**Mainstreaming: The Necessity of Republicanism by Dick Leaman**

**Source, Coalition December 1996 pp. 32-34**

This document is about the **Social Model of Disability.**

**The Social Model of Disability** is the idea that someone is disabled because of attitudes and society, not their medical condition or impairment.

This idea was created by disabled people because they wanted to take action against discrimination and unfair treatment they were facing.

Dick says there has been a lot of talking about the Social Model of Disability recently.

Dick Leaman thinks that the reason people are disagreeing about the social model so much is that they disagree about how much society has to change for disabled people to be equal.

Dick talks about an example from when he was in UPIAS in the 1970s.

This was when disabled people first started talking together in Britain about the problems they were having.

He says that even then, lots of people did not have the same views about the same problems.

Some disabled people spoke about their personal experiences when talking about their views on these problems.

Because disabled people had been treated very badly for so long, some of the group thought most of the bad things that happened to them were normal.

This meant that they didn’t think the world should have to change very much.

Other people, like Dick Leaman, said that disabled people had to look at the world and not how they felt about things.

These people said that, when you look at the world, you can see that disabled people are clearly treated unfairly in it, and so are other groups like black people and women.

This means that, for disabled people to be equal, the world has to change quite a lot.

These talks about what was happening to disabled people helped UPIAS come up with the Social Model of Disability.

Dick said an important thing about the Social Model is that it makes us look at things that happen in the world, and not just think about our personal difficulties or how we feel about ourselves.

Recently, Dick thinks that a lot of disabled people have been thinking too much about just the bad things that happen in their lives.

This means they haven’t looked closely enough at how the world treats other disabled people, or other people who are treated unfairly.

Dick thinks that the Disabled People’s Movement is slowing down because of this.

He talks about an idea called **“Mainstreaming”** which is what this document is about.

**Mainstreaming** is about disabled people being able to do all the same things that non-disabled people do.

Dick thinks that all disabled activists believe in this.

The problem is that disabled activists disagree with each other about what that actually looks like.

Some disabled activists think that mainstreaming means that disabled people should be equal in the world how it is now.

They think that disabled people should be able to go to the same kinds of schools and get the same kind of jobs as non-disabled people now.

These activists fight for laws that say disabled people cannot be treated unfairly or discriminated against.

Another group of disabled activists, including Dick, say that mainstreaming means something much bigger than that.

They say that the world we live in is unfair to lots of different types of people, and that we need to look at ways of changing it for everyone.

This means that, for example, we might need to change how workplaces and schools work, rather than just saying that disabled people should be able to go to them.

This idea looks at getting rid of all inequalities, not just the bad things that happen to disabled people.

Dick says that there are real problems with thinking that you can just give disabled people the kinds of things non-disabled people have now.

He says that this has been tried before, and it didn’t work.

In the 1960s, lots of disabled people asked for more money so they could buy the kinds of support that would let them go to normal schools and get normal jobs.

For a while, the government said it would give them this money, but in the end, it only gave a bit more money to some disabled people.

This meant that most disabled people were no better off.

About the same number of disabled people ended up stuck in institutions, or unable to live the lives they wanted.

Dick thinks two things went wrong.

**First**, the government at the time wasn’t really interested in making the whole world fairer.

This meant that they only helped a small number of disabled people, and left everyone else out.

**Second**, the things disabled people need to live a better life are often different from the things non-disabled people need.

In the 70s, this meant that it was hard for disabled people to buy the things they needed, even if they were given more money.

So, for example, a disabled person might need someone to help them get up and go to work in the morning, and get home at night.

But it can be hard, by yourself, to find someone who wants to work just those hours.

Dick says not much has changed and that disabled people were in a similar situation in the 1990s.

Instead of money being the issue, it’s **Anti-Discrimination Legislation (ADL).**

**Anti-Discrimination Legislation (ADL)** is a set of laws that try to stop the unfair treatment to disabled people in Britain.

Lots of disabled people were saying that if Britain had these laws, disabled people’s lives would be much better.

These laws would make it illegal for anyone to try and stop a disabled person doing any of the things non-disabled people do.

This would include going to school, having a job, or going into a pub or cinema.

He thinks that the way disabled people are going about this all wrong as they are only looking at little changes to the problem.

He says that most disabled people won’t be made better off by changing the law.

Most disabled people are not stopped from doing things by other people, but by how unequal the world is.

Dick thinks you have to look at the bigger picture.

When Dick was writing this document there were 500 million disabled people in the world and a lot of them lived without any support.

Disabled people in many parts of the world were struggling to survive because of poverty and discrimination.

All these disabled people would not be helped much by anti-discrimination legislation.

For their lives to be better, something much deeper would have to change.

Dick does not think that the new government wants to change things to make them more equal for everyone.

He thinks it will let disabled people down like the government in the 1960s.

Dick says that when he is writing this essay, a minister in the Labour party has had to say sorry for calling himself a **Republican.**

**A Republican** is someone who thinks that the Monarchy (such as the Queen of England) should not have any power, but instead people should vote who is in charge at the top.

Republican's think that it isn’t fair that the Queen has lots of power over the people in Britain, as she was not chosen by the people.

Dick says that having a Monarchy shows to the world that Britain is an unequal country, because the government lets the monarchy have wealth and power that it keeps from ordinary people.

Because the Labour party has made their minister say sorry, Dick thinks this shows that the Labour government are not interested in making the world fairer for everyone.

He thinks this means that disabled people can’t trust the Labour party to come up with ways to help disabled people be more equal.

Instead, he thinks that disabled people should find new ways to fight for everyone’s equality.

This means that disabled people should try to work together with other people who are treated unfairly.

This includes poor people, women, gay people, and black people.

They should all work together to find ways to make the whole world a better and fairer place for everyone.

Dick thinks that this is much more important than getting laws made by the government.