

International day of Disabled People

3rd December

Disability Equality at UCU

UCU is proud to be a leader in the field of disability within the trade union movement and supports the social model of disability which states that it is the way society organises that creates barriers to inclusion and prevents disabled people from taking an equal part in life. This model underpins all the work that we do in the area of disability equality.

Disability Arts A Decade of Rocking Rebellion

During the 1990s a number of organisations began using the Arts to positively promote visibility and awareness of disabled people in the media, on film and television and in music that continues today.

Stereotypes challenged
"Cap in Hand?" - Conference on the portrayal of disabled people in charity advertising.

Fighting for rights
"Taking Liberties" is set up by disabled people to fight for the rights of disabled people to gain greater access to art activities in and around the Wigan area.

New forum
Launch of Northern Disability Arts Forum at Buzzle Arts Centre, Wallend, including Graae Theatre Company with "Hound".

Festival of Deaf History, Buxton, Derbyshire.

Simon Smith and The Useless Eaters release their debut album "Entitled".

Launch party for Stream Records new releases including Ian Stanton's 'Rollin Thunder'.

Shropshire Disability Arts Festival.
DANN (Direct Action Network Nottingham) Disability Cabaret.

"Sweet, Sour and Serious" illustrated anthology by Survivor's Poetry Scotland.

"Inmates" by Allan Sutherland and Stuart Morris (BBC Radio Four). A ninety minute play set in a long stay institution for disabled people, starring disabled actors.

"Out of the Darkness: The Legacy of the Holocaust" (ICA week). Includes films 'Children of Gals' / 'After the Truth' / 'Healing by Killing' / 'Liebe Perla' / 'One of Us' / 'The Undesirables' and discussions.

Mad Pride Festival, Clissold Park, London.

West Midlands Disability Arts Forum established.
Independence Festival '98, Manchester.

'Wrong Bodies' Exhibition and Performances, Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA).

Lifting the Lid First Disability Film Festival, Lux Cinema, London.

Disability Film Festival

Introduction by Sally Hunt UCU General Secretary

In 1992 the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 3 December as International Day of Disabled Persons. Although much had been done to raise awareness through the UN it was not enough and it was decided a world day on disabled people's rights would be a powerful focus. The principles of the day are involve, organise, celebrate and take action and this is the story we are telling through the wallchart. How disabled people have through self organisation, their trade unions and by political action have not only challenged their civil, social and employment rights but perceptions and attitudes which are so difficult to change. The wallchart celebrates what movements and individuals have achieved across the planet as well as reminding us of appalling treatment including murder that can happen and still happens.

Some parts of the world have still to respond to the basic needs of disabled people whether that be by making transport and buildings more accessible or providing information in Braille or easy read. It is still shocking that such fundamental needs can be denied and how easily excluded disabled people can be from activities non disabled people take for granted.

The campaign for equal rights is not over and we need to be vigilant in protecting what has been won but let's today celebrate the achievements which have been made in politics, legislation, the arts and celebrate the ever increasing confidence and visibility of disabled people who are 'out and proud' too.

International Milestones

1809 Birth of Louis Braille
In 1824, he develops a tactile system using just 6 raised dots to represent the standard alphabet, enabling blind and partially sighted people to read and write independently. His best friend Gabriel Gauthier becomes the first person ever to read Braille.

1817 First school of its kind
Laurent Clerc, a deaf teacher born in LaBalle, France in 1785 and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, found America's first school for deaf children at Hartford.

1880 One step backwards...
The International Congress of Educators of the Deaf, meeting in Milan, Italy, calls for the suppression of all sign languages and the sacking of every deaf teacher. This triumph of oralism is seen by deaf advocates as a direct attack upon their culture.

...one step forward
Formation of the National Association of the Deaf by deaf people in the USA, which becomes the leading association fighting the braille.

1885 Braille breakthrough
Anna Adler establishes a printing house for blind people, which prints the first-ever Russian language Braille book.

1904 Binet "Intelligence" tests
Alfred Binet develops a system for testing intelligence and begins the trend for discriminating between schoolchildren on the basis of their supposed 'mental age'.

1907 Legalised discrimination
The eugenics movement gains momentum. Between 1907 and 1943, 30 states pass sterilisation laws aimed at 'social misfits: the mentally retarded, criminals and the insane.'

1921 Disabled people determine own destiny
The Council of People's Commissioners establishes the All-Russian Cooperative of Disabled People (VKO). Only disabled people have voting rights over the way it is run.

1932 "The impatient armies of the poor"
20,000 unemployed disabled war veterans and their families march on Washington. Tear gas and bayonets are used against peaceful protesters and 100 people killed. The events of 1932 inspire a new militancy in the USA and the roots of the disability rights struggle in America.

1933 - 1942 The Second World War
During the period 1933 - 1942 the Nazis introduced under the Law for the prevention of progeny with hereditary disease, atrocious attacks aimed at people with mental health problems, learning difficulties, epilepsy, blindness and deafness. It is estimated that 250,000 disabled children and adults are murdered between 1939 - 1945 by lethal injection or starvation. The black triangle was used by the Nazis to identify disabled persons.

1937 Employees fight back
Blind employees at workshops in Pittsburgh hold a sit-down strike after being denied the right to unionise.

1939 The T4 Programme
In 1939 the T4 Programme begins and an estimated 70,000 disabled people are murdered. Most of these large-scale killings use poison gas - a forerunner of the killing programme of Jewish people, known as 'The Final Solution'.

1944 The facts about the T4 programme
The facts about the T4 programme were exposed by Cardinal Cullen in 1941. As a result, Hitler orders the suspension of the programme as a result of growing public concern and pressure from the church and judiciary.

1950 Founding of the Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO)
The Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO) is founded.

1954 "The People Shall Govern"
The Freedom Charter of the African National Congress enshrines the principle of state support for all disabled people.

1964 The Group for Independence of Physically Disabled Persons (GIHP) is formed
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1975 Full integration
The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons calls for full economic and social integration of disabled people.

1979 Disabled people organise themselves
At the World Congress on Disability in Winnipeg, Canada, organised by Rehabilitation International (RI), a proposal for 50% representation of disabled people on the RI board is turned down. Disabled people take the decision to form their own international organisation.

1981 The United Nations proclaims 1981 as International Year of The Disabled
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1986 Southern African Federation of Disabled People (SAFOD) formed in Durban
The Southern African Federation of Disabled People (SAFOD) is formed in Durban.

1990 The Americans with Disabilities Act is passed
It is similar to the Civil Rights Act 1964.

1992 The Disability Discrimination Act becomes law
The Disability Discrimination Act becomes law.

1993 Shootings
Police open fire on a demonstration by disabled war veterans. Two protesters are killed.

1994 New declaration
Representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations hold the World Conference on Special Needs Education, in Salamanca, Spain. They agree a dynamic new Statement on the education of all disabled children, which calls for inclusion to be the norm.

1998 The United Nations declares December 3rd as International Day of Disabled People
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2000 Beijing Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the New Century
The Beijing Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the New Century is adopted.

2003 European Year of Disabled People
The European Year of Disabled People is declared.

2005 Organisations of disabled people hold demonstrations to protest against benefit cuts
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2006 New rights adopted
The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and is opened for signature on 30th March 2007.

2009 Education fight
Disability rights activists hold protests about the new 'Right to Education' Bill which excludes up to 20 million disabled children and young people.

2008 Chain of demands
Disabled people form a human chain around the National Museum in Dhaka and demand full inclusion in society.

2009 The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities comes into force on 3rd May 2008
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2010 The Equality Act
Brings in new protection for disabled people.

Disabled People Facts & Figures at a Glance

2x Disabled adults are twice as likely to live in low-income households as non disabled adults and the gap is bigger than a decade ago. (The Poverty Group).

The employment rate among disabled adults remains far below that of non-disabled people, with around 50% of disabled people not in work, compared to around 20% of non-disabled people. (The Poverty Group).

A quarter of those disabled people who require adapted housing in England are currently living in accommodation that is unsuitable for their needs. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation).

Disabled people still face substantial disadvantage in the education system - 25% of disabled people have no qualifications compared to 11% among the population as a whole. (Alliance for Inclusive Education).

1 in 100 disabled people, compared to 1 in 50 non disabled people, participate in a public life (i.e. being a local councillor, school governor or magistrate). (Office for Disability Issues).

Disabled people in work on average earn almost £1 an hour less than non-disabled people in work, and nearly half of disabled employees are dissatisfied with their pay. (Office for Disability Issues).

10% Disabled people make up 10% of the global population - around 650 million people. (World Health Organisation).

There is **no country in the world** where disabled people's rights are not violated. (Disability Awareness and Action).

25% of the entire global population is either directly or indirectly affected by disability and impairment. (United Nations and World Bank).

30% of young people living rough are disabled. (United Nations International Children's Fund).

3x Disabled people of working age in every country in the world are 3 times more likely to be unemployed and live in real poverty. (Disabled People International).

1.7 Research indicates that violence against disabled children occurs at annual rates at least 1.7 times greater than for their non-disabled peers. (United Nations).

15-20% Disabled people account for 15 - 20% of the world's poorest people. (World Bank).

98% of disabled children in the majority world do not attend school. (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).

UK Milestones

1800s "A statute of quite uncommon callousness"
The Poor Law Amendment Act becomes law. Counties in England and Wales are permitted to build institutions to confine "criminal and pauper lunatics".

1808 A harsh Act
The County Asylum Act becomes law. Counties in England and Wales are permitted to build institutions to confine "criminal and pauper lunatics".

1834 Important leader elected
Disabled Trade Unionist and son of a former slave, William Cuffey, is elected to the national executive of the National Charter Association and subsequently becomes the President of the London Chartists.

1842 Darwin distorted
Charles Darwin's theories of evolution and the notion of the survival of the fittest through natural selection lead to the widespread and apparently scientifically justified view of disabled people as inferior.

1845 Overseers of the poor
The Scottish Poor Law Amendment Act creates a central board of supervisors which oversees a national programme of Poorhouse construction.

1899 A great step forward
The National League of the Blind (NLB) is founded and campaigns to introduce state pensions and equal rights for blind workers.

1899 New Association
The British Deaf Association is formed by Francis Maginn to protect sign language and promote better education for deaf people.

1913 The Central Council for the Disabled is founded
The Central Council for the Disabled is founded.

1919 "Justice not Charity"
Three contingents of NLB members converge on London, calling on the government to introduce a Blind Persons Act.

1913 The Mental Deficiency Act
Home Secretary, Winston Churchill brings in The Mental Deficiency Act. It categorises people as:
- idiots
- imbeciles
- feeble minded
- moral defectives

1913 Under the Act, 50,000 children and 500,000 adults are incarcerated in long stay institutions during the first half of the 20th century.

1919 Members of the National League of the Blind march to London to protest about unemployment
Members of the National League of the Blind march to London to protest about unemployment.

1921 Segregation
The Education Act provides for "handicapped" children to be educated but only in special schools or classes.

1921 The British Deaf Association creates 11 categories of impairment
The British Deaf Association creates 11 categories of impairment. Thousands of disabled children are sent to segregated schools, Junior Training Centres and institutions.

1944 Fair pensions
The Physically Handicapped Association holds a rally in Trafalgar Square then marches to Downing Street to present a petition to the Prime Minister, calling for "pensions according to disability".

1946 "CRIPPLES CAN DO VITAL WORK"
Labour shortages during WW2 lead to over 300,000 disabled people being recruited into the workforce.

1946 The first Coalition of Disabled People is formed in Derbyshire
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1946 The Mental Patients Union is formed
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1946 A new force
Disabled activists, Megan du Boussion and Beth Thornberry establish The Disablement Income Group in order to campaign for financial support for disabled people. By 1970, the government introduced the Attendance Allowance which covered some thousands disabled people.

1950 Affirmative action
The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act requires larger employers to recruit 3% of registered disabled people.

1950 Letter launches a movement
Paul Hunt writes to The Guardian newspaper calling for equality for disabled people and asking others to join with him. His letter inspires the start of a united struggle against discrimination.

1950 Power to disabled people
The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP) is founded as an umbrella group of organisations run and controlled by disabled people.

1950 Trade unions lead the way
NALGO holds a national conference of its disabled members - the first event of its kind in the UK.

1950 "Rights Not Charity" march in London
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1950 The Independent Living Fund is established
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1950 BODP publishes the case for fully comprehensive Anti Discrimination Legislation
The British Organisation of Disabled People (BODP) publishes the case for fully comprehensive Anti Discrimination Legislation.

1950 Colin Barnes publishes "Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination"
Colin Barnes publishes "Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination". He argues that disability is a civil rights issue and that only disabled people themselves can bring about the changes enabling them to become fully participating citizens.

1950 Equality not pity
The second "Block Teletext" lobby takes place on 18th July. Thousands of disabled activists converge on LWT TV studios to protest against an event that is offensive, intrusive or patronising. As the cameras roll, protesters break into the studio holding up "Piss on Pity" placards.

1950 Attack on disabled people revisited
The Benefit Integrity Project is set up to examine the level of "fraudulent" claims for Disability Living Allowance. There are large protests by disabled people and red paint is thrown outside parliament and 10 Downing Street.

1950 Self determination, direct action
The Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAP) is established as the first action in Christchurch, Dorset.

1950 New law provokes protest
The Disability Discrimination Act becomes law. Disabled activists hold protests, calling it "fatally flawed" as it allows "justifiable discrimination" and does not convey full civil rights.

1950 The Disability Rights Commission is launched
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1950 National demonstrations against the Welfare Reform Bill
National demonstrations against the Welfare Reform Bill.

1950 Disabled Person's Direct Action Network launches its 'Free Our People' campaign
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1950 BSL is recognised as an official British language but not given legal protection
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1950 UK Disabled People's Parliament meets for the first time
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1950 Leading organisations of Disabled People draw up the Rights and Freedom Bill
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1950 First TUC Disability Conference
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1950 The Equality and Human Rights Commission replaces the Disability Rights Commission
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UK Legislation - Key Milestones

30 Years in the Struggle for Disability Equality

1981 The Disabled Persons Act
The Disabled Persons Act deals with issues of access and adaptation to buildings to cater for workers with mobility impairments.

1983 The Mental Health Act
The Act makes provision for the compulsory detention and treatment in hospital of those with mental disorder...

1986 The Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act
The Act gives disabled people greater control over services provided to them by local government bodies.

1990 The NHS and Community Care Act
The NHS and Community Care Act - Local authority social services departments give overall responsibility for community care for disabled people. Where possible, services should be provided in the home or local community.

1993 The Education Act
The Act places a qualified duty on local authorities to make provision for children with special educational needs in mainstream schools.

1995 The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act
This Act places a duty on local councils to carry out assessments of need for carers.

1995 The Disability Discrimination Act
The DDA makes it "unlawful to discriminate against people in respect of their disabilities in relation to employment, the provision of goods and services, education and transport".

2000 The Carers and Disabled Children Act
Local authorities are able to provide direct payments to young disabled people aged 16 or 17 and to the parents of disabled children.

2002 The Disability Discrimination Act is amended to more fully cover education.
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2006 The Disability Discrimination Act is amended to include the Disability Equality Duty.
The Disability Discrimination Act is amended to include the Disability Equality Duty. This Duty requires public bodies to promote disability equality when exercising their functions. It includes the meaningful involvement of disabled people in public bodies' strategic planning processes.

1981 Harriet Tubman
c.1822 - 1913
Slavery Abolitionist & Spy

Harriet Tubman (pictured) was the first woman to lead an armed expedition in the American civil war, when she guided the raid on the Combahee River and liberated more than seven hundred slaves.

1981 Rachel MacMillan
1855 - 1917
Social Campaigners

Sisters, Rachel (pictured) and Margaret MacMillan, were founder members of the Independent Labour Party and pioneers of child welfare. They were instrumental in persuading Parliament to introduce the 1906 Provision of School Meals Act, arguing that "if the state insists on compulsory education it must take responsibility for the proper nourishment of school children...".

1981 Eleanor Marx
1855 - 1898
Author and Literary Translator

Eleanor Marx (pictured) was a founder of the Socialist League and regularly wrote for the monthly newspaper, Commonweal, on women's issues.

1981 Helen Keller
1880 - 1968
Political Campaigner

Radical author and political activist, Helen Keller, was the first deafblind person to gain a Bachelor of Arts degree. She was a pacifist and campaigner for women's suffrage, trade unionism and the rights of blind people.

1981 Frida Kahlo
1907 - 1954
Artist

"I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality."

Internationally acclaimed Hispanic artist, Frida Kahlo combined elements of indigenous Mexican culture with surrealism to create a series of stark and dramatic paintings.

1981 Alan Turing
1912 - 1954
Mathematician

Mathematician, Alan Turing, joined the Government Code and Cypher School, based at Bletchley Park (pictured, above) in 1938, where he led the team that played a vital role in deciphering messages encrypted by the German enigma machine. After World War 2 he became a pioneer in the field of artificial intelligence.

1981 Ian Dury
1942 - 2000
Singer and Songwriter

Ian Dury is best known as the founder, frontman and lead singer/song writer of the band Ian Dury and the Blockheads, who were amongst the most important groups of the New Wave era in the UK.

Two of his songs were banned by the BBC: "The classic 'Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll'" which marked Dury's debut for Stiff Records and the 1981 single "Spasticus Astasticus", written to rebut the International Year of the Disabled. The lyrics were considered to be too uncompromising.

1981 Roy Webb
1949 - 2007
Trade Unionist

Roy Webb's activism spanned every aspect of the Disabled Peoples' Movement. He was a committed trade unionist, aficionado of London Disability Arts Forum and member of the Disabled Peoples' Direct Action Network.

As Head of Policy at the National Centre for Independent Living, he co-ordinated the Our Lives Our Choices campaign in support of Lord Ashley's Disabled Persons' (Independent Living) Bill.

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