

Subject cc master

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INNER CITIES

The Prime Minister held a meeting after Cabinet on 14 November attended by the Lord President of the Council, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Secretary of State for Social Services, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Secretary of State for Employment, the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Paymaster General, the Chief Secretary, Treasury, and the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. Patten). Also present were Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr. A.J. Langdon, Cabinet Office.

The Home Secretary said that, as he had explained in his minute to the Prime Minister of 23 October, he believed disaffected young people (predominantly black) presented a grave threat to the social fabric in some 12 to 15 city areas. More effective action was required to prevent further increases in the number of people in these disaffected groups. The people in question had little realistic prospect of employment and saw themselves as excluded from the mainstream of society. Getting through to them would clearly be a difficult task. Nevertheless he advocated an early initiative directed at a narrowly drawn target area. Education was central to what had gone wrong, but training and job matching were also important. The type of initiative he envisaged would not necessarily be expensive. It would aim at a specific and visible effect.

The following main points were made in discussion:

(a) Although the Home Secretary was right to put the emphasis on problems among young people, and to point to the problems if successive generations were allowed to go the same way as the present groups of malcontents, it would be counter-productive to raise expectations that could not be

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fulfilled in this volatile and intractable field.

(b) It would also be counter-productive to be seen to be concentrating help on lawbreakers or on black people specifically.

(c) Money itself would not solve the problems: representatives of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) had acknowledged as much. Too much loosely-targeted money could indeed be counter-productive. In any event a considerable amount of money was already being spent on inner city problems, and the means of co-ordinating it had recently been improved by the decisions taken in MISC 104.

(d) Education was generally accepted as of fundamental importance. It was not surprising that ill-educated - and in some instances maliciously educated - young people should model themselves on most undesirable examples, and should see little attraction in the modest remuneration of whatever stable jobs were immediately within their reach. But education, along with urban renewal generally, was in many cases in the hands of local authorities which were accentuating the problems rather than helping to solve them.

(e) It was suggested that the Government should not shrink from contemplating a head-on approach to the problem by administering the key services in a few pilot areas through agencies that local authorities could not sabotage. Such a radical approach would however present major constitutional issues with the local authority world, which would vigorously oppose it. An alternative course, less likely to require legislation, the passage of which would take much time and provoke strenuous opposition, would be to work both through existing local authorities and special new agencies in a few pilot schemes.

(f) In general, new agencies would require new legislation. The Housing and Construction Bill would provide a vehicle for enabling urban development corporations to be established

outside Inner London and the Metropolitan County areas. Not all new machinery required legislation, however: the Merseyside Task Force was a case in point.

(g) A meaningful new approach to the problems identified by the Home Secretary would have to be based on the acceptance of a prolonged commitment. Quick schemes that were presented as destined to end quickly could do a lot of harm, though there might be useful ways in which new ventures could be worked up and then handed over to the conventional agencies.

(h) Under existing urban policy considerable efforts were already being made to involve black people in local projects. Valuable work of this kind had been done for many years in the United States of America, and it might be worth considering getting some effective black leaders or organisers from there to help in this country.

The Prime Minister, summing up the discussion, said that the meeting was grateful to the Home Secretary for raising the issues set out in his minute, and had had a valuable preliminary discussion. The meeting had noted that a great deal of work directed at the inner cities was already in train, and that questions of co-ordination had already received attention. Nevertheless, there were still grave doubts about the way in which money directed to the problem areas was in fact being spent, and it was not clear what further policy developments might take place under powers currently available. These matters needed to be clarified.

The meeting should reconvene in about three weeks. For that discussion a group chaired by the Lord President of the Council, and consisting of the Secretaries of State for the Home Department, Education and Science, Scotland, the Environment, and Employment should select 10 areas in cities with the potential for public order trouble as the basis for further study. A group of officials under Cabinet Office chairmanship should prepare an analysis of the money that was channelled into these areas and the way in which it was spent.

The group of officials should also prepare an account of the relevant powers that were currently available to central and local government. Finally, the group of officials should prepare a survey of relevant voluntary organisations obtaining public funds, and what the money was used for.

In the light of this information the meeting would consider whether any special new developments would be feasible. The meeting would have a particular eye to possibilities in the field of training, and would wish to consider the possibility of experiments in education. People from the churches and particularly from monastic communities who had no political axe to grind, might have much to contribute, and the possibility of involving them should not be overlooked.

The meeting -

1. Took note with approval of the Prime Minister's summing up of their discussion.
2. Invited the Lord President of the Council, in consultation with the Ministers indicated, to prepare a list of 10 possible areas for further study.
3. Invited the Secretary of the Cabinet to arrange for a group of officials under Cabinet Office chairmanship to prepare the information that had been requested.

15 November, 1985.

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10 DOWNING STREET

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PMG
CHIEF SEC.
MR. PATTEN, DE

From the Private Secretary

15 November 1985

MR. GRIFFITHS

Dear Joan,

I enclose a copy of the record prepared by the Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister's meeting on Inner Cities held after Cabinet yesterday. I suggest it should be given a restricted circulation.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to the Private Secretaries to those who attended the meeting.

Yours ever,
David

(David Norgrove)

Miss Joan MacNaughton,
Lord President's Office.

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MR NORRGROVE

Inner City Youth

I attach a draft record of the Prime Minister's meeting on Inner City Youth.
It has been cleared by Sir Robert Armstrong.

Rosalind Mulligan

ROSALIND MULLIGAN

15 November 1985

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INNER CITIES

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The Home Secretary said ^{that} ~~that~~, as he had explained in his minute to the Prime Minister of 23 October, he believed ~~that~~ disaffected young people (predominantly black) presented a grave threat to the social fabric in some 12 to 15 city areas. ~~He believed that~~ ^{more effective} ~~increased the number of people in~~ action was required to prevent further ~~additions to~~ these disaffected groups. The people in question had little realistic prospect of employment and saw themselves as excluded from the mainstream of society. ~~and~~ ^g getting through to them would clearly be a difficult task. Nevertheless he advocated an early initiative directed at a narrowly drawn target area. Education was central to ^{what} ~~the things that~~ had gone wrong ~~with this group~~, but training and job matching were also important. The type of initiative ~~that~~ he envisaged would not necessarily be expensive, ~~but~~ ^{it} would aim at a specific and visible effect.

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The following main points were made in discussion:

- (a) Although the Home Secretary was right to put the emphasis on problems ^{among young people} with youth, and to point ^{to} out the problems if successive generations were allowed to go the same way as the present groups of malcontents, it would be counter-productive to raise expectations that could not be fulfilled in ^{is} these volatile and intractable field.
- (b) It would also be counter-productive to be seen to be concentrating help on lawbreakers or on black people specifically.
- (c) Money itself would not solve the problems ~~that had been identified~~: representatives of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) had acknowledged as much. Too much loosely-targeted money could indeed be counter-productive. In any event a considerable amount of money was already being spent on inner city problems, and the means of co-ordinating it had recently been improved by the decisions taken in MISC 104.
- (d) Education was generally accepted as ^{importance} ~~being a~~ fundamental issue in the present context. It was not surprising that ill-educated - and in some instances maliciously educated - young people should model themselves on most undesirable examples, and should see little ~~of the~~ attractions in the modest remuneration of ^{whatever} ~~the~~ stable jobs ^{were immediately} within their reach. But education, along with urban renewal generally, was in many cases in the hands of local authorities ^{which} ~~that~~ were accentuating the problems rather than helping to solve them.

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(e) ~~It was suggested that~~ the Government should not shrink from contemplating a head-on approach to the problem by administering the key services in a few pilot areas through agencies that local authorities could not sabotage. Such a radical approach would however present major constitutional issues with the local authority world, which would vigorously oppose it. An alternative course, less likely to require legislation, the passage of which would take much time and provoke strenuous opposition, would be to work both through existing local authorities and special new agencies in a few pilot schemes.

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