



# Disability: Leadership, Resistance and Culture

## Paul Hunt – Institutions are not Solution



*"We are tired of being statistics, cases, wonderfully courageous examples to the world, or pitiable objects to stimulate funding..."*



When Paul Hunt died in 1979 at the age of 42 his death was a great loss to the Disabled People's Movement, then still in its infancy. Paul's life, like so many other disabled people, had been full of struggle. At the age of 19 Paul went to live at the very first Chesire Home. With his move to 'Le Court' Paul joined a community intent on developing their own skills and gaining more freedom. It was not long before the residents began an important struggle inside the Home for greater control over their own lives. This spirit of revolution soon spread to other Chesire Homes through an in-house magazine Paul wrote many articles for. Together with Peter Wade and others Paul became a spokesperson for a new liberation movement and in 1966 edited a book called Stigma, showing the many ways in which society oppressed disabled people.

The next major phase in Paul's life came when he became more involved in the political struggle outside the Chesire Home, including his active participation in DIG (The Disablement Income Group).

On September 20<sup>th</sup> 1972 Paul wrote a letter to the Guardian Newspaper which would have a far-reaching and profound effect on the lives of many disabled people. In the letter Paul invited physically disabled people to join him to form a new organisation that would not focus on a single issue, like DIG or other pressure groups did at the time, but would address the discrimination faced by Disabled People in all areas of their lives. With the people who responded to his letter Paul founded UPIAS (The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation), in 1974, which went on to formulate the basic principles of the social-model interpretation of disability and out of which has grown the modern UK Disabled People's Movement we know today.