

WAR & IMPAIRMENT:
the social consequences of disablement

1. At the same time as the Prime Minister was waxing lyrically about what this nation owes to British Military Forces and veterans when speaking at the recent Conservative Party Conference, the DWP were busy advising 80,000 disabled War Pensioners that we were about to lose access to DLA and could, if we wished, apply for the new highly discredited PIP award. PIP has a 12 month waiting list for all new applicants and, according to the DWP, a guarantee that the majority will not be successful. By May 2014 only 15.4% of new PIP claims had received a decision, and only 12,654 of the 220,300 people who had made a new claim since April 2013 have been awarded some rate of PIP.
2. This unexpected threat to this nation's working age War Pensioners was despite the fact that I received a personal telecom from the Cabinet Office 12 months ago, as witnessed by my carer, claiming that the Cabinet had '*... just agreed that all War Pensioners could keep their DLA for life and will not be reassessed, as an acknowledgement of their service to the nation.*' My opinion was invited and given and, of course, I was delighted with the news.
3. Then, the very nervous caller asked me what this decision would mean for my research? Evidence from the research exposed the WCA, conducted by Atos Healthcare, as being bogus and using a totally discredited assessment model. The WCA was copied from a notorious American corporate insurance giant in order to remove as many as possible from long-term sickness benefits, regardless of the consequences in terms of human suffering. The research has been accepted by the UN and evidence from it has been used in welfare debates in the HOL and especially in the HOC - largely thanks to John McDonnell MP. Ask yourself why the national press will not publish the research evidence accepted by academics throughout the UK? **Do we have a free press or a government controlled press??**
4. The same research also exposed the fact that the welfare reforms were totally unrelated to the financial collapse, regardless of repeated gvt claims. The evidence

confirmed that the destruction of the welfare state is the legacy of the Thatcher government, and the PM had been waiting for a plausible excuse to justify introducing this long ago planned destruction of the welfare state, masquerading as welfare reforms, as the UK moves ever closer to health care and welfare funded by private insurance.

5. Twelve months later, it seems that the ‘phone call from the Cabinet Office last year was an attempt to stop the research and, being naive, I didn’t anticipate that the DWP would now threaten 80,000 working age War Pensioners because my integrity is not for sale.
6. Since the outpouring of public and political outrage the last time the DWP published the mortality figures of the thousands of sick and disabled people who had died, often within weeks of being found fit for work and removed from long-term sickness benefit, the DWP has since refused to publish any more annual death totals. The unelected Lord Freud has far too much authority and **the press have blood on their hands. They willingly quote any new DWP fantasy attacking sick and disabled benefit claimants as people are dying, in their thousands, killed by the State.**
7. For some of us, this DWP decision to remove DLA from working age disabled older veterans will be a death sentence whilst all other disabled veterans, including War Pensioners over the age of 70, have a government guarantee of DLA for life without any further reassessment, in recognition of their ‘*service to the nation.*’ **ALL disabled veterans were disabled serving this nation and all War Pensioners should be treated the same, regardless of age, and be allowed to retain the promised access to DLA for life.**
8. The UN are apparently investigating the UK government for breaches of the disability rights of disabled people and time will tell how long it takes for members of the present UK government to be investigated for the identified crimes against humanity, masquerading as welfare reforms. Members of the House of Lords now compare the Coalition government to 1930s Germany where elderly, sick and disabled people were nothing more than a burden to the State that needed to be removed.

9. Clearly, the social consequences of disablement in C21st UK are the abuses of hard won disability rights by a very dangerous government. There are now in excess of 3 million disability benefit dependent claimants living in fear of imminent destitution or worse, including 80,000 working age War Pensioners. They also fear possible public hostility due to the often extreme press headlines that report the deeply disturbing rhetoric of DWP Ministers, as disability hate crime is now the highest ever recorded. There are reported examples of disabled people being thrown out of their wheelchairs and spat at in the streets, in C21st UK, thanks to disabled people being constantly vilified by DWP Ministers, politicians and commentators who have all joined the band-waggon.
10. Speaking personally, over the past 12 months in particular, I have been very aware of members of the public looking at me in a judgemental manor to the point where some will make derogatory comments, no doubt encouraged by influential press headlines and the Secretary of State's frequently quoted comments referring to *'shirkers and skivers.'*
18. There can't really be any surprise that many sick and disabled people now no longer feel comfortable when venturing out of the safety of their homes into the no-man's land of public opinion. Many are now prisoners in their own homes, and that includes disabled working age War Pensioners fearing imminent death or destitution. There really isn't much difference between being incarcerated in institutions or a prisoner in your own home, as independent living is being systematically destroyed by these very dangerous welfare reforms.
19. Few benefit dependent disabled people can possibly absorb a monthly reduction of £300 per month or more without serious or fatal consequences. **The removal of DLA from working age War Pensioners is a totally indefensible decision given our much proclaimed *'service to the nation'* - as frequently acknowledged by the PM only when in front of the TV cameras.**