

The Impact of the Community Development Projects on Assessing Urban Deprivation

Timothy Whitton

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Monica CHARLOT
General Editor



**Britain's
Inner Cities**

OPHRYS - PLOTON

Foreword

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The Impact of the Community Development Projects on Assessing Urban Deprivation

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On 17 June 1994, the *Independent* ran the following headline: *£10bn wasted on failed inner city policy*. The Government is castigated for having frittered away public money on an endless stream of apparently useless projects aimed at improving the inner-city situation. These criticisms and the article's concluding recommendations are all too reminiscent of so much of the literature devoted to "those Inner Cities" ever since the issue was brought to the forefront of the political arena at the end of the 1960s.¹

In 1986, Lord Scarman chaired a conference devoted to urban unrest during which many of the speakers quite openly expressed their bitterness, disappointment and exasperation at having to repeat yet again what they had been stating for years.² Their "I told you so" attitude bears witness to the ever-widening gap between what was needed to revive the inner-city areas and what was actually being done. Their words fell once again on deaf ears.

My aim here is not to imitate the *Independent and* expound upon the alleged shortcomings of government spending in the field of inner cities. Vast sums of money have perhaps been wasted on trying to stamp out decay in some of Britain's most underprivileged urban areas, but defining the problems to be solved has also generated a great deal of waste and frustration. To highlight this I propose to take a step back in time to examine the first faltering steps of the Urban Programme (UP) and more particularly one of its most important offspring, the Community Development Projects (CDPs). The CDPs were established in 1969 and served as a breeding-ground for inner-city policies to mature in, but withered on the vine when the enhanced Urban Programme was launched in 1977 following the government White Paper, *Policy for the Inner Cities*.³ This document is often described as a watershed in government commitment to inner cities policies and although it widely predicated upon the Inner Area Studies, the CDPs played their part in informing the new approach.⁴ In this case, the money engulfed by the CDPs was not entirely wasted and although it might not have served its primary purpose, it most certainly enabled researchers to produce substantial empirical material concerning urban decay. Whether this was put to (good) use or not, there is no denying that the CDPs were milestones in the debate on the etiology of the inner-city crisis.

The Urban Programme announced on 5 May 1968 by the Prime Minister showed every sign of having been plucked out of thin air.

*It is as if the political [...] pressures to do something (and to be seen to be doing it) were so great that something was done, even in ignorance of what it was hoped would be achieved and how it would be accomplished.*⁵

Whether Wilson's idea was to pave the way with good intentions or quell the fears aroused by Enoch Powell's "Rivers of blood" speech, remains something of a mystery.⁶ If the Labour Government was galvanised into action by Powell's diatribe then the ostensible link between the UP and immigration highlights the shortcomings in their immigration policy. Whichever the case may be, by responding so quickly to Powell, Wilson unfortunately established an

intractable link between urban deprivation and immigration thus dealing a blow to inner city policy from which it was never really to recover.

Clearly immigration had become a very high-profile issue especially in the wake of the racial disturbances which had shaken America. A decade earlier, Britain had actually felt the consequences of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act restricting West Indian immigration into the United States. This had led more or less directly to a sharp increase in the movement of an unskilled immigrant population into the low-wage sector of the British economy. Over time this exacerbated racial tension in Britain especially in areas like the inner cities where the worst-off tended to congregate. In 1958 Britain was to have her fair share of racial unrest culminating in the Nottingham and Notting Hill riots. The seat won in Smethwick in 1964 after an overtly racist local campaign stands out as a sad reminder of the vote-catching potential of the (anti-) immigration issue especially in the wake of the contested 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act.⁷

Wilson's plans for urban revival may appear therefore as a rather *ad hoc* decision to keep social peace within Britain by steering clear of the American nightmare. To counter Powellism, the impact of immigration on the inner city crisis in Britain was deliberately played down.⁸

*I then announced the UP [...] to provide further help in housing, education and health in a number of big towns and cities where these problems were greatest **whether immigration was a factor there or not.***⁹ (emphasis added)

Furthermore, in announcing UP Wilson borrowed numerous ideas from President Johnson's programme designed to combat poverty in America. Both adopted a blanket approach in dealing with urban deprivation which in time was contested as being ineffective, costly and time-consuming. Whether Wilson's intention in proposing a comprehensive set of measures was to gloss over his Government's distinct lack of a positive immigration policy, is questionable. The blanket approach was in any case later replaced by a much more selective distribution of finance (often referred to as "positive discrimination") especially as funding possibilities gradually dwindled.¹⁰ This in turn merged into the contemporary and more fashionable "enterprise culture" approach.

Even if the Urban Programme at the outset lacked any solid ideological foundations or established direction, promises of financial investment in urban revival were abundant. Despite the slightly chimerical nature of the programme, it was to dispose of £20-25m over the first four years with the Local Government Act 1969 providing the legislative framework. In 1970, the life of UP was extended from four to eight years and expenditure of £40m over and above the initial £20m was approved. A further £10m was added in 1971 and in 1972 £1.1m specifically for projects promoted by voluntary organisations. An extra £2m was allotted to UP in 1973 and again in 1974.

At the beginning UP was not financed through the Rate Support Grant, for according to central government it needed to retain its financial specificity. This meant essentially that not only were Local Authorities prevented from redirecting UP project funds - should they have so wished - but also that central government could interfere in local money matters.¹¹ This interference reinforced the traditional hostility between the public authorities, especially when selectivity in allocating grants reflected political persuasions rather than the validity of proposed projects, to the detriment of actual project work.

The first step was to distribute Urban Aid to selected areas in order to provide capital injection for a plethora of projects proposed by Local Authorities and voluntary organisations.¹² In areas where projects were approved by the Home Office which had assumed a co-ordinating role, 75% grants were provided to Local Authorities on a yearly approval basis. The remaining 25% had to be met from the Local Government budget, the aim being to secure some form of co-operation and involvement from local authorities. From 1968-1975, around 3,750 projects costing nearly £35m gained official approval. They included provision for children, young people, the elderly and the homeless in the form of organised facilities and activities, a variety of advice, education and community centres and general social work devoted chiefly to welfare and health.¹³ By far the greatest number of approved projects dealt with nursery education.

The final criteria by which Local Authorities were able to apply for Urban Programme project funding were: i) the proportion of immigrant children on the school roll and ii) the proportion of households in an authority having more than one and a half persons per room. The bluntness of this approach betrays Ministers' desire to get the Urban programme off the ground hoping probably that once the ball was rolling, it would pick up speed due to its own interior dynamics.

At the same time 12 Community Development Projects were sanctioned under UP in the following localities:

Local Authority	Project Area
Coventry	Hillfields
Liverpool	Vauxhall
Southwark	Newington
Glamorgan	Glyncorrwg
Newhaven	Canning Town
West Riding	Batley
Paisley	Ferguslie Park
Newcastle	Benwell
Cumberland	Cleator Moor, Arlecdon, Frizington
Birmingham	Saltley
Tynemouth	Percy, Trinity
Oldham	Clarksfield

At the outset they were administered by officials from the Home Office's Children's Department, responsibility for which was transferred to the Department of Health and Social Security following the reorganisation of Central Government departments after the 1970 General Election. Each CDP was closely followed by a research team, often university based, whose task it was to monitor activities and establish documented reports. Local CDPs related to the Home Office through a regular CDP Consultative Council.

James Callaghan, who in 1969 was Home Secretary, declared that the CDPs were "a neighbourhood-based experiment aimed at finding new ways of meeting the needs of people living in areas of high social deprivation." Whereas the numerous projects funded under UP were designed to target specific situations in specific localities, the CDPs dealt with community issues in small areas of between 10,000-40,000 people thus providing an average view of urban deprivation.

*The purpose of the CDP may be summarised as: to improve the quality of individual, family and community life in areas with high levels of social need.*¹⁴

In some cases therefore, CDPs would unavoidably cut across areas which had already been singled out for special treatment from the Local Authorities. These included areas with Community Industry Schemes, Special Development or Intermediate Areas (qualifying thus for industrial incentives), Educational Priority Areas and General Improvement Areas, to state just a few.

As with the American Poverty Programme CDP fieldwork consisted in the organisation or reorganisation of the distribution of social services. The aim of the projects was to:

*[..] try to find out how to give more effective help to people suffering from severe personal and social deprivation [...] [and] try to reduce the dependence of such families on difficult and costly forms of help, such as the removal of children into care, psychiatric treatment or prolonged dependence on supplementary benefit, and find ways of helping them to live fuller and more satisfying lives.*¹⁵

In other words CDPs were not just another source of direct funding in the form of social provision to recipients, for their aim was to use resources in a targeted and better manner. They were one more response to urban deprivation in areas which had not benefited from the sort of well-being fostered by the Welfare State.

CDP action can be divided into six categories: employment, income maintenance, welfare rights, housing, education, information and advice, and finally research. Each project developed a policy strategy which in turn embraced a neighbourhood strategy corresponding to the more particular needs of the area covered.

Unlike the numerous specific local projects funded under the Urban Programme, the CDPs stand out as being the research arm of urban renewal policy. Direct contact with local residents covered the following range of social work: encourage take-up of available benefits; provide information, advocacy and technical support particularly in the field of housing (leases, improvement schemes), (un-) employment, retirement and pensions; establish special educational provision especially for the underprivileged and at nursery level and to exploit local employment potential. Filling in gaps in the local social services was of course the more visible side to the CDPs.¹⁶ Nonetheless, a great deal of their work involved the study, monitoring or investigation of local social provision. In many instances, especially at a policy strategy level, research was the main result of the CDPs' missions as they endeavoured to give some sort of meaning to the Urban programme.

Defining urban deprivation

Such was Wilson's haste to respond to the fears raised by Powell, and such, it is surely fair to add, was the confusion surrounding immigration and race relations policy, that very little groundwork had been done before announcing the Urban Programme to actually state why it was necessary to deal with urban deprivation. Perhaps things were so self-evident that Wilson hoped that they would just fall into place naturally. This was the first trap, for the

self-evidences of the time were mainly based on simple social pathological assumptions that went unchallenged.

It was assumed that problems of urban deprivation had their origins in the characteristics of local populations - in individual pathologies - and these would best be resolved by better field co-ordination of the personal social services, combined with the mobilisation of self-help and mutual aid in the community even among those who experience most difficulty in standing on their own feet.¹⁷

Without going to the same extremes as Powell, popular belief readily subscribed to the view that the inner cities suffered from the weaknesses of those who lived there. The link between this idea and the immigration issue was even simpler: since immigrants tended to live in areas of urban decay, they were responsible for this state of affairs (the 1958 riots had of course confirmed this and given stronger impetus to the social pathological view).

[...] the forced concentration of immigrants in the deprived and decaying areas of the big cities highlighted (and reinforced) existing social deprivation; racism defined them as its cause.¹⁸

In order therefore to improve the inner-city situation, something had to be done to curb the pernicious effects of immigration and of immigrants themselves. Wilson inadvertently reiterated this view in May 1968 when he announced the Urban Programme by emphasising how immigration tended to exacerbate the inner-city problem (whatever that was!), or brought it out into the open. Edwards and Batley put it in a nutshell.

UP was concerned with a programme to deal with the problems experienced by immigrants and at the same time a way of relieving the stress caused by immigration.¹⁹

This had become so widely accepted and axiomatic that on the whole more political effort was being devoted to the immigration issue than to relieving the plight of the inner cities. It was a case of the trees hiding the wood for the areas designated as being deprived were more often than not quite simply those with high concentrations of coloured people. This is reflected in the way in which UP officials established their hierarchical list of deprivation factors which ran as follows in order of importance: immigrant concentrations/language difficulties, poverty or low income, problems of handicapped, lack of community facilities, unemployment/poor industrial base/poor job opportunities, single-parent families, overcrowding, urban renewal problems, declining industry, declining rate of income, decaying infrastructure, large families, poor health, level of crime, bad housing, non-involvement in local affairs and local politics. Immigration and poverty were of course high on the agenda.

This rather short-sighted view of the inner-city crisis overlooked official CDP and other research that pointed to the far wider reaching causes and consequences of urban decay. In 1967, the Plowden Report had drawn up a list of criteria in order to help define the urban crisis in terms of multiple deprivation which quite naturally covered the immigration issue.²⁰ These included occupation, size of families, supplements in cash or kind from the State, overcrowding and sharing of houses, poor attendance and truancy from school, proportion of retarded, disturbed or handicapped pupils, incomplete families and children unable to speak English. The strength behind this sort of approach lay in its ability to include the immigration issue without drawing particular attention to it by concocting a clumsy hierarchy of

deprivations. Emphasis was laid on the hardships that immigrants experienced along with the white population in the same area, rather than those they supposedly caused. In this way the whole population of a given area was concerned, white and coloured people alike. Despite the fact that urban deprivation had only been partially defined and what is more using only sample manifestations, or indicators, people were related to it rather than it to people's - and especially immigrants'- so-called social inadequacies.

CDP officials drew up their own list of criteria which, although similar to those of the Plowden Report, alluded to the "deprivation cycle" and the sort of vicious circle that deprived families could be trapped in:

[...] ill-health - financial difficulties - children suffering from deprivation - constant delinquency - inability of the children to adjust to adult life - unstable marriages - emotional problems, ill-health and the cycle begins again.²¹

The problem of any reference to a cyclical rationalisation of urban deprivation was the tendency, for want of a way of breaking the vicious circle, to simply lay the blame upon the inner-city population. They were caught up in the supposedly unending cycle that generated the social inadequacies which were responsible for (their) urban degeneration. The CDP analysis was slightly different insofar as it insisted on the interdependency of factors which led to average deprivation: an area deprived in one field probably suffered from general deprivation. In so doing the CDPs challenged the widespread belief that breaking the vicious circle would have an impact on deprived communities. They went even further by saying that fundamental urban deprivation was not necessarily contained within the boundaries of the inner-city areas. In this respect focusing efforts on a few limited areas could not alter the harmful overall effects of market forces.

Analysis of the wider context of CDP areas has led us to recognise what many social scientists have been asserting in recent years: that problems of multideprivation have to be re-defined and reinterpreted in terms of structural constraints rather than psychological motivations, external rather than internal factors.²²

This conception had far, wider-reaching roots which went beyond the media-friendly scope of the UP projects and demanded the restructuring of the national economy.

The Urban Programme moves on

Even though UP was not inundated with requests from Local Authorities and voluntary organisations, submissions for project approval far outnumbered funding possibilities. Whatever impression of grandeur UP may leave, it accounted for only a very small portion of total money allocated to the social services.²³

Apart from the quite pragmatic problem raised by monetary issues, UP still lacked any sense of direction despite the growing and constantly updated body of empirical evidence provided by the CDPs on the real needs of deprived areas. Before this research took form though (and, to be truthful, well after it!), UP appeared to rely on a rather makeshift and botched strategy.

For all the coherence implied by the word "programme", and for all the unity implied by the joint issue of circulars and approvals, we see that central government decision-making in the UP was diffused and fragmented.²⁴

On 6 April 1972, an editorial in *The Times* echoed these criticisms but also challenged the effectiveness of UP. People quite simply could not fathom out what it was supposed to be achieving:

There is a growing awareness that Britain's worst social conditions are to be found in the decaying centres of our cities. But there is as yet no official policy to match that awareness [...]. Their urban programme is a ragbag of good intentions. It does a certain amount of good in a haphazard way. It has stimulated some good ideas. But it is inadequate in scope, and has not managed to bring about a proper urban strategy at local level. All too often the urban programme is regarded by local officials simply as a source of finance for programmes for which they would otherwise not be able to find the money. Its effects are therefore uncoordinated.

Even so, the fundamental etiological debate was somehow just getting off the ground and the CDP research teams were beginning to make waves.

Subsequent to the shift in thinking within the [Urban Deprivation] Unit, or concurrent with it, has been the move away from viewing deprivation in pathological terms to a conception that takes more account of basic inequalities in the distribution of goods and services.²⁵

However, by admitting their own deficiencies and openly challenging the widely accepted social pathological approach to urban deprivation the CDPs were threatening mainstream political thinking.

Clearly a local CDP on its own is not in a position to tackle the ultimate causes of disadvantage which have their sources nationally in the economy, and in government policy.²⁶

The CDPs spent a long time in fact defining what they had not achieved. This betrayed their frustration both at their inability to make significant inroads into government thinking and the latter's reluctance to lend any credibility or support to CDP findings.

The 'crisis' itself has never been satisfactorily defined and even where government statements have appeared to indicate a particular view of the crisis, this has not necessarily been supported by the policy measures taken.²⁷

As long as governments refused to accept that urban decay was a direr consequence of the capitalist market's structural inequality, then the CDP work was bound to go unheeded. Because the CDPs constantly asserted that deprivation was due to external factors and not people, they could deal only with cosmetic solutions to the plight of the inner cities, and their role as a placebo reinforced their conviction that UP was a sham.²⁸ While project rhetoric served only to mask the lack of impact of the CDPs on the community at large, the only way out from their obvious ineffectiveness was to insist on a continually better and more efficient use of available resources - especially as they had no funds to inject directly into social provision. To this end they were constantly forced to deal with the obvious causes of urban

deprivation simply because this was so much easier and more acceptable than delving into its far-reaching consequences.

Towards the enterprise culture

CDPs turned out to be an experiment in order to establish a plan rather than a solution in themselves. Even as late as 1974, five years after the launching of the CDPs, the lack of tangible results within deprived areas was apparent:

The majority of CDPs are still at an early stage. But it is already possible to draw from their work so far some idea of the areas where the experiment can be expected to contribute to drawing up a programme directed towards solving the problem of urban deprivation.²⁹

This criticism was to be repeated again and again as each attempt to tackle urban deprivation rang very hollow:

Experiments are now an established tradition in the inner city as a substitute for actually spending the money required to deal with these problems.³⁰

The visible impact of UP on targeted communities had moreover been very unsatisfactory. New restrictions on public spending meant that funding for UP projects was scarcer and the so-called "enhanced" Urban Programme announced in 1977 was a logical shift towards a more money minded approach in dealing with urban deprivation. Free market policies had been creeping steadily in to UP and private enterprise had already been involved in numerous projects, albeit perhaps for more practical rather than ideological motivations.

[...] and the government requested submissions under the Urban Aid Programme to be concerned with projects which would assist in wealth creation rather than consumption, engage the private sector and contribute to making the inner cities places where people want to live and work.³¹

CDPs had not mustered enough political clout to check the move towards seeking an overall solution to the inner-city crisis somewhere within the private sector. From 1977 onwards, the old style of partnerships between local and central government was to be supplanted by the introduction of a new set of schemes involving the close participation of the private sector.

The regeneration of the inner cities is not, however, a job for central or local government alone. A new and closer form of collaboration is required between government and the private sector, between government and the community [...] and above all with the people living in the inner areas. It is their welfare, immediate and longer term, which must be the ultimate touchstone for success.³²

This was to seal the fate of the Community Development Projects since urban regeneration was now to depend to a great extent on market development projects, where wealth could so easily replace welfare.

By 1978, CDP had virtually died out. It had been meant to shore up social provision in underprivileged areas whilst providing Government with a continuous flow of research. However politicians grew weary of the CDP's radical recommendations which did not fit in

with general policies. The CDPs claimed that urban deprivation went beyond the inner-city communities and could only be tackled by redistributive policies designed to even out wealth over the regions. By constantly stating their belief that the organisation of capital was the key issue and not red-flag elements such as immigration or poverty, the CDPs estranged themselves somewhat from their political partners. This cut short the possibility of their strategic efforts in the community being backed up by a wider initiative on a national scale designed to stamp out the ultimate causes of urban deprivation. At the same time, it gained them the reputation of being more radical than other UP projects, which meant that the latter - however ineffective - were more acceptable to government.

Judging by the amounts of money spent on trying to deal with urban deprivation and the consequent inner-city crisis, one may wonder which comes first, the welfare of the community living in the under-privileged areas or that of the management that deals with them. Had more time been spent in the early stages in looking beyond the mere indicators of urban deprivation and coming to terms with the underlying causes, then surely waste could have been minimal. Ultimately the CDPs were a thorn in the government's side because they constantly pointed out the necessity for major structural changes in society, which was the only realistic strategy capable of eradicating urban deprivation. What better way of refuting this sort of challenge than handing it over to the market: but therein lies another tale.

Monica CHARLOT (general editor), *Britain's Inner Cities*, Paris: Ophrys – Ploton, 1994, pp. 9-23.

- ¹ « Those inner cities » was how Mrs Thatcher quaintly referred to them the morning after her general election victory in 1987.
- ² The conference papers were brought together in : J. BENYON & J. SOLOMOS, (eds.) *The Roots of Urban Unrest*, Oxford: Pergamon, 1987.
- ³ The last CDP was officially closed down in 1978, only one year after the enhanced Urban Programme was announced.
- ⁴ Three Inner Area Studies were carried out and documented in Liverpool, Birmingham and Lambeth.
- ⁵ J. EDWARDS & R. BATLEY, *The Politics of Positive Discrimination*, London: Tavistock, 1978, p.238.
- ⁶ Fearing a mass influx of immigrants following the Kenyan Asian crisis in 1967, Wilson's Government hastily rushed the Commonwealth immigrants Act through both houses. It was not enough to stop Enoch Powell from denouncing the Government's "madness" in his famous speech given in Birmingham on 21 April 1968. His openly racist ideas were too much for Heath who sacked him from the Shadow Cabinet.
- ⁷ The election slogan of Peter Griffiths, the Conservative candidate who won the seat in Smethwick was: "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour".
- ⁸ By Powellism I mean quite simply the line of thought fostered by Powell and his followers that designated immigrants as being largely responsible for social evil and urban decay.
- ⁹ H. WILSON, *The Labour Government 1964-1970, a Personal Record*, London: Weidensfeld, Nicholson & Michael Joseph Ltd., 1971, p. 153.
- ¹⁰ In 1976, the International Monetary Fund imposed severe public spending limits on the British Government forcing Callaghan to adopt more monetarist policies.
- ¹¹ It was a well known fact that Local Authorities would often propose projects with what they called "Home office Appeal", thus pandering to the whims of government officials.
- ¹² From 1968-77 more than 300 Local Authorities received grants from Urban Programme funding.
- ¹³ For more details see EDWARDS & BATLEY, *op. cit.*, 146-147.
- ¹⁴ J. GREVE, *Community Development in the Context of Urban Deprivation*, United Nations Division of Social Affairs, 1973, p. 7.
- ¹⁵ Community Development Project, "The Community Development Project", Press Release, 6 July, 1965.
- ¹⁶ For complete details of the CDPs see Community Development Project, *Inter-project Report*, London: CDP Information and Intelligence Unit, 1974, pp. 40-47.
- ¹⁷ CDP, 1974, *op. cit.*, 1.
- ¹⁸ A. SIVANANDAN, « Race, Class and the State : the Black Experience in Britain », London : Institute of race Relations, 1976, p. 350, quoted in LONEY, *Community Against the Government: the British Community Development Project 1968-1978*, London: Heinemann, 1983, p. 35.
- ¹⁹ EDWARDS & BATLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- ²⁰ Plowden Report, Central Advisory Committee for Education, *Children and their Primary Schools*, London: H.M.S.O., 1967.
- ²¹ CDP Press Release, *op. cit.*
- ²² CDP, 1974, *op. cit.*, p.8.
- ²³ 0.1% of the total social services budget in 1972-1973.
- ²⁴ EDWARDS & BATLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
- ²⁵ The Urban Deprivation Unit was formed in 1973 and was supposed to be a government think tank for inner-city policies. See *The Times*, 2 November 1973.
- ²⁶ BENNINGTON, J., "Community Work as an Instrument of International Change", *Association of Community Workers' Annual Conference*, 1972, p. 10.
- ²⁷ M. LONEY, "The Inner-City Crisis", *Urban Change and Conflict*, D 202 Block 6, Unit 28b, p. 139.
- ²⁸ For further information see for example *Community Development Project, Gilding the Ghetto*, 1977, & M. LONEY, *Community against Government*, London: Heinemann, 1983. Both virulently condemn the ineffectiveness of the Urban Programme.
- ²⁹ CDP, 1974, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
- ³⁰ ANDERSON J., "Back to the Nineteenth Century", *New Statesman*, July 1980.
- ³¹ *Municipal Journal*, 1980, p. 466, quoted in N. LONEY, "The Inner-City Crisis", *Urban Change and Conflict*, D 202 Block 6, Unit 28b, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
- ³² Department of the Environment, *Policy for the Inner Cities*, CMND 6845, London: H.M.S.O., §103.

CIVILISATION

Britain's Inner Cities

L'urbanisation des populations qui s'est développée au x.x^e siècle avec la révolution industrielle prend en cette fin du xx^e des proportions démesurées.

Longtemps masqués par la croissance économique exponentielle de l'après guerre, les nouveaux problèmes posés par cette concentration humaine se révèlent - avec la crise - chaque jour un peu plus dramatiques.

Criminalité, chômage, délinquance, drogue, illettrisme, paupérisme, racisme, urbanisme sauvage demandent des solutions.

Au Royaume-Uni ce phénomène n'a pas pris les proportions des favelas brésiliennes ou des mégalo-poles du sous-continent indien et les municipalités et le gouvernement central essaient de faire face, autant que faire se peut. Conservateurs et Travailleurs tentent d'apporter leurs réponses, économiques, politiques ou sociales.

Monica Charlot a réuni les universitaires britanniques spécialistes de la question. Ils retracent l'historique de ces trente dernières années, font l'état des lieux et analysent les traitements.

Illustré de nombreux tableaux économiques et statistiques, souvent inédits, *Britain's Inner Cities* permet au lecteur de faire le point sur cette question qui reste d'une brûlante actualité.

Monica CHARLOT, Professeur de Civilisation Britannique à l'Université de Paris III (Sorbonne Nouvelle) est l'auteur de nombreux ouvrages sur la Grande-Bretagne et notamment d'une biographie de la Reine Victoria (Flammarion).

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