and awareness-raising exercise with Councillors and Officers of the County Council. In a glare of publicity an activist from Hampshire was flown into Matlock by helicopter, and showed a video of activities at the CIL in Berkeley, California. This was followed up by a discussion in the Members Room at the Derbyshire County Council Offices.

Such activities were part of ongoing connections with other groups interested in CIL's in different parts of the Country. As has already been mentioned, the Coalition played a part in the establishment of BCODP and DPI as part of its intention firmly to locate itself as part of the wider, national and international disabled people's movement. Not all members could see the need for this, feeling that disabled people in Derbyshire should come first, but the majority realised that DCDP's own security in part lay with it not being seen as an organisation in lonely isolation, but as part of a national and international movement expressing similar demands.

Building on this majority view, one Coalition member (also a member of the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS), the organisation which took the initiative for forming the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP)) played a leading role in the events which led to the formation of the British Council, by drafting its first constitution and chairing its first meeting in June 1981. This input from the Coalition proved to be very timely, as it helped BCODP to get its act together in time for the first World Congress of the Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) in Singapore at the end of 1981.

It was the BCODP representatives to the Singapore Congress who raised crucial questions regarding the draft DPI Constitution. In the face of heavy pressure from the Congress organisers to get the Constitution adopted without debate, for fear it would have to be deferred until the next Congress four years later, the BCODP representatives prevailed. Their grave concern was that the basic philosophy of DPI would be badly compromised by the medical model definitions of disability which had been inadvertently written into the

Constitutional preamble. The British delegates had performed a sterling role in lobbying others and, in the discussion which followed, they were successful in getting a broadly social definition of disability adopted, though with some variation in actual terminology.

In many ways, the debate within the DPI Congress mirrored arguments which had already been played out within DCDP itself. The insidious effect of the medical model was that many disabled people had internalised the idea that their bodies were the cause of their problems. Although none of the delegates to the World Congress were DCDP members, the Coalition played its part by helping bring BCODP into being and linking it in with the thinking which had earlier gone on in the UPIAS.

Consistently, right from the earliest days of the Coalition, DCDP continued its policy of supporting the growth of other organisations controlled by disabled people, whether at home or abroad. Coalition members frequently spoke at different meetings around the country, giving support, encouragement and advice. This helped to create a firm foundation of BCODP in terms of philosophy and principle, as well as assisting with the growth of BCODP's membership itself. As the profile of DCDP continued to rise, so did the number of requests for support.

Internationally, Coalition representatives helped in practical ways to establish and support the European Region of DPI, as well as playing a part in the Second World Congress in 1985. Speakers were sent to many European seminars and meetings, and Coalition members played host to members of the movement from other countries, by providing local accommodation and other facilities.

CHAPTER 8

EARLY PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

On the basis of its policy that actions speak louder than words, DCDP set in motion a number of projects in the first two years of its existence. They were all preparing the way for the kind of practical activities which a CIL - should they be successful in setting up such a Centre - might wish to take over and develop further.

The political importance of these projects was that they helped give the Coalition a practical public image. DCDP members were aware that they were seen as being the "favoured child" of the Council in the International Year, and that the local traditional disability organisations had been critical of the County Council of the extent to which they appeared by comparison to be falling behind in the grant-aid pecking order. The projects operated as a kind of tangible validation of the safety of the County Council's judgement in grant aiding DCDP to the extent they had. The more practical things the Coalition could set in motion, the less vulnerable they felt in the face of criticism, and in the generally precarious world of local authority funding.

The fact was that the Coalition was set up in the very year in which political control of Derbyshire County Council had shifted to Labour. Central government was dominated by almost pathological Thatcherite antipathy towards "socialist" local authorities in general and "loony left" ones in particular. DCDP members were painfully aware that the new Labour Authority's support for their radical approach to disability could lend itself to such labelling. But, by itself, this kind of smear tactic would not be likely to lead to loss of support.

The Coalition was also aware that the language of the political right was reflected in some of the demands of the disabled people's movement, e.g., for independence, and individual choice and control. For disabled people, whose ability to exercise independence, choice and control had been systematically denied, such aspirations were right and proper. They were the legitimate expression of a group of people prevented from exercising equivalent rights, responsibilities and opportunities in a society geared to serve able-bodied interests. From the movement's point of view, the demand for equality applied equally across the whole of the political spectrum. Nor was there any doubt in the Coalition's mind that there had to be an appropriate collective commitment on the part of society before equality of opportunity could be secured. However, they also realised that their demands were vulnerable to negative right wing characterisation from Labour politicians, given a change in the climate of

political support.

Thus DCDP realised it was set on a very hazardous course. It could attract critical attention from the political right or left at any time, but particularly so if they mounted any high profile campaigns. The financial and other consequences of loss of political support could be disastrous to an organisation with so many battles to fight on so many fronts. In many ways, each practical project which the Coalition could successfully establish, could be seen as being a battle won and a step towards the winning of the war itself. But politically, they would offer themselves as "value for money" markers of the Coalition's progress, and stand as a tangible demonstration of the benefits of independence and self determination, and would thus help to offset any negative political criticism.

An early project was the setting up of signing classes, designed to give Coalition members and staff basic skills in communicating with people with hearing impairments. Support was given to a group of young disabled people who were trying to establish their own printing and publishing co-operative. The Newlink Project was set up to explore the possibility of linking volunteer readers with people with visual impairments in West Derbyshire. An effort to build a housing co-operative in North Derbyshire along the lines of the Grove Road Scheme fell through when Habinteg Housing Association were unable to attract Housing Corporation funding.

A project which attracted more interest from outside the County than within, was the setting up of Interhelp - a co-operative based on the idea of equality between able-bodied helpers and disabled people requiring help. An integrated team of young able and disabled people was supported in carrying out an Access Survey in Chesterfield. A project exploring the use of Tactile Maps was set in motion and a 24 hour Emergency Card Scheme for people with sensory impairments was established.

A project designed to examine and compare the benefits of Prestel, Vistel, Visicom and PSS mail for hearing impaired people was developed, and an induction loop loan and awareness project was set up. Support was given to developing the national Sympathetic Hearing Scheme at local level. A booklet in three languages called "Can't You Hear Very Well?" (Colledge, 1986) was produced with the aim of improving communication with people who are hearing impaired. A contribution was made to a national training package on communication for and with the medical professions filmed by ESCATA for the National Information Forum (NIF, 1987).

A successful application for Joint Funding between Health and Social Services

led to the employment of a Community Link Worker on a pilot project in the Bolsover district of the County. This Project was designed to explore the issues raised in identifying local disabled people and involving them in developing and linking local resources to meet local needs. A bid for a further worker through a Manpower Services Commission short term funding scheme, allowed research to go ahead on the production of a County wide Transport Guide for disabled people.

CHAPTER 9

THE MAJOR PROJECT: THE DERBYSHIRE CENTRE FOR INTEGRATED LIVING

From the earliest days of the Coalition's existence, the idea of setting up a Centre for Independent Living (CIL) in the County was given the highest priority. However, it was not until 11th July 1985 that the Derbyshire CIL was registered as an independent, autonomous Company. This early period of development of the Centre can be seen as having three phases: exploration, formulation and implementation.

EVALUATION PHASE

Work on this first phase started with discussion papers produced by Coalition in 1981, and in principle support for the idea was given by Derbyshire County Council in the same year. The idea was formally pursued by the Coalition and the County Council when a Joint Working Party was set up and began to meet in February 1982. This first phase came to an end with the making of a documentary film, Statement of Intent, later that same year.

Susan Kay, one of the officer members of the Joint Working Party describes and summarises the work of the group as follows:-

"...to engage in a mutual exploration of the idea of a CIL in Derbyshire. Its brief was to review existing services and to explore whether and how a CIL could relate to existing service provision. During the eight months during which it met periodically, the Working Party reviewed the American experience; after all the idea had been imported from the States and there were no practical examples to consider elsewhere in this country, or in Europe for that matter. The Coalition did, however, extend the debate into a wider forum with other disabled peoples' organisations in Hampshire, Manchester and other parts of the country who were also intent on developing CIL's in Britain. Yet once the Working Party had decided that the American CIL model was in response to a different set of political, economic and social circumstances and should only in very broad terms inform our thinking, we were starting again fresh at the drawing board, designing a service Wormed by the British experience. One which would be designed against the backcloth of established welfare provision, which would take account of local circumstances in Derbyshire and where service- planners and service-users had become its joint architects'."

(Kay, 1984)

All of the meetings were practical and candid affairs which did not attempt to dodge the realities of the unequal power relationship existing between the two parties. The Coalition worked to its own aims and principles and those of the wider movement - and was seeking to explore the way such a Centre might be a vehicle for responding in a practical way to the implications of the social definition of disability.

The Working Party considered a series of papers, which can be seen as a running record of the development of ideas about the Centre. By mid 1982, it was re-affirmed that a CIL would basically be about providing support which would enable independent functioning in a normal social context. One earlier suggestion for the CIL had been for a purpose built Centre, having no connection with any local authority building or residential home, carrying out the following operations:-

- a) *Maintenance and updating the Disabled Persons Register;*
- b) *Setting up a County-wide care attendant register;*
- c) *Housing services, from design to direct labour;*
- d) *A co-ordinated, County-wide accessible transport service;*
- e) *Mixed physical ability commercially viable workshops;*
- f) *Information, advice and associated support services;*
- g) *Publicity and communications service;*
- h) *Aids and equipment showroom and store;*
- i) *Halfway House rehabilitation service;*
- j) *Peer counselling service."* (DCDP, 1985).

It was taken as axiomatic that services should develop out of the direct experience of disabled people. This led the group to discuss ways in which disabled people at the local level in the County could clarify and express their own needs and the solutions to them. In turn, this should inform the actual facilities offered by the Centre. The idea of local services meeting local needs under local control grew out of this kind of discussion, and this led to an exploration of the relationship between a central CIL and local services.

The paper went on to say that:-

The implication of these factors was such that the CIL could only be seen as part of a wider project, which was subsequently renamed DILP - the Derbyshire Independent Living Project. In this way, the development and delivery of centrally managed services would be more likely to be responsive to the expressed needs of disabled people at the local level: central services less likely to inhibit local initiatives; and the CIL more efficient and

accountable than might otherwise be the case." (ibid.).

The Coalition's initiative in securing funding for a Community Link Worker had anticipated many of these issues, whilst its other practical projects were already suggesting a range of initiatives for the future CIL which was far wider than anything which had been suggested earlier.

As the year wore on, other issues had been raised for the Coalition by their involvement in the Joint Working Party. The question forced upon them by their own aims and principles was to do with control of services, by whom and to what extent:-

"...when we talk of disabled people controlling services for independent living, do we mean total, exclusive control if not, what principles should guide DCDP in developing joint methods of control?". (ibid.).

In practice, DCDP had up to this point accepted in some areas of their activities a joint, co-operative approach, e.g., with councillors and officers of the County Council and by promoting mixed physical ability co-op's. But at this stage, there was a felt need for a more formal agreement on both sides on the principle of direct involvement of disabled people in services funded (in whole or in part) by the local authority.

This need was generated in part by the positive atmosphere surrounding the work of the Joint Working Party, which had raised the Coalition's expectations. However, at the same time, the issues and difficulties which were being uncovered were causing tensions. Certainly, a clearer view was beginning to emerge of the CIL, and ways in which all services for disabled people could move towards independent, integrated living goals. But many service providers in health and social services were working independently from each other and the Coalition. For the disabled representatives to the Joint Working Party, there seemed to be an urgent requirement for a unified strategy before more public money was committed on behalf of disabled people.

The issues were not just about what CIL should provide, or how it should relate to disabled people and services at local level. They were also about relationships in and between different agencies. Big questions of power and vested interest had surfaced. The Coalition was relatively small and very weak compared with the authorities with whom they were seeking to share power. The task they had taken on was enormous: they were asking statutory bodies to scrap a whole culture of segregated, dependency creating services and the jobs and careers of those involved in them.

Characteristically, the Coalition did not shirk from its task. The sixth paper in the series, tabled by DCDP representatives at the final meeting of the Joint Working Party in October 1982, began to explore these questions of power, control and relationships by discussing a hypothetical situation of converting a segregated residential institution into a Centre for Independent Living.

Separately from these discussions, and at about the same time that these issues were being explored, DCDP was approached by the makers of the ATV Link programme, who wanted to make a documentary about the disabled peoples' movement in Britain. It was agreed to go ahead and filming took place at the time DCDP members were discussing the seventh paper in the series at the November 1982 meeting of the Council. The paper summarised for members the position up to that time, and posed the question: why should a CIL be located in an existing Part III institution. Two main reasons were put forward:-

" (a) Existing Part III institutions create dependence and segregation. The consequences of siting CIL in any other building would be to set up a self-perpetuating cycle of service provision: the local authority creating institutionalisation within Part III provision and the CIL working to de-institutionalise disabled people elsewhere.

(b) The re-use of a Part III institution as a CIL therefore, would help remove existing anomalies and the concomitant waste of resources. It would serve to assist in the development of a unified strategy to supply services appropriate to human needs, in a normal social context. It would free resources which are committed merely to containing disabled people into supporting and developing their functional capacity." (ibid.).

DCDP members were aware that the law which gave local authorities the power to build segregated institutions was framed without any organised input or lobby of disabled people. As they were effectively shut out of the democratic process, Part III of the National Assistance Act 1948 was seen as little more than able-bodied legislation serving able-bodied interests.

The point was made that they were forced to pay for the creation of their own dependency and segregation from society since, as rate and taxpayers, disabled people had met in full their legal obligation to contribute to State welfare services. As disabled people laying claim to the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship, the Coalition had a duty to demand that services should be appropriate to the needs of those who pay for them and consume them.

Noting that highly expensive segregated residential institutions were completely out of step with current thinking, Coalition members made the point that it was not only inappropriate but also inconceivable that the cash needed to fund

proper community based provision could be found in addition. The paper then went on to make the case for a unified strategy aiming to redirect existing services towards the goal of independent, integrated living and, on the question of power and control, to put off no longer:-

... the challenge which needs to be made in order to re-direct mainstream service provision. It should be stressed that secure independent, integrated living cannot be achieved while highly expensive segregated facilities continue to soak up limited resources.

It needs also to be said that Derbyshire leads the field in alternatives to institutions. This begs the question of how many more demonstrations of independent integrated living are required before mainstream provision is re-directed into community provision.

In conclusion, there is little doubt that community resource starvation will continue to deprive blind, deaf, mentally handicapped and physically impaired people and their families of the help they need to ensure the fullest possible independence and social integration, without resolute action " (ibid.).

Although these issues were discussed at length within the Coalition, and on camera, the arguments were never developed in detail elsewhere. There were a number of reasons for this, the main one being that the Council's policies were now no longer being challenged in the abstract. The Coalition had raised the stakes by focusing on Cressy Fields, the County Council's only Part III institution for disabled people. What was being discussed was a suggestion for phasing out Cressy Fields' institutional function and phasing in a Centre for Independent Living, within the same building and involving both staff and residents in the turn-round.

It was a highly political, emotive issue, crystallising all the issues in a single symbolic suggestion. Susan Kay's comments on some of the issues raised as follows:

... towards the end of 1982, the Derbyshire Coalition had resolved the issue in their own thinking by their controversial suggestion to locate the CIL within existing institutional provision. They went further and named the local authority's only residential establishment as its optimal location. The Coalition then proceeded to discuss and receive feedback on their proposal from several of the long stay residents and the Officer in Charge of the Home.

The Coalition's reasoning was simple, but politically naive. If statutory help was disabling then service provision itself should become the target for change. The strategy which would have maximum effect was one which phased out institutional responses to people's needs whilst simultaneously phasing in integrated living services. Why deal with the problem of de-institutionalisation when you could deal with the problem at source?

Their proposal was politically unacceptable. Members were concerned about the insecurities and fears about the future generated by the Coalition's activities amongst the establishment's long stay resident population. The Coalition was seen as not representing the interests of all disabled people and their action was construed as an attempt to dismantle welfare services: a bid at privatisation (and raised the question) whether CIL's could be used as a vehicle to accelerate the trend towards reducing statutory responsibility for direct services to disabled people and their families " (Kay, 1984).

The affair was not only happening under the spotlight of TV cameras, but was also set in the broader context of Government policies which were quite clearly at odds with those of Derbyshire's Labour controlled authority. It raised complex political and emotional issues; highlighted deep questions of power and control; and tested the extent of the Council's own willingness to listen and respond to disabled people's views on the future direction of disability services.

FORMULATION PHASE

In the event, the making of the film Statement of Intent marked the end of the first phase of developing the Derbyshire CIL. The Council were not prepared to continue collaborating with the Coalition if the issue was pressed further. The Coalition decided on balance that discretion was the better part of valour and, at a meeting called to review the relationship between the two organisations early in 1983, they put forward a plan for a Centre which dropped the institutional issue. The County Council responded positively, and agreed to set up a second Working Party to formulate plans for bringing a CIL into being.

The Working Party met several times during 1983 and, in October a request for "in principle" support for a Centre for Independent Living (as it was still at that time being called) was put to the Social Services Committee. It was suggested that setting up costs based on the Coalition's earlier plan could come from Joint Funding with the Health Authorities. Consent was given, and it was also agreed to look for funding from other sources to meet the other costs involved in the scheme. The Committee report noted that the community based aims of the Coalition were in line with the County Council's policy and that a CIL would:-

"prevent many disabled people having to be admitted to institutions. The Social Services Department consider the proposals as being of central importance to their future development strategy on services to disabled people and their families." (DCC, 1987).

Over a period of many months the Coalition had debated the issue of control from many different points of view and had decided that the best way to create independent, integrated living choices for the maximum number of disabled people in the County was through arrangements for shared control and joint design and delivery of services. It seemed that any other course would not help bring about the unified policy for services which they thought to be so badly needed.

During 1983, the Coalition sought to influence the Social Services Department's future strategy, looking for a way of linking the CIL into a broader framework for service development which rejected the segregative arrangements of the past in favour of services and facilities which supported the goals of independence and social integration. This was pursued through the Department's DSG (Development Support Group) and led eventually to the publication of an overall strategic plan for service development over three years, 1983/6. The ultimate aim of the Strategy was directly in line with Coalition thinking:

"To secure 'independent, integrated living' opportunities for disabled

people in order to promote their full participation in the mainstream of economic, social and political life in Derbyshire." (DCCSSD, 1983).

The Strategy made it clear that, in order to achieve this aim there could be no instant "fix", that cosmetic changes to existing services would not suffice, nor could it be reached by a "more of the same" approach. It was made plain that there was a need to move away from the welfare paternalism of the past to a service system based on a collaborative relationship between service users and providers. The strategic approach was to direct and re-direct new and existing resources towards achieving this aim, and the way to get started was to focus on:-

"two inter-related and inter-dependent themes: 1) the establishment of a Centre for Independent Living, 2) mainstream services." (ibid.).

This interdependent relationship between the CIL and mainstream services was thought to be a vital component of the driving force needed to start work on the Strategy. Looking at the CIL, this was seen as being a unique opportunity for shared control and joint design and delivery of services, as well as a resource centre for disabled people and their families, voluntary groups and professionals in Health, Social Services, Education, Housing and Employment.

As for mainstream services, a phased approach to the direction of these resources was proposed. The first step would be to focus on the main service divisions, with a view to stimulating debate, to get down to detailed planning and to develop demonstration projects. This process would start initially with three teams of workers located in the three main service divisions. In later phases, these teams would spread out geographically, relocating eventually at the local level.

At the same time as the Coalition was working to locate the Derbyshire CIL within this wider strategic framework, throughout 1982 - 3 it was putting an equal amount of energy into promoting and discussing the idea of CILs with other organisations in the movement. There had been ongoing contact with disabled people who were working to set up the Hampshire Centre for Independent Living, and "national CIL" meetings were held with representatives of groups in Exeter, Norwich, Islington and Manchester. BCOOP set up a Standing Committee on CILs, and international links were made when the Coalition sent a speaker to a conference in December 1983 in Stockholm, to debate the issues with disabled people from Sweden and the United States.

The central issue for the Coalition and other groups in Britain and Europe, was how far the American CIL experience was relevant to countries with well

embedded social welfare systems. The philosophy of the independent living movement (ILM) in the States had caught the imagination of disabled people: John Evans, a member of the Hampshire CIL group described it as:-

....an approach to living meaningfully in the community, and it really encompassed everything that a person does. It had recently been described by an independent living advocate as a continuous process of identifying choices and creating personal solutions. The philosophy of independent living recognised the need for every disabled person to make his/her own life decisions and to participate on equal terms.....
(Evans, 1984).

In the development of its own thinking, the Coalition felt that this kind of individualism had both dangers and limitations. In terms of CILs, there were major questions of how this range of choice and participation was to be achieved, and what this might mean for the nature and quality of the helper/helped relationship. Such questions were later discussed in greater detail (Davis, 1988, pp.31 - 33) in a comparative study of the issues involved. At the time, however, this was the stuff of strong debate as Simon Brisenden, writing for the Hampshire Centre for Independent Living, made clear when he said:-

"The need to collaborate brings with it many advantages, particularly with regard to funding...but also the danger that we may dilute the demands of our constituency - the JLM - to adopt aims that are less threatening to the existing structure of provision for people with disabilities." (Brisenden, 1985).

The Coalition had from time to time considered ways and means of funding and developing the CIL which could have made it completely independent. The thought of having independent control of a CIL was tempting. It knew that many careers had been built on disabled people's socially constructed dependence. Particularly for those who had spent years in segregated residential institutions, the idea of collaborating with those who had used their control to expand segregated service empires was not a comfortable prospect.

Despite these misgivings, since the beginning of 1983, DCDDP had set itself on a collaborative course. Its influence on the formulation of the Social Services Strategy had helped to secure an aim for services which was clearly in line with the demands of the movement. Of course there was a fear that its innovative ideas would be weakened and subsumed by its more powerful partner. But the risk of the CIL becoming marginalised with very little influence on mainstream services, had been reduced by the interdependent relationship built into the Strategy.

And, for all its small size, the Coalition had shown that it could be a strong and determined adversary. Susan Kay, referring back to the making of the film Statement of Intent commented that the Coalition had:-

"challenged vested interests within the institutional framework and had made a mark on their own behalf, that they were not prepared to be incorporated. The incident has now made history, but will not be forgotten by either the Coalition or Derbyshire County Council."

(Kay, 1984).

This independent spirit did not make the Coalition an easy partner. It also led to differences emerging between itself and other member organisations in the movement, although DCDP's commitment and principled approach to the movement's ideals were not in doubt. The Coalition worked hard to set its collaborative approach to CIL and disability services in a clearer and more consistent framework of ideas. By the end of 1983, the Coalition had replaced the term "independent living" with the concept of "integrated living", the source of which was explained as follows:-

"Whilst the nature of the barriers preventing the full social integration of disabled people in Britain are very complex, in essence it was considered that they stem from the unequal nature of the able/disabled relationship. Where barriers exist, it was recognised that they were erected on the assumption of ablebodied normality, on decisions taken by non-disabled people. It was also recognised that the design, delivery and control of services and facilities was for the disabled by the non-disabled, usually without challenge to fundamental assumptions.

The concept of "integrated living" grew out of this analysis. It asserts that the social integration of disabled people will follow when service delivery systems are themselves integrated, i.e., when people who have personal experience of the daily problems of disability are themselves directly involved in service design delivery and control. The approach is less to do with merely overcoming barriers, but more with removing their causes." (DCDP, 1986, March).

DCDP was unhappy with any approach to overcoming socially caused disability which didn't deal with the basic ways in which barriers kept being produced and reproduced. Breaking down barriers per se did not necessarily lead to the removal of disability. The complete demolition of barriers involved disabled people breaking into the decision-making process. It was strategically important for disabled people to be involved in planning, deciding and executing the ways

in which barriers were to be removed. Gaining access to the design, delivery and control of services was thus seen to be a key objective of this strategy.

Despite the differences of approach which were now emerging, the Coalition still saw the CIL as being very much part of the disabled people's movement. It could see that if the Centre became separated from its roots in direct experience of disability, history would be at risk of repeating itself. The CIL could in time become as divorced from the experiences and influences of the broad population of disabled people as were statutory services themselves. The task of balancing the need to locate CIL within a collaborative framework for future service developments, at the same time as keeping it linked to the disabled people's movement had proved difficult and time consuming for the Coalition.

However, by the end of 1983, the Coalition had resolved most of the main theoretical questions to its own satisfaction and was working on more detailed plans for the development of the CIL. Working with officers of the second CIL Working Party, a further Report was produced and put before the Social Services Committee on 23rd February 1984. In it, approval was sought for a six year development plan for the establishment of a Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living (DCIL). This plan was based on an analysis by the Coalition of the areas of action necessary to get rid of the barriers to disabled people's participation in everyday social life. The task for DCIL flowing from this analysis was to:-

"...focus resources more precisely on the fundamental needs of disabled people. Thus service development is in seven main areas: information, counselling, housing, technical aids, personal assistance, transport and access. Without action in these areas of need disabled people will continue to be denied equality of opportunity to take part in mainstream education, employment and leisure facilities." (DCDP, 1986, March).

The final stages of the formulation phase were given over to more detailed development proposals and costings and finding the money to make it all happen. Joint financing of two Joint Co-ordinator posts (to symbolise the able-disabled partnership) was approved with the Health Authorities. Social Services had agreed to meet the capital elements in 1985-6, and the Policy Committee had agreed to meet 50% of any money it might be possible to get from the European Social Fund. In effect, the County Council had placed itself in a "financier of the last resort" relationship to the development of the CIL.

By the end of 1984, after consideration of a number of possible organisational forms, a constitution for CIL had been agreed which met most of the main requirements of the concept of "integrated living". DCIL would be overseen by

a General Council of 30 appointed members: twelve from DCDP, a further twelve from the County Council, and six from voluntary organisations. At least 50% of members had to be disabled, and the Chair (who had a casting vote) also had to be disabled. A Management Committee of ten members in the same ratio was to be elected from the General Council, and this Committee would be responsible for the day to day running of the Centre. This Constitution was later turned into a Memorandum and Articles of Association, when DCIL registered as a Company. Registration as a charity was also obtained.

By 1985, funding for three years had been agreed by the European Social Fund a building identified on the County Council's Long Close complex at Ripley, and a scheme of adaptations drawn up to provide access and other amenities for disabled people. During the first quarter of 1985, the General Council had been appointed and a Management Committee elected. By March 1985, two CIL Co-ordinators had been hired

and were setting about implementing the development plan for the Centre.

On the other interdependent wing of the Strategic Framework, in mainstream services, by 1985 staff had been appointed to form three teams and these had been located in a residential institution, a day centre and an Area Social Services Office. Discussions had been started with staff and "clients" on the more detailed development of the strategy. The formulation phase was over.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

The process of getting DCIL up and running was less a matter of philosophy and policy than a matter of practicalities and politics. Obviously, much of what has happened since the two Co-ordinators were appointed in March 1985 is properly the history of the CIL not the Coalition. Only the main events involved in turning the years of planning into practice are recorded here.

The task of the Joint Co-ordinators was to start work on the development plan for which European Social Funding had been agreed. As explained this was based on seven areas for action, later dubbed the "seven fundamental needs". The roots of this operational framework for DCIL lay in the direct experience of disability which the founders of DCDP had brought with them into the Coalition.

In the run up to the formation of DCDP, the struggle for independence and social integration had been focused mainly on finding suitable housing and help with personal needs. This struggle had been very hard for those members who had been forced through lack of choice to live in institutions. Their experience had shown very clearly that well designed housing and the right technical aids

had a dramatic effect on their need for personal assistance. These were three key factors in independent living in the community.

Through discussions with others, they had realised that having access to information linked to peer advice and counselling had preceded their bid for independence. It had also become clear that accessible transport and environmental access interacted to provide mobility outside the home, i.e., that they were the key elements in social integration.

It was out of this kind of analysis that the so-called "seven needs" emerged, putting flesh on the social definition of disability. The Coalition was aware that for the most part, these were ordinary needs which had been turned into special needs by a society which was designed largely to serve able-bodied interests. The task of the DCIL Co-ordinators was thus to take action in a very practical way to remove discriminatory social arrangements.

Their work was taking place parallel with workers in the teams hired to progress the mainstream services part of the Strategic Framework. These workers had provided independent confirmation of the Coalition's development plan for DCIL:-

"The 1983 Strategic Framework ...outlined plans to move away from welfare paternalism and to move towards a collaborative relationship between service users and providers. In order to do this, the Disability Project was set up in 1984. The Project was to look at the design and delivery of services in a residential, day care and field work setting and were charged to work closely with CIL. At the same time, local and regional planning groups organised workshops involving professionals, volunteers and consumers. All these workshops identified a similar range of issues and needs, which have become known as 'the seven needs'. Other needs may be identified by individuals as being important, e.g., work, education, leisure. However, it is our belief that these are secondary needs, which could be met by ordinary mainstream enterprises and services if the primary needs are met...". (DCCSSD, 1986, August).

In the earliest stages of implementation, the Co-ordinators had taken over most of the practical projects started by the Coalition, and had also incorporated the information service started by DIAL Derbyshire into its structure. The Community Link Worker on the pilot project in the Bolsover District had been relocated in DCIL, and new workers had been hired to make progress in other areas.

DCIL was beginning to expand rapidly. A design brief for a second building stage was produced in October 1985 which aimed to meet accommodation needs in the short term. An implementation strategy had been produced which, in addition to developments in areas of primary need, gave special emphasis to the secondary need of employment. The following comments in the implementation strategy indicate why this is so:-

“In providing services which are based on the experience of disabled people CIL, is obviously most concerned to employ as many disabled people as possible. Traditionally, disabled people have found it difficult to gain employment in a non-segregated work environment. Lack of formal education and few training opportunities coupled with poor access and transport have joined basic discrimination to make work an unexpected part of a disabled person's life. Low expectations about treatment by potential employers puts many disabled people off from applying for jobs for which they may be eminently suitable.

The nature of many of CIL's new posts are such that few disabled people will have had the chance to gain the skills needed to carry out such jobs fully. It is therefore an aim of staff at the Centre to provide training for disabled people with a view to their full time employment by CIL.” (DCIL, 1985).

In the years which have elapsed since DCIL started its operations, it has made a substantial impact on the lives of disabled people in the County. It has produced, directly or indirectly, action in each of the primary areas of need. More recently however substantial difficulties have overtaken these activities, as DCIL has become increasingly embroiled in the complex interactions between competing interests within the Authority. The Disability Project has, in effect, withered on the vine, and all but disappeared in its attempts to re-direct mainstream services. Large cuts in DCIL's funding have followed the County Council's attempts to avoid Charge Capping. The advent of Community Care legislation has stimulated a strong statist re-assertion of the Authority's attachment to direct service provision. The principles of participation and equality which guided the Council in its early relationships with the CIL, have become submerged as the political struggle between the ruling Labour Group and central government has reached crisis point.

Despite these problems, setbacks and uncertainties about its future role and funding position, DCIL continues to be an inspiration locally and nationally in disabled people's bid to focus resources on social integration. It has been forced to undertake a number of substantial reviews and re-organisations brought about by these major changes in its fortunes. However, its sights are still set in the direction set so clearly by Vic Finkelstein in 1980:-

"Once social barriers to the re-integration of people with physical impairments are removed, the disability itself is eliminated. The requirements are for changes to society, material changes to the environment, changes in environmental control systems, changes in social roles, and changes in attitudes by people in the community as a whole. The focus is decisively shifted on to the source of the problem - the society in which disability is created." (Finkelstein, 1980, p.33).

CHAPTER 10

TAKING STOCK

The degree of thought, discussion and energy consumed in launching a project of the size and importance of the Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living, was very considerable. Although the Coalition never ceased its other work during the time, DCIL was its largest and most important project. Members were looking ahead to the time when the new project was up and running and, from early 1985 onwards, a series of teach-ins were held based on "Forward Look" papers which anticipated some of the issues which would arise, once the CIL became properly established.

The main issue was to do with roles and relationships. The prospect in view was that of operating alongside what was bound to be a much larger organisation, with the same ultimate aims. Questions were raised about, whether duplication of effort would occur; whether disabled people might be confused with two County-wide organisations in operation; whether the County Council, as the main funder of both DCDP and DCIL might itself see no reason to carry on funding both. The question was faced as to whether the birth of DCIL might lead to the death of DCDP.

The teach-ins helped DCDP members to face these questions and to clarify the essential roles of the two organisations. It was felt that, if DCDP was itself unclear about the distinct role of each organisation, it could hardly expect others not to be confused. In many ways, all the work and campaigning over the three years up to this point had taken the Coalition's attention away from these wider questions of roles and relationships within the local movement.

In a nutshell, the outcome of these discussions was that the role of DCIL was to do with practice, whilst that of DCDP was to do with politics. The experiences of the preceding years had left Coalition members in no doubt that for an organisation to operate in the role of campaigning pressure group, whilst at the same time sitting down with the establishment in the role of co-operative collaborator, created major difficulties for all concerned.

The essential role set for DCIL was that of being a practical resource and facility within a collaborative framework of service development involving all the major statutory players. To be sure, it had the same aim as DCDP itself, but a very different practical and pragmatic way of achieving it. It was recognised that the CIL would be brought into conflict with authorities on a number of issues and also that it would be seen as being implicitly a campaigning body. Its task was to manage any tensions resulting from its unique position in the

movement, and to let DCDP handle the potential fall-out from political confrontations.

This time of taking stock had been difficult. For all the discussion and planning, a significant emotional and actual gap in the Coalition's concerns was created when DCIL became independent of DCDP later in the year. The job of practical developments was taken away and with it most of the projects already started by the Coalition. With more workers, more time to devote to issues and a bigger budget DCIL soon began to grow in influence. Its method of working, particularly through community link workers mobilising local people, gave DCIL an influence which DCDP could only achieve with quite disproportionate effort.

DCDP's task was to recover and build its campaigning role in other areas of activity, to go back to its roots as a membership organisation and as the local voice of disabled people. As the year progressed, the two organisations began to develop their distinct roles: DCIL from its premises in Ripley and the Coalition from its office in Clay Cross. Dorothy Hemm, as Chairperson of both organisations at the time, was able to give a clear and confident explanation of the way the distinct roles of the two organisations were developing:-

"Now that DCIL has been established as a separate company, it has removed from DCDP the role of developing practical services for our social integration, and left a much clearer, representational, campaigning and consciousness-raising function for our organisation. DCDP is a campaigning organisation with a consumer membership. DCIL is a resource organisation with no campaigning role and no membership, though it does have a negotiating role". (Dorothy Hemm, in private conversation).

The Coalition's strategy for achieving its aims was at this time given close attention. Its earliest strategy had concentrated efforts towards three main objectives. First, the establishment of DCDP itself, as the democratically organised voice of disabled people in the County. Second, to campaign to restructure disability services, with DCIL as the vehicle for achieving independent, integrated living goals. Third, to represent direct experience of disability on as many decision making bodies as possible.

After the re-think about roles and relationships in the run up to the launching of DCIL, the Coalition was in many ways going back to basics. A new strategy evolved out of the discussions, which was similar in essence to the first, though different in its content. First, there was a need to build up DCDP's membership through a programme of member development. Second, there was a need to

strengthen DCDP's representational input, and respond to the new demands created by its role on the governing bodies of the DCIL. Third, there was a need to respond more effectively to campaigning issues raised by the Coalition's own members, as well as by the demands of the movement itself.

The imminent departure of the Coalition's first Co-ordinator about this time presented an opportunity to look again at the organisation of the Coalition's resources. This led to the overall Co-ordinator's post being split into two part-time positions: an Administrative Co-ordinator and a Campaigns Co-ordinator. The first of these was intended to strengthen the Coalition's organisational base in view of the increasing range of members' representational and other activities.

The new post of Campaigns Co-ordinator was created to expand the range of campaigning activity. It was felt to be particularly important to respond to the needs of the Coalition's own members, but with a strategic eye to generating publicity around issues which were of concern to the wider disabled people's movement. Individual access issues, for example, often revealed the extent of discrimination against disabled people, and could be used to highlight and strengthen the growing case for anti discrimination legislation.

There was just enough leeway in the Coalition's budget to create two other opportunities for disabled people on benefits within the so-called "therapeutic earnings" limit. This approach was thought to be potentially of mutual benefit to DCDP and disabled individuals who were looking for an activity within their capabilities, perhaps as a way of keeping active against declining capacity - or as a way of gaining confidence with a view to future remunerated employment. Accordingly, two people were engaged to help develop activity in the areas of Member Development and Public Relations.

The range and frequency of contact between DCDP and DCIL was high in the case of Coalition members who were serving on the CIL's General Council or Management Committee or as DCIL Officers. However, in the case of members of staff of the two organisations, contacts were much less frequent. There were many reasons for this: it was partly because staff were working at full stretch in both DCDP and DCIL; partly because of a felt need to preserve their distinct identities; partly because of the physical distance between them; and to some extent because of the very different approaches of the two organisations.

CHAPTER 11

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The first Membership Development Officer occupied an important position in the Coalition's new scheme of things. It was the start of a distinct change of emphasis inasmuch as up until this point, disabled people, able-bodied supporters and organisations had become DCDP members to participate in, lend weight to and generally give support to rather than receive it from the new organisation. Although help had been given to individual members when requested, the sheer volume of activity had left little time for anything other than reacting to particular situations or crises.

The new strategic objective of membership development required a proactive approach to the job. The Membership Development Officer became a key person, visiting current members at their homes, offering more support, ascertaining their special interests, and generally building up their involvement. This revealed many individual problems which, in some cases, were passed to DCIL for practical help and in others taken up with statutory agencies direct.

Despite the Coalition's relatively high organisational profile, it was important from a membership point of view always to be publicly visible. Although this was part of the Public Relations Officer's role, the Membership Development Officer also played a part in this. Stalls and displays promoting DCDP were set up in shopping precincts, libraries, schools and galas and similar events with a view to giving out information, answering questions and recruiting new members. Local meetings and discussion groups also created ways of drawing in more disabled people. Events elsewhere in the County were making it more than usually important to demonstrate grassroots support, and strengthen the Coalition's mandate through a large membership.

However, DCDP was interested in building the quality as well as the quantity of its members. The better informed and active the membership, the more able would the Coalition be to fulfil its other roles as an advocate and campaigner for individuals and groups of disabled people. The proactive membership policy led the Coalition to debate whether to develop a localised structure, through setting up locally based Coalition Action Groups.

It was suggested that these would not be branch organisations in their own right, but area based meetings of members. This would enable the Coalition to move forward on a broader front, develop member education and find active roles for more disabled people, including fund-raising for DCDP as well as identifying campaigning issues. It was thought this process of "going local" would mean that an increased number of people could become used to speaking on behalf of the Coalition and thus be able to represent it in various forums. More work was put into local area meetings to encourage this process, but "putting a face" to DCDP at local level proved difficult to accomplish in practice.

Drawing the total membership into the Coalition's work in a more comprehensive way was also difficult. The first principle in the DCDP Aims "to promote the active participation of disabled people" always defined the way the Coalition worked, but the developmental effort needed to achieve comprehensive involvement also required resources which the Coalition did not have.

"One thing that's blocking us is our own capacity to organise effective participants: people who're representative, sufficiently articulate not to be completely submerged by doing it - strong clear-minded, disabled people. It shows up our own organisation problem about mobilising people to come up in that way, to say 'We're here, we're knocking on the door'". (Ken Davis, quotation front student video).

However, the issue went beyond more workers or more money, To be sure, this kind of resource was important, but there were many other factors involved. Setting up local meetings, for example, involved finding accessible premises, accessible transport and personal assistants, and these could be hard to identify.

On top of these material problems, there were more intractable issues of a psychological or attitudinal nature. Quite apart from the relatively low level of active, participating members which all organisations seem to experience, the Coalition seemed to be facing even harder than usual problems in motivating disabled people. They were working with sometimes very low levels of self esteem, confidence, knowledge and experience which posed special questions of approach and ongoing support. Even so, membership was growing and, at its peak, the Coalition had as many as 900 members on its books.

CHAPTER 12

REPRESENTATION

Right from the beginning of its existence, the Coalition saw representation of direct experience of disability as one of the most important aspects of its pressure group role. It was this very experience which had led the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation to propose the social definition of disability which the Coalition had adopted. This had enabled DCDP to analyse the specific ways in which social barriers prevented disabled people from being equal participants in everyday life. Indeed, the Centre for Integrated Living had been based on such an analysis.

One aspect of the social definition was that it had made possible an historical view of the creation of disability. For instance a whole new area for research had opened up when Vic Finkelstein suggested that physically impaired people living in the early stages of capitalism were just as incapacitated by the newly introduced machinery of production as they were by the physical condition of their bodies. He said it was:-

"...the Industrial Revolution (which gave) the machinery of production the decisive push which removed crippled people from social intercourse and transformed them into disabled people."

(Finkelstein, 1981).

On this analysis, it was the disabling legacy of the Industrial Revolution which the Coalition had been working to get clearly into focus. The various physical barriers were easily identified and categorised. However, behind the growth of inaccessible "public" transport systems, the barrier ridden streets and thoroughfares, the poorly designed housing and "public" buildings, lay the human factor. Each of these features in our disabling society came about as a result of people designing, planning and deciding that these things should happen.

The problem from the Coalition's point of view, was that it was able-bodied people who were doing the planning and deciding. In the absence of representation of direct experience of people with physical or other impairments decisions had and were being made which produced and reproduced disability. As Mary Croxson had said at the IYDP Conference at which the Coalition had been proposed, disabled people lived in a society which served and perpetuated the interests of an able-bodied elite. Prior consultation and participation in the decision making process was what was needed.

It was this kind of understanding which underlay the Coalition's approach to representation. In its early days, DCDP accepted all invitations to sit on such

bodies, but as demands built up it tried to target those bodies where it felt a direct input from disabled people could achieve the most. For example, *in* 1985 when the County Council was preparing to implement its Equal Opportunities policy, it was requested that the Coalition be regarded by the Council as the appropriate body for consultation on disability matters.

This request was precipitated by news that the County Council wished to establish a Consultative Forum for each of the main groups affected by its new Policy: ethnic minorities, women and disabled people. DCDP's view was that, to avoid tokenism, consultation needed to take place with an organisation which was democratically controlled by members of the group actually suffering the unequal treatment. It said that the Coalition was such an organisation and that, since it had been working for equality of opportunity as part of its aims and policies, it was ideally placed to make a positive input to the County Council's policy development.

The Council did not concede that the Coalition was an appropriate organisation for the purposes it had in mind. It took the view that DCDP was unrepresentative in the sense that its aims were not shared by all the other disability organisations in the County. It even went so far as to hold that able-bodied representatives could be properly included in the Forum, but withdrew when it was pointed out that there would be outrage if it was suggested that men could be considered as having a proper place in the Women's Forum.

It was, for the Coalition a development with disturbing implications. Firstly, its suggestion had been rejected on the grounds that it was an unrepresentative organisation; secondly, the County Council wished to draw up a constitution for a separate organisation which it did consider to be representative. The suspicion was aroused that the Coalition was being relegated; that it was falling from favour with the body that had thus far given it so much tangible support.

Having tried and failed to persuade the Council, the Coalition's response was to turn to its own aims and principles in deciding what to do. It concluded that the way forward was to try and influence the shape and operation of the new consultative body, and suggested a draft constitutional form for a Derbyshire Disabled People's Forum. This was democratically based, but with arrangements which were intended to secure representatives from each of the District Council areas as well as from the main impairment groups. Most importantly, only people who were themselves disabled could be elected to the Forum.

Similar developments were beginning to take shape in some of the District Councils and, again, Coalition members tried to get involved and shape the future of consultations at that level. It clearly made sense for as many Coalition

members as possible to seek election to these new bodies. However, bearing in mind the new representational roles the Coalition had to fulfil as part of its constitutional obligation to DCIL, the responsibilities in this area of activity were very much on the increase from 1986 onwards.

Even so, strenuous efforts were made to meet these obligations and opportunities, in addition to keeping up the number of representatives on other bodies. In this new phase of representational activity, the Coalition typically had members on bodies at District Council level, on the Rural Development Council, Community Health Councils, the Peak Park Planning Board, Police Consultative Committees, Community Education Councils, and so on.

However, effective representation was always harder to achieve than merely finding enough people to send along. Coalition members had to face the immediate issue in terms of the sheer physical effort of getting to meetings and/or dealing with the communication difficulties for members with sensory impairments. Beyond this, the input which DCDP representatives made needed to be informed and co-ordinated to ensure that they were actually reflecting Coalition policy.

The Coalition simply did not have the resources at its disposal to ensure that its representatives were always able to act effectively and efficiently in the organisation's name. Training was needed to help members acquire the skills involved and back up support was not easy to arrange, with the most active members always being at full stretch. Ideally, there should have been pre-meetings before every meeting but this was only rarely possible. Most members were learning about the decision making process on the run, and this led to the following comment:-

"We need to understand the system, including the spaces between levels ...to know where decisions get taken, or bucked, or shelved ... to know where to plug in and be able to demand 'We want participation here, here, here, here and here'. We're not clear because we don't know fully how decisions are made. We know more than we did at first, but we need to know a lot more yet, including not wasting time on the less effective committees". (Ken Davis, in student video).

Clearly, the Coalition's membership development programme was right for the circumstances which were prevailing at this time. But the Coalition, in common with other groups in the voluntary sector, was finding that maximising the benefits of any representation always required more effort, more work and more money than was readily available.

CHAPTER 13

CAMPAIGNING

While ever the aims of the Coalition remain to be achieved, campaigning will be necessary. DCDP was set up for this purpose, the need to campaign is its *raison d'être*, and all of its many activities are, in one way or another, about the campaign for participation, independence, integration and control by disabled people over their own lives. Indeed, the need to campaign has a much deeper underlying purpose. The Coalition's Aims and Policy Statement indicates this, when it says:-

The Coalition affirms the value of individual human life and the right of all impaired people to lead a full and satisfying life. To this end, the Coalition opposes any attempt to legalise the withholding, on the grounds of a person's impairment, of anything necessary to support the continuation of life. We will endeavour to identify the social causes which devalue life, and to find the means to remove these causes."

(DCDP, 1988).

DCDP has thus recognised the need to campaign for the very right of disabled people to exist and be valued, without reference to impairment. This is not simply a campaign against able-bodied laws such as the Alton Bill which was quite happy to see impairment used as a reason to legitimise abortion. It is a campaign also for the hearts and minds of disabled people, for self esteem, dignity and proper pride in themselves as intrinsically valued members of the human race.

The need to campaign at the "right to exist" level was seen as an important part of the struggle for disabled people to gain a positive self and group identity. It was felt that the law, and medical procedures designed to weed out impaired life, were just variations on what was a long tradition of killing in different human societies. DCDP's view was that a link existed between lack of equal social opportunities, low personal self esteem and the extent to which society upheld disabled people's right to life.

A positive campaigning stance was thus adopted by DCDP on these issues.

When the Aims and Policy Statement was drafted however, it was not fully realised how easily disabled people's right to exist could be swept aside by, for example, advocates of euthanasia or eugenics in Germany prior to World War II:-

"Systematically and efficiently, a good many more than 200,000 German

citizens were killed by their physicians. The killed were citizens in good standing with the state. They were not, in most cases, terminally ill; neither were they often in pain or unusual distress. They were the institutionalised insane, the severely disabled those whose lives - in the eyes of their doctors - were 'not worth living' (Gallagher, 1990, p.4).

The early campaign for a CIL in Derbyshire has to be seen in the wider context of the issues identified in the Aims and Policy Statement. The CIL was a means of asserting a basic "right to be here", of establishing an alternative to being "put away" in institutions, out of social sight, and out of public mind. It was a campaign against the kind of assumptions, labelling and stereotypical responses that made disabled people so vulnerable to cripphobic swings of political mood. It was part of the Coalition's determination to make it a thing of the past for disabled people to be patted on the head, stared at, looked down on, patronised and talked over the top of.

For these reasons, the CIL campaign was at the same time a campaign to put flesh on the social definition of disability. It was not so much a campaign against the "medical model" as a crusade to shift the focus away from the individual on to the particular forms of social organisation in which disability is created. It was a rejection on the one hand of demeaning labels like "helpless", "invalid" or "dependent" or, on the other, of "supercrip" eulogies such as "courageous", "inspiring", and "brave". The campaign for CIL was for the kind of services and facilities which would permit disabled people to choose to be ordinary or exceptional on their own terms.

The campaign for a Centre for Integrated Living located within an integrated strategic framework for service development certainly met stereotypical opposition from many service professionals. The extent of this was hinted at in an evaluation of the Disability Project, which had the task of carrying forward the mainstream services element of the Strategy. Over a third of the senior officers involved had "felt that there was insufficient to discuss to make a meeting worthwhile", whilst other staff had indicated that:-

"the project had not been properly thought throughthat they should have been consulted when the project was being designed because they would have been able to provide suggestions for alternative ways of using the money...that it was very difficult..to keep up withthe flood of ideas from Matlock". (DCCSSD, 1985).

This tended to confirm the academic view that, in the early stages of change, even partnership between disabled people and professionals is threatening to the professionals (Kuh et al. 1986, p.79) and the typical bureaucratic response

to any new idea is to appear to accept it and then to neutralise it within the woolly complexities of a vast organisation. The generally negative response to the evaluation also tended to confirm the DCDP view that any campaign to change the course of a huge vested interest would take more to produce results than mere rational argument or elegant strategic plans.

From 1986 the new emphasis on membership development and the new post of Campaigns Co-ordinator had produced a different approach to campaigning than had been employed hitherto. With some exceptions, early campaigning activity had been essentially proactive, in that objectives had been defined in advance and then pursued with as much application as possible. The campaign for the Derbyshire CIL was the main example from this early period.

With an increase in the number of, as well as the frequency of contact with members, it had become increasingly important to respond to member needs. In practice, this meant that the Coalition was entering an essentially reactive campaigning phase, dealing with matters after, rather than before the event. Even so, the wider issues raised by individual problems were pursued where it was possible to do so.

Many matters were pursued in this phase. One example which arose from an individual complaint was the successful campaign to persuade the then Department of Health and Social Security to provide skin-toned hearing aids for black people. This was as much a campaign to get rid of one aspect of institutional racism as an advance for disabled people themselves.

Another matter, brought to the Coalition's attention through a regional TV news programme, concerned a deaf man without speech who had been accused of a minor theft, found unfit to plead, and transferred from prison to a psychiatric hospital for an indefinite period. In large measure, the Coalition's campaign helped to get the man released - and in the aftermath, DCDP gave support to work by a local lawyer and other disability organisations to get the law changed which had permitted the whole episode.

Campaigns for access took different forms. Some were highly visible, taking the form of demonstrations outside inaccessible local cinemas in Derby and Ripley. Quite different were changes to countryside walks and amenities which came about, not as a result of member complaints or public demonstrations, but through the Coalition's representations to the Peak Park Planning Board. This led to greatly improved access to the countryside for wheelchair users, through direct consultation with the Coalition member involved.

Another example was the objection lodged by the Coalition to the County Court

offices in Alfreton being moved to first floor premises, since they were not served by a lift. After a campaign which lasted eighteen months, during which support was sought from trades unions, the T.U.C., local M.P.s, churches, the County Council and backing from the House of Lords, the Lord Chancellor's Department capitulated.

The denial of equal opportunities and appropriate support in the workplace, has historically trapped disabled people in a highly inadequate State benefits system, and is responsible for many DCDP members struggling to exist on very low incomes. This has always been a source of individual aggravation and complaint, many of which have been pursued to a conclusion, not always by DCDP itself, but more frequently by the Centre for Integrated Living.

However, the Coalition has been vociferous in response to the effects of Government policies, the harsh impact of its social security reforms, and for a "partial incapacity" approach to what is, essentially, a "sick or fit" benefits system. To these ends, it has produced leaflets, spoken at public meetings, lobbied parliament and generally campaigned alongside other organisations in the movement on these issues.

Basically, the Derbyshire Coalition believes that disabled people have a similar right and obligation to work as do the able-bodied, and that jobs and working conditions should be as suitable to their needs as to those of able-bodied workers. It has campaigned consistently on the idea that work should be fit for people, rather than the other way around, as was implicit in the Government's own "Fit for Work" idea. The campaign has been for equal opportunities, and against the prejudice often encountered when disabled people seek work in open employment:-

I was furiously angry at the whole tone of the interview and the range of questions that had been put to me, which seemed to have little to do with the job they were trying to fill. I actually felt like a freak. How many able-bodied candidates are asked to explain how they would arrange their office furniture?" (Diana-I in Campling, 1981b, pp.76-78).

Not all campaigns were reactive, however, during this period. The issue of personal assistance - in particular, who controls the supply of personal assistants - had been the substance of long running debate. On the "independent living" model, personal assistants are hired, trained, organised, paid and, if necessary, fired by the disabled person him or herself.

On the "integrated living" model, the opportunity for disabled to hire their own assistants was seen as one option among a range of others - all of which provided for shared input and control from disabled people themselves. DCDP started a strong campaign during 1987 to persuade the Social Services Department to support two pilot projects based on the idea of groups of helpers and helped managing their own locally organised service. The projects were intended to inform both DCIL and the Department about the potential for re-thinking the whole approach to this kind of service.

The campaign raised some of the deepest issues encountered by the Coalition for some time. The County Council's Home Help, Home Care Aide and Flexi-care services were seen, politically, as being symbolic of its caring and beneficent image. These services employed a large number of staff, and the Unions were as protective of their members' interests as were the Councillors of their political image.

It was not a scenario for change, and the Coalition's campaign did not bring practical results. But it did reveal how powerful were the vested interests involved and, ironically, how dependent were the Authority, its workers and Unions on the idea of disabled people being a dependent underclass in need of their version of welfare.

More recently, there has been a change of emphasis in campaigning style, stemming from a long-running campaign against the introduction of a pedestrianised zone in Chesterfield town centre. The first attempt to introduce the scheme was successfully resisted in 1983, but re-introduced again three years later, after, the idea had been "softened" (including, on this occasion, DCDP itself) by being discussed along-side a package of measures including a greater number of designated parking spaces and a Shopmobility scheme.

It was not until 1989, however, after objections by other organisations including DCIL and the Chesterfield Access Group, that the affair reached an impasse, and flared up into full scale demonstrations on the streets. By this time, the campaign had gained the support of the movement nationally and received wide coverage in the media. The Borough Council refused to withdraw their proposal and, for the first time, DCDP members ignored the law, continued to park in the pedestrianised zone and ended up in Court, where they pleaded guilty. The following is an extract from their Statement:-

"There are two things we should like the Court to know. Firstly that we are both law abiding people and that we have a proper respect for the Law. Secondly, that we seek neither lenience nor harshness from this Court: we think that disabled people should accept the same responsibilities - but also

that we should share the same rights - as non-disabled people.

It is this pursuit of equality which has brought us into conflict with the Law. We have been charged with offences created by the Borough Council's Town Centre Traffic Order which was made in the teeth of one of the biggest campaigns of opposition ever mounted by disabled people and their organisations in this country. We were involved, along with many others, in the most strenuous efforts to make the Council aware of the discriminatory effect of this Order on disabled people. We were ignored. All told, they have ignored four public demonstrations of opposition, a 1000 signature petition and many letters of complaint from both individuals and organisations, locally and nationally.

We would like this Court to know why we were against the Traffic Order. We explained that we cannot use public transport; we thus have no choice but to use cars; our Orange Badges gave us limited rights to park; but the Traffic Order would take that right away.

The effect of losing the ability to walk is devastating enough. To regain freedom of movement by way of an adapted vehicle means a great deal. To have that freedom taken away by the stroke of a pen is a grave injustice. We had a duty to oppose the Order.

We explained that the Order would affect our ability to go about our business; to shop; to find work; in some cases even to get to our places of work; or just to have the pleasure of going into our own town centre. We explained that the alternative parking would be too far away for some disabled people; that we would lose our independence; that it would add to the stress on those who help us.

We are fully aware that there are conflicts between people and traffic and that these are difficult to deal with. Equally, we are aware that congestion on our roads is the result of transport policies which are outside the ability of the Borough Council to control. But we do not think it is right that we should be asked to sacrifice access to our own town centre - simply to make life more congenial for others whose freedom to come and go is by comparison unrestricted.

For these reasons, we felt we had to point out that the policy of pedestrianisation is an able-bodied invention: that the very word concerns the act of walking and cannot but be inherently discriminatory against people who are unable, or have difficulty with walking.

The Council were made aware that there is no anti-discrimination legislation to protect us from such a policy.

Pedestrianisation sets out to make areas traffic-free for some, by its implicit rejection of disabled people. We agreed with a proposal put forward by the Campaign for an alternative policy of safe accessibility for all which, because it sets out with an explicit acceptance of disabled people as equal citizens, would allow us to argue for the right to freedom of movement through consultation and negotiation.

We have seen the Traffic Order as an infringement of a basic human right, the effect of which is not limited only to ourselves. Pedestrianised areas are now becoming widespread across the country. As a result, freedom of movement for Britain's 6.2 million disabled adults - already severely restricted by lack of facilities - is being further curtailed.

We think this is a national scandal and, if the Borough Council had not been so determined to add Chesterfield to the list of no-go areas, we would not have been brought before this Court today.

The sad fact is that disability is no respecter of persons. Anyone can be struck down by illness, accident or disease. Those who have made this Order do so as much in ignorance of the reality of what it means to their fellow human beings as what it may one day mean to themselves. The Chesterfield Town Centre Traffic Order may seem small scale, but the principle on which it rests is unjust and, in our view, as ultimately unwise as was the building of the Berlin Wall. Of course, no-one who respects the Law, breaks the Law lightly. But we have felt that we have been left little choice in the matter and can now only place ourselves in the hands of this Court." (DCDP, 1990, May).

This change in campaigning style, is a reflection of similar changes which, since 1989, have emerged in the wider movement. After nine unsuccessful attempts to persuade the Conservative Government to introduce Anti Discrimination Legislation since the Coalition came into existence, direct action has appeared on the agenda of a number of disabled people's organisations.

A network of disabled people in the county called the Derbyshire Direct Action Now Network (DDANN) has been formed, many of whom are Coalition members. With support from DCDP, this new network organised a nationwide conference to explore the issues raised by direct action for BCODP and its member groups, and to look at ways and means of resourcing and organising

campaigns of direct action on key issues.

The activities of charities, and the encouragement given to such bodies by the present Government as part of its political programme of replacing public funding by private giving, has already been singled out as a priority concern. The annual Telethon event has been selected as one of the main targets for direct action, with Coalition members prominent at demonstrations in London.

CHAPTER 14

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE LOCAL MOVEMENT

One of the consequences of the kind of prolonged campaigning undertaken by the Coalition, has been a need continually to assess and re-assess the way it should itself respond to the changes brought about as a result - directly or indirectly - of its own work. Although the Coalition was building on a gradual process of disabled people coming together when it first started work in the County in 1981, campaigning and other organised activity under the control of disabled people was at a relatively low level. Ten years later, the picture had changed dramatically.

Apart from the Coalition's own ongoing work, one of the main factors responsible for this change was DCIL. Once this organisation started to become active in 1985, with much larger resources at its disposal, it soon had an impact on the development of the movement in the County. A key element in this were DCIL's Community Link Workers, whose job brought them increasingly into contact with disabled people at the local level.

Soon local groups concerned with access and transport were emerging all over the County. These began to represent disabled people's interests in local affairs and campaign for change. They were independently constituted, autonomous groups, linked only tenuously via their contact with DCIL's workers and, through that link, into the movement's broad philosophy.

A further influence for change came during the period when the Disability Project teams were working within the Strategic Framework for service development. Building on broader County Council policies, disabled "clients" were encouraged to come together with a view to influencing Departmental practice. Local Planning Groups were eventually formed for this purpose. Although there were severe constraints on the extent to which these Groups were able to become politically active, their existence added to the general growth of organised disability activity in the County.

The development of local authority equal opportunity policies stimulated more organisational developments. Reference has already been made to the development of the Derbyshire Disabled People's Forum. This organization became the formal point of contact for disabled people to influence the County Council's policies and practices. In turn, the Forum has set up sub-groups to deal with specific aspects of the Council's work. Similar developments have taken place at District Council level, in Derby, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire.

Some of these organisational developments are more clearly "grassroots", democratic and representative than others. The Derby Disabled People's Consultative Panel, for example, started off only with representatives who were themselves disabled - later, the Council changed the Constitution to allow able-bodied controlled disability organisations to send representatives. Overall however, it represents an almost unimaginable change compared with the picture only ten years before. It has sometimes seemed ironic to Coalition members, who set up the Coalition precisely to enable groups and individuals to come together as a means of developing disabled people's unity and strength, to find instead a process of fragmentation occurring across the County.

CHAPTER 15

TENSIONS AND DIFFICULTIES

The Coalition's ambivalent feelings about its relationship to the Derbyshire Disabled People's Forum, came to a head at the 1990 AGM, shortly after the County Council cut the remaining half of its annual grant which, in effect, left DCDP without any income. The organisation had been brought to the edge of collapse. Redundancy notices had been issued to all staff. Survival plans had been drawn up based mainly on voluntary input from members organised into networks. The mood of members at the AGM was grim and determined.

The cut in grant aid, though publicly caused by the threat of Charge Capping, was interpreted by Coalition members as indicating a substantial loss of political support. Members at the AGM felt that withdrawal of support from DCDP could be used to give false credibility to the Forum. Although DCDP had initially given qualified support to the organisation, it was, in effect, a Council invention as distinct from democratically organised grassroots body like DCDP. Coalition members were aware that the Forum could not freely express disability opinion since the County Council controlled what it could discuss by setting its Agenda.

There was anger about why the Forum had failed to initiate or get involved in any action in support of DCDP. This led to DCDP to resolve no longer to recognise the Forum and to adopt a policy of non-cooperation with it. This was intended not to be seen as an attack on disabled members of the Forum, as much as an expression of the resolve of DCDP that no-one could with impunity claim the Forum to be the bona fide voice of disabled people in the County.

Shortly after the AGM it had been possible to withdraw redundancy notices from two of the Coalition's workers because of emergency grant aid which had been provided by North East Derbyshire District Council. Some other District Councils later followed suit and, during 1991, the County Council resumed funding DCDP at half the previous level. As these negotiations over funding were proceeding, the Coalition debated the extent to which its policy on the Forum might be adjusted.

The central concern was about the divisions beginning to open up between disabled people and their organisations and the ways in which the Coalition's policy of non-recognition and non-cooperation was exacerbating that process. A view was gaining ground that a positive policy of involvement might achieve two goals: first, that of healing a breach in the movement; second, that of bringing the aims and principles of the movement into the Forum, thus strengthening its performance.

The situation with the Forum nicely illustrates one of the main sources of tension and difficulty within the local movement: that lying in and between consultation and representation on the one hand, and the politics of pressure group campaigning on the other.

It had always been acknowledged by the Coalition that to occupy a "separatist" position; to claim the freedom to think, speak and act independently; to work to bring about change from the "outside", had great strengths in the process of bringing about social change. One of the changes the Coalition wished to achieve, however, was that of decision making bodies actively consulting with representative disabled people in reaching decisions.

DCDP had won that role for itself in many different forums and, having done so, had placed itself in a different relationship with the body concerned. Many of its campaigning tactics had to be set aside, and a different approach had to be adopted which was more appropriate to representation and consultation. This had involved explaining the issues, negotiating, seeking support. It had involved the making of relationships and the communication of information. The problem for DCDP was that its pressure group role had not come to an end at the time this process was going on. Other campaigns were needed, on other issues, but often against the same body.

It was understood by the Coalition that the tensions implicit in this situation could be eased to some extent when other organisations of disabled people such as the Forum were set up specifically for consultative purposes. In practice, however, new tensions had emerged when the consultative group represented issues in ways which seemed to be at variance with the aims of the movement at large.

This had raised the difficult question of education across and discipline within the movement. This, it had been recognised, was more than just a technical problem of awareness, communication and co-ordination of policy. To be sure, as the local movement had grown larger and more fragmented, it had been harder and harder to win a consistent policy approach. But it had also raised questions, touching on the independence, autonomy and integrity of the newer groups, as to how far the Coalition's own policies and practices were

acceptable to them.

A further source of continual tension was to do with the extent of the Coalition's own freedom to speak and act absolutely independently, particularly when its funding was derived mainly from one source. It had undoubtedly been the case that the range and impact of DCDP's message was in no small part due to the financial resources it had at its disposal. The County Council grant aid - starting off at £20,000, rising to almost £50,000 at its peak prior to the Charge Cap cuts - had enabled DCDP to set up its own office, with its own workers and equipment. The extent to which it could communicate its ideas, generate and maintain contact with members, and conduct its business was directly linked the funds it had available.

The Coalition was very aware that the level of its effectiveness was at the disposal of the County Council. This had made it necessary for it to consider a number of options. It could seek to raise funds from elsewhere in order to diversify its income base and reduce the power of any one funding body to control its affairs. It could direct its campaigning activities away from the County Council in an attempt to avoid confrontation with it. It could be selective in both the content and style of any pressure it might wish to bring on its main funding body.

In practice, the Coalition did all of these things to a limited extent. It accepted that its freedom to act was constrained by the need to make judgements about the effect its actions might have on its main funding body. However, the Coalition had never flinched from raising controversial matters in controversial ways, if it thought the circumstances warranted it. This had brought it to the brink of crisis on occasion, as in the wake of the film "Statement of Intent". It was an approach which had needed care, and which had:-

"introduced a sense of unease or perhaps caution into the helper/helped relationship; a feeling on both sides that the change process would need to be more carefully managed." (Kay, 1984).

Other tensions had emerged in internal relationships, particularly in meeting the needs of members with different impairments. For example, people with a sight impairment had always been fewer in numbers than, say, those with mobility impairments. Particularly where meetings had been called at short notice, blind members found themselves disadvantaged either because documents had not been reproduced in the right form, or insufficient time had been given to assimilate the contents, or both.

A good deal of stress was caused merely as a result of the range of advances

which DCDP helped to bring about. Demands on staff and member time and energy sometimes reached intolerable levels. The Coalition had, of necessity, been a very centralised organisation right from the start. There were not enough active disabled people about in 1981 for it to be otherwise. But there were other reasons for this:-

"First, disabled people had never been used to coming together and running their own groups. This had almost always been done for us by able-bodied people. To make DCDP strong, to give it a chance of survival, we needed to have strong central control. Second, DCDP was trying to get over some new ideas which people were not very used to. We had always been spoken for by able-bodied people. Able-bodied people decided what things we needed. Ideas of what was best for us were coming from able-bodied people. We needed strong central control to make sure we were able to get our message across to people. Third, DCDP was proposing some very different practices. We weren't just getting involved in disability politics - we were also after some practical changes in services. We needed strong central control, with strong people who had clear ideas - if we were to make any real changes happen". (Davis, 1990).

Real tensions existed because the need to build a strong organisation at the centre conflicted with the need to promote the active participation of more and more members at the local level. Although members had tried to meet this need, putting energy into local activity simply diverted it away from the centre. It was a "Catch 22" situation of DCDP's own making.

This also caused problems with the requirement to make an effective management input into DCIL. Members had found it necessary to divide their energies between many representational and other tasks. Each division of their time and energy led to a reduction in the degree and detail of their input into DCIL. This caused a reduction in DCDP's capacity to control the direction of events inside DCIL.

This was the background to a number of questions regarding procedures inside DCIL which had been identified in an Audit of the organisation in the early part of 1990, which had been imposed on the organisation by the County Council members of the Centre's Management Committee. This heralded a new and difficult period in the relationship between the Coalition and the County Council, and it brought a number of tensions to the surface. The change of policy towards the disabled people's movement implied by this action was soon followed up by drastic cuts in the grant aid to both organisations. Although this is properly part of the history of the Centre, it affected

DCDP significantly in many ways.

The "co-equal" basis of the relationship between the Coalition and the County Council, was clearly shown by the events of this time to be easier to write into the DCIL constitution, than to put into practice in the real world. Indeed the relationship had been under strain for some time. This was not so much a matter of personalities but of genuine difficulties caused by differences between the policies and practices of the Authority and the aspirations of members of the movement.

CHAPTER 16

FACING THE FUTURE

From 1990 to date, the Coalition has faced some of the most difficult circumstances of its turbulent ten years of existence. In late 1989, its members were engaged in a searching appraisal of its role and relationship to the local movement. All of its members were sent a questionnaire designed to involve them in thinking about the organisation's future.

Reviewing its main achievements, it noted many contributions it had made to the development of the disabled people's movement on Britain. It had been the country's first Coalition of disabled people; with the County Council it had produced the first "Statement of Intent" on disability policy; it had pioneered the theory and practice of integrated living; it wrote the first draft constitution for what later became the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People. Through its work, it had become widely known and respected, but Coalition members were aware that, in terms of the magnitude of the task facing the movement the struggle had hardly yet begun.

With regard to the growing number of independent groups across the County which were controlled by disabled people, the question was faced as to whether DCDP could rethink its own organisational framework in an attempt to halt what the Coalition characterised as a fragmentation of the local movement. It was noted:-

This is not a happy trend. Given all the social changes that need to be made, if disabled people are ever to lead a decent life, we should be looking to increase, rather than decrease our solidarity and unity. Cohesion, unity of purpose and political clout are required of the movement in the Nineties, if we are to secure lasting improvements".
(Davis, 1990).

However, a hiatus had been caused by the events within DCIL and this had been quickly followed, in August 1990, by the cut in grant aid by the County Council. Work was halted on the implementation of the Strategy for the Nineties and was replaced by intensive work on a strategy for survival. The departure of most of its workers in the wake of the cut in grant had led to a vision of DCDP carrying out strategically important activities through the medium of networks of members, supported by the remaining resources at the DCDP Office.

Negotiations with District Councils were beginning to yield limited results in

the way of funding, but a further difficulty was raised when the County Council linked its partial resumption of grant aid in 1991 to the outcome of discussions between DCDP and DCIL on the roles of and relationships between the two organisations. These discussions were eventually held, and a Joint Strategy worked out which for the first time yielded a programme of joint ventures between the two organisations.

Ten years after the inauguration of the Coalition, in December 1981, the Coalition emerged from one of the worst periods in its history. As this record is being prepared for publication at the start of 1993, it still carries on, older and wiser but still intact, still looking to the future, and still as determined as ever to give its best to the long struggle for the emancipation of disabled people.

"DCDP News", the Coalition's bi-monthly newsletter, had been replaced by a joint DCIL/DCDP publication "INFO"; support has been given to the formation of new groupings of disabled people - including TUDA a national alliance of disabled trade unionists and a local Arts Forum. A campaign "Access for Life" had been launched, to promote the building of all new housing to the Coalition's "accessible-adaptable" standards. And the fragmentation of the local movement is being addressed through conferences designed to bring representatives of many smaller groups together around the theme: "Who speaks for Disabled People."

The future remains uncertain, but the challenges yet to come in the 1990's are likely to be met by the same spirit of resolve and determination. The aim of "full participation and equality" which inspired Coalition members to come together in the early days, is a just and proper cause. DCDP is now part of a much larger and rapidly growing national organisation. The Coalition's prediction, made in its very first publication in 1981, remains very much a part of the driving spirit behind this growing movement:-

"Disabled people are on the move now, and they are on the move in such numbers and in such a way that their collective voice can no longer be denied." (DCDP, 1981).

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