

S O C I A L I S T D I S A B I L I T Y A C T I O N G R O U P .

BROAD STATEMENT OF AIMS -

At the time of writing, the Steering Committee is still hotly disputing what the aims of the Socialist Disability Action Group should be. Indeed, this discussion is not likely to be concluded until after the Group is launched, and is probably to be an ongoing discussion inside the Group for as long as the Group exists. Even the title of the Group has yet to be agreed upon, mirroring the intense discussion which is taking place regarding the very nature of the Group.

However, it was felt that it would be wrong to invite people to go to the trouble of attending the launch of the Group, or to ask them to become members of the Group, without giving them some ideas of the kind of thing we feel they would be letting themselves in for. Therefore what follows is an attempt to bring together the threads of our discussion, and to produce from these a feel of what we hope the Group will become, at least in the broadest sense. In doing so, I would like to apologise to my colleagues on the Steering Committee if I fail to do their discussions justice.

One of the main reasons we felt the Group was needed in the first place was that we felt there was no outlet for the political aspirations of disabled people, and probably partly because of this, a lack of political motivation among disabled people themselves. Therefore we feel one of the chief aims of the Group will be to provide both the motivation and the outlet for disabled people's political expression in a socialist context. This is probably the most central aim of the group, with all the other aims flowing from it.

One of the obvious aims will be to focus the minds of the Labour Movement in all its guises on the needs of the disabled in Society. Of course, this means talking about and influencing the provision of benefits, housing, access to buildings, and all the other things disabled people are supposed to be interested in. But it means more than this. Disability is not simply about physical or sensory limitations. It is more about Society's attitude towards the disabled. Change that attitude significantly, and you do more to mitigate the effects of disability than all the other measures put together. This is the real Socialist issue of disability, and this the Group will aim to do. We will be asking anyone actively involved in Socialist Politics to join the Group, especially M.Ps. and prospective M.Ps. And we will widen our

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discussions to include any political or socialist issue. In this way we aim to provide a broad forum for disabled people to discuss and influence the political issues of the day.

We feel that the Group will therefore provide a powerful and important new outlet in the lives and aspirations of disabled people. After its launch in July, we expect the group to gradually establish itself as part of the life of the Socialist and Labour Movement in this country. To do this however, we need the support of disabled socialists, and the whole of the established Labour Movement. In other words, we need your support.
