

with the run-down. The pros and cons are only ones that I have most commonly heard; there may be (in fact most certainly are) others. My intention is not to provide an exhaustive list of arguments, only to provide enough to form a springboard for discussion.

HANDICAPPED

PRO: If the word is taken to mean that we are at a disadvantage in the able-bodied world as it is, then this is a simple statement of fact.

CON: The word originated at races where people drew straws from a hat to determine relative disadvantages in the race. It suggests then, that life must be competitive like a race, rather than co-operative. It has also, by now, been tainted by the fact that it has been so often used by people when they were saying something hurtful. This applies, in fact, to most of the words or phrases in this list.

DISABLED

PRO: Members of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation argue that we need two separate terms; one to describe the physical reality and another to describe the result of the way we are treated in society. Hence they say that the word disabled is good when it is used to mean that we are dis-abled by society's attitudes, failure to provide us with jobs, failure to provide us with aids etc.

CON: Using a term that is already in use but not understood to be a reflection on society won't change anything; people will continue to use it unwarily. Also continuing to use this word encourages the continued use of the phrase 'The disabled' which conjures up images of a sort of jellified mass of sub-humans that you might trip over out there if you don't watch out! (This also applies to the phrase 'The handicapped').

PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED

PRO: This is the term that U.P.I.A.S. use to refer to the physical reality. It is thought to be a straight-forward term and is accepted by some professionals in the field.

CON: The word impairment has many very negative associations (look it up in a Thesaurus if you're doubtful) and lots of people say it conjures up images of something rather nasty and morally bad!

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

PRO: It puts the word people first and doesn't contain any cover-up or denial. It also can't be shortened to 'the something'. The argument runs that if you are paralysed from the waist down, then in fact you are un-able to walk.

CON: It does convey the idea that our lack of abilities is a result of our conditions rather than the result of our treatment by society. The direct argument about the person who is unable to walk is that it is rare that the objective is actually walking, and if the objective is to get from A to B, then they could do so if society gave them whatever mechanism suited them best (e.g. an electric wheelchair).

PHYSICALLY DIFFERENT

PRO: It has no linguistically inherent negative meaning, as do the syllables 'dis' and 'im', found in other words.

CON: The whole notion of difference is frequently the excuse for oppression - 'women are, after all, biologically different'. Also every person is physically different from every other, so it is pretty uninformative.

PEOPLE WHO ARE DISVALUED

PRO: It is true that we are disvalued and that this underlies some of the oppression (if people thought we could contribute to society, presumably they would make it easier for us to do so).

CON: The term is rather general and applies to many different groups of people in society.

That's it then. I believe that we need a word or phrase that WE think up and are happy with (here I'm talking about a reasonable consensus) and that in all probability it will need to be something completely fresh. Meanwhile, perhaps I can leave you with a phrase that was a slip of the tongue on the part of a friend of mine yesterday. She said 'people with POSSibilities'. Well, it has possibilities! (Merry Cross).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?





Far Friends

In each issue of In From The Cold, shall have news and letters sent to from people living in countries other than the U.K. Below you will find letter from a Swedish member of our Network.

Exchange of information between people with disabilities in different countries is enlightening and supportive. A campaign for our human rights must world-wide in order to achieve our liberation.

I'm looking forward to receiving a flood of letters and news from abroad. If the sender is unable to translate their contribution into English, they should first try to get someone else to do it for them; BUT if that's not possible it should be sent to me anyway, because by hook or by crook I'll find someone to do it for me!

At present our resources only allow us to publish In From The Cold in English.

When we met, I told you a little about the Swedish handicap movement. It has grown very strong during the last five years, and its activities are getting more and more coverage in the mass media. There is a Central Committee of the Handicap Organisations, and they have some twenty organisations as members. Among them is the Association of the Visually Handicapped, of whose Youth Section I'm an active member, as well as editing their tape magazine. I have gathered that in England the handicapped have to rely a lot on charity, and they have to pay for their technical aids themselves. I'm not sure this is correct, since I don't know a lot about the situation there. But this is my impression. In Sweden, all technical aids are free, but you have to go to a doctor first, so he or she can judge what aids you need. That doctor has to be a specialist on your handicap, of course, and together you will try out various aids and devices.

These are the material things. Technique we have in abundance, and its very convenient to be able to manage as well as most people. But what is more important

is people's attitudes towards handicapped people. There is much elitism and contempt for weakness in our society, and this affects the handicapped as well as other minorities. Up till now we have just taken the scraps thrown at us with the implied reasoning that anything's good enough for us and we should be grateful we get anything at all! That was the attitude implanted in us at Tomtebodan, the school for blind children. Many people continued to believe it as they grew up, and that's why the handicap organisations never gained any strength. But as other young people began to grow more aware so did the handicapped youth. And my youth section was among the first to demand instead of beg for our basic rights. The elders followed; the awareness spread. This is a bit simplified, of course. But roughly that's how it went.

In 1976 we had our first demonstration march. That was just the blind and deaf people, demanding access to mass media and literature. In '78 and '79, the entire handicap movement gathered to demonstrate, and the theme was 'Jobs for Everyone'. Of the visually handicapped, one out of ten has a job on the open market.

We have also had this theme called 'Daily Papers for the Blind'. They have experimented with three daily papers, recording them on cassette and sending them out with the ordinary papers. One paper has kept it up for two years now, and has no intention of dropping it. It has made an immense difference to the blind people living in that area. Some people may ask, 'But isn't it enough with the radio? You get news there'. But during the labour conflict in May, when the papers were faced with the possibility of not coming out because of difficulties with the printing, these same people came forward and said the situation was unacceptable; it would be a danger to society if we had no papers, etc. So they were not prepared to be satisfied with the radio!

We are hoping to establish the handicap movement as a vital part of our society, something to count on. There is so much for us to do yet. With the new fascism creeping up all over, we need to be strong and united.

I don't know if you've heard about the case of the German tourist who stayed at a hotel in Greece where there was a group of Swedish handicapped people. She found it distasteful to stay at the same hotel as them, and when she got home she brought the matter to court, demanding her money back from the travel agency because her holiday had been a failure. The court denied her any compensation; but she took it further, and that higher court was sympathetic towards her demands. They granted her full compensation with the motivation that while it is a pity that some people are handicapped, at least one must be able to choose whether one wants to see them on one's holiday! A decision like that is really frightening, and of course there was an outcry from the German handicap organisations. In Sweden the handicap movement sent round lists which were signed by a great number of people, and then marched to the German Embassy (West German, I should say) and delivered the lists. You can't allow such things to pass without loud protests! There has been some coverage in the papers on this subject too...

I send you all my best.

Kait Bessing



GRIT

During a motel holdup in Cleveland on May 3, 1977, the robber, Bruce Williams, was shot and paralysed from the waist down. He impressed the authorities the following year by committing five additional crimes within three months, including a robbery, a theft, and a kidnapping. The Associated Press in May 1978 quoted his comment on the work of the Cleveland police: "They picked on me!" he said, from his wheelchair.

(Reprinted from a book called 'True Remarkable Occurrences compiled and annotated by John Train, published in America.)

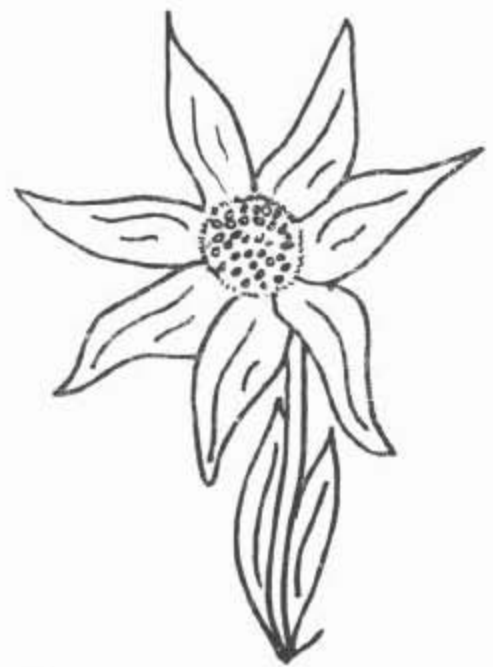


In Tower Hamlets, a particularly impoverished part of London, there was an exciting development at the end of last year. A couple of community workers told their management committee that it wasn't up to the committee to decide what their organisation could do for I.Y.D.P. but up to people with disabilities themselves. As a result, one of them got together a group of us to discuss what we wanted, with the leadership coming from within the group, not from her.

What has emerged out of this is an extremely powerful group called THE OUT AND ABOUT RIGHTS GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, which is campaigning for improved access to public buildings and meetings in the borough and for a special transport scheme that will fill the needs of those who can't use public transport and haven't enough money for cabs.

The group has already acquired a taxi adapted to take wheelchairs, and has had a few bits of publicity in local papers.

If you want to know more about it, or would like to help run it or just join the organisation with a view to getting transport, ring 790 9077 or write to Dama Colet House, Ben Jonson Road, London E1.



SPEAKING OUT Edwina McCarthy

This piece of writing gives me the opportunity to get on the platform and say something to the people who think they have a speech problem or communication hang-up not to give up the fight to be liberated.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Edwina McCarthy, I am 25 years old, and also have a disability, which is cerebral palsy. The disability affects my speech. At one time I had a hang-up about talking to people I didn't know very well or people who didn't know my needs. Let me explain my theory. If I was at a social gathering and a person came to talk to me, after a while I would sense if the person was guessing what I was saying, or they would ask the person who was with me, 'what did she say?', or interrupt me in the mid-flow of a sentence and then carry on.

Nowadays I say:

- (a) if you can't understand certain words I'm saying, please ask again till you get every word;
- (b) if people really listen to me they should understand;
- (c) I try to get a quiet background to carry out conversation.

Please don't give up trying to be understood. People with speech defects are now appearing on television, in plays and on radio.

NEW GROUPS

Angry at the lack of socialist/feminist literature available on tape or in Braille, a mixed group of people with visual disabilities and sighted allies have got together to produce two regular alternative talking magazines, one socialist and one feminist. First editions are to be published shortly.

Help is needed to organise finances and with technical advice.

Subscription to each magazine will be £3.00 annually.

All enquiries to:

The Alternative Talking Newspaper Collective,

c/o In From the Cold,
Flat 4,
188 Ramsden Rd.,
Balham,
London S.W. 12

The Trades Union Congress IYDP Conference, to be held in London on July 21st, will be considering proposals for a range of policies to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

As well as representatives from affiliated unions, disability organisations will be invited to send delegates to the Conference at Congress House which has access and toilet facilities for people with disabilities.

For further information please contact Trevor Mawer, Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Dept., TUC., Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS Telephone: 01 636 4030.

← Forthcoming Event

'SUBNORMAL' - OR JUST DEAF?

An estimated 750 people of normal intelligence are in hospitals for mentally handicapped people in Britain simply because they have hearing difficulties. A recent study of hospitals in Devon showed that 1.5% of all those classified as 'mentally handicapped' were deaf and achieved IQ scores of above 70 - below average but 'normal'. Deaf people in these hospitals in Devon have been there for an average of 38 years - some of them for 69 years.

BENEFITS: ARE YOU MISSING OUT?

You may not be getting the benefits and services to which you are entitled, according to a report published recently by the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux. The report showed that a large number of people were not claiming their attendance allowance, the benefit available for people who need frequent or constant assistance from others. Others did not know that they were entitled to supplementary benefit. Only five people, from 39 households of people with disabilities picked at random, were getting all the benefits to which they were entitled. To find out what benefits you are entitled to contact your local Citizens' Advice Bureau or Claimants' Union.



The Museum of London in the Barbican is the First Museum to have an Induction Loop System.

Sponsored by Marks and Spencer, the system has been installed in the Museum's lecture Theatre and will enable many hard of hearing adults and children to enjoy the full programme of films and lectures.

The loop produces a magnetic field of sound which is picked up by any standard hearing aid (including NHS) produced in the past four years. A tiny switch links the listener to the amplification system and cuts out all background noise.





Animals have Rights too

Since joining the Liberation Network of People with Disabilities, I have become acutely aware of the Liberation Movement as a whole. I have come to realise that liberation of any one group cannot happen in isolation - that becoming aware of the nature of our oppression, brings with it responsibility to other groups.

Although I care about other minority groups in our society, I have come to realise that the oppression of animals is far in excess of anything suffered by humans. Since I was young I have loved animals and been concerned at the extent of their exploitation by humans.

Since I joined Animal Aid reading and an increased awareness has shown me that behind grossly cruel and insensitive violence on animals there lurk motives of profit and 'scientific' minds which have no compassion for non-human life, and to whom a laboratory animal has no more feeling than a bunsen burner. At home the scientist is a kind and compassionate person - s/he may even have pets. But at the laboratory his actions are not modified by these human characteristics. S/he becomes 'objective' and capable of insensitive cruelty. This 'desirable' human state is nurtured at schools where children are encouraged to dissect small animals.

People with disabilities at this point may feel that vivisection is essential if cures for their disabilities are to be found (indeed having Muscular Dystrophy I used to think this myself). I now realise that the whole thing about cures is a great job-off. 'Never mind they'll soon find a cure' To me this attitude says 'You are unacceptable the way you are' It masks the real problem which is that the world is just not built for people in wheelchairs. I realised that hoping for a cure is a waste of the life I have and that my main handicap is that, although improving, society still has many obstacles in my way. The fact that we are turned away from cinemas etc. is not due to our disabilities but to

blatant discrimination. To blame our disabilities is to blame ourselves. We must take care, whilst fighting for our liberation not to collude with other forms of oppression and exploitation.

Animal experimentation leads scientists to ignore the real nature of disease. One scientist submerged 8 dogs in icy water up to their necks to study hypothermia. He inserted balloons into their stomachs and circulated warm water to compare this with conventional methods of warming people up.

Anyone who looks at the problem of hypothermia in total knows it is due to the elderly not having adequate heating. Without using these unfortunate animals the scientist would have to face this fact. Scientists are preoccupied with curing conditions which could be eradicated by preventive medicine.

Cosmetic, household cleaners, toiletries and garden products are all tested on animals. Neat substances are dripped into rabbits' eyes and force-fed to establish the lethal dose. As if we haven't enough of all these things.

Vivisection denies our most basic principles. Exploitation, and the deliberate infliction of suffering are abhorrent to us and yet perfectly acceptable in laboratories.

The main defence of vivisection is that the end justifies the means. This argument has been used to justify Nazi medical experimentation. The same argument is destroying our Earth. We are polluting rivers and killing river life because industry is more important than any old animal; we are exterminating species because they are threatening some lifestyle; seals are culled because we are more entitled to the fish than they are!! The whole assumption is that humans are the most important and therefore all others have no consideration at all, that it is OK to poison, irradiate, scald and starve animals because WE are the most important.

I believe that all oppression begins with the oppression of animals and that while we accept cruelty as a means to an end, as a 'necessary' evil we will always live in a cruel, unjust and opportunist world.

Mary Woodhouse
(I'd be very interested to hear readers' views on this subject - please write to IFTC)



Success Stories !

Most of us have been made to believe that there are only two choices for people with disabilities who need daily assistance in order to live - to stay at home with ones' family, or to live in a residential institution. Keith Armstrong however, has found an alternative way to live independently within the community with the help he needs. His initiative has set a precedent for many others in a similar situation, but recently his life-style was seriously threatened by the IHSS.

Keith's first attempt at independent living was squating for 3½ years in a GIC property. Members of the squat shared 'caring' for him (help with dressing, cooking, bathing etc.) When the Group were rehoused Keith refused to be housed away from all his friends. He therefore asked for a 2 - bedroom flat in which he could live with a full-time helper in the same area as the squat. After an Appeal, the DHSS agreed to pay the whole rent of the flat which meant that Keith's helper could be offered a rent-free flat plus the low rate of attendance allowance in exchange for giving him the assistance he needed. This was in 1976.

The arrangement worked very well until November 1980 when suddenly Keith's money did not arrive. When he tried to find out what had happened he was told that due to the new Social Security Act they were considering withdrawing the amount of £4.60 from his money - the equivalent of the rent allowance to his helper, to which they now claimed that Keith was no longer entitled. The implication of this was that he was supposed to start charging his helper rent. Knowing that it was very unlikely that a helper would stay with him without the added incentive of rent-free accommodation, he began to get worried. He lodged an appeal against the decision and enlisted the support of the Liberation network of People with Disabilities.

It is very easy to give up fights like this, because we have all had so many discouraging experiences; so it was probably easier for the rest of us to be outraged on Keith's behalf than it was for him to realise how important it was that he didn't give up.

We wrote a press statement to draw attention to what was happening and to a picket which we planned outside the appeal hearing. Keith also found a good ally in a lawyer who specialises in Social Security cases. On the day of the appeal there were as many 'press' as demonstrators, but it was good to feel that we had shown our solidarity in public.

The appeal was adjourned and Keith was later informed by letter that he had been successful. Furthermore they had agreed with Keith's lawyer who had discovered that people who need 'personal assistance' because of a disability (and do not live with a blood relative) are entitled to Domestic Assistance Allowance - the equivalent of the amount one pays to a helper.

Keith now receives an extra £14.50 a week as well as having had the rent allowance restored. Added to his attendance allowance it means he can pay his helper almost £50.00 a week. This victory makes it much easier for other people with severe disabilities to start living independently, because they will now be able to pay helpers something approaching a living wage.



From:
The Director's Office,
The Settlement,
Complexton.

1 April 1981

Private and Personal
Senior Staff Members Only

Dear Colleagues,

I am more than a little concerned to hear that a number of the disabled in our organisation are actually thinking of trying to get elected to our executive, as they have done in some other organisations.

Ever since this organisation was first founded in 1936 by the late Sir Henry Hunter, J.P., we have always been mindful of the fact that we are here to help the less fortunate members of the community. Our achievements in this direction can clearly be seen by the fact that three of our staff have been awarded the M.B.E. and that our new treatment centre was opened by Lady Claire Weller. On that occasion we actually arranged for some of the residents to chat for a few minutes with our distinguished visitor. Although she managed to understand only a little of what they said, we managed to get some excellent photographs.

Quite honestly, the thought of having the disabled on the executive is really going too far. The notion is quite preposterous. Many of these people are in wheelchairs, have speech impediments and could cause all kinds of problems. I know that I must be speaking for most of you when I say that ideas of this kind could cause some extremely embarrassing situations. It is in the interests not only of FAD, but also of the disabled themselves to accept the limits of their disabilities. I would therefore make the following suggestions to discourage the participation of the disabled:

1. Make the disabled aware of their difficulties.
2. Emphasize to them all the practical problems which would be involved in them becoming members of the executive.
3. It needs to be stressed that we simply do not have sufficient financial resources to make all the alterations which would be required, e.g.

4. Consult our legal advisors to see if any of the clauses in our constitution could prevent this kind of situation from occurring.

I should like to take this opportunity for thanking you all for the really tremendous effort which you have all made during our present difficult period, when it has not been possible to increase salaries. Now that my wife and I are back from our European fact-finding tour, we are hoping to meet some of you again, from time to time.

Most sincerely

Edward Lloyd - Straightman

Edward Lloyd-Straightman M.A.
(Alias Larry Walters)



SIGNS OF PROGRESS?

A Spanish bank, the Banco Espanol de Credito, has opened a branch in Barcelona whose staff, from manager to tellers, are fluent in sign language. The bank will cater specifically for more than a thousand of the city's deaf people.



- * To seek to abolish all forms of segregation particularly in educational settings and residential institutions.
- * To seek allies amongst able-bodied people (i.e. people who will help us to fight for ourselves - not on our behalf).
- * To seek complete self-determination and control over our representation in the media (T.V. books, films, adverts etc.) and to have control over information put out about us.
- * To seek to unite organisations and institutions representing people with disabilities to fight for a common policy of liberation. (This does not mean detracting organisations from their original aims e.g. medical research, if these aims are complementary to the movement).
- * To work out a just economic policy taking into account that with industrialised countries in particular, a disability can require extra income to allow the person to reach the same standard of living as able-bodied people, whilst at the same time the competitive nature of earning money can exclude people with a certain degree of disability from making an equal contribution to work.
- * To inform as many people with disabilities as possible of their rights, in particular those included in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights for Disabled Persons.
- * To encourage people with disabilities to organise themselves into active groups which will discuss the implications of achieving their rights at international, national, and local levels, and will seek to change or influence conditions around them accordingly.
- * To make allies of, and be allies to all other oppressed groups.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

- * I wish to subscribe to 'In From The Cold' for 1 year (3 issues) and enclose £1.20.
- * I wish to become a member of the Liberation Network of People with Disabilities and enclose £2.50 (Magazine free to members).
- * I wish to make a donation to the Liberation Network of

Name

Address

.....

.....

Tel. No.....

Please send to: In From the Cold, c/o Flat 4, 188 Ramesden Road, Balham, London, SW12 8RE