A People’s Timeline:

* C. 1800’s BCE: the semi-mythical “Trojan War” between the Greek city state of Mycenae and some of its allies takes place against the city of Ilium a puppet state of the Hittite Empire. The events are dramatized most notably in two epic poems “The Illiad” and “Odyssey” believed to by some ancient Greeks to be written by a single writer “Homer” who they claim was blind.
* C. 600 BCE; legendary law giver of the ancient Greek City State of Sparta, Lycurgus mentions in his laws that disabled people should be cast into a hole and left to die.
* C. 509 BCE; the Roman Republic is established after the last of Rome’s semi-legendary King’s Tarquinius Superbus and his family are chased out of the city. The constitution of the Republic stipulates that the father of a family (i.e. the head of the family) has the right to put any child born with a physical “deformity” to death.
* 30’s CE: Jesus of Nazareth supposedly raises the dead, heals the sick, such as lepers and the blind.
* 313 CE: Roman Emperor Constantine decriminalises Christianity as a religious practice throughout the Empire with the “Edict of Millan.”
* 337 CE: Constantine converts to Christianity on his deathbed. From now on every Emperor bar Julian (r. 361-363 CE) would be Christian. The Christians preached a doctrine of charity, and ‘pity’ towards the poor. The Christian ethos develops the mind-set that disabled people are pitiable and tragic a mind-set that has not left world yet.
* 1300s CE: a law is introduced granting the British monarchy the right to seize the property of disabled people.
* 1486 CE; A German theologian publishes the infamous “Malious Malafacorum” aka “The Witches’ Hammer” the book acts as a guide for the pious to find and exterminate witches, one way, according to the book to identify a witch is to look for someone (primarily a woman) with physical deformities, these deformities are cited as proof that said person made a pact with the devil and is thus a witch.
* 1500’s-1600’s CE: Witch Hunts erupt throughout Europe killing millions of people, many of them disabled women and children.
* 1600’s CE: Doctor Issac Hawes recommends using torture to cure those he deems ‘] maniacs’ instead of using medicine.
* 1601: In England, the government makes the first legal acknowledgement of (some) impairments in law with the passage of the “Old Poor Law” which establishes almshouses for ‘the lame’ and ‘infirm’ and makes a distinction reminiscent of recent Tory rhetoric of the ‘idle poor’ and the ‘infirm poor’
* 1700s CE; the private asylum is established in England and elsewhere in Europe, many disabled people are incarcerated in these institutions.
* 1789 C E: The French Revolution breaks out in Paris. The newly created French National Assembly adopts “The Declaration Of the Rights Of Man And Of The Citizen” one of the world’s first human right’s charters.
* 1792 CE: English feminist Mary Wollstonecraft publishes “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” which is meant as a rebuke to the French human rights treaties for ignoring the rights of women, this opens up the idea, of different marginalised groups in society potentially having the idea to their own rights treaties.
* 1815 CE: Napoleon is defeated at the Battle of Waterloo; the victorious powers agree to re-arrange Europe on increasingly more Conservative lines at the “Congress of Vienna” which means clamping down on any perceived notion of human rights, which are seen to be a by-product of Jacobinism and the French Revolution.
* 1825 CE: A blind Frenchwoman Thérèse-Adèle Husson publishes her memoirs titled “Reflections” which details her experience living as a blind woman in post-revolutionary France. She begins to make a distinction that a lot of the difficulty she faces is through social barriers and stigma from external forces (society).
* 1880 CE: Helen Adams Keller is born, known as the “miracle child” she became deaf, dumb and blind from an early age, and was tutored by a visually impaired woman named Anne Sullivan who is often overlooked as being disabled herself, even spending several years prior to teaching Helen, imprisoned in an almshouses for disabled people.
* 1899 CE: In England the first disabled workers’ union is established with the advent of the “National League of the Blind and Disabled” the use of the word ‘disabled’ as separate from ‘blind’ is the first explicit distinction of ‘disabled’ meaning something other than impairment.
* 1900 CE: Helen Keller attends Radcliffe College along with Anne Sullivan, becoming the first disabled woman to attend a non-disabled college in the US
* 1904 CE: (1): Popular sci-fi author and journalist H.G. Wells publishes the short story “The Country Of the Blind” knowingly or not this story depicts a non-disabled man who comes across a community run entirely independently by blind people in the mountains of Peru, who soon take to isolating the sighted protagonist, and segregating him from society, even going so far as to talk of ‘curing him’ of his ‘sickness’ (sight). This story shares similarities to a sketch later developed by disabled activist Vic Finklestein who shall be mentioned later, about a community of wheelchair users who exclude non-wheelchair users who come to visit their town (2): Helen Keller publishes her autobiography “The Story Of My Life”
* 1909 CE: Helen Keller joins the American Socialist Party and begins to make the distinction that capitalism as an economic system plays a role in the exclusion of disabled people.
* 1917 CE: The Bolshevik Revolution takes place in Russia, in October, dethroning the weak, fledging Provisional Government which itself overthrew the Romanov dynasty earlier in the year.
* 1918-1922 CE: partially as an unintended consequence of the civil-war the Bolsheviks begin a gradual process of de-institutionalising asylums in Russia, thus releasing a lot of disabled inmates back into their respective communities in the process. Lenin’s regime also reverses the Romanov ban on immigrants with disabilities coming to the USSR. Unfortunately all of this potential progress is undone and reversed after Lenin’s death in 1924 with Stalin reversing what little progress was made with regards to disability and re-opening asylums to store both disabled and non-disabled people alike who were proving awkward for the regime
* 1933-1945 CE : The Nazi Party come to power in Germany and soon start setting up a totalitarian state, which includes passing legislation that forces the sterilization of disabled people, and establishes the “T-14” programme which leads to the mandatory euthanasia of disabled people. During WWII (1939-1945) over 200,000 disabled people are murdered in Nazi death camps as part of what becomes known as “The Final Solution” aka “The Holocaust.”
* 1944 CE: The British government passes the “Disability Employment Act” which tentatively acknowledges disabled people have the right to perform paid work. This is a response to the fact that during the war many disabled people worked in factories, as they could not fight on the front lines, but wanted to help the war effort.
* 1945 CE: The United Nations (UN) is founded by the victorious allied powers.
* 1948 CE; (1): The Post-war Labour Government creates the National Health Service (NHS) which was a positive step forward for healthcare in England but had the negative impact of increasing the medicalisation of disabled people, instead of addressing social issues that marginalised them (2): The UN declaration of human rights is published (3): “The National Party” in South Africa comes to power and begins the era of Apartheid.
* 1940’s-1950’s CE: non-disabled ran charities such as Léonard Cheshire and RNIB establish institutions where many disabled people are imprisoned against their will
* 1952 CE: Helen Keller visits Israel, and is shown a special, segregated village by the authorities, where disabled people live cut off from the rest of society. Helen demands the closure of the village and the reintegration of its inhabitants into Israeli society. Which the Israeli authorities reluctantly agree to.
* 1962 CE: Ed Roberts, a disabled man from California in the US becomes the first disabled person to attend Berkeley College in California.
* 1965 CE: The Disablement Income Group (DIG) is founded in England by Megan du Boisson and Berit Moore which aims to combat poverty amongst disabled people.
* 1966 CE: (1): demonstrations take place in Trafalgar Square held by disabled people demanding rights and greater social protection. (2): an inmate of one of the Leonard Cheshire charity homes, a wheelchair user named Paul Hunt publishes a book called “Stigma” which acts as a damming indictment of the limiting often cruel practices carried out by these institutions.
* 1968 CE: (1): Helen Keller dies, after spending her life campaign and advocating for disability rights, she was more or less single handily responsible for mainstreaming audiobooks in the US as an alternative form of reading and made an early link between the damaging effects of capitalism and disability (2): South African anti-apartheid activist, and member of the South African Communist Party (SACP) Marxist, and wheelchair user Vic Finklestein goes to the UK after being exiled from South Africa for his work with the ANC and other anti-apartheid groups.
* 1969 CE: Ed Roberts and other disabled students at Berkeley set up an informal activist circle and create the first Centre For Independent Living (CIL) an idea which soon catches on worldwide within disability activism.
* 1970 CE: Alf Morris, Labour MP and ally of disabled activists manages to push through the House of Commons the “Chronically Sick And Disabled Persons Act” which for the first time guarantees (limited) legal guarantees to disabled people under the law
* 1972 CE: (1): Paul Hunt who by now has managed to escape residential care sends a letter to the Guardian demanding equality and emancipation for disabled people (2): Hunt’s letter inspires several disabled people to respond and soon a conversation starts up in the form of circulars about the possibility of establishing a Disabled People’s Organisation (DPO) (3): Hunt coins the term UPIAS – Union Of The Physically Impaired Against Segregation as the proposed title for the DPO (4): Vic Finklestein who got involved in circular’s, contributes his own circular where he comes quite close to explicitly calling ‘disability’ a form of social oppression.
* 1974 CE: UPIAS is formally constituted as a proper DPO
* 1975 CE: (1): Disability Alliance (DA) is founded. Like DIG it focuses on income in equality amongst disabled people but shy’s away from actually addressing the structural issues that cause that inequality (2): one of its first actions is to take part in a debate against UPIAS about the meaning of disability.
* 1976: (1): Sisters Against Disablement (SAD) is founded to provide a feminist interpretation of disability emancipation (2): Vic Finkelstein, Paul Hunt and others publish the document “Fundamental Principles Of Disability” through UPIAS here, for the first time Finklestein unequivocally argues that ‘disability’ is an external, societal oppression, on top of the functional limitations caused by a person’s impairment and thus disabled people are an oppressed group in society.
* 1970’s-80’s CE: in the US, Ed Roberts, Judith Heuman and others start to organise and attend direct action sit-in protests demanding anti-discrimination legislation (ADL).
* 1979 CE: (1): In the UK the Disability Liberation Network (DLN) is founded (2): Paul Hunt dies.
* Early 1980’s CE: First CIL’s are established in England, such as in Hampshire and Derbyshire.
* 1980’s CE: the world is hit with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Mass protests erupt in the late 1980’s demanding pharmaceutical companies and governments take urgent action deliver affordable medical care and stop discriminating against those with the virus.
* 1980 CE: Vic Finklestein publishes “Attitudes And Disabled People” which attempts a broad historical overview of disablement throughout (western) human history.
* 1981 CE: The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP) is formed, it is an umbrella group that consists of various DPO’s throughout England who all meet together to fight for emancipation.
* 1982 CE: (1): The UN declares the “Year Of Disabled People” (2): Disabled People’s International (DPI) is founded, which BCODP becomes a member (3): the Commission On Restrictions Against Disabled People (CORAD) in the UK advises the British government that there should be anti-discrimination legislation placed on the statute books but the government rejections the recommendation.
* 1983 CE: activist and academic Mike Oliver publishes the book “Social Work with Disabled People” which quotes UPIAS’s “Fundamental Principles” declaration that disabled people are an oppressed group in society. Oliver coins the term “The social model of disability” to refer to this oppression. He also coins the term “the individual model” to refer to the mainstream view that ‘disability’ was simply a fault within the individual and not external societal factors. These two tools become the main driving forces behind the DPM going forward.
* 1985 CE: Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) which is one of the longest running DPO’s is established.
* 1987 CE: The Thatcher government establishes the Independent Living Fund (ILF) which grants money to disabled people in order to employ Personal Assistants (PA’s) or purchase technology which they feel may help them live more independent lives.
* 1989 CE: European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) is founded as the first Pan-European DPO.
* 1990 CE: (1): After years of protest the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) is signed into law by the Bush senior administration being the first anti-discrimination legislation for disabled people in US history the act also acknowledges the AIDs pandemic of the 1980’s and pledges medical assistance to those with HIV (2): At its first conference ENIL adopts principles of independent living (3): the first black disabled people’s network is established along with several black people’s mental health organisations.
* 1991 CE: (1): Sponsored by the BCODP and supervised by Mike Oliver, Colin Barnes publishes the book “Disabled People and Discrimination in Britain: The Case for Anti-Discrimination Legislation” which makes the financial and moral arguments for ADL for disabled people (2): “Regard” an LGBT+ DPO is established to challenge bigotry towards disabled LGBT+ people in the DPM and challenge the exclusion of LGBT+ disabled people from the LGBT+ community.
* 1992 CE: Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is introduced.
* 1993 CE: Disabled People’s Direct Action Network (DAN) is formed and spearheads a number of protests demanding ADL.
* 1994 CE: Colin Barnes establishes the Disability Research Unit (DRU) which eventually becomes the Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) at the University Of Leeds, which is initially a research arm for the BCODP.
* 1995 CE: (1): Finally after years of protest, the Tories issue “The Disability Discrimination Act” (DDA) which acts as a limited ADL though the act does not go far enough and discrimination against disabled people is only considered conditional under some circumstances according to the act (2): Ed Roberts dies.
* 1996 CE; (1): The European Disability Forum (EDF) is established (2): disabled activists protest the opening of a garden outside Leeds Train Station, that was meant for disabled people, instead of money being used to make the station itself accessible, the garden was opened by Jimmy Saville (3): BCODP establishes the National Centre For Independent Living (NCIL) (4): The Community Care Act is passed, which establishes direct provisions for disabled people.
* 1997 CE: (1): The Oviedo Convention and it’s protocols are established by the Council of Europe (COE) which are meant to oversee and guarantee the protection of human rights and dignity when it comes to biology and medical practices (2): The Labour Party comes to power, under the leadership of Tony Blair, who promises an extension to the DDA to ensure greater rights for disabled people.
* 2000 CE: The government sets up the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) which is meant to recommend policy reform and extensions to the DDA but ends up becoming a toothless government advisory body.
* 2005 CE: (1): The government passes the Disability Discrimination Act Amendment Bill which extends legal protections for disabled people to small employers, public transport and other areas not covered by the original DDA (2): the controversial mental capacity act (MCA) is passed which gives medial authorities the right to involuntarily detain people they consider to be mentally unwell.
* 2006 CE: (1): BCODP changes its name to United Kingdom Disabled People’s Council (UKDPC) (2): the DDA is effectively replaced by the Equalities Act and the Disability Rights Commission is effectively replaced by the Equalities Commission (3): The UN Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities (UNCRPD) is established
* 2007 CE: the UNCRPD becomes open to signatories, the UK, China and other states, sign immediately, without nesscairliy intending to implement the convention’s articles.
* 2007-08 CE: The Global financial crash happens issuing in a period of austerity across the world.
* 2008 CE: Employment And Support Allowance (ESA) is introduced intended as a replacement for DLA.
* 2009 CE: (1): Conservative MP’s Ian Duncan Smith’s thinktank proposes the creation of a new single benefit “Universal Credit” to replace Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) ESA and DLA (2): Disabled activist John Pring launches the Disability News Service (DNS).
* 2010 CE: (1): The EU publishes its first European Disability Strategy (EDS) intended to last for 10 years (2): UKDPC and the NCIL are combined into Disability Rights UK (DRUK) (3): The Tories come to power in the general election (4): Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) is established (5): The Tories introduce the “Equality Act” which formally replaces the DDA but like it’s predecessor is limited in scope and scale.
* 2011 CE: (1): Vic Finklestein dies, UPIAS dissolves (2): Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is first introduced as a new benefit.
* 2012 CE: (1): The Olympics and Special Olympics are held in London (2): this is used as a smokescreen to disguise the austerity measures being introduced by the Tories-Lib-Dem coalition (3): Reclaiming Our Future Alliance (ROFA) is established by DPO’s such as Inclusion London and Disability Sheffield, intended as a replacement and successor DPO to the BCODP (4): Then Work And Pensions Secretary Ian Duncan Smith announces the roll out of Universal Credit.
* 2013 CE: ROFA launches the national Reclaiming Our Future, Disability Manifesto in London.
* 2014 CE: (1): DPAC, ROFA and others collect evidence of human rights abuses committed by the UK government against disabled people (2): The elections for the European Parliament take place with the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) winning many seats, which has the effect of pushing the coalition government further to the right in order to try and win back UKIP voters.
* 2015 CE; (1): the Tories win a majority in the election, thus ditching the Lib-Dems as coalition partners, but continuing to aim their policies further right pledging to ‘get tougher’ in welfare fraud, and hold a referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU (2): Ian Duncan Smith proposes the Welfare Reform Bill to the House Of Commons.
* 2016 CE (1): The Cameron government closes the Independent Living Fund (IFL) (2): the roll out of universal credit gets underway adding to the impoverishment of many disabled people and others in the process (3): the UK votes to leave the EU making the continuation of certain medical supplies between Europe and the UK uncertain (4): in a historic ruling the Committee of the UNCRPD rules that “systematic human rights abuses” have been committed by the UK government against disabled people (5): The 47 member states of the Council of Europe decide to go ahead with their proposed, Additional Draft Protocol (ADP) to the Oviedo Convention, despite warnings from the UNCRPD and others that the ADP enables medical authorities to infringe upon and even take away the human rights of many disabled people (6): Debbie Jolly, the co-founder of DPAC dies.
* 2017 CE: The Chronic Illness Inclusion Project (CIIP) is set up.
* 2018 CE: (1): The UN Special Repoteaur On Poverty Prof. Philip Aston releases a damming statement about poverty in the UK stating that poverty levels are now over 14 million with 1.5. Million destitute (2): the UK government holds a global disability summit in London where it lectures governments from developing countries about shortcomings in disability rights (3): Mike Oliver dies (4): the additional draft protocol is due to be passed by the COE however after continued pressure from the EDF, committee of the UNCRPD and others it is agreed that the ADP will be examined at the European Court Of Human Rights, to investigate standards of good practice.
* 2019 CE: (1): ROFA sets out its strategy to campagain for National Independent Living Service (NILS) (2): ROFA International Committee a subgroup to deal with foreign relations between ROFA and international DPO’s is established (3): ROFA’s national independent living strategy sub-group is established (4): ROFA IC holds a conference where DPO’s from across the globe come together to discuss disability rights, representatives of the UK’s Department For International Development (DFID) are present (4): The EDF host a meeting in Brussels to review the EU’s EDS noting disappointment that it did not go further and was not completely successful (5): The Tories win a deceive majority in the December election meaning a hard Brexit is all but guaranteed with many questions surrounding medical supplies, and the isolation of the British DPM from the rest of Europe still remaining (6): Doctor Frances Ryan publishes her book “Crippled” which details the human rights abuses against disabled people since the Tories retook office in 2010. (7): The People’s Republic of China (PRC) discovers cases of Covid-19/Corona Virus in the Wuhan Province and reports it to the World Health Organisation (WHO).
* 2020 CE: (1): The EDF host another meeting in Brussels to prepare for the new 10 year European Disability Strategy which is intended to last from 2020-2030 (2): The WHO declares a global pandemic after a rapid spread of Covid-19 (3): almost all countries go into various stages of lockdown to try and prevent the spread of the disease but disabled people are left as after thoughts, when it comes to maintaining service provisions, and care homes where the majority of the deaths are located (4): the Johnsons government announces the closure of DFIDD which is to be merged with the Foreign Office (5): previously ROFA IC had established contact with DFID to request funding so that DPO’s in the developed and developing world could work on disability rights projects but DFID offered the funding contracts to non-disabled people led charities like International Disability Alliance (IDA) and Sightsavours (6): The Global Action On Disability (GLAD) group holds an online meeting to discuss disabled people and the Corona Pandemic, disabled people are not permitted to speak at the meeting which is chaired and participated in by non-disabled charity leaders such as IDA and Sightsavours, along with ministers from different European governments (7): Ellen Clifford publishes “The War On Disabled People” which among other things accuses big charities of facilitating the oppression of the disabled in the UK (8): disabled activists via an online meeting hosted by DPAC discuss rejuvenating the social model of disability which they say needs a new spark of life.