



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

PRESS RELEASE:
Disability History Scotland does it again with
Justice Not Charity, Was Their Cry

Disability History Scotland, in partnership with the University of Birmingham, is pleased to announce a grant of £15,000 from the Arts & Humanities Research Council Voices of War & Peace WWI Engagement Centre for *Justice Not Charity, Was Their Cry*, which will examine the experiences of disabled people in the shadow of the Great War.

The National League of the Blind (NLB) was established in 1894 to represent the interests of sight impaired people employed by charities and in the private sector. In 1902, it affiliated to the TUC and developed a reputation for militancy and direct action in support of the civil and employment rights of blind workers. Increasing numbers of blind people because of WWI raised issues of workplace exploitation and government inaction. These protests culminated in the first long distance protest march to London in April 1920, with blind protestors converging on Trafalgar Square from all over Britain.

Justice Not Charity, Was Their Cry will explore the Scottish dimension of the march by investigating Scottish popular press representation and archival evidence in the records of trade unions and blind organisations. Individuals with disabilities will be recruited as Citizen Researchers to investigate and disseminate information about their counterparts from one hundred years ago. Workshops will be managed by DHS and academic researcher Dr. Jennifer Novotny, and will produce online content in the run-up to a public launch of the project's findings.

'We are extremely pleased to support this project,' said Dr. Nicola Gauld, Coordinator of Voices of War & Peace, University of Birmingham. 'We are also excited by the prospect of working with Disability History Scotland and Dr. Jennifer Novotny, both of whom have impressive track records of working on collaborative heritage projects. The stories of disabled people and the effect of the Great War on their lives have not yet been fully explored and *Justice Not Charity* will make a huge difference in changing that.'

Commenting, Dr. Jennifer Novotny said 'This project is an exciting opportunity to gain insight into the lives of individuals with disabilities and their political radicalisation at the start of the 20th century. It will also allow us to better understand the wider impact of the First World War in civilian society, which had repercussions in peoples' everyday lives well beyond the battlefield.'

'*Justice Not Charity* breaks new ground by placing disabled individuals at the heart of an academic research project, not only as subjects, but as practitioners,' said DHS chair Sasha Callaghan. 'The support of Voices of War & Peace and Dr. Jennifer Novotny will be invaluable to Disability History Scotland in researching how disabled people helped shape post-WWI Scotland and the United Kingdom.'

The taster workshop for *Justice Not Charity* will be held at the Drill Hall/Out of the Blue (www.outoftheblue.org.uk/about) at 36 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh from 11am-2pm on Thursday April 20th 2017. The session will give prospective Citizen Researchers the opportunity to find out more about the Justice Not Charity project and Disability History Scotland. Full information is available on our website at www.disabilityhistoryscotland.co.uk/jnc-taster. To book a place at the workshop, or for any other queries, please contact George Lamb or Stuart Pyper via e-mail at justicenotcharity@disabilityhistoryscotland.co.uk.

Notes to Editors

About Disability History Scotland (DHS)

Disability History Scotland is a disabled people's organisation advocating the advancement of equality and diversity through the promotion of disability history, education and campaigning. We are committed to active participation, offering a view of history which includes disabled individuals and the many achievements they have made which, to this day, contribute to society. Follow us on Twitter @DisHistSco and visit our website at www.disabilityhistoryscotland.co.uk.

About Voices of War and Peace

Voices of War and Peace: the Great War and its Legacy is a First World War Engagement Centre funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund. The University of Birmingham Centre is a joint initiative across the Midlands with Birmingham City University, the University of Wolverhampton and the University of Worcester, and further afield with Cardiff University, the University of Durham, Manchester Metropolitan University and Newcastle University.

The Engagement Centre is based in the Library of Birmingham and will support a wide range of community engagement activities, connecting academic and public histories of the First World War as part of the commemoration of the War's centenary which begins this year.