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Prime Minister

INNER CITY YOUTH

I mentioned at Cabinet on 15 October that I intended to have early discussions with a number of colleagues about ways in which, outside the police context, we might respond to the issues raised by the recent disturbances in our inner cities. I had a preliminary meeting on 17 October with the Secretaries of State for the Environment and Employment, the Paymaster General, the Minister of State for Education and Science (Mr Christopher Patten) and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Environment (Sir George Young).

We agreed that there were underlying social and economic problems which, while in no way providing an excuse for rioting, remained potent factors in the inner city equation, and that our response to these must recognise in practice that they have a specific ethnic (notably black) dimension. In particular, more effective action is required if we are to prevent further additions to the number of young blacks who realistically have little or no prospect of employment and increasingly see themselves as excluded from the main stream of society. Existing policies and expenditure programmes need to get through to the people, and be seen to do so, if they are to get better value for money in the areas we have in mind.

/At present

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At present, an important limitation on what can be done by central government is the antagonism and incompetence of local authorities in some of the areas in which most needs to be done. Yet local authorities are closely involved in the present statutory framework. As we recognised in Cabinet, one way of dealing with that situation might be to create a new agency or agencies, with an appropriate range of powers. We already have the recent precedents of the London Dockland and Merseyside Corporations. A new body might put more emphasis on people and less on the development of infrastructure or the removal of dereliction (not all the areas that need attention are derelict). Any new agency would need to be able to operate flexibly taking account of the particular circumstances of a local area.

The Secretary of State for the Environment is giving further thought to the agency concept, which we all recognised could be politically controversial. It would almost certainly require legislation. For obvious political reasons it would not be confined to areas where there have been riots.

More immediately, our task is to find possible ways of using existing programmes and money more effectively. Programmes for education, training, and employment could be explicitly targetted on the youth of the inner cities. The communities there (whose views may not be the same as those of the local authorities which claim to represent them) should be involved in finding solutions; the prize would be a more integrated and orderly society. In practice we might want to concentrate initially on a few selected places. We identified several existing programmes which already

/deploy relevant



deploy relevant resources with the assistance of local administrative structures:

- The MSC programmes and the Area Manpower Boards:
- The Home Office Grants under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 for local authority expenditure to meet the special needs of what were then called Commonwealth immigrants;
- DES programmes and grants;
- Programmes and grant-giving powers of other Departments (eg DHSS and DTI);
- The Urban Programme with the Partnership Committees and Inner Areas Programmes;
- The City Action Teams (on which DOE, DTI and MSC are represented and which other Departments are associated) are developing a co-ordinated approach in the seven Partnership areas.

All these existing programmes already have resources, without at this stage considering the case for extra money eg for community-based arrangements.

They need to be looked at again in the light of the more explicit targetting to which I have already referred.

/If you agree

If you agree with this general approach, the re-examination of the application of Government programmes, which I started to discuss with colleagues on 17 October, will need impetus and co-ordination. You may wish to consider whether we need separate machinery at Ministerial level. We already have MISC 116, the Ministerial Group on Urban Policy, which is supervising the work of the five City Action Teams. One possibility in the first instance would be to extend the remit of that group. Or you may think it more sensible to start afresh.

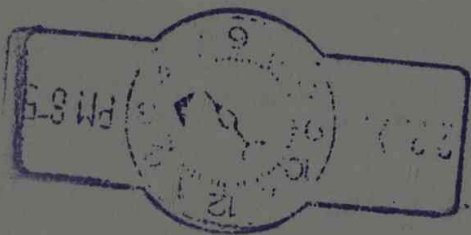
I doubt if it is for the Home Office to take the lead. But the Home Office and other Departments will continue to develop under existing arrangements their work on crime prevention and on specific measures in the race relations field.

I propose to refer to these matters in only the most general terms in Parliament this week.

We may have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that a number of our cities now contain a pool of several hundred young people whom we have not educated, whom it may not be possible to employ, and who are antagonistic to all authority. This is a thoroughly dangerous situation. I am sure we shall need to think hard and imaginatively of ways to prevent that pool being constantly replenished.

I am sending copies of this minute to other members of the Cabinet, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Douglas Hurd*





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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

31 October, 1985.

INNER CITY YOUTH

The Prime Minister was most grateful for your minute of 23 October reporting your discussions with colleagues about ways in which, outside the police context, the Government might respond to the issues raised by the recent disturbances in the inner cities. She has also seen the subsequent correspondence.

The Prime Minister wishes to chair a meeting on this, and the Cabinet Office will be setting it up.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Members of the Cabinet, the Chief Whip, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

(David Norgrove)

S.W. Boys Smith, Esq.,  
Home Office.

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*BM*

C O N F I D E N T I A L

CC/BG



HOUSE OF LORDS,  
SW1A 0PW

26 November 1985

NBPN

My dear Douglas:

INNER CITY YOUTH

I was interested to read your memorandum of 23rd October to the Prime Minister, with its suggestion for special agencies to channel funds into projects in inner cities directed at the immediate personal needs of the community, as distinct from improvements in infrastructure and the physical environment. My direct Ministerial interest in this is, of course, fairly limited except in so far as improvements to the social fabric might lessen the enormous burdens being placed on the courts in major population centres.

At this preliminary stage, I would however suggest that in considering the possible ambit of the sort of bodies which you appear to have in mind, you and Colleagues might care to include the provision of legal advice in deprived areas by law centres and also by other agencies including CABx. As I (and Colleagues) have made clear before, law centres are essentially locally-based agencies established by local initiatives to meet local needs. It remains my view that it is not appropriate for them to be directly managed, and in receipt of direct funding, by central Government (and I long for the day when an alternative source can be found to provide funds for the few centres which my Department supports at present) but they do, in most cases, provide a valuable service to the less fortunate, mainly in deprived areas, on matters such as housing and welfare rights where private practitioners are in short supply.

Law Centres cannot be a panacea and are not a substitute for ordinary legal aid or legal advice and assistance, but they probably have a positive role to play in helping to alleviate some of the problems of deprivation and in enforcing legal rights. The reluctance of some local authorities to support law centres - or at least to meet their full cost - has been one of the major causes of uncertainty over funding in some

...areas.

The Right Honourable  
Douglas Hurd, MP,  
Secretary of State for  
the Home Department,  
Home Office,  
Queen Anne's Gate,  
London, SW1H 9AT.

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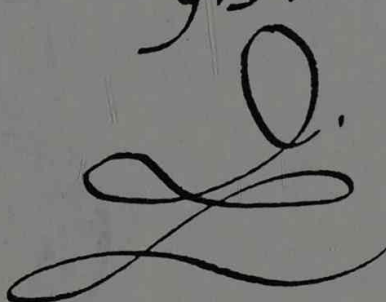
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areas. The establishment of bodies, separate from local government, in some inner city areas could provide the independent source of funds which such centres have been seeking.

Hence my suggestion that, in considering the projects which might be funded by the bodies you have in mind, Colleagues might do well to include law centres and other legal advice agencies. I regard them as having a potentially beneficial role to play in assisting inhabitants of some inner city areas towards a better understanding of their rights and of the benefits which might be available to them. And the better provision of services of this kind might well serve to temper the feeling of alienation on the part of certain sections of these communities.

More immediately, even without major institutional changes in the arrangements for the funding of inner city programmes, we should perhaps be prepared, at the very least, to maintain the existing Urban Programme commitment to law centres and indeed if possible to enhance it. There is certainly potential here for encouraging confidence in the legal process, as a means of promoting greater obedience to the law and the orderly resolution of disputes.

I am copying this letter to the other members of the Cabinet, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yrs:  




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REGIONAL Policy

Pt 7 Inner cities





Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

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CABINET OFFICE,  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

Tel No: 233 3299  
7471

28 October 1985

The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd MP  
Secretary of State for the  
Home Department  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
LONDON  
SW1H 9AT

D Douglas,

INNER CITY YOUTH WITH HEAR

Thank you for copying to me your recent minute, received here on 23 October, to the Prime Minister.

I agree that we should look continually to improve the effectiveness of our existing programmes and spending. Along with this, we might aim to make our programmes more visible, and more obviously co-ordinated. I know that this is a part of the work of the City Action Teams for their areas, and I hope that we can impress on Departments the need to break down Departmental distinctions and show that central government is already playing an instrumental role in stimulating inner city regeneration.

As to the question of the creation of a new agency, I think we must tread very cautiously. The attraction of the precedent of the London Dockland or Merseyside Corporations as a means of attacking the problems of particular areas may well be that they have a specific and well-defined task, undertaken by professionals or businessmen operating largely in their own sphere. It is not immediately obvious that the successes of the DCs in infrastructure improvements can be reproduced in regeneration of an area in the wider sense which you describe. The concept is fine, but where will the idea take us? Who are the people likely to be running such an agency; from where will the staff be found? What powers is it to have? What finance; would we simply be creating another engine for public spending? I realise that these are not questions which can be answered now, but they are suggestive of the difficulties.

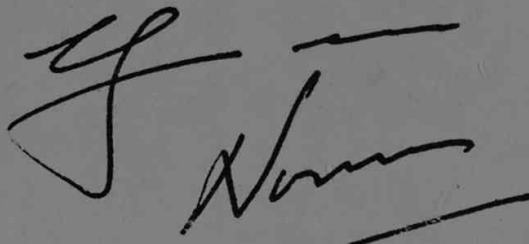
Unless we were so bold as to take functions, for example education, away from existing authorities and put them into the agency, we may find that it is not easy to place a direct emphasis on people. Perhaps therefore we should direct the agency towards a



physical task of redevelopment, and seek to draw in the energies of the local community to supporting this work.

At the same time, I think we may well need to be pursuing a political campaign to turn the sentiment of local communities firmly against those who are active in their areas, and exploiting the alienation of young people, under the banner - less covert as time passes - of "turning riot into revolution".

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of the Cabinet, the Chief Whip, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Norman', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

NORMAN TEBBIT

