

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL WORK, UNIVERSITY OF YORK
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THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNITY WORK

The Final Report of Batley CDP

**ERIC BUTTERWORTH
RAY LEES
PETER ARNOLD**

THREE PROJECTS 1970-78

Batley, Cumbria and Oldham were three areas chosen in the government-sponsored National Community Development Project which took place in the 1970s. The members on their research teams were on the staff of the University of York and over the years in which they and the action teams worked in the areas a mass of material was collected relevant to a wide audience concerned both with identifying issues and taking action in the fields of social policy and community work. Few areas have been so consistently documented in this way over a period of time.

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THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNITY WORK
The Final Report of Batley CDP

Eric Butterworth
Ray Lees
Peter Arnold

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The photographs which are used on the front cover and in the text were taken by David Whiteley of the University of York, and we wish to thank him for providing distinctive views of Batley which we hope will convey a sense of it to others. We should like to thank Dr Michael Hirst for drawing the map of Kirklees which we use.

The final responsibility for the typing of the manuscript has been that of Sue Medd. We are aware of the care and consideration that she has given to this, despite all the pressures we have created for her, and can only record our heartfelt gratitude. In addition, Jan Linder, Kathy Logan (at the Western Australian Institute of Technology) and Barbara Kindness have typed parts of earlier drafts of the book and we wish to thank them.

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Abbreviations

In the text certain organisations, procedures and the like, are referred to by their initial letters after a first full reference to each is given. For ease of reference a comprehensive list is provided here.

ACT	Advice Centre for the Town
ACW	Association of Community Workers
ASTMS	Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff
BTA	Batley Tenants' Association
BC	Borough Council
CDA	Central Development Area
CDP	Community Development Project
CRC	Community Relations Council
CRO	Community Relations Officer
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Security
DoE	Department of the Environment
EPA	Educational Priority Area
EVW	European Volunteer Workers
FIS	Family Income Supplement
GIA	General Improvement Area
HAA	Housing Action Area
HO	Home Office
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
IIU	Information and Intelligence Unit
IOR	Institute of Operational Research
MDC	Metropolitan District Council
MWS	Muslim Welfare Society
NCDP	National Community Development Project
NPFA	National Playing Fields Association
SAPA	Sheffield Adventure Playground Association
UPA	Urban Priority Area
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
WRCC	West Riding County Council

FOREWORD

This book has been brought together at various stages over the last three years, some time after the Batley Community Development Project was terminated. It was also hoped to include an assessment of the Urban Priority Area work to 1977 on a systematic basis but this was not possible. Most of those who were involved in the Project have helped directly or indirectly in its preparation - some by making written contributions or by passing on written material and personal files, and others by being interviewed. Some of those who were invited to contribute did not respond, while in other cases it has not been possible to obtain the views of some of the others involved in Project work. Nevertheless, even those who did not respond left their views well documented, and in this respect this present book relies heavily upon internal Project papers. The purpose of the present work is to consider in some detail and in the context of current debate about the theory and practice of community work the experience of the Batley Project which formed part of the CDP Programme. The Batley Project has already achieved some fame or notoriety in community work literature, both with the strike of some of its workers in 1974 and its early closure in 1975, taken to show that community work within local authorities must be token or will inevitably fail. We believe that a reconsideration of these events and the overall work of Batley CDP is necessary, especially in the light of the fuller evidence we have drawn together for the book.

Our method in compiling this book has relied upon a combination of oral and written source materials, and where source materials have been cited we have taken great care to ensure that the material we have used can be corroborated. It will be for the reader to judge whether this approach has succeeded, but we are confident that the evidence we have produced spells out particular themes which have received little attention in other reports, for example group dynamics, and the relationship between Projects and their local sponsors, and recreates the atmosphere of Project work and the motives behind it. We do not claim that we have provided a 'definitive' account : indeed it is best to acknowledge at the outset that 'definitive' works rarely exist. However, we do hope that we have tackled the key questions in Batley CDP and of community work in general.

The views expressed are those of the authors and not those of others who have been consulted. The contributors of the individual chapters have not been involved in other parts of the book. Although we may have different views individually on some of the topics, and at times this may be apparent from internal evidence in the book, we are agreed on our general approach.

This book is divided into five parts : the opening ones, I and II, follow the format of several other CDP Reports by providing an overview of the individual Project and the National Community Development Project (NCDP), an indication of the significance of Batley CDP to the national programme and to community work in general, an analysis of the Project in its wider environment and a review of the major areas of work undertaken. The central parts of the book, III and IV, depart from the established format by combining the thematic and personal-evaluative approaches. Part III concentrates on the theme of conflict and describes the Style and Image of Batley CDP, Group Processes in the Project, and Political Processes in the Project's relationship to the local authority. Part IV complements this by drawing together the Assessments of a number of key actors involved in or with the Project, the Leader of Council, the Chief Executive Officer of the local authority, a *post facto* research assessment of the Batley Project based upon interviews with local authority elected members and officers,

the second Project Director, the Research Team Director, and the head of the research capability drawn on by the Project from the University of York. The final part, V, draws together our conclusions on Batley CDP and the National Community Development Programme, in the context of the theory and practice of community work. In the Appendices a number of useful guidelines to future study are provided.

It would be appropriate to record our thanks to the Home Office for providing all the funding for the research in Community Development Projects. Although the later stages in the preparation of this report have depended on other sources, without that support many of the publications that have been produced about Batley could not have appeared, and the research would never have been undertaken. For Batley and the other two Projects whose research teams were linked with York the publications in the series of *Papers in Community Studies* provide a readily available record of many vital aspects of their work to supplement what is presented here. With the publication of one more work on Batley later this year there will be seven detailed reports on that Project alone under these auspices.

**I BATLEY and the NATIONAL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT:
An Introduction**

1 BATLEY AND THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT :
 AN INTRODUCTION

THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT : ORIGINS

When the plan for a co-ordinated Community Development Project (CDP) programme was launched in July 1969, the Home Office press release referred to it as a 'major experiment in improving the social services for those most in need'.¹ The aim was to try to find out 'how to give more effective help to people suffering from severe personal and social deprivation'.² The basis of the work was experimental and it was assumed that the use of 'social science methods of inquiry and evaluation as a built-in support for social action, constitutes a wise and worthwhile addition to traditional ways of tackling the problems of social welfare'.³

This emphasis differed from those in later formulations. In an official Home Office view, expressed in 1971, CDPs had become :

*a modest attempt at action research into the better understanding and more comprehensive tackling of social needs, especially in local communities within the older urban areas, through close co-ordination of central and local official and unofficial effort, informed and stimulated by citizen initiative and involvement. The concept of community development of this kind is not new; but this is the first time that central and local government have decided to make a joint venture into this field themselves.*⁴

The first CDPs began in 1970; all twelve were concluded by 1978, with most projects completing around a five year term of operation. Most people interested in social policy will have heard of them but there is a lack of material about detailed project work, and in particular its practical application elsewhere, which reinforces the need for more comprehensive information to be provided, and for a wider debate to be opened on their value and contribution.

Their relevance for community work in the 1980s is undoubted, despite what has so far been an undue emphasis on the analysis adopted by some teams, often referred to as 'structural', to the virtual exclusion of what community work was undertaken and what can be learned from it, and the apparent desire on the part of governments of both parties to put aside an experience productive of much stress. It is our view that the experience of the projects must be examined in the widest possible context for the most positive of reasons, of which achieving better practice is the main one.

So far the response to CDPs seems to have taken one of two main forms. The first may be represented by a fairly mild example. It involves the experience of a colleague who applied for a University post after working over three years in one of the projects. 'Ah yes,' said the Vice-Chancellor, looking at his papers as he settled down at the interview : 'Community Development Projects ... whatever went wrong with them?' Needless to say, the colleague did not get the job! The answer to the query must be that quite a lot did 'go wrong' in that sense. An impression was created of some abrasive and intransigent Young Turks attacking the *status quo* with relish and enjoyment. The outcome was a desire to close down the experiment as soon as possible, not because of what it achieved but because, to its detractors, it produced little at the national level more than rhetoric. The second form of response accepts the validity of the national project and considers that its failure is due to lukewarm government reaction and in particular the ineffectiveness of the Home Office to respond to and encourage activities

at the grass roots. This, and the absence of any inter-departmental structure, which could allow for the consideration of issues, and the dissemination of ideas and new approaches arising from the experience of CDP, has led to a growing conviction that the national project was an exercise in 'social control' on the part of a government that had traditionally been complacent about both the problems of inner cities and the likely solutions to them.

Essentially the projects set up by the government were established to discover more effective ways of meeting the needs of people suffering from interrelated forms of social deprivation. Small areas with about 10,000-20,000 population were to be chosen, in co-operation with the local authorities concerned, with 75 per cent finance from the urban programme and 25 per cent from the local authority. Inter-service teams, consisting of two or three full-time and additional part-time members, with the participation of all the local statutory and voluntary services, were to identify needs, stimulate better co-ordination and accessibility of services, and foster community involvement, with better communication between local people and local services. Research and evaluation provided by local universities or polytechnics was to be built in from the beginning.

The original concept of CDP, therefore, was one of a carefully controlled experiment aimed at tackling conditions of social deprivation by improving service delivery, encouraging self-help and participation, experimenting with new ways of providing social welfare and combining the skills of research with action in order to monitor and evaluate this new departure in meeting needs. Such aims embodied general developments in social policy at that time, such as positive discrimination through Educational Priority Areas and the Urban Programme, greater co-ordination of welfare services through the post-Seebohm developments, and more local participation in planning procedures following the Skeffington Report. In the original specifications given to each project, five main objectives were spelled out :

- (i) *assessment of needs in the locality selected, and especially of those that look like being unmet;*
- (ii) *stimulation of local residents to participate in this assessment and to take some initiative and responsibility in what follows;*
- (iii) *production, discussion and encouragement of practical ideas for meeting the needs wherever it is realistic to seek to do so, eg through adjustments in policies, methods or priorities, with special emphasis on the development of contact and co-operation at all levels between the various local authority departments and other resource-controlling agencies, and the local residents themselves;*
- (iv) *promotion of a limited number of specific schemes designed both to plug immediate gaps in local social provision and to test new methods of achieving effective official/unofficial co-operation;*
- (v) *identification of needs and possible solutions which are beyond immediate local action but merit feeding back to wherever policy is formed.⁵*

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF BATLEY CDP

The Batley Community Development Project was established in late 1971 and the first appointments to the Action team were made then, including the Action Director. It came into full operation early in 1972 with the appointment of an Assistant Director and two Research Fellows. Later in 1972 a Research Director took up post, bringing the Research team up to its complement of three, and a second Assistant Director on the Action side completed the Action team.

In November 1975, four years after its inception, the Chief Executive Officer of Kirklees MDC announced that the Project had 'collapsed in its present form because of irreconcilable difficulties concerning the future'.⁶ Such a declaration was a far cry from the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council's (WRCC) resolution to support a Community Development Project in December 1970. Then, it stated that 'great advantage would result to the area selected and the lessons learnt be capable of application to other areas of the county'.⁷

In four years the Project experienced changes of government, local and central, crises in leadership, numerous wrangles with committee, and a strike of CDP workers. By 1974 the changed aspirations and expectations of the Project bore only a loose connection to those statements made before it started when the Home Office first tried to gauge whether or not the West Riding would be interested in promoting an area for a Community Development Project.

At an informal meeting in 1968, Professor Kathleen Jones of the Department of Social Administration and Social Work at the University of York had been sounded out by the late Derek Morrell of the Home Office as to whether the University would consider taking research responsibility for a Community Development Project in the West Riding. This invitation was reaffirmed some time later. Quite independently a small group of people attached to the Yorkshire Council of Social Service, including Raymond Clarke, its Secretary, and Eric Butterworth, a member of staff of the University of York and in charge of community work there, were making plans to try and start a community work project in Batley. The proposed National Project fitted in well with what they had in mind, and Eric Butterworth took on the negotiations about the research capability.

In February 1970 at meetings between Chief and Senior Officers of the WRCC and YCSS it was agreed, in principle, to support the establishment of a Community Development Area. Subsequently, the Deputy Clerk of the West Riding County Council formally approached the Home Office to open the issue, and information was collected on three potential target areas, Batley, Castleford and Knottingley. After further consultations a meeting was held in September 1970 between representatives of the Home Office, members of the Community Development Project Central Team, including Dr A. H. Halsey, the Consultant, and Professor John Greve, the Research Director, representatives from the West Riding County Council, and from the Yorkshire Council of Social Service. It was agreed that the WRCC officers would recommend to their County Council that a Project should be established. The University of York was designated as the research 'sponsor' for the Project, and work was begun on the original research design.

In selecting an area suitable for the experiment the Special sub-committee of the WRCC bore two points in mind.⁸ First, the area chosen should provide results useful to the whole county. Second, account should be taken of the Home Office's opinion that the target area should be 'materially different from the four areas already sponsoring projects'.⁹

(These were : Coventry, Glamorgan, Liverpool and Southwark.) By February 1971 all parties felt that Batley conformed to the specifications of Home Office and County Council and that the University of York was prepared to act as research sponsor. In the formulation by the WRCC the principal aim of the National Project was to 'find ways of meeting more effectively the needs of individuals, families and communities, whether native or immigrant, in areas with particular social and environmental problems'.¹⁰ The Project, when operational, could help people use the social services constructively in order to improve living conditions, and the team appointed would 'explore possible ways of supplementing but not displacing, and rendering more effective the existing machinery for inter-service co-ordination'.¹¹

From its inception the Special CDP sub-committee of the WRCC was given responsibility for the Project. Formed as a sub-committee of the major Education Committee it acted as the body to which CDP was most immediately responsible prior to the Project's transfer to Kirklees Metropolitan District Council (MDC) in February 1974.¹² The Project team worked in Batley, a 'second-tier' Municipal Borough within the County, and issues requiring the consideration of County Council were referred 'upwards' to it. After a short time it was evident that any agreement over the aims and development of the CDP programme with the Batley Municipal Borough Council had been hindered by the location of the Project at County level. No Batley member was asked to serve on the CDP sub-committee until October 1972, and though some arrangements had been made to involve both tiers at officer level these early initiatives did little to bridge the distance between the Project, the community and local elected members.¹³

There were difficulties all round arising from the organisational structure imposed. The researchers were responsible for their work to the University, but the use of the term 'Project Director' (often interchangeable with Action Director, a more accurate term) led to some assumptions that along with this role went the control of the Project. The position was further complicated by the desire on the part of members of both teams in certain circumstances to act together as a Project : researchers took part in the long discussions on policy that went on.

By the time arrangements were made for Batley CDP to transfer to Kirklees Metropolitan District Council after local government reorganisation in 1974, the Batley Project had undergone rapid and fundamental change. Both the National Community Development Project and Batley CDP had been subject to censure, and each was influenced by internal and external forces. The Batley team had abandoned 'social pathology' explanations of deprivation and accepted that structuralist interpretations offered more accurate insights into the causes of poverty and inequality. Likewise, it questioned the national framework set up for CDPs, criticised the Home Office brief as vague, and the time-scales allotted to individual and national projects as unrelated to real community development. This disenchantment conveyed itself in a general and specific questioning which stressed how ill-defined premises, aims and methods cut across an experimental approach.¹⁴

Though it was partly aware of the Project's changing priorities, at a full committee meeting in February 1974 the Kirklees MDC expressed its intention to maintain support for the Project. In March the Director of Administration reported on relationships between the Project and the Council, and it was resolved that a committee of members should be set up to work with the Project. For the greatest part of its remaining existence the CDP sub-committee consisted of fourteen members : the Labour leader, nine Batley councillors, two councillors from nearby wards, and the Chairmen of Education and Social Services Committees.

From hazy beginnings the Batley Project team had, by 1973, established the major priorities in its programme. Predictably, and to some degree deliberately, much of the work undertaken resembled that of other projects; for example, on housing, welfare rights, work with immigrants and playgroups, the local economy, and planning. The various tenants' associations developing in the town attracted considerable attention, as did the Batley Advice Centre, later the Advice Centre for the Town (ACT). After October 1973, the team decided to extend its work across the town, since some members considered that to select a smaller neighbourhood, as recommended by the Home Office, might inhibit flexibility and further stigmatise the area selected. This also avoided the need to establish priorities which might not have found favour with individuals in the team. Nevertheless, from Autumn 1974 an element of intensive neighbourhood work was reintroduced through the Urban Priority Area Project in the East Ward of Batley, set up parallel to and 'in contrast to the more free-flowing community work', with which the Project had until then been concerned.¹⁵

With the handover of responsibilities from the West Riding County Council to Kirklees Metropolitan Council, the Project anticipated problems for Project staff and the new local sponsor. These were referred to in the *Report to the Minister* of October 1973, and were compounded by the national uncertainties surrounding CDP, and by growing internal tensions stemming from anxiety over the Project's role and function, and its overall accountability to local and central government.¹⁶ Within months of the Project's transfer to Kirklees a renewed debate broke out over ACT, one of the organisations which the Project supported. In the past there had been some opposition to ACT from the Batley Council, but when the Kirklees local authority required greater representation on ACT's management committee, some Project and ACT workers pointed to this as an example of local government's intention to shackle and contain the centre. What was required was three members, or about a quarter of the total number. Four community workers went on strike in protest at the local authority's action, and requested the support of the Association of Community Workers (ACW) and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff (ASTMS) in their dispute with the local authority. Community work posts in Kirklees were blacked by ACW and other Community Development Projects expressed some support for the Batley Project and the workers on strike. Soon, the original discussions about ACT developed into a debate on the purpose of the National CDP programme, and the premises upon which community work was based. The conflict was unresolved during the Summer and Autumn of 1974, and remained largely unsettled until late Spring 1975. When, in July 1975, Kirklees Council resolved that, as ACT had agreed to amend its constitution, the CDP sub-committee would recommend a grant for ACT, outside observers were entitled to feel that the Batley Project had overcome its main difficulties. This optimism was unfounded. The Project had lost direction, the team was under-strength and divided over strategy, and the anti-CDP lobby had become stronger among councillors and officers.

The Autumn of 1975 saw the demise of the Batley Project. Having expected a sizeable financial contribution to ACT to be approved by Kirklees Council, Kirklees offered ACT little more than a token grant. From September 1975, some of the Project team challenged the controlling Labour Group in Kirklees and accused it of duplicity and hypocrisy. In October, the second Action Director resigned and an officers' steering group was set up to manage what remained of the Project. Without a Director the team could not function as an integrated unit. Discussions continued with the local authority, but were inconclusive. Finally, in November 1975, the Batley Community Development Project was officially terminated, and only the part of its work carried out by the Urban Priority Area Team was incorporated into the local authority structure. In the Summer of 1977 this was discontinued.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BATLEY CDP

The experience of Batley CDP illustrates at first hand general problems of community work theory and practice. Four critical themes stand out : the existence of conflict at a number of levels, within the team, with the local authority, with the Home Office and with some community groups; the degree to which community work may develop its own mystique; the effects of local government reorganisation on local politics and on local community projects; and the relationship between theory and practice. An attempt to explain the relevance of these factors provides an opportunity to test certain central issues of practice or theory against empirical evidence.¹⁷

The centrality of 'conflict' as an element in some forms of community work has long been acknowledged, and in Batley the Project team referred repeatedly to the possibility of its work leading to conflict with the local authority, over policy issues or the importance of community involvement, and with central government over the motives behind its poverty programme. These two elements were well illustrated in the community workers' strike of 1974 : whatever else is known about Batley there can be no doubt that this strike attracted a lot of attention nationally.¹⁸ Most of the strikers were due to leave their jobs a short time after the strike in any event - facts not covered in the media. From early 1975, virtually a newly-appointed action team took over. Before the new programme could get under way problems about the honesty of the Labour politicians who dominated Batley were raised and these not surprisingly led to conflict with the Project, though four workers were kept on in the Urban Priority Area (UPA) scheme which lasted for another eighteen months. This scheme was then closed for reasons said to be associated with cutbacks in local government finance. As with other promising innovations, the UPA, which appeared to be making an impact, became a casualty of the tendency within the political system to support the routine and the 'safe' rather than approaches which question traditional assumptions and may lead to significant change.

In national CDP publications and in other community work literature, the issues raised by the community workers' strike and the closure of Batley CDP have typically been referred to as proving the fraudulence of government 'anti-poverty' programmes and the essentially oppressive nature of the local state. For example, in *Gilding the Ghetto* the experience of Batley is quoted to support the view that the state will inevitably clamp down on radical community initiatives that threaten established interests, omitting any detailed discussion of what actually happened or accounts of the work that was attempted.¹⁹ Corkey and Craig have summarised the Batley Project in a way which underwrites this notion :

The Kirklees closure decision was the culmination of a long and well publicised dispute. The authority had taken exception to the activities of a CDP-funded advice centre (ACT) in Batley, and some workers on the Project had come out on strike and then resigned in protest at the decision of the council not to give a further grant to the Centre, which insisted on its right to promote squatting and criticise the council where necessary. A long and confused series of negotiations followed at the end of which, following the Centre's agreement to some conditions, it appeared that the council would give a significant grant to the Centre. However, the Labour Group finally betrayed this understanding, whereupon a Labour councillor resigned in disgust (removing the Labour Group's one-vote majority), and the remaining Project workers, dismayed at the behaviour of the Labour Group, launched an attack on what they described as the politics of Labourism in the town. The decision to wind up the Project and replace it with a number of workers closely tied to separate local authority departments followed shortly afterwards.²⁰

In accounts such as these the state is seen principally as reflecting the economic interests of a dominant class, whilst welfare provision is a method of social control. It is in the nature of this theory that any state support for promoting client participation must be seen as a means of buying off working class protest and as Jerry Smith has pointed out in a perceptive article, if this view is taken crudely, community work itself is placed along with participation as 'no more than a new method of social control'. Smith rejects this view and its own particular view of theorising, which he terms 'nihilistic Marxism'.²¹

The narrow 'theoretical' focus of much of CDP published material has left out of account several critical problems which arise from action, from the structure of the teams, from the capacities and backgrounds of the workers, and from the complex relationships that exist not just between the different parts of the structure or sub-systems, but also between the actors themselves. Without some analysis of these elements a vital ingredient of 'paradox' in the national programme is unexplored. It is important to look at the actual conflicts which occurred during the life of the Batley Project in order to bring out a more realistic and more complete view of what can be learned from the overall CDP experience. The conflict with the local authority contributed to the mythology of Batley CDP, and so too has the general problem of expertise and performance in relation to a number of areas of work in which the Project was involved. Given the ambitious scope of the tasks that developed, it became increasingly difficult in a small team to obtain the knowledge necessary to cope with some of the issues that emerged. Take, for example, the case studies of town centre renewal and of the expansion and decline of the local economy.²² In the first, a knowledge of Town Planning and Geography were required, as well as an appraisal of individual schemes. These were present in the teams to some degree, but when set in the context of a political and administrative system which it is extremely hard to understand and represent, the lack of relevant knowledge had serious adverse consequences. In the second, the wide range of economic and econometric skills required was not available, and an economic consultant was employed. A great deal of faith was placed in the ability of professional economic historians to prove that, historically, the local economy was vulnerable. Ironically, the historical evidence pointed to a great deal of diversity there.²³

The Project saw itself as part of a national programme and some of its workers regarded their participation in this as extremely important. However, the extent to which Project members were prepared to carry through important tasks varied. Moreover, not one of those who was appointed in the early stages survived to the end. Whilst it is simplistic to see staying power as a virtue in itself (such as in Cumbria CDP, where all the initial major action and research staff appointments stayed until the end) in Batley, changes in the emphasis in Project work corresponded to changes in staffing. Continuity and consistency, both of personnel and approach, are vitally important ingredients in successful community work.

In most reports on CDPs a serious analysis of the local authority's response and the effects of local government reorganisation has been left out of the final reckoning, and this lack of a local authority dimension is a serious omission. For example, there has been little analysis of the machinery set up by local authority sponsors to assess and disseminate Project findings and recommendations, or to calculate how far CDP findings led to shifts in policy in the local authorities, and, with the exception of Oldham CDP, the perspectives of local authority officers and elected members have been largely ignored.²⁴ In Batley, the Project was only marginally able to influence the local authority, before and after local government reorganisation, and there can be no question

that the extent of the conflict generated with the local authority was magnified after reorganisation in 1974. Although Project workers had previously complained of little councillor involvement, reorganisation produced in fact a committee structure where local elected members were in more frequent contact with the team. Reorganisation generated considerable hostility to the Project from councillors outside Batley who had little contact with, or knowledge of, either Batley or its Community Development Project before.²⁵

The experience of Batley CDP also points to the need to evaluate more critically the relationship between local government and community groups. Dearlove's recent study of local government reorganisation has indicated that the most fruitful lines of inquiry are those that provide a 'political perspective' on reorganisation.²⁶ Evidence from Batley reinforces this view, but also suggests that since a variety of perspectives are involved there may be few cut-and-dried answers. In Batley, local government reorganisation made worse an already tense relationship between the Project and its local authority sponsor, but there were a number of opportunities for the Project and the local authority to achieve a more satisfactory working arrangement. Political perspectives are vitally important tools of analysis, but it would be wide of the mark to interpret the breakdown in the Project's relationship with local government as arising from a form of subtle ideological control or manipulation. John Benington has written that :

*reorganisation represents an important adjustment in the state apparatus at the local level, adjustments which are a response to important developments within the British economy.*²⁷

Unfortunately, this theme was taken too literally by Batley CDP so that almost every local political decision was interpreted in the same vein. We agree that reorganisation can only be properly understood in a broader context, that pays attention to the political economy of the state. However, for community work, a proper understanding might be achieved more quickly if some of the theories are examined against actual evidence on how local government works.

Later in this book Ray Lees refers to the potential of structural analysis as an action-research strategy, and reference has been made elsewhere to Batley CDP's analysis of structural elements in the local economy.²⁸ The authors of this book believe in the importance of structural factors and contend that there was never any doubt about the opportunities for organising around such issues in CDPs. However, we discount to some degree the inference that a transition from 'pathological' to 'structural' took place and maintain that varied explanations of social deprivation co-existed for long periods within the framework of the national programme and, moreover, existed long before it.

Substantial criticisms of the deleterious effects of a combination of structural economic analysis and 'closed' theories of the state on the understanding, practice and potential of community development can be made. First, by seeing the state as monolithic and dominated by the interests of a capitalist class there is no realisation of the complexity and contradictions in the scope of state action that do allow the genuine promotion of reform and welfare. There is also a dangerous contempt for the values of representative democracy. Second, by concentrating only on economic factors, there is a failure to discuss work such as that of playgroups, adventure playgrounds, tenants' associations, neighbourhood visiting schemes and the skills and resources that are needed for these kind of activities, including efforts to find radical 'alternatives' such

as co-operative industries, food co-operatives, free schools and communal living. Such work does not involve the radical redistribution of wealth and power, but it is important and is in a libertarian political tradition that we believe can help people to improve the everyday quality of their lives. Third, a closed and predetermined theoretical position can lead to action far removed from the perceptions and interests of the people for whom one is nominally working. Its apotheosis is an elect group speaking for the people, knowing what they want intuitively without having to meet any other than those who agree with the group, subscribing to a belief about 'the system' - that it is monolithic and incapable of being changed by anything other than outside intervention - which leaves them free to act only by developing their rhetoric and political critique, released from the manifold conflicts and ambiguities which most forms of action can generate, and from any obligation to test the flexibility of that system. Such a characterisation would be grossly misleading if one did not find assumptions not far removed from those we mentioned in some Projects.

In a recent article on community work a former Batley CDP research worker has stated :

CDP fulfilled a prophetic function in plugging community work's theoretical and ideological cavities with 'a structural perspective' at least for a time. But after the ending of CDP, many community workers have found it difficult to operationalise or apply the theory to their own practice, partly because the material produced by the CDPs has tended to be longer on analysis than on application.²⁹

Batley CDP did find it difficult to translate ideas into practice, but the examples of work with tenants' associations, advice centres, pre-school playgroups, adventure playgrounds and with single parents or groups representing ethnic minorities illustrate significant improvements are possible in a local area although they are never permanent.

The rest of this study is devoted to describing and analysing the experience of Batley CDP. We hope that it will reveal more clearly those issues and implications that have a wider significance for future projects, policy-making, the theory and practice of community development and government-sponsored initiatives. In the concluding section of this book we return to the theme of 'significance' and look again at the questions we have raised in relation to the empirical evidence and differing perceptions of Batley CDP.

NOTES

- 1 Home Office Press Release, 16 July 1969.
- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 Home Office, *CDPs Objectives and Strategy*, September 1970.

- 4 Home Office, 'CDP : An Official View', in R. Lees and G. Smith (eds.), *Action-Research in Community Development*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 3-5.
- 5 Home Office, 'CDP : An Official View', *op. cit.*, p. 4.
- 6 Kirklees Metropolitan District Council, Report of Chief Executive Officer to Policy and Resources Committee, 26 November 1975.
- 7 West Riding County Council, Minutes of Policy and Finance Sub-Committee, 8 December 1970.
- 8 The sub-committee comprised two members each of the Education and Health Committees, and two members from the Steering Committee for Social Services.
- 9 West Riding County Council to Batley Municipal Borough, Correspondence, 5 February 1971.
- 10 West Riding County Council, Policy and Finance Sub-Committee, 8 December 1970.
- 11 *ibid.*
- 12 Reasons for locating the Project sub-committee within the Education Committee structure of the County Council were influenced by the presence of Sir Alec Clegg, Chief Education Officer and a national figure in education, and the late Alderman Mrs L. I. Fitzpatrick, a Batley councillor and Chairman of Education.
- 13 Minutes of Batley CDP sub-committee, 24 October 1973.
- 14 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister*, October 1973.
- 15 Batley CDP, Report of Project Director on the Urban Priority Area Project, 2 September 1974.
- 16 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister*, October 1973.
- 17 See E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, Merlin Press, 1978, for a defence of a humanist Marxist tradition, empirical and self-critical in method, and open to the scrutiny of the historian.
- 18 See John Edgington, 'The Batley Battle', *New Society*, 5 September 1974.
- 19 CDP, *Gilding the Ghetto : The State and the Poverty Experiments*, 1977, p. 4.
- 20 D. Corkey and G. Craig, 'CDP : Community Work or Class Politics?' in P. Curno (ed.), *Political Issues and Community Work*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, pp. 55-56.
- 21 J. Smith, 'Hard Lines and Soft Options', in P. Curno (ed.), *op. cit.*
- 22 K. Carter, P. Edwards, J. Friend, Institute of Operational Research, *Community Influence in Town Centre Renewal*, Tavistock Institute, September 1973.
Batley CDP and Nigel Moor, *Batley at Work - the Rise and Fall of a Textile Town*, December 1974.

- 23 F. Finnegan and E. Sigsworth, *Poverty and Social Policy : An Historical Study of Batley*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 19, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1978.
- 24 L. Corina, *Oldham CDP. An Assessment of its Impact and Influence on the Local Authority*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 9, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1977.
- 25 See III, 3, *Political Processes : Batley CDP and the Local Authority*, and IV, *Assessments*.
- 26 J. Dearlove, *The Reorganisation of British Local Government : Old Orthodoxies and a Political Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- 27 J. Benington, *Local Government Becomes Big Business*, CDP Occasional Paper, No. 11, 1975, p. 3.
- 28 See IV, 5, *Action-Research Strategies in Batley CDP*, Ray Lees and II, 2, *The Local Economy and Planning*.
- 29 Paul Waddington, 'Looking Ahead - Community Work in the 1980s', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1979, p. 226.

II THE WORK OF BATLEY C D P

INTRODUCTION

Here the major themes in the work of Batley CDP are presented in chapters on 'The Local Economy and Planning', 'Housing', 'Asians in Batley', 'Information, Advice and Advocacy', and 'Social Education'. These are preceded by 'A Community Profile of Batley' which draws together a variety of data on the town and its occupants which influenced the early phases of Project work. Obviously, the themes presented do not follow a chronological sequence except within the individual chapters, but details of the changes in emphasis over time are summarised in Appendix Two.¹ Other Appendices provide information on staffing and other relevant matters.

As Project plans unfolded work on welfare benefits followed the construction of the Community Profile, and this was in turn followed by work on housing and social education and contacts with minority groups. Later a greater share of the Project's resources was devoted to work on employment, industry and planning, and housing, and community work was accorded a lower priority. This is well illustrated in the case of social education which lost ground to employment and other structural issues in the Project programme devised at the end of 1973 in which seven action-research themes were designated.² However, from September 1974 onwards a strong element of neighbourhood community work was reintroduced in the Urban Priority Area Project and this is referred to in the chapters on Housing and Asians.

In preparing these chapters on the work of the Project we have tried to provide an accurate reconstruction of the major elements in the Project's programme. With every theme there were stages that had to be gone through, from thought to certain forms of action, and these are examined in the context of the changing priorities in the team's work, in the context of the team's changing composition, and in relation to the outcomes that were achieved. In some cases it has been easier to evaluate the successes and failures of Project work after the event, but in a number of cases the judgments that we have made correspond to criticisms that were made at the time. There can be little doubt that the term 'community development' was used in a rather distinctive way in the National Community Development Project, and that it differed between Projects. This reinforces the need to re-examine its major components within each project and to appreciate the balance between the main types of work undertaken.

Our chief criticism of the manner in which the Batley Project undertook its work concerns the frequency with which it retreated from the later stages of community work when there was a clear potential to proceed. This was not uncommon in CDPs and in Batley, as the example of social education illustrates, it involved a decision to abandon the concern with curricula and resources because this was said to involve little more than 'tinkering with the system'. Had the main criteria of action been to maximise educational enrichment then priorities may have been rather different.

One straightforward formulation of the major elements of community problem solving, the first Gulbenkian Report *Community Work and Social Change*, sets out the following stages :

1. *Exploration and study of the situation and preliminary definition of a problem (or problems).*
2. *Creating structures and organisational arrangements to promote relationships and communication and developing formal machinery for study and action on problems.*

1 A COMMUNITY PROFILE OF BATLEY

As pointed out in part I, Batley fitted into the Home Office scheme established for the second wave of Community Development Projects for three main reasons. First, the Home Office was eager to balance its earlier studies of inner-city areas with in-depth studies of smaller declining communities on the fringe of urban conurbations. Second, the West Riding County Council accepted the Home Office's interest in locating a project in the County, and had chosen the Batley area as being the most suitable for an experiment of this kind. Third, it was felt feasible to narrow down an area of the town of Batley to match the Home Office's preference for studies of communities of approximately 10,000 inhabitants. When the panel of West Riding County Council officers conducted its survey of suitable areas within which to establish a community development project, it examined a number of social indicators of poverty or social deprivation. Batley was shown as a problem area compared with surrounding areas of the West Riding due to :

- (i) a high level of unemployment;
- (ii) a very high number of large families;
- (iii) a high proportion of semi-skilled workers (Social Classes IV and V);
- (iv) a high proportion of overcrowded dwellings;
- (v) a high percentage of children obtaining free school meals;
- (vi) a high percentage of children involved in legal proceedings; and
- (vii) a high referral rate to social services.

In addition, the town possessed a 10 per cent Asian community, the highest birth rate in the West Riding and one of the highest death rates in the country. More than other towns in the region, it had suffered an overall loss of jobs, and was amongst the three poorest non-county boroughs in terms of rateable value per head, with an average wage of just over £18 per week. Such indicators of social deprivation do not, however, take account of tradition. Batley has its own traditions and a distinctive character, moulded by a complex interaction of historical forces which shaped its social and political structure.¹

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND²

From 1851 to 1971 the population of Batley increased from 9,308 to 41,990, 'peaking' temporarily in 1911 at 36,395 followed by two decades of decline, so that in 1931 total population stood at 34,573.³ Though boundary changes increased the total population, a relative decline took place between 1931 and 1961 arrested by a 'modest resumption of total population growth' to the 1971 figure of 41,990.⁴ In these broad demographic parameters, four factors stand out; an overall loss due to migration, a consistently high death rate, high infant mortality and high birth rate.

By comparing the actual population in Batley at decennial census years to a hypothetical one (ie, a population which would have existed in the absence of migration) it has been calculated that had no migration occurred, at the 1971 census, the population of Batley would have stood at 50,630 and not 41,990. In work commissioned by Batley CDP, Finnegan and Sigsworth argue that, to understand the recent history of Batley, it is necessary to

emphasise that this has been 'a steady loss and one over a period embracing all but the very oldest inhabitants of the town'.⁵ Set against this net loss due to migration is the consistently high death rate per 1,000 live births showing that since the 1890s the average death rate per 1,000 for Batley has always exceeded the average for England and Wales. Indeed, any marked improvements halted after the 1920s and in the years of slump, so that 'perceptible progress towards the achievement of a death rate consistently lower than the average for the 1930s was arrived at only during the 1960s'.⁶ This high death rate, compounded by the existence of an ageing population and the removal of the younger, healthier and fertile groups, attracted the interest of research workers and policy-makers alike in the 1960s and 1970s.

The connection between overall death rate per 1,000 live births, birth rate and infant mortality is a complicated one. In Batley, high infant mortality contributed most significantly to the high death rate, especially up to the 1920s, though from the 1930s to the 1960s Batley recorded a lower infant mortality rate than the national average. The position was reversed in the 1960s when the Batley figure increased to 22.4 deaths per 1,000 compared to the national average of 20.6.⁷ Despite usually registering a lower than average death rate for infants, Batley has suffered periodic crises in death rate, paralleled by fluctuations in the birth rate. The interplay between birth rate and rising or falling fertility is complex: fertility patterns have closely resembled national trends, with crude birth rates falling by over half between the 1890s and 1930s. However, the birth rate in Batley accelerated after the Second World War, and it outstripped the national average, especially in the decade 1961-71 when its birth rate reached 20.48 per 1,000 population, compared to a national average of 18.10.

These demographic factors assume greater shape and meaning if set against analysis of housing stock, and the occupational and social structure of the town. Most houses built in Batley in the nineteenth century, which experienced the period of fastest housing growth between 1831 and 1881, were of the one-up and one-down or the single back types. They accounted for the majority of working class housing, although cottage-type properties and artisans dwellings of higher quality were also built. It is unnecessary to record in detail the disadvantages of occupancy; briefly summarised, they were bad ventilation, lack of sunshine, severe overcrowding due to smallness, and inadequate sanitary arrangements. In response to rapid industrialisation, these dwellings were built simply to house a work force and no more. Enlightened attitudes were rare and few attempts made to raise standards by either private or public initiative. Rents were low, mirroring a limited ability to pay in a town characterised by low wages. The most severe instances of overcrowding are found in the nineteenth century but they are by no means confined to that century. In 1931 the Medical Officer reported that 177 families were statutorily overcrowded, and the Census of the same year recorded 14 per cent of the population as living in overcrowded conditions.⁸ The problem persisted well into the 1950s, and re-emerged in the 1960s.

From the 1930s the local authority in Batley began to tackle some of the acute housing problems. Small, overcrowded and unfit dwellings, lacking one or more of the three basic amenities, were eliminated in a wholesale slum clearance programme combined with expansion of public sector housing to soak up displaced families. Programmes started in the 1930s were abruptly cut by the Second World War, which led to further deterioration of unfit property. Too little clearance and replacement in the immediate post-war era further hampered development, made more urgent as the first effects of the post-war bulge were felt. In 1954, no less than 4,796

houses, or 34 per cent of the total housing stock, were declared unfit. In 1956, it was revealed that Batley had the highest proportion of back-to-backs in the country - 48 per cent of total stock - the highest rate of overcrowding in any West Riding town, and a slum clearance programme as severe as any in Great Britain.⁹

After these alarming results were publicised, the housing issue became a central focus for debate in local political life. New slum clearance schemes were announced - the first in 1955, aiming to clear 500 houses in five years. Efforts were made to build 100-120 council houses and 50-80 private houses per annum.¹⁰ Further development in the political debate about housing in the sixties concerned the issues of high rise as against low rise construction, rent policy, and the balance between the public and private sectors. By the end of the decade it appeared that the resolution of Batley's housing problem was near at hand, and, far from a shortage, a surplus of housing was envisaged. These assumptions, set against a background of cuts in building programmes, and inadequate replacement of demolished homes, were challenged in the 1970s when 'the realities of the growing housing crisis began to emerge'.¹¹

Finnegan and Sigsworth argue that 'the creation of poor housing is rooted in the material circumstances of the occupants', an observation which strengthens the need to examine income and housing together, linked to employment and poverty.¹²

Orthodox interpretations of Batley's growth and decline have stressed the town's dependence upon shoddy and mungo, and the consequent dislocations wrought by a reduction in their importance as a major source of employment for males and females. In contrast to this explanation, Finnegan and Sigsworth have pointed to an early diversification of the local economy and to an increasing reliance on work outside the town. For them, textiles remain the major source of employment in the town, but after 1841 - when the proportion of the local labour force employed in textiles was 66.9 per cent - its importance declined so that 'never at any time after that point was more than half the labour force employed in this activity'.¹³ Using evidence from Census records they maintain that, as early as 1931, '41 per cent of Batley's residents worked elsewhere ... compared with the figure of 48 per cent revealed by the 1966 population census'.¹⁴ If the sheer numbers employed in textiles are fewer than formerly assumed, the significance of the textile sector in explaining Batley's decline must also be reduced.

Though this evidence modifies the picture provided by analysis from the Batley Project team, in the decade prior to the establishment of a community development project Batley's economic performance was subject to a number of external pressures. Following a substantial growth in local employment from 1961 to 1966, there was an overall loss of jobs over the next five years, amounting to 13 per cent and 18 per cent in the manufacturing sector. The only visible gains were in the service sector, which increased its share of total employment in 1966-1971 from 15.5 per cent to 23 per cent. Textiles meanwhile accounted for 31 per cent. A tradition of female employment is firmly established in Batley. However, although from 1968 to 1971 textiles' traditional contribution to female employment diminished, when almost 500 female jobs were lost. Some of this displaced labour found work in the food and services industry. In 1971, 46 per cent of all jobs in the town were occupied by women - a much higher rate of activity than in the surrounding area. For a town where wage rates were low, the importance of female earning to total household income was crucial and the consequences of female unemployment extremely serious.¹⁵

Historically, Batley has been affected less by mass unemployment than low pay. Unemployment figures for the 1930s show that in 1936 6.4 per cent of the total occupied population were out of work, with a male unemployment rate of 9.3 per cent. In 1938, these percentages had risen to 8.9 and 10.8 per cent respectively, well below the national averages of 14.3 per cent and 13.3 per cent in 1936 and 1938. These figures indicate that Batley may have suffered less from unemployment than other regions during the years of depression. By June 1971, however, this position was changing and unemployment rates for males, females and the total combined workforce were above the averages for Kirklees, West Yorkshire and Great Britain. Unemployment exceeded vacancies and, of those who were unemployed in January 1972, 25 per cent had been unemployed for longer than twelve months.

Batley is a town with its own traditions which stem from the historical experience outlined above and which are reflected in the social and political life of the town. The low-key political debate which suprised CDP workers is itself a feature of community traditions in the town. If Finnegan and Sigsworth's work has revealed anything, it is that our socio-historical understanding of communities such as Batley is often limited. They make connections between indicators of poverty - such as low wages, poor housing, high death rate and limited social mobility - and the basis of the economic system, but quite rightly stress that more detailed work is needed before these can be linked to traditional deference. In contrast, other explanations such as those provided by CDP emphasise how the social relations of patronage and paternalism in Batley are reinforced by the socio-geographical and physical structure of the town and culminate in a muted political consciousness, which only pushes forward with any force when the stability and order characterising the local community has temporarily broken down. Although this argument is reasonable enough, it is often propounded with little understanding of how stability is attained in the community, or of the control agencies which cumulatively inhibit an articulated response against cultural and institutional orthodoxy. Normally trade unions have been seen as providing a rallying point for social and political change. In Batley, CDP described them as 'weakly developed' and with 'little effect upon local civic politics', and no explanation was given of the bureaucratization and 'accommodative' outlook of many traditional unions locally.¹⁶

In the absence of a convenient analysis of the social and political structure of Batley, the Project team confined itself to the visible signs of stability. Batley appeared to be a close-knit community with a highly personalised civic life. Voluntary organisations existed alongside a newly-formed Civic Society and one or two fragile tenants' groups, but for the most part there was no tradition of community action and involvement. The level of political debate was limited and, as a rule, grievances were siphoned through elected representatives and formal political parties. Examples of public discussion were few, save those on housing or the local economy in the late 50s and early 60s. Reasonably strong informal social systems existed in some neighbourhoods, where working men's clubs, pubs, credit agencies and other 'informal' means of association perpetuated social traditions. The direct links between these networks and the formal political system were obscure. In this context the first Project team began to develop a community profile of the town as a starting point for its first direct interventions.

DETERMINING THE NEEDS OF THE AREA

In the first instance there were two main aims guiding the Project's early work : the preparation of a community profile to facilitate the choice of Project area and the close scrutiny of initiatives taken as the action team

familiarised itself with local issues. Each issue was to be documented and the possible sources of intervention considered with the appropriate methods or resources firmly in mind.

Within guidelines set out by the Home Office¹⁷ and through meetings at the University of York, the Batley team identified four main objectives in its work :

- (i) to work primarily with and help establish community groups from a neighbourhood basis bearing in mind that participation and self help were to be promoted at all times;
- (ii) to test a variety of hypotheses concerned with effecting social change by undertaking various intervention strategies in the fields of housing, education, race relations and unemployment;
- (iii) to explore techniques of service and the structure of social services, and research alternative forms of social planning more responsive to local needs; and
- (iv) to concentrate on advocacy and advice.¹⁸

Accordingly, the team began to draw up its community profile as part of the framework upon which the first six months' work would rest. When compiled, the community profile was based on three distinct sources; four neighbourhood studies, standard demographic, social and economic data, and evidence gleaned from discussions with officials and organisations already concerned with social provision in the area. Of these, the neighbourhood studies were the most important source.

As soon as a worthwhile network of contacts was established, the first Project Director set up an *ad hoc* group of local councillors, clergy and press to advise the team. In February 1972 this group was convened to discuss plans to help select four suitable neighbourhood areas for study. It was decided to work in the Mount Pleasant, Carlinghow, Fieldhead and Soothill areas during March and April. On the advice of the Action Director, Project workers, and a student from the University of York, took one of these areas and collected evidence, through interviews, on a largely impressionistic basis. This approach did not meet the University of York's view that more systematic and comparative data should be collected. In this way the first steps were taken to penetrate formal and informal networks, to research local needs, and to give valuable practical experience to the action team.

Where possible the neighbourhood studies were monitored and cross-checked by the research team, although these interests were subordinated to the primary aim of familiarising the action team with the local context in which they were to operate. Although they were originally assigned to individual areas, it became clear that the action workers did not see themselves as solely attached to these neighbourhoods. During this short investigative period, there were early indications that the team would eventually extend its work across the whole town.

Four policy areas emerged as particularly significant in the informal discussions - unemployment, physical re-development, education and housing. The position of immigrants was referred to and mention was made of the generally low expectations of people in the area. Although respondents tended to concentrate on their own 'specialisms', it was possible to identify areas in which policy studies would be useful. The reorganisation of the personal social services, for example, had resulted in inevitable confusion, which required fuller investigation.

Though the early neighbourhood studies gave direction to the team and confirmed the choice of Batley as a suitable area for a Project of this kind, the limitations of the approach were exposed in later stages of Project work. The general tendency had been to collect impressions through short interviews, on the assumption that this approach would suffice in identifying specific areas worth more considered investigation. However, it proved difficult to devise a suitable method whereby information gathered on the four areas could be compared and data standardised, which would have been particularly beneficial for future team work. Furthermore, an opinion was expressed that any rigorous attempt to impose a systematic format on neighbourhood studies was inferior to a 'play it by ear' approach, and would inhibit the action workers' attempts to penetrate formal and informal networks.

Once the decision had been made to extend work across the whole town, it was quite apparent that a more quantitative approach would have to follow : the greater complexity of problems, the increase in the size of the area to be dealt with, and a vast increase in target population all indicated that measurement of social malaise by impressionistic means was unsuitable. From the end of 1972, therefore, the Project team began to introduce a more quantitative emphasis.

To advance the construction of a more complete community profile of Batley two systematic studies were undertaken; a large scale community survey, and the preparation of a Census Atlas of Kirklees, based upon analysis of the 1971 Census.¹⁹ Although a 10 per cent household survey for the whole of Batley was originally planned to form part of the Welfare Benefits Project, this was abandoned in favour of producing data on a sub-sample of the East and West Wards of Batley, which were generally regarded as the areas with the highest proportion of low income households. Thus in the Autumn of 1972, a sample of 20 per cent of all households was drawn from the 1972 Electoral Register, and a questionnaire was piloted in November 1972, with the intention of completing interviews before the CDP Welfare Benefits Campaign started. For the main sample, the majority of interviews were carried out between January and April 1973, and 850 households were interviewed. The questionnaire covered household composition and characteristics, age, occupational class, family size, income, employment and general aspects of living standards. Since the questionnaire asked several questions on income, a high refusal rate was anticipated. In all, 14.3 per cent of the sample (142 households) refused to be interviewed and 17 per cent (170 households) refused to answer questions on income. The response rates were as follows :

<i>Initial Sample</i>	<i>No. of households</i>	<i>%</i>
House empty or demolished	79	6.8
Non-contact	83	7.2
Effective sample	992	86.0
	<hr/> 1,154 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

<i>Effective Sample</i>	<i>No. of households</i>	<i>%</i>
Completed questionnaires	680)	68.6)
) 850) 85.7
Incomplete questionnaires	170)	17.1)
Refusals	142	14.3
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	992	100.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Once completed, the 850 questionnaires were computed and the results made available to team members, and later published. The results highlighted the East and West Wards of Batley as areas characterised by low earnings and high unemployment, with many households living below 125 per cent of the basic Supplementary Benefit level, which was taken as an arbitrary measure of poverty.²¹ Generally, earnings were lower than the national average (earnings for a man in full-time employment were £31.40 as against £41.90), the number of overtime hours worked were higher than average, the proportion of semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers was higher than the national and regional averages, and the unemployment rate, then 6.5 per cent, was high both in relation to the rest of Batley and nationally. When examining the data produced and its relationship to theories of poverty, the author of an abridged Report on the Batley Survey wrote :

Three inter-linked theories of poverty were mentioned in the Introduction to this paper - cultural deprivation, institutional dysfunctioning and structural poverty. Attempts to remedy the first two sets of symptoms can be of limited value, while the third condition - structural poverty - remains unaltered. Neither the contact of families with Social Services, nor their personal problems were investigated. However, the results suggest that 30 per cent to 40 per cent of families had problems of a purely financial nature which were liable to exacerbate any other difficulties and which relate more to the economic structure of the area than to the functioning of the individual family. The local Social Services department attributed the high number of referrals from Batley to the upheaval of slum clearance, lack of facilities and low wages. Institutional dysfunctioning was an important factor in the area, eg lack of communication channels, distance from agencies, lack of policies for the immigrant community. Much emphasis was placed on this level of causation in the work of Batley CDP, eg many individuals had been helped and tenants' groups, facilities such as an Adventure Playground, an Advice Centre and Playgroups were established. While CDP is part of the movement towards greater participation of local residents in decision-making and involvement in local facilities, it has not had any overall impact on social deprivation and the distribution of resources and opportunities. The national CDP programme was directed primarily at the first two causes. The survey results emphasise the importance of structural poverty as the most important cause of poverty.²²

While it is difficult to challenge the assertion that a large measure of structural poverty could be found in Batley, the orientation towards the structural origins of poverty, inspired by the results of the community survey, prohibited its systematic use as a guide to community work intervention. Further long-term implications arose from the community survey.

As the majority of the research team's time was invested in analysing its results, the workers had little capacity to respond to initiatives taken by the action team. Consequently, action workers complained that the research team's preoccupation with 'experiment' was irrelevant to their needs as community workers.²³

The second attempt at collecting standard data on Batley emerged in a completely different form to the Batley community survey, and concentrated on the new Kirklees authority as a whole. *The Social Atlas of Kirklees* took the form of a set of maps, with a commentary based upon an analysis for the Kirklees area derived from the 1971 Census of Population. Twenty different indicators were selected and mapped for all the seventy-eight old wards in Kirklees in order to reveal the different degrees and forms of disadvantage distributed across the area. The index incorporated six major items: tenure, housing amenities, demographic structure, socio-economic status, household occupancy and immigrant settlement. Two zones of 'disadvantage' stood out: the first covered the Central Wards of Huddersfield, and the other formed a belt from Batley to central Dewsbury. In fact, on the scales of social well-being used, the East Ward of Batley had the second poorest score in the whole Kirklees area, with the West Ward seventeenth from bottom. In general Batley West was worse off than the Kirklees average, whilst other sub-regions in the town (Batley North, Soothill and Birstall) were roughly average.

Three major policy implications emerged from the study. First, the decision to base a CDP in Batley was justifiable; second, data such as that produced in the *Social Atlas* should be recognised by the local authority and reflected in its corporate decision-making; and third, some measure of positive discrimination was needed to help solve the problems documented. With the completion of the community survey and *The Social Atlas of Kirklees*, the construction of a broad community profile of Batley ceased and hereafter work concentrated either on more thematic programmes, or on an attempt to develop community development approaches in a small area of the East Ward of Batley.²⁴

NOTES

- 1 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister*, October 1973, p. 8.
- 2 This section draws heavily on Frances Finnegan and Eric Sigsworth's *Poverty and Social Policy: An Historical Study of Batley*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 19, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1978.
- 3 Although the period of major growth had ended by 1881.
- 4 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 7.
- 5 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 8.
- 6 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 9.

- 7 As compared to the particularly high figures for the first decade of the twentieth century when average infant mortality rose to 172.5 per 1,000 live births, or the death of one in six children under one. *Poverty and Social Policy*, pp. 9-17.
- 8 *Poverty and Social Policy*, pp. 46-47.
- 9 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 49.
- 10 P. L. Edwards, 'The Development of Public Housing Policy in Batley', Batley CDP, January 1975.
- 11 'The Development of Public Housing Policy in Batley', p. 9. According to Edwards the fact that from 1954 to 1972 4,697 houses were demolished and 5,123 built by the council and by private firms should not conceal the poor performance from 1968 to 1972 when 2,000 houses were demolished, but less than 400 were built.
- 12 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 54.
- 13 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 72.
- 14 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 73.
- 15 Batley CDP and Nigel Moor, *Batley at Work : The Rise and Fall of a Textile Town*, Batley CDP, 1975, pp. 20-21.
- 16 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister*, October 1973, p. 8.
- 17 See Part I, Introduction.
- 18 Batley CDP, 'Aims of the Batley Project', 31 January 1972.
- 19 M. McGrath, *Batley East and West : A CDP Survey*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 6, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1976.
R. Barrowclough, *A Social Atlas of Kirklees : Patterns of Social Differentiation in a new Metropolitan District*, Occasional Paper No. 1, Department of Geography and Geology, The Polytechnic, Huddersfield, 1976.
- 20 *Batley East and West*, p. 62.
- 21 The Supplementary Benefit Scale at the time of survey was as follows :
- | | |
|---|--------|
| Married couple | £10.65 |
| Single person | £6.55 |
| Any other person | |
| Not less than 18 | £5.20 |
| " " 18, but not less than 16 | £4.05 |
| " " 16, " " " " 13 | £3.40 |
| " " 13, " " " " 11 | £2.75 |
| " " 11, " " " " 5 | £2.25 |
| " " 5, " " " " " | £1.90 |
- Batley East and West*, p. 6.
- 22 *Batley East and West*, pp. 60-61.

- 23 See J. R. Bradshaw, 'Welfare Rights : An Experimental Approach' in R. Lees and G. Smith, *Action-Research in Community Development*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- 24 See Batley CDP, 'Future Programme and Budget Estimates 1974-75', 'Project Planning Document 1975-76' (both presented to the Project sub-committee), the 'The Priority Area Project', a written report from the Project Director to the CDP sub-committee, 26 September 1974.

In their study of community action and the American Poverty Programmes, Perlman and Gurin remarked that an emphasis on self-help activities, and participation could not compensate for 'indispensable provisions' - jobs, income and housing.¹ This observation has much in common with the experience of Batley CDP. Once it was decided that these themes of self-help and participation were peripheral to any ultimate solution of poverty, the emphasis switched to an overall programme favouring examination of the social and political system, and general structural problems affecting the town. In respect of the first, the following questions were posed in the Project's Report to the Minister in October 1973 :

*Is the current situation to do with the fact that the situation in Batley is merely a replication of national problems concerning the structure of government and its representativeness? Is it that local authority powers are limited, and that there are weaknesses in local government organisation concerned particularly with its capacity to make policy and respond effectively to needs?*²

As for structural problems, the same Report asked :

*Do the causes of the current situation lie outside the local government system altogether in the social, economic and political structure of society, which rewards certain classes, groups, and regions, and penalises others - a situation which makes Batley Council and Batley CDP merely symbolic scapegoats for a whole series of problems which are totally outside of their control?*³

At this stage of Project development it was impossible for the team to find adequate answers to such questions. Over the next two years considerable energy and Project resources were expended in an attempt to find some of the answers. In this period employment and planning issues were elevated to a central position in the overall programme, but in Batley, as elsewhere, difficulties of application were experienced.

The authors of the Final Report on Cumbria CDP have outlined some of the common dilemmas in developing an action-research strategy for employment in their Project area. They write :

*much self-education had to be accomplished even to reach a point where a strategy could be sketched out and the right kind of expertise brought in. As a consequence the balance between action and research was weighted heavily in favour of the latter ... such work done was done with the Project needs in mind, rather than as a response to particular requests from organised sections of the community, or as part of a carefully laid influence strategy which had clearly defined audiences.*⁴

In Batley it was also true that 'research' tended to dominate and few pieces of work were undertaken in response to community needs. Where the Batley and Cumbria Projects differ is in the audience defined; in Batley it was mainly labour organisations. The employment strategy was planned with the following intention :

creating a local 'popular front' of working class members of trade unions and 'left' political parties together with other workers, members of residents' organisations and

*claimants unions, etc. The aim is to repoliticise the neighbourhood around 'structural' rather than purely 'local' issues and to facilitate the development of new forms of involvement and leadership which straddle the conceptual gaps between home and workplace and between worker and non-worker.*⁵

This emphasis on 'repoliticisation' derives mainly from work on employment begun in 1974. Before this the Project team initiated studies of local plans for re-development of the town centre, identified during the Project's preparatory phase as of considerable importance to the local community. The Project's report on its first six months' work maintained that the decline of the physical environment in Batley helped reinforce the town's image as a deprived area.⁶ Complex issues were involved, such as the balance between County and Borough Council decision-making, the role of private developers in local planning, and their reluctance to commit themselves to a plan for Batley. Preceding the development of work on employment, a major study of planning issues was agreed by the West Riding County Council and Batley Municipal Borough Planning Committees and the CDP sub-committee. A Steering Panel of delegates from the West Riding County Planning Department, the Batley Council, Batley CDP, the University of York and the Home Office was formed to discuss proposals for the study.

STRATEGIC PLANNING : THE TOWN CENTRE ISSUE IN BATLEY CDP

The decision to begin a study of planning was influenced by two factors; the presence of a qualified planner in the team and a growing concern with studies of planning in other CDPs, and the importance of a debate on town centre renewal in Batley. To assist evaluation of the key role of planning issues in Batley, it is important to sketch in some of the background to the major local issues.

The History of the Plan for Town Centre Renewal in Batley

In 1963, after a firm of architectural and planning consultants submitted ideas to Batley Municipal Borough Council for a large scale re-development of the town centre, agreement was reached between the local authority and the West Riding County Council over town centre re-development. In the mid 1960s, local plans were prepared and a Central Development Area (CDA) was delineated. At the end of 1969 an alternative proposal emerged, when a firm of private developers, Yeltab Ltd., announced plans to build a large sub-regional shopping centre at Carlinghow in the north west of Batley, on a site with good access to the M1 and M62 motorways and the major road network to Leeds and Huddersfield. This plan to construct a shopping centre of 200,000 square feet, in a series of linked single storey buildings together with parking for 7,000 vehicles, had a special appeal for the Batley Borough Council, keen to increase rateable value and new employment opportunities, and to prevent the drain of shoppers to other areas. In contrast, the West Riding County Council advised against the application because provisional agreement had been secured to develop the Town Centre. Nevertheless, Batley councillors argued that the Carlinghow plan would have negligible impact on the central development scheme. As discussion on the two plans grew, the *Batley News* polled its readers and asked 'Do you want a shopping plaza at Carlinghow?' The vote was overwhelmingly in favour.

During the summer of 1969 the local press reported the attitudes of other interested parties and later the West Riding County Council decided to oppose formally the Carlinghow plan, which was rejected at a Public Inquiry held in Batley Town Hall on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day 1969-70. At

the Inquiry the views of the local community were mainly represented in the reports on opinion polls carried out to evaluate the need for better parking near to shopping facilities than was provided in the Town Centre. In contrast the Chamber of Trade articulated the views of the local business community, strongly against the Carlinghow plan. In this, as in other Public Inquiries, a strong feeling was expressed that over another major planning proposal the opinions of the Batley community were under-represented. In the period after the Inquiry this view was largely endorsed, as formal planning discussions between local authorities and the County Council were held on the non-shopping functions of neighbouring town centres, and on the possibility that a new town centre development in Batley would revitalise town life and generate more employment and income.

In the Spring of 1970, the first plan (Mark I) to re-develop Batley's town centre around Market Street and Commercial Street was put out to tender. Only one firm, Enterprises Limited, a development consortium formed by the Chamber of Trade, responded. However, the scheme they submitted required more extensive and elaborate development than was practically possible. Several elements in the approved plan discouraged developers : the late rejection of the Carlinghow plan, shortage of capital, and the small scale of the scheme, well below the 100,000 square feet units normally favoured by the West Riding County Council. Despite these constraints there was a strong optimism that private commercial capital would be channelled into Batley as part of the then discernible trend towards renewal of existing town centres. Accordingly, in April 1971, the Planning and Re-development Committee of the Batley Council called in plans for the Mark II plan to develop a much larger area, and greater emphasis was placed on securing the participation of a private developer. From a short list of three, Town and City Properties were chosen. Their principal concern was to interest a large retailer and to validate the feasibility of the scheme, while for its part the local planning authority had to ensure that land was available and, with the County, provide public services and roads. County Council commitment to this scheme remained strong and in January 1973 draft plans, a revised town centre map, and a report, were submitted to the Planning and Highways Committee of the County Council. The proposed development encompassed 20 acres of land, mostly in the hands of Batley Council, 300,000 square feet of shopping, and 2,500 car parking spaces. Formal processes of consultation proceeded : the County Council referred the plan to other neighbouring authorities for comment. In November 1973 the Kirklees Metropolitan District Council approved the plan in principle but forwarded it to the new West Yorkshire County Council because of its strategic implications. It was roughly at this point, when Batley was no longer in control of its own re-development plan, that the Project team showed a definite interest in it.

Batley CDP and the IOR Study

In February 1973, Batley CDP put forward a proposal for a study of community influence on the processes of central area renewal to the Institute of Operational Research (IOR). The general aim was to investigate the scope for 'responding effectively to the needs and aspirations of an urban community through the co-ordinated exercise of different forms of public influence over the processes of central area change and renewal'.⁸ It was hoped that the results of the study would be germane to CDP inquiries in a number of related spheres, including the study of wider planning processes, and the co-ordination of public authorities and amplification of channels for local representation after local government re-organisation.

Four issues were selected for in-depth analysis : the handling of a commercial proposal for an out-of-town shopping centre (Carlinghow Plaza);

the possible re-location of a retail market; the commitment to a large scale shopping centre in a partnership between the local authority and a property company; and the treatment of various proposals for new or expanded social facilities in or near the town centre. Based on these case studies, the IOR Report of *Community Influence in Town Centre Renewal* characterised the process of central area renewal in Batley by a number of features : the involvement of several agencies, public and private, the variety of formal and informal settings for decision-making, the interdependence of issues, and the lack of clear boundaries to delineate the responsibilities of officers and elected members, and general lessons for community involvement. These centred on the effectiveness of local representation by elected members which, it was argued, was restricted by :

- (i) the introduction of regional perspectives into the decision-process, rendering local perspectives insufficient for the range of centrally determined decisions;
- (ii) the tendency of local representatives to refer judgment on planning considerations and commercial trends upwards to the County Council.
- (iii) consensus amongst political groups over the need to secure an injection of private investment which, coupled with (ii), led to little sustained challenge against measures to sacrifice local interests;
- (iv) the noticeable absence of a genuine public dimension to the debate over the revised town centre plan;
- (v) the sheer complexity of the issues at local and regional levels, inhibiting any development of clear procedural rules for handling problems, resulting again in the assertion of informal decision-making by a select group of officers and chairmen.⁹

Local interests were allowed little chance to participate in the acknowledged channels of representation and less privileged sections of the community were especially impotent. To redress the trends which cramped effective challenge to official judgments, in Batley it was advocated that new ways of relating the structure of the decision process to deliberations on complex planning issues should be devised. The report recommended that :

- (i) a continuing and developing arrangement should be set up to explore the community implications of complex planning issues, with, in the first instance, an emphasis on town centre re-development;
- (ii) the transition to a new local government structure be treated as a period of experiment;
- (iii) central to this experimental period, a 'local issues analyst' should be appointed, and relate to a 'local representative forum';
- (iv) Batley CDP provide the initial resources and direction in the experimental process.¹⁰

The conclusion to the report noted that :

experimentation could bring important benefits to Batley in terms of a progressive enrichment of local community influence over decisions with complex and far-reaching implications; could

*provide valuable experience for Kirklees and West Yorkshire in developing guidelines which could be applied elsewhere for meeting pressures for local democratic control in other parts of their areas, and could yield lessons which would be of direct significance for community development in disadvantaged urban areas throughout the country.*¹¹

In February 1974, the recommendations of the IOR Report were referred to Kirklees Metropolitan District Council for consideration. Little immediate action was taken, due to the new political and administrative context which reorganisation had brought into existence, when the former six County Boroughs and the old County Council were replaced by five new metropolitan districts. The new County kept strategic planning powers but exercised limited executive and financial powers. Under these new arrangements the plans for redevelopment of the Batley Town Centre were severely disrupted.

The Town Centre Plan Under Kirklees

When the Mark II Town Centre plan was accepted by Kirklees it was noted that the scheme would absorb all of the new authority's capacity for shopping expansion up to 1981. In consequence, in March 1974, a joint working party of officers from Kirklees and the West Yorkshire County Council formed to consider the strategic and local planning implications of the scheme. After reorganisation took effect, the town centre plan virtually disappeared, except for discussion in relevant committees. In September 1974, the minutes of the County Strategic Planning Sub-Committee recorded that :

progress so far indicated that the retail shopping development proposed was of such a large scale that it was inappropriate in the context of the County's likely interim shopping policies.

The shopping policy which the minutes referred to aimed to provide a consistent and coherent framework for the County, and to resolve competition between town centres and out of town locations, but made no mention of the earlier commitment to find at the centre of the conurbation one new development of reasonable size in Batley.¹² A commitment to Batley had been inherited, but the position was confused. In February 1975, however, Kirklees endorsed the County Interim Shopping Policy and agreed to the selection of Town and City Properties to work with the new authority to prepare a plan for Batley which, dependent on the appropriate planning permission and terms of partnership, would result in a firm commitment to proceed.

Subsequent changes in County Shopping Policy resulted in a further slimming down by one half of the area for development first agreed by the West Riding County Council, and to the withdrawal of Town and City Properties. The effect, therefore, was to abandon the original Mark II scheme. The reasons behind this are themselves connected to the implications for planning of local government reorganisation.

After 1974, major proposals were subject to a new method of examination in which on the new County Council the larger urban areas bargained for the interests of their own constituent areas. At their simplest, changes in political structure and representation adversely influenced Batley's interests. Batley had lost its local council and found itself part of a much larger authority - Kirklees - an area of greater diversity embracing several self-contained communities each competing for scarce resources. In this new situation in which changes at local and county level had caused dislocations, the Town Centre redevelopment plan was stalled. At the county level time was needed to establish a consistent strategic perspective,

and at the metropolitan level the new authority had to adjust to and regulate new pressures, and establish priorities. The time-lag involved in each is indicated by the length of time which elapsed before work actually started on the Town Centre Redevelopment plan in 1978.

The Town Centre Issue and Community Development

The interim period in which new methods of working were being established at two separate levels was one of great frustration for Batley CDP, anxious to press for recognition of Batley's interests. The derelict state of the town centre had long been identified as an important local issue, both for residents and their elected representatives, but genuine community debate had been muted. The IOR Report, presented to Kirklees in February 1974, made a number of recommendations to secure greater public participation in planning decisions, but for the local authority and the Project team potential gains were lost. The CDP team sidestepped the opportunity to act as an intermediary between the local planning authorities and the public in fostering this participation, and consequently the positive potential in 'experimentation' in the Report's recommendations was never realised. Rather than assuming an intermediary role, the Project team dovetailed its subsequent analysis of planning issues into a wider concern with 'politicising' issues for community development, and towards providing empirical material against which a growing interpretation of the structural factors behind Batley's economic condition could be evaluated. In an internal memorandum written in the Summer of 1975, one of the Project workers wrote that a pamphlet should be produced with the aim of creating 'a fuss, a political embarrassment, a local debate and a rapid decision'.¹³ This document was never written; analysis of the town centre issue was next presented in a full-scale study entitled *Batley on the Shelf : A Case Study of the Town Centre Re-development Plan 1972-1975*.¹⁴

Batley on the Shelf is, in a number of respects, very similar to other studies of planning issues and the role of local government that were emerging from CDP and other sources at the time, such as Cynthia Cockburn's study of Lambeth.¹⁵ Like Cockburn, the authors of *Batley on the Shelf* imply that decision-making and planning policy ultimately reflect the needs of the dominant economic class and the state, and that municipal activity is 'little more than a stage show'.¹⁶ The decline of Batley Town Centre is explained as part of the deep-seated structural problems affecting the whole area. The authors comment :

*The deterioration of the town centre was a symptom of this process of decline, not its cause. Low wages and spending power, environmental decay and uncertainty about the future all contributed to the town centre's demise. Commercial capital became progressively less enthusiastic about investment there. It was a vicious circle of diminishing possibilities. The local authority contributed to this by their policies for the town centre and through planning blight.*¹⁷

The conclusion is reached that everybody in Batley has lost out, and only professional planners and private capital have gained. Central government has been unable and unwilling to intervene, through its regional and industrial policy, as private investment makes a quiet profit and then retreats. It is somewhat ambiguous that, after taking account of the poor record of the central and the local state, the authors advocate that the only effective remedy is through greater concentration of state efforts. They write :

Kirklees Metropolitan District



*This case study of Batley's town centre has exposed the incapacity of the statutory planning system to re-direct market forces in any significantly positive way. Planning powers in relation to commercial development are essentially negative in that they rely on development controls. Planning can encourage private development but it cannot make it happen. State intervention at both central and local levels will need to be a great deal more effective than it has been in the past if the deeply established processes of decline in older industrial communities like Batley are to be arrested.*¹⁸

This final statement on the town centre issue is inextricably lined with the Project's stance on employment issues, in which the structural weaknesses of the local economy were emphasised and the underlying process affecting Batley and much of West Yorkshire was described as a spiral of decline.

BATLEY CDP AND ECONOMIC STUDIES

Basic questions on the economic performance of towns such as Batley were first asked in the early phases of Project work and more explicitly in the October 1973 *Report to the Minister*. Despite this, work on employment issues remained a relatively under-developed aspect in the Project's over-all programme until the first phase of an action-research programme on Economic Studies was implemented in the Spring of 1974, two and a half years after Batley CDP was established. The first step was to develop an understanding of the political economy of Batley before proceeding with action initiatives on employment and industry.

Batley and Industrial Decline in Regional and National Context

A rapid scan of the *Batley News*, from 1961 to 1975, provides some insights into the economic fortunes of Batley, and the surrounding area. Roughly speaking, from 1961-1966, a contraction of the textile sector occurred, partly compensated for by a growth of local employment in other sectors. Between 1961 and 1964 prospects were bleak. Batley's MP complained that the 'life blood' was being drained out of the town and appealed to the Board of Trade to intervene.¹⁹ Quite suddenly the press reported a reversal of this trend, and in March 1964, the *Batley News* carried headlines announcing a brighter future, even the prospect of an industrial boom. By 1967 a recession had set in and short-time working was introduced as a decline in textiles accelerated. Between 1966 and 1971 an overall job loss of 13 per cent was experienced and unemployment rose. This precipitated a government examination of the area's economic prospects and, in 1972, Batley was declared part of the Intermediate Development Area extended to cover Yorkshire and Humberside. At the turn of 1974-75 the sharp decline in job opportunities, and an increase in male unemployment, from below the national average in 1966 to 70 per cent above in 1975, augured badly for the future. Nationally, a recession as serious as that of 1931 had hit textiles; 150,000 out of a work-force of 830,000 were on short-time, and 100,000 jobs had disappeared, almost 10 per cent of the total, between 1971-75. In West Yorkshire the problem appeared particularly acute. Throughout the early seventies the area was refused Intermediate Area status, and this was aggravated by the County Council's concern with problems in the southern industrial region, as illustrated in the Development Strategy of 1971. As far as central government policy was concerned, the continuing reliance on high rates of unemployment as a main determinant in central intervention worked against Batley's interests. The same was true of the assumption that the area was one of labour shortage, when, even at the peak of demand, the number of unemployed exceeded

vacancies.²⁰ Thus, throughout a period of great economic stress the response of central government was patchy, unco-ordinated and ineffective. This situation was summarised in an unpublished study of Batley from CDP in 1976 :

Over twenty years, central government has done virtually nothing to arrest the economic decline of Batley, and its neighbours. It has left the local authorities and local democracy to cope with tasks and strains which they were not designed to bear.²¹

The Characteristics of the Local Economy in the 1970s

In a number of CDP publications such as *Jobs in Jeopardy* and *Batley at Work* factors such as changing ownership patterns, low wages and levels of skill, and the use of female and immigrant labour by local firms have been described as characterising the local economy in Batley in the period immediately before the establishment of a CDP.²² Some of these factors are reviewed in detail elsewhere in this report. At this stage, we will summarise some of the main points :

- (i) In line with national trends between 1966 and 1975, the pattern of ownership and management in Batley moved away from local independent control. In 1966, 17 per cent of externally controlled firms provided 27 per cent of jobs in the town; by 1975 20 per cent of such firms provided 45 per cent of jobs. Mergers and takeovers accentuated centralisation and rationalisation, but small firms were still prominent as the number of firms employing over 200 employees decreased, especially in textiles. The decline of the larger firm was partially compensated for by an influx of medium-sized firms which moved into Batley to benefit from cheap labour, cheap industrial premises and the advantages of easy access to the motorway network. However, these changes in the local economy created their own problems; first, many of those firms which moved into Batley stayed only for a short period - one third of firms established in Batley in 1966 had closed down or left by 1975; second, new firms were labour intensive and generated low grade and lowly paid work; and third, few were able to provide stable or continuous employment.
- (ii) In Batley the pattern of change in manufacturing employment shows extreme fluctuations. The loss of manufacturing jobs from 1961-71 was 16.6 per cent, as against a small increase of almost one per cent for England and Wales. Locally, approximately half of all employment in manufacturing industry, 30 per cent of total, was in textiles, compared to 2.7 per cent nationally. In contrast, the engineering industry employed 10 per cent of the national workforce, but only 5.6 per cent in Batley. Likewise, in the metal manufacture and vehicles category, comprising 9.3 per cent of national employment, the corresponding figure for Batley was 1.8 per cent. Some industries had, of course, been expanding - for example, metal industries, food processing and carpets - but on the whole such growth had ceased.
- (iii) Examination of the workforce in Batley also revealed striking trends. In 1971, Batley had a higher than average proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, and a substantially lower than average proportion of

professional and managerial workers, compared to neighbouring areas and the nation as a whole. 38.9 per cent of workers were skilled; 19.7 per cent semi-skilled; 9.3 per cent were classified as unskilled and only 10.6 per cent as of the professional managerial and employing class. Migration out of Batley by the younger and skilled groups, and the re-classification of ex-textile workers as unskilled or semi-skilled, contributed to the size of latter groups.²³ A strong reminder of the trend was provided in the breakdown of male unemployment figures in Batley in 1974. Of the 346 registered as unemployed, two-thirds were officially classified as general labourers.²⁴

- (iv) In Batley women have traditionally constituted a high proportion of the labour force, especially in textiles. Recently employment of women had declined, but as a whole female activity rates had stayed high compared to the national average; in 1971 68 per cent in Batley compared with less than 60 per cent nationally. As a proportion of all jobs in the town, 46 per cent were occupied by women in 1971. Certain industries, for example the food industry, soaked up female labour displaced from the textile industry, but by the time CDP was established growth appeared to have ended.
- (v) The newest variable in the local workforce came in the 1960s in the form of migrant Asian labour, although the importation of new labour was hardly a new phenomena, since throughout the nineteenth century Batley assimilated labour from the surrounding rural areas and later still, at the turn of the century, from Ireland. The town's sizeable Asian community, mainly Gujerati, was established in the 1960s, and was engaged primarily in wool textile production, so that by the early 1970s nearly 30 per cent of the industry's male workforce, 13 per cent of the total, was Asian. In 1971, when 7 per cent of the total population was Asian, approximately 75 per cent of Asian male workers were occupied in the textile industry in Batley and the surrounding area.
- (vi) Wage levels in Batley have traditionally been low, not only in the textile industry. From information compiled in the Batley Community Survey (1973) and from other sources, male earnings in 1973 were 72 per cent of the national average, and 80 per cent of the regional average for Yorkshire and Humberside.²⁵ Almost half of men employed earned less than £30 a week in 1973, as against 25 per cent regionally, when at the time £30 was the TUC proposed minimum wage. Between 85 per cent to 90 per cent of local men earned less than the average weekly wage of £41.90, and at the lower end of the scale one in five men earned under £25, twice the national and regional proportion. For this payment local workers had to work longer hours than the average; 90 per cent of men worked more than 40 hours per week compared to 50 per cent nationally, and 28 per cent of men over 50 hours per week as against 18 per cent nationally.

For Batley CDP, these details provided the raw material for an analysis of the role of central and local government economic policy and for an investigation of the problems of poverty and structural disadvantage. However, to provide a fuller picture, it was decided that Batley's economic performance, especially in textiles, should be considered in a historical perspective.

The Importance of Textiles in the Local Economy : Myth or Reality?

The study of the local economy in and around Batley produced by Batley CDP maintains firmly that the textile industry has traditionally dominated the economy and that in economic and social terms a chain reaction has been set up out of its decline. According to this analysis, acceleration of this decline has created a situation in which Batley's primary economic function has become that of 'a reserve labour pool to be drawn on in times of national prosperity and discarded in times of national recession'.²⁶ This interpretation was put forward in *Batley at Work*, which claimed that a once strong local economy has stagnated. However, this view is criticised by Finnegan and Sigsworth in *Poverty and Social Policy*.²⁷ They contest four major themes in the *Batley at Work* report; the importance of textiles in the local economy and the centrality of the shoddy trade in the textile sector; the classic boom-slump cycle in the textile industry; the degree to which the local economy has diversified; and the importance of the journey to work area in the local economy. Through re-examination of the source materials used, Finnegan and Sigsworth challenge the determinist outlook of *Batley at Work* and criticise it for failing to 'accord with the facts'.²⁸

The argument put forward in *Batley at Work* is that Batley's growth was founded on the establishment of textiles in the town, and that in this sector the dominance of the shoddy trade (the branch of textiles which relies upon the re-working of waste materials) created an unhealthy over-dependence on one trade. This had disastrous side effects. The labour force was deprived of the chance to acquire other skills and other branches of the textile trade were disinclined to set up in Batley. In *Batley at Work* it is claimed that :

*The rapid growth of the town had not created a community able to expand, and diversify its industrial base. It is our view that the town's economic difficulties over recent years are the direct result of the limitations which became built into the local economy during the years of boom expansion.*²⁹

The years of boom were those of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation that stimulated domestic demand, and those of overseas war (the Crimean War, followed by the Boer and First World Wars), which again increased demand. Batley, therefore, experienced boom conditions between 1850 and 1870, stagnation from 1870 to 1900 and boom again from the turn of the century to the end of its second decade. It is contended that this last upturn in demand stimulated local population growth, so that by 1915 the town's population had risen to 38,000.

Confining their study to the occupations of Batley's inhabitants, and basing it chiefly upon contemporary records and census material, Finnegan and Sigsworth question many of the assumptions which have encouraged an exaggeration of the role of textiles, and more particularly of shoddy production, in papers such as *Batley at Work*. The pattern of occupational grouping which emerges from their work is one which suggests that as early as 1871 the importance of the textile industry was diminishing and reductions in its significance were being offset by 'a small movement towards the

occupational diversification of Batley's inhabitants'.³⁰ Evidence from census returns suggests that though 61.5 per cent of the local labour force was employed in textiles in 1871, only 8.8 per cent, or 5.4 per cent of the total occupied workforce, was actually employed in the production of shoddy. Basing much of their argument on this finding, Finnegan and Sigsworth comment :

*the proportion of Batley workers engaged in the actual production of shoddy and mungo ... was never at any time as great as seems to have been believed. The inaccuracy of this myth is established by the use for the first time of census information in this respect - information which incidentally is substantiated by the contemporary observations of Jubb, the authority on the shoddy trade.*³¹

Evidence such as that cited above questions two of the main contentions in *Batley at Work*; first, that large numbers of workers were unable to acquire non-textile skills, and second, that the shoddy trade was almost always dominant.

In assessing the notion of periodic booms and slumps in the shoddy end of the textile sector, Finnegan and Sigsworth are just as cautious. They cite the records of the Committee on Industry and Trade of 1928 to show that the 'boom' period, which according to *Batley at Work* ended in 1870, actually persisted well into the 1880s, followed by a levelling off in consumption and then a quick recovery. Therefore, 'within a decade the consumption of recovered wool had reached unprecedented levels', indicating that the sustained slump of 1870-1900 referred to in *Batley at Work* may not have occurred at all, and that a more plausible account would suggest that expansion in output and further growth continued up to the First World War when the recorded consumption of rag wool was twice the 1870 level.³²

On the question of the relationship between population increase and the fortunes of the shoddy trade, the evidence produced in *Batley at Work* is equally misleading. The authors fail to take account of the fact that people registered as textile workers in Batley may not be resident in the town. Thus the percentage of Batley workers engaged in textiles, set at 72 per cent in 1929, may not be inhabitants at all, and in which case the connection between growth of the shoddy industry and local population growth would not be very strong. Finnegan and Sigsworth's evidence shows that in 1931 only 38.3 per cent of Batley's employed population was engaged in textiles and not necessarily in the town. Moreover, in the period of rapid shoddy expansion, 1900 to 1915, referred to in *Batley at Work*, the proportion of Batley inhabitants engaged in textiles fell. The population growth that did occur, from 1900 to 1915, when population rose from 28,000 to 38,000, may be explained by natural increases of births over deaths and by boundary changes which in 1911 alone added 4,000 to the town's population.³³

The distinction which Finnegan and Sigsworth make between the occupations of Batley inhabitants and the occupational structure of Batley, which would include a sizeable number of non-resident labour, is important in understanding Batley's social evolution. Instead of basing its analysis on a combination of sources, including census materials, the *Batley at Work* report relies upon employment exchange returns which provide a picture in which factors such as in and out migration are hardly discernible. On the implications of using uncorroborated primary source material Finnegan and Sigsworth write :

Using the employment exchange figures for 1929, however, in comparison with those for the 1931 census it is clear that

very considerable migration of workers into and out of Batley was already taking place. (Census breakdown) shows that the number of employed Batley residents was 18,489. The employment exchange figures, however, show that jobs in Batley totalled only 14,293. This means that over 4,000 Batley residents worked outside the town, even on the unlikely assumption that all the remainder were employed in Batley. Further, only 7,079 people who lived in Batley worked in the textile industry, whereas according to the employment exchange figures, the industry in the town employed a total of 10,311 individuals. Obviously, therefore, more than 3,000 textile workers who were not resident in Batley must have been employed as such in the town. Taking the employment exchange figures, the number of non-textile jobs was 3,982. But the balance of Batley residents not engaged in textile occupations was 11,410, which suggests that at least 8,428 inhabitants of the town travelled to work elsewhere.³⁴

According to Finnegan and Sigsworth the historical importance of the journey to work in the local economy must be assessed so that the centrality of textiles can be properly evaluated. To support this claim they show that only 55 per cent of inhabitants worked in the town in 1931 and that less than 70 per cent of these, or 38 per cent of the whole, were employed in textiles. It would be wrong, however, to claim that the authors of *Batley at Work* were unaware of the journey to work pattern. They were aware of it but miscalculated its importance in dismissing it as a gloss over the structural problem of industrial decline.

We anticipate that one reaction to our analysis will be the criticism that we have taken too narrow an approach by concentrating on Batley alone rather than working out the so-called 'journey to work area' as a whole. That has certainly been the stock answer to studies of small areas by Government agencies and regional planners. The logic of this appears to be that if you generalise about a wide enough area and average out the rough and the smooth the problems of particular areas become less significant. That may be convenient viewed from Whitehall or City House, Leeds, but from where people stand in Batley it does not reduce the real problems which the town faces. In any case, much of what we have said about Batley applies to Dewsbury and the journey to work areas as a whole.³⁵

There is some reason to believe that this line of argument is a stock answer too. Moreover, if historical evidence has shown that the occupational characteristics of Batley's inhabitants, and the role of textiles and the journey to work area in the local economy are each rather different than formerly supposed, there is little validity in asserting that Batley's experience is also replicated in the surrounding region. The assertion needs to be proved. The overall impact of the conclusions in the *Batley at Work* report needs, therefore, to be moderated with an historical assessment based on alternative source materials so that its economic reductionism may be reduced. However, this does not necessarily undermine the genuine potential for action-research strategies to be devised around structural problems such as employment, and for structural issues to be politicised in community development.

The major action-research programme on Employment and Industry evolved out of the Project review which took place just prior to local government reorganisation. In that review Economic Studies were one constituent part of a programme of seven action-research themes and by the February of 1974 the main parameters in an Economic Studies Programme had been defined.³⁶ The plan was to combine a general diagnostic overview of economic and employment characteristics and decisions bearing on them with more specific and detailed micro-studies. The general aim was to produce 'adequately researched working papers likely to stimulate action and interest in a variety of action situations'.³⁷ To handle data collection, and the first set of studies, a firm of economic consultants was commissioned to work in conjunction with CDP staff. Several areas of investigation were identified as meriting more detailed inquiry. They were :

- (i) an economic analysis to cover Batley in its wider setting, the employment structure, and changes in local, regional and national context;
- (ii) study of Industrial Ownership and Investment to cover size of firms, take-up of grants, training and staff policies, and so on;
- (iii) investigation into unemployment and labour to include an inquiry into levels of employment relating to class, trade, age, sex, opportunities and aspirations, commuting patterns, along with special studies devoted to particular groups such as women and immigrants;
- (iv) incomes and conditions covering company policies, shift systems, and so on;
- (v) trade unions and employers' organisations - policies, attitudes, activity and organisation;
- (vi) the role of government agencies and policies with comment on their effectiveness and co-ordination.

These six themes would be pursued by the consultants, and supplemented by a general overview of Batley as part of the economic system, and designation of several areas for action, in a combined undertaking with the Project team.

The initial phase of the research programme was completed, in December 1974, with the submission of *Batley at Work*. In October, the Project Director had given a report to the CDP sub-committee on the programme of Economic Studies, and encouraged it to agree to the appointment of an Action-Worker for Employment. It was envisaged that his tasks would be to :

- (i) strengthen contact with organisations involved in the industrial and employment field, especially trade unions and trades council;
- (ii) develop a programme of 'community work' within the employment field and encourage the development of new information and other services;
- (iii) participate in the development of a debate on employment issues, and promote sponsorship for a developing analysis of Batley's economic situation and prospects.³⁸

This proposal to strengthen employment work was approved by committee on 21 October 1974, although the appointment was delayed until April 1975.

As *Batley at Work* went to press, the Project team strove for widespread community support for its employment strategies. In the 'Progress Report on Economic Studies' of October 1974 the Project Director referred to the need to increase the flow of information on key local issues, such as employment and housing, and for this to be made publicly available, to the need for clarity of purpose in provoking a debate on employment issues, and to the need for an action constituency of interests centred on elected members and political parties, residents and workplace organisations. These recommendations were similar to those made in *Batley at Work*. It called for a wider debate based on the assumption that employment problems in Batley were structural and political, and that the only solution was to be achieved through 'public intervention',³⁹ which meant local and central government acting together. To secure some solution to local economic problems the mobilisation of public opinion was vital, and to carry the debate forward nine proposals were made. They were :

- (i) a full discussion at the local community level to include local and regional elected representatives, political and industrial organisations and parties;
- (ii) the convening of a local Employment Conference to be held in the Spring of 1975;
- (iii) the collection of more material on the 1971-74 period;
- (iv) the establishment of an Employment Action Committee to consider problems and mount campaigns to lobby outside interests and promote the area's claims;
- (v) the establishment of an Economic Monitoring Unit linked to an academic institution as a clearing house for information;
- (vi) the establishment of a local industrial newspaper;
- (vii) the establishment of a special sub-regional planning study to give an economic appraisal of the area as a whole;
- (viii) a review of the impact of central government policy on local communities, with particular reference to the textile industry;
- (ix) the commissioning of further investigations on the unemployed, low paid and unskilled, on investment and company ownership.⁴⁰

Reaction to these proposals was mixed, and the criticism that the Project was duplicating the work of others was raised. On the bonus side elected members and officers in the new authority responded well to the suggestion that a wider debate be opened up. An informal seminar group was set up to discuss the report and the contract with the outside consultants who had helped prepare it extended. Other initiatives followed; a conference on Urban Problems in West Yorkshire was convened in August 1975, and much of the material first presented in Project work carried through in other discussions at regional and national levels. The Chief Executive of Kirklees wrote later that

*proposals in the West Yorkshire Bill (before Parliament in 1978) dealing inter alia with industrial improvement areas are consequential upon a number of separate influences of which CDP work was an important one.*⁴¹

From the Project's point of view, it was soon clear that there were limitations in the *Batley at Work* approach. These were raised in the internal discussions between the newly appointed worker for Employment and Industry and those who had worked on the early programme of Economic Studies. The incoming team member argued that although the chronic problems of employment and industry were attributable to the decline of textiles and the absence of new growth industries, there was still latitude to devise a short-term plan of action to complement longer term 'consciousness-raising' perspectives. He argued that *Batley at Work* had not disengaged itself from the approach it abhorred - namely a tendency to confuse symptom and cause. Moreover, given that the expected life span of the Project was short, and political dimensions were long, the politics and logics of the situation demanded implementation of some short-term measures. Several were proposed, embracing special training for the unemployed, more rights campaigns to help the unemployed, and discussion with major employers to encourage a more concerted advertising of the need for labour. Long-term proposals included investigation of the potential for co-operative work, campaigns to encourage trade union membership, development of better information services for workers, and industrial promotion schemes to persuade firms to set up in Batley. In respect of the latter issue, it was suggested that an inventory of sites should be built up and that the Project should act as an intermediary between the Kirklees Industrial Panel and firms interested in setting up in the area.⁴²

This approach outlined above was anathema to some team members, who regarded it as symptomatic of the 'piecemeal' palliatives which had contributed to the town's fundamental employment problem. In the Batley team it became difficult for the two approaches, 'incrementalist' and 'structuralist', to co-exist. One argued that 'consciousness-raising' should be paramount. As the two approaches diverged, the extent to which in practice each operated independently indicated a lack of unanimity over aims and purpose and called into question the premises for community development upon which the economic studies programme had been devised. When the Project closed, it was no nearer a unified strategy on employment and industry than when, in January 1974, it first announced an intention to devise the programme.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to assess the precise impact that Batley CDP's work on Employment and Industry had. At the policy level a more informed debate was stimulated, and there is now a greater recognition of the 'structural' nature of industrial decline. For elected members, or at least those representing Batley in Kirklees, the work enabled them to make vigorous representations on Batley's behalf. Indeed, in research undertaken after the Project's closure many members referred to the merits of the Project's research on economic studies, although others found it irritating and saw little virtue in research unless it inspired practical change.⁴³

At various points in our discussion of the local economy and planning, we have referred to dilemmas and ambiguities in the approach adopted. The starting point for study has been criticised for reflecting the need to extend Project work rather than as a measured response to community needs. Similarly, much of the material presented has been dismissed as of dubious utility. In the event, the Project's experience proved that the issues selected did not lend themselves to work of a community development type. In planning the town centre issue was dull and unlikely to stimulate community enthusiasm, and in employment, genuine inexperience undermined the development of a coherent programme. In each, the proposals for action emerged haphazardly or in a form inconsistent with local realities.

The major proposal in each sphere was to work with interested groups, especially labour organisations, but there is little evidence to suggest that any political momentum was established. Sundry contacts were made to 'repoliticise' issues, but in the individual unions, where in fact the real power lay at area rather than at branch level, there was some reluctance to combine efforts with a local community project such as Batley CDP.

At all times Batley CDP emphasised the 'social costs' inherent in the way the local economy had developed. One might, therefore, have expected detailed studies of particular groups to figure prominently in the Economic Studies programme. This was planned, but few detailed studies were undertaken and consequently we have only scattered evidence upon which to deepen our knowledge of unemployment or low pay, and of the impact of official policy and economic change on attitudes and expectations to work.

At the local level, the weaknesses of the Project's approach to employment issues in community development was shown in a number of confusions over the usefulness of its work and the changes in policy that it might inspire. On the one hand Project workers advocated greater state interventionism but then criticised it as a mere sop. Similar planning problems are singled out for special attention, but the anticipated outcome is confused. The key problem, it is stated, is

*how to link planning policy at the local level into proposals at national levels for overcoming structural problems of the economic situation as a whole.*⁴⁴

However, as Project work progressed, the negative aspects of the rhetoric of structuralism gained ground, the policy dimension was dropped, and it was concluded that the potential for planning objectives and serious proposals for change to succeed in the present system were thwarted by the interests of a dominant class.

NOTES

- 1 R. Perlman and A. Gurin, *Community Organisation and Social Planning*, Wiley, 1972, Ch 1, p. 5.
- 2 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister*, October 1973, p. 29.
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 H. L. Butcher, J. H. Pearce, I. D. Cole with A. Glen, *Community, Participation and Poverty : the Final Report of Cumbria CDP*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 22, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1979, p. 50.
- 5 P. Waddington, *Inter-Project Collective on Employment and Industry Discussion on Action Strategy*, Paper from Batley CDP, June 1974, p. 2.
- 6 Batley Community Project, *The First Six Months*, July 1972, p. 3.

- 7 J. Stables, Urban Renewal Officer, WRCC, E. S. Dixon, Town Clerk. Batley, R. Lees, University of York, M. Would, Batley CDP, S. Richards, Home Office.
- 8 K. Carter, P. Edwards, J. Friend, Institute of Operational Research, *Community Influence in Town Centre Renewal*, Tavistock Institute, September 1973, p. 3.
- 9 *Community Influence in Town Centre Renewal*, p. 64.
- 10 *op. cit.*, p. 73.
- 11 *ibid.*, p. 73.
- 12 West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council, *Interim Policy for Shopping*, September 1974.
- 13 P. Waddington, 'Town Centre Issue : Some Notes', June 1974, p. 2.
- 14 P. Waddington and P. L. Edwards, *Batley on the Shelf: A Case Study of the Town Centre Redevelopment Process 1962-1975*, Unpublished Paper, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, January 1976, p. 33.
- 15 C. Cockburn, *The Local State*, Pluto, 1977.
- 16 *Batley on the Shelf*, p. 41.
- 17 *Batley on the Shelf*, p. 43.
- 18 *Batley on the Shelf*, p. 49. A similar statement was also made in a paper given at a Conference on Urban Problems in West Yorkshire by one of the Project's workers. It was stated that 'It seems clear that the spiral of decline can only be arrested by more direct public intervention to change the logic of the economic forces at work, thus providing a better incentive to private investment'. P. Waddington, *The Problems of Industry and Employment*, August 1975.
- 19 *Batley News*, 25 May 1962.
- 20 Batley's unemployment rate had until the 1970s lagged behind the national average. See II, 1, *A Community Profile of Batley*.
- 21 Batley CDP, *From Rags to Ruins. The Effects of Chronic Underdevelopment on Batley. Batley CDP Employment and Industry Programme Final Report*, unpublished paper, June 1976, p. 1.
- 22 CDP, *Jobs in Jeopardy. A Report to the National Community Development Project*, June 1974, pp. 3-13. Batley CDP, *Batley at Work. The Rise and Fall of a Textile Town*, December 1974, pp. 13-41.
- 23 *From Rags to Ruins*, p. 66. The corresponding national figures for 1971 were skilled 33 per cent; semi-skilled 15.3 per cent; unskilled 7.7 per cent; professional/employers/managerial 17.7 per cent.

- 24 *From Rags to Ruins*, p. 67.
- 25 The Batley Community Survey was carried out in April 1973 on a 20 per cent sample survey of households in two local electoral wards, Batley East and West. The results are compressed into M. McGrath, *Batley East and West : A CDP Survey of two wards in Batley*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 6, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1976.
- 26 *Batley at Work*, p. 41.
- 27 Frances Finnegan and Eric Sigsworth, *Poverty and Social Policy. An Historical Study of Batley*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 19, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1978.
- 28 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 67.
- 29 *Batley at Work*, p. 8, but see pp. 5-13 for the historical background.
- 30 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 65.
- 31 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 66.
- 32 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 74.
- 33 *Batley at Work*, p. 13, *Poverty and Social Policy*, pp. 74-76.
- 34 *Poverty and Social Policy*, p. 70.
- 35 *Batley at Work*, p. 29.
- 36 The others were Housing, Dimensions of Disadvantage, Political Processes, Corporate Management, Social Needs and Social Structure and History.
- 37 Batley CDP to N. Moor, 'Note on Economic Studies', 4 February 1974, p. 1.
- 38 Batley CDP to Kirklees MDC, 'Progress Report on the Programme of Economic Studies - Proposed Appointment of an Action Worker', October 1974, p. 3.
- 39 *Batley at Work*, p. 50.
- 40 *Batley at Work*, pp. 51-53.
- 41 IV, 2. Eric S. Dixon, Batley CDP, *The Assessment of a Chief Executive Officer*, p. 166.
- 42 Michael Wedgworth, 'New Jobs in Batley', Discussion Paper, 29 April 1975.
- 43 L. Corina, *Batley CDP - Comparative Case No. 5 in A Selective Assessment of the Influence of Oldham CDP on the Operations of the Local Authority*, Unpublished Paper, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, May 1976.

44 P. Waddington, *The Problems of Industry and Employment*, A Conference Paper on Urban Problems in West Yorkshire, August 1975.

Throughout the duration of the Batley Project, housing issues were highly significant in the overall CDP programme, as acknowledged by the second Action Director in January 1975, who noted that housing was 'central to the Project's programme ... it underpins all parts of our work'.¹ Action-research initiatives on housing issues were pursued in a variety of ways. Initially the emphasis was on service provision and community involvement, accounting for work with tenants' associations, and in encouraging the local authority to declare General Improvement Areas, under the terms of the 1969 *Housing Act* and the modified improvement procedures of the 1974 *Housing Act*. Later analysis was more concerned with imposing greater theoretical clarity on housing issues, and in this the influence of work from the CDP Inter-Project Housing Group was evident.²

HOUSING IN BATLEY

The Regional Context, Housing Stock, Households and Tenure

During the 1950s various reports and returns to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government emphasised the severity of housing problems in England and Wales. The Housing Survey of 1956 showed that West Yorkshire, East Lancashire and the Durham Coalfield possessed the highest proportion of obsolescent housing and that slum clearance was not an overall panacea. By 1962 only 52 per cent of houses in West Yorkshire declared unfit in 1955 had been cleared. In 1962, Burnett and Scott pointed out that West Yorkshire ranked high amongst the ten areas with the most severe housing problems in England and Wales, and they argued that all the major aspects of the overall problem were present in Batley :

*On all counts the towns of the Calder Valley, Ossett, Dewsbury, Batley through Sowerby Bridge to Hebden Bridge in the west, stand foremost in presenting the greatest intensity of unfavourable housing conditions in the West Riding. Batley (40,000 population) is usually regarded as the archetype of the Calder Valley towns. In the Section One returns 4,800, 34 per cent of its permanent houses were recorded as unfit for human habitation. At roughly the same date 6,700 houses, 48 per cent, were found to be of the back-to-back type. In the 1951 Census, 6,900 dwellings had three rooms or less, 7,700 households had no fixed baths, and 6,000 were sharing WCs. In 1958 8,300 dwellings, 58 per cent of the total, were rated at £10 or less. It has been estimated that at the time of the Census 43 per cent of all its dwellings were 75 years old. Altogether this presents a picture of half of the town consisting of old, small, outmoded houses due for early replacement.*³

When others, following Burnett and Scott, examined the situation in the sixties, there had been no discernible improvement. In areas of population decline the progress of urban renewal had been slow and planning problems were more severe. As a whole the West Yorkshire area was characterised by a high rate of owner-occupancy, a high rate of household formation, a low level of basic amenity provision, a high percentage of overcrowded dwellings and single occupancy households. However, attempts to deal with these problems were restricted by the local authority's ability to pay its way. In 1967, Butterworth summarised the position thus :

The capacity of the local authorities to meet demands upon services and housing depends to a considerable extent on the amounts of money that can be raised locally by rates. West Yorkshire shows up badly in this respect. In 1959 nearly 50 per cent of the housing in the area had a rateable value of under £13 compared with 24 per cent in England and Wales below that level, and a further 20 per cent between £13 and £18 compared with 15 per cent in England and Wales. Local circumstances influence valuations, but the disparity between nearly 70 per cent of housing with under £18 rateable value in West Yorkshire and about 39 per cent in this category in England and Wales, speaks for itself and is a fair indication of housing standards.⁴

It is clear then that in the mid-fifties and early sixties Batley represented one of the most severe concentrations of housing deprivation in the country. Through a vast clearance and replacement programme efforts had been made to improve the situation but in 1971 a severe housing problem still existed. Then the population of Batley formed approximately 14,400 households, the majority living in small dwellings of four rooms or less. Over half were one- or two-person households, and, of these, 29 per cent were households in which one or both occupants were pensioners. The tenure divisions were : owner-occupiers 47 per cent; council tenants 34 per cent; private tenants 19 per cent. The owner-occupier category can be split into two groups, occupying pre- and post-1919 houses. Of the first, less than 20 per cent of the total housing stock, the most common building types were the two-up two-down or four block varieties, and most increases in occupancy were due to transfers from private tenancies. The post-1919 owner occupier group, accounting for almost 5,000 houses, were either older householders owning outright or first-time purchasers. Council tenants (34 per cent), the second largest overall group, had mostly moved from slum clearance areas or were second generation tenants, generally natives of Batley or the surrounding area. This portion of the housing stock was not increasing in number. The last group, private tenants (19 per cent), occupied the worst housing in the town in which rents were low, and in which low income households and pensioners were strongly represented. As far as the quality of the dwelling stock was concerned, on the standard amenity counts private tenants (especially those in unfurnished accommodation) suffered most from substandard provision - two-thirds lacked exclusive use of amenities, and 31 per cent shared an outside WC.

The Politics of Housing in Batley⁵

In the 1950s debates on industrial decline, town centre redevelopment, the reorganisation of secondary education, and housing were the most transparent issues in local political life. In a non-county borough housing was the one service administered directly by the local political machine, and it was more likely to inspire determined local action.

From 1946 to 1954 Batley Municipal Borough built 1,000 council houses and 170 private houses, but a change of policy in line with the national pattern was then made, which moved away from council building for replacement to large-scale clearance programmes. In 1954, it was revealed that 4,796 houses in Batley were unfit and requiring demolition, which encouraged the controlling Labour Party to adopt clearance as the pivot of its housing programme. In its first five year plan, started in 1956, 600 houses were earmarked for clearance. This target was easily achieved : 646 dwellings were demolished, and replaced by 731 council houses. For the second five years, 1961-65, a clearance target of 800 was set and combined with a plan to build 400 houses per annum, between 1963 and 1967. These targets were

revised in 1964, when the Housing Committee announced its intention to clear the remaining 3,000 slums and to replace them with a building programme of 4,000 new homes by 1971, mainly in the public sector. In the event, 2,605 houses were cleared and 3,400 were built, between 1961 and 1968. On the surface these were healthy figures, but they were followed by four lean years when the equation of building over clearance was less impressive. In this period, 1,560 houses were cleared and only 530 built - 211 by the local authority and 319 by private firms. Following the energetic house-building drive of the sixties this sudden deceleration was surprising, but justified by the local Housing Department in terms of an overall decline in demand for houses. A more critical reaction was made later, in mid-1973, when the appearance of homeless families in Batley and an overall shortage of rented properties indicated that the local authority's programme had lost ground.

In practical terms several influences determined how local programmes would unfold. Redevelopment was hindered by Batley's position as a second-tier local authority with limited planning powers of its own. Zoning policies established by the West Riding Council, reinforced by a reluctance to revise the town map, created a shortage of land suitable for development purposes and when the Housing Committee encroached on land in residential areas (in Upper Batley for example) vigorous protests resulted. The two major consequences of these planning hindrances were that the council was forced to build on isolated sites at the town's periphery - Fieldhead Estate is a testimony to this - and that, due to the shortage of land, the local authority all but abandoned its commitment to build traditional houses with gardens in favour of three-and four-storey blocks of flats. The combined unsuitability of sites and building styles was evident by the 1970s.

Though these planning constraints were serious, fundamental shifts in national housing finance arrangements affected housing policy and culminated in a drastic reduction of the house building programme. In the 1950s the local authority built slowly but cheaply. Then, as rates of clearance accelerated and intensified the need for replacement, resources were overstretched in an enlarged programme in which tighter construction standards increased unit building costs. This had a direct effect on rent levels. In the fifties Batley had prided itself on its ability to maintain a low rent policy, the revenue from which, if supplemented by central government subsidy and rate funds contributions, brought the Housing Revenue Account into surplus. In 1961, changes in housing subsidy legislation meant that the Housing Revenue Account surplus accumulated between 1952 and 1960 was wiped out by 1962. Increases in rent levels were made in 1961 and 1963. Two factors contributed to the downturn in the HRA account: first, the reduced level of central government subsidy; second, the rapid rise in interest charges on loans. Until 1961 Exchequer subsidy accounted for 30 per cent of the total HRA and rents 60 per cent, but by 1966 the subsidy had dwindled to 21 per cent of the total. Meanwhile, interest charges as a proportion of HRA expanded, from 64 per cent in 1964 to 75 per cent in 1968. Some temporary relief was provided in the form of the *Housing Subsidies Act* in 1967, but this had little effect on the overall situation in which rising costs made investment in council housing a less attractive proposition than in new and comparatively inexpensive private housing.⁶

When the Conservative Party took control of Batley Council in May 1968 attention was drawn to a recent rapid expansion of capital expenditure on housing. The immediate response was to cut the capital debt on housing, which had doubled from £4,000,000 in 1964 to £8,500,000 in 1968, and to reduce the rate contribution to the HRA which had risen to 11.9 per cent of the total. To accompany these new priorities the Housing Committee reconsidered the outgoing Labour Party's commitment to build 700 houses

between 1968 and 1972. This in effect meant that the plan for a new council estate at Intake Lane, Upper Batley, disappeared from the housebuilding programme. It was decided that slum clearance should be completed but only a reduced commitment, covering 100 houses from the initial building programme, was retained. To avoid expanding council housing stock a policy of re-lets was devised to re-house displaced families.

As the Labour Party had predicted, the newly elected Conservative Party decided to sell council-owned land for private development, and to give private builders a greater share in local housebuilding. However, as political attention turned away from housing to the town centre redevelopment scheme, this, and other housing issues, became less important. Moreover, analysis of the local authority housing waiting list in 1969 and 1971 indicated that the decision to reduce the size of the building programme was correct. Subsequent analysis by Batley CDP suggested that these reports 'created the myth that Batley's housing problem had been solved'.⁷ Council house rents increased : in 1970-71, the average rent in Batley was £111.20 per annum, in 1971-72 £118.12 - £2.40 above the conurbation average and £12.40 above the regional average. As rents rose, arrears did too; from 1.8 per cent of rent collected in 1967-68 to 3.4 per cent in 1971-72. Rent increases in 1968 and 1969 stimulated the formation of tenants' associations on the larger estates, and these were followed by more volatile action from tenants after the introduction of the *Housing Finance Act* of 1972. This Act coincided with the return to power of a majority Labour Party in Batley and, with the 1969 *Housing Act*, supplied the first platform for CDP involvement in housing issues on behalf of the community.⁸

BATLEY CDP AND HOUSING

Participation and Service Co-ordination

In Batley much of the Project's early reputation was based on its work with tenants' associations and the extent to which it became involved in issues raised by the 1969 *Housing Act* and the 1972 *Housing Finance Act*. The first enabled the local authority to make 50 per cent grants for home improvement, and to declare General Improvement Areas (GIAs), and in Batley the response focused mainly on improvement of inter-war housing stock. The second Act stimulated more energetic tenants' action than the rent increases of 1968 and 1969. Tenants resisted the implementation of the Act and joined together in the Batley Tenants' Association (BTA), the only successful attempt at establishing a coalition of tenants' interests in the town. The local effect that these Acts had influenced the course of CDP work in three areas : on local authority housing; on General Improvement Areas and on older housing; and on housing policy.

For the first two years the Batley Project devoted a great deal of its time to supporting tenants' associations in line with the part of the Project's brief referring to service provision. Project workers helped tenants' associations communicate problems to the Housing Department over a wide variety of issues, such as modernisation, heating, and repairs procedure, and in several cases definite changes in provision resulted. During its first year the Project gave support to seven tenants' associations in the Howden Clough, Wilton, Brearley Place, Mount Pleasant, Staincliffe, Field-head, and Central Estate areas. Involvement tended to be at the level of one estate around a specific issue, but in some cases estate and tenants' associations lost momentum as individual problems were solved. An illustration of this pattern is provided by the history of Howden Clough Tenants' Association and CDP's involvement in its Redfyre campaign.⁹

In April 1972, before the Howden Clough Tenants' Association was formed, a resident of the estate organised a petition to draw attention to 'the inadequacy of the coke fires installed in the Howden Clough Estate'.¹⁰ When the Tenants' Association formed, in May 1972, the Redfyre heating system was quickly identified as an important concern for its members. The Association's Secretary wrote to the Town Clerk regarding 'the inefficiency, inconsistency and high cost' of the system and asked why no action had followed the presentation of a petition to the Housing Department in mid-April 1972.¹¹ The Association eventually received notification from the Housing Committee that inquiries would be conducted and a survey of fuel needs carried out. The Tenants' Association decided to conduct its own survey, simultaneously, and was helped in the design, execution and interpretation of the survey by a Research Fellow from the Batley Community Development Project. The results of the survey affirmed considerable dissatisfaction with the system and showed that, of the 48 sample households interviewed, almost all had recourse to some form of supplementary or alternative heating. This, and other results, were sent to the Town Clerk on 1 September 1972, and a meeting was requested with members of the Housing Committee. Later, at a meeting of the Tenants' Association, a unanimous vote was passed in favour of replacing Redfyre with Gas central heating, and representatives were elected to put this to the Housing Committee. After the meeting with the Housing Committee, representatives of the Tenants' Association were optimistic that their requests would be granted. Subsequently, the Housing Committee decided to conduct a pilot scheme of repairs, approved by the council on 13 December 1972. This disappointed many tenants, especially since the repairs previously carried out by Redfyre had been unsatisfactory.

The Tenants' Association requested Batley CDP to make an independent assessment, following the Housing Department's decision to select seven houses for a pilot scheme. Research workers from the Project inspected documents belonging to the Association, discussed them with members and interviewed the seven residents selected for the pilot scheme to assess their experiences, wishes and expectations of the heating system. The survey results and the early petition indicated quite strongly that residents had little faith in the Redfyre system. This view was communicated to the Housing Committee in the hope that the council would replace the heating system with one more acceptable to residents. Though the results presented by CDP were of some importance in convincing the Housing Department that the Redfyre system should be replaced, there is no evidence to suggest that the Project's intervention speeded up the actual replacement process. In the event, the replacement programme was undertaken by the new Kirklees Council with its greater economic resources - more than two years after the Redfyre issue had first attracted the attention of the local authority.

From these and other discussions with the local authority it became clear that tenants felt that the council had shown little understanding of their needs. Genuine difficulties existed over the system of contact with tenants on maintenance, building, and repair procedures, and tenants expressed discontent about their lack of control over their residential environment, and the unresponsiveness of the local authority to tenant problems. There was a basic need for tenants' associations to be encouraged and for a greater flow of information from the local authority. Nevertheless, in work with tenants' associations, the Project was unable to resolve one basic problem in its work; the tension between a need to create stable, permanent organisations and the tendency for residents to respond immediately to issues as they emerged. In a candid statement the Assistant Director outlined the basis of this problem :

should we be interested in the 'permanent' development of organisations to be involved as of right in housing management

policy - participation to avoid intermittent outbreaks of aggro? Or, should we be providing the resources - community work and 'hard' technical skills ' to be at the disposal of tenants when they need them? Does tenants' control have any meaning other than in situations where something is being done or not being done by the local authority? What are the problems in involving tenants in the wider underlying issues, political and economic, around the supply, control and management of housing, which are the sources of the day to day issues which face them as tenants?¹²

Short answers may be given to these questions. First, neither permanent stable organisations nor proper consultative framework for housing management were established. Organisation around specific issues was always the starting point for CDP and tenant involvement, and mostly the terminal point too. In part, this reflected the Project's failure to proceed with ideas on participation and to allay the fear that militant tenant action would be cooled out by bureaucracy. Second, resources were provided but with uneven success. At an individual level, through the Advice Centre for the Town, work on housing issues progressed, with some remarkable successes. In contrast, the more collective 'servicing' aspects hovered uncertainly between a desire to inform tenants and to extend policy-oriented work with officers and councillors. Third, though the Project was eager to broaden its knowledge of the political economy of housing, it experienced considerable difficulty in pitching the analysis in a form which harmonised short-term pay-offs with longer term political insights. In Project work on General Improvement Areas Campaigns there was some prospect that both short-term and long-term objectives would be realised.

In October 1969 the Batley Housing Committee announced its intention to prepare a rolling programme for the improvement of 2,500 houses lacking one or more of the basic amenities, and approved plans for the preparation of a pilot General Improvement Area (GIA). Slowly, a GIA programme took shape but it lacked consistency or real direction. By March 1974 five GIAs were nominally in progress, public meetings had been held and residents' committees formed, but none had been formally declared. These five GIAs contained 1,065 houses, 582 council and 483 private dwellings.¹³ They were supplemented by the Public Health Inspector's identification of another nineteen potential GIAs, containing 1,676 houses (1,537 were private and 139 council houses). The 'potential' GIA areas did not include any of the three 1930s estates in most urgent need of environmental improvement, and one incorporated 48 post-war houses. The bias in this programme prompted CDP's Assistant Director to remark :

It seems surprising that in a town with some two and a half thousand older houses with potential for improvement up to the twelve point standard, less than one fifth of them were included in GIAs in progress, whilst over half of the local authority's inter-war housing stock of 900 were.¹⁴

In broad terms, the weaknesses of the local authorities GIA programme were clear. Grant approvals were scattered, with little concentration on an area basis, whilst the declaration of GIAs lacked an underlying continuity. Instead of providing a focus for a coherent improvement policy GIAs in Batley were simply tagged onto the council house modernisation programme. To some extent this was not surprising; the local authority had after all won its reputation by virtue of its council house programme and hence it focused on the possibilities of an improvement programme in that sector. However, in so doing, it missed the opportunity to assist in the improvement of rapidly deteriorating older terraced housing, where the most severe instances of low standard amenity provision were found. To compound the

dangers of interpreting the terms of the two Housing Acts which encouraged improvement in a short-sighted manner, the council's programme was marred by the serious delays which took place. Two and a half years passed before declaration, and a further two years elapsed before work started on the environmental features, in August 1974. Four potential GIAs (at Healey, Purlwell, Wilton and Birstall Smithies), all of which were included in the first list of five potential areas in 1973, received no further attention before local government reorganisation, or before the £200 per house allocation for external improvement had been cut to £100 in June 1974.

Following a request from the Public Health Inspector, in mid-1972, Batley CDP carried out a survey of the first GIA in Healey, to determine how successfully the local authority had communicated its intentions to residents and how far the residents felt able to participate in planning the improvement of their area. The survey revealed a low level of resident understanding and involvement in the GIA plan and prompted the Project to advance alternative suggestions to encourage greater residents' participation in the planning process. Superficially the Project's recommendations were accepted by the Housing Committee as the basis for future GIAs, and influenced declaration of the succeeding four. In practice, the total effects of CDP's recommendations were more limited and reservations must remain about the overall approach and its impact.¹⁵

As with the Project's work with tenants' associations, the guiding principle of participation lay behind much of the work on GIAs, but the practical skills required were different and involved the preparation of reports, based on survey data, for presentation to the local authority. The Brearley Place Survey was the first example of a CDP Report written in a technical and managerial style, shaped with the intention of influencing future policy. In the first instance, the survey was prepared with officer support, but when it criticised the Housing Department's efforts to set up resident liaison committees and its general attitude to participation, opinion became divided. That the report's recommendations were adopted at all owes much to the efforts of Batley's Town Clerk, who persuaded councillors and fellow officers of its practical use. Despite this, the report had only a limited policy impact: first, because the idea of participation put forward by CDP never squared with the perceptions of local councillors, who had traditionally seen themselves as the local champions of housing issues; and second, because in suggesting that residents should of right be involved at all stages in the planning of GIAs, the Project assumed that the local authority had actually established a comprehensive GIA and home improvement policy which could be used as a starting point.

The eventual result of the Project's GIA Report to the local authority was that it did encourage officers to formulate a more comprehensive GIA programme, but in a situation where only a small amount of background work had been started. Furthermore, in forcing the issue, tension emerged between the local authority and CDP, exacerbated by difficulties that arose when the report's recommendations were implemented in localities where the Project team was already working with residents' organisations. For example, in the Wilton and Mount Pleasant areas residents were unable to distinguish between GIA Committees and residents' organisations, and this hindered the declaration of GIAs. In Mount Pleasant, where the GIA Committee had matured from the Residents' Association, the Project prepared a preliminary report on the potential for declaration of GIAs. It summarised the need to declare GIAs in Mount Pleasant, the problems experienced elsewhere, and the critical need for the local authority to engage in continuous contact with residents. Unfortunately, in trying to place itself between the local authority and residents' committees, the Project failed to satisfy either side and to

retain its own separate identity. As a result, the initial momentum was lost, confusion resulted, and only uneven progress was made.

At the general level all the Project's work on housing was related to housing policy, but more specifically papers were prepared on issues such as rent arrears, homelessness, or general improvement with the intention of providing the local authority with detailed information. In Batley, CDP's examination of closely connected subjects such as homelessness, slum clearance and house building provoked the most heated discussion.

Initial involvement with homelessness arose from the Project's direct association with the Advice Centre for the Town. In 1973, a number of homeless families appeared in Batley and sought the assistance of the Advice Centre and the Housing and Social Service Departments. The role of ACT's organiser in bringing the local authority's attention to the issue of homelessness was crucial. He brought together representatives from CDP, Social Services and Housing Departments and the Town Council (including the Chairman of Housing) to discuss the problem informally and to foster a greater awareness of homelessness. CDP provided analysis of homelessness as a local and national phenomenon and urged the local authority to provide temporary relief, and to reassess the size of its annual building programme as a step towards local remedial action. As a result of this group's work, Batley Council and the Social Services Department agreed to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families. In addition, a housing association was formed with a CDP worker as its secretary, and it drafted plans to buy older properties in the town. While these actions were important influences on local policy, by far the most influential factor was a report from the Housing Manager that the local authority housing waiting-list was expanding at a rate faster than normal.

Once the first indications of a housing crisis were revealed through homelessness the local authority agreed to build twenty urgently needed four-bedroomed houses, and a small number of flatlets for the elderly to reduce overcrowding and underoccupation of three-bedroomed units. Following this, the Housing Manager reported to his committee in June 1973 that waiting list applications had risen from 47 a month in 1972 to almost 65. This prompted the Housing Committee to approve a further programme for 100 two-, three- and four-bedroomed houses, and co-ordination of effort with the Social Services Department to release shortlife properties to homeless families. This shift in policy was of considerable local importance to the Batley Council, and to its successor Kirklees, which inherited the commitment to build. Moreover, the change was highly significant for Batley CDP, as it provided justification for many of the arguments it had put forward earlier. The next step for the Project was to define additional priorities for work on housing policy issues.

The Political Economy of Housing

Reviewing the Project's early housing strategy, in October 1974, the Assistant Project Director wrote :

At the simplest level I think that as a Project we have misunderstood the political importance of the housing issue in Batley, and this is reflected in the approach to housing.¹⁶

In his view, the early strategy was devised on the assumption that :

tenants' associations and the 1969 Housing Act are good for you.¹⁷

The Project had experienced some difficulty in legitimating its involvement with residents and the local authority, and in planning and committing resources to carry out a programme of action.

From late 1974 a fresh attempt was made to conceptualise housing issues and to connect an overview of changes in the housing market to a framework which showed how local patterns of social advantage and disadvantage were maintained. In broad terms Batley's housing history was similar to the national pattern. A transition had taken place, in which older sub-standard privately-rented accommodation had been replaced by council housing and owner-occupation. For the Project team, the problem lay in devising a method which could reveal the underlying dynamics of this pattern. Rex and Moore's model of housing classes provided a conceptual starting point.¹⁸

In their study of Sparkbrook, Rex and Moore argue that the system of home ownership and allocation produces five housing classes and that membership of :

*one or other of these classes is of first importance in determining a man's associations, his interests, his life-style, and his position in the urban social structure.*¹⁹

Each has its own qualifications for entry.²⁰ Though it was feasible that this classification could be applied in a refined form to Batley, an oversimplification of the argument militated against any rigorous testing of the hypothesis. In order to establish connections between membership of particular housing classes, and chart access or mobility in other spheres (for example employment or education), large-scale data collection was required. Although it was decided that data collection should proceed, CDP workers felt that resources would be more profitably invested in an examination of local authority house allocation and waiting list policies, from which insights could be gained into why pockets of poor housing continued despite the existence of large-scale council provision. However, this priority was temporarily shelved in favour of an attempt to develop theoretical concepts applicable to housing before undertaking major empirical work.

The major reinterpretation of the local politics of housing was activated by the work of the Inter-Project Housing Group. During 1974, the traditional emphasis in CDPs on housing management and the creation of ghetto or residual estates gave way to work which questioned the primary function of council housing as a replacement for slum clearance, or as second choice housing for those who could not afford owner-occupation. For the Batley Project this stimulated a wholesale re-evaluation of public housing policy, which concluded that :

- (i) the pursuit of a unilateral policy based on slum clearance had created a state of disequilibrium in which the political importance of other aspects of policy had diminished. To aggravate this situation the local authority had failed to anticipate changes in the housing market created by slum clearance;
- (ii) the role of council housing as a replacement for slum clearance, reinforced by an excessive concentration on the waiting list as the principal indicator of housing need, had resulted in failure to spot fundamental changes in housing demands, so that in many instances real needs were undetected;
- (iii) in most areas council housing was the only form of tenure open to non owner-occupiers.²¹

In policy terms, CDP argued that the local authority should recognise that council housing policy never operates in isolation, especially in an area like Kirklees, where several housing markets existed. As far as specific groups were concerned, the Project maintained that policies sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged in other forms of tenure to the public sector - particularly private tenants and low income owner-occupiers in older housing - should be formulated.

The major difficulty for the Project turned on the need to translate these new perspectives into action and to make it clear how the relationship between national or regional trends was relevant to the local authority. It was argued that the mileage to be gained from further work on local authority housing issues was limited, due to the effects of local government reorganisation, internal changes in the team's approach and the mixed success of work with tenants' groups. In its first two years, the Project had concentrated on the qualitative aspects of council housing, such as repairs and maintenance and the Redfyre system, but there were clear limitations when the team tried to move away from purely short-term issues to broader issues, such as tenant participation in estate management, or the long-term needs of Batley's families. An additional difficulty concerned the unresolved problem of whether to pursue issues on a town-wide or a neighbourhood basis. This ambivalence could be overcome on some issues, such as those related to older housing in the Urban Priority Area, described below. This context offered useful opportunities to extend work on owner-occupation and private renting in an area of high density immigrant settlement, and to test insights from the Inter-Project Housing Group by micro-analysis of the local housing market. Gradually, during the Winter of 1974-75, most of the Project's work on housing took place within the framework of the UPA Project.²²

Housing Action Areas and the Urban Priority Area Project

As the first steps were taken to develop housing work in the UPA, housing statistics released in 1975 confirmed some of the substantive elements in the Project's analysis.²³ In the eighteen months before January 1975 private housebuilding contracted at a disturbing rate nationally, even though land, labour and mortgage funds were in abundant supply. The housing market was unpredictable and houses remained unsold, despite the demand for low cost properties. These trends in the private housing sector were paralleled by striking changes in the public sector. Whereas in 1973 the six major conurbations, including West Yorkshire, were demolishing more houses than they were building, in 1974 there was a small upturn in building and in home and area improvement. By 1975, the biggest challenge to local authorities centred on the speed with which the terms of the 1974 *Housing Act* could be implemented and Housing Areas (HAAs) declared. This initiative provided a new focus for CDP intervention, especially in the East Ward of Batley.²⁴

The social characteristics of the East Ward have been commented on elsewhere and require little detailed comment here. In 1974 Batley East ranked as one of the two most disadvantaged wards in Kirklees. The area consisted of a mixture of housing, a small number of council estates, areas of older housing with little prospect of clearance, cleared sites with potential for re-development and extensive areas of open space. Apart from the development of council housing, the most recent changes in tenure and occupancy had been from private renting to owner-occupation, and the movement of Asians into the older housing.²⁵

As the UPA team was recruited in 1974, housing needs in the East Ward of Batley were emphasised. The main thrust of the programme of action on



Batley Town Centre Redevelopment



Street in General Improvement Area, Batley

housing issues encompassed three main strands : the production of a socio-ecological map of the area, including data on housing; the production of a trilingual community newspaper, including regular features on housing; and determined action to declare substantial areas of older housing as improvement areas.

Collection of data for a socio-ecological map proceeded during the Summer of 1975, but there is no single document which draws together the data. Much of the baseline data was taken from the 1971 Census, and CDP studies such as *The Batley Community Survey* or *The Social Atlas of Kirklees*. The latter used three indicators specifically related to housing - lack of amenities, overcrowding and household size - and showed that the East Ward in Batley suffered from the worst stresses in terms of housing conditions : 36 per cent of households lacked the three basic amenities, compared with a figure of 20 per cent for Batley as a whole, while overcrowding was at the level of 9 per cent, compared with 3 per cent for the town overall.

Within the geographical area defined as the East Ward, which comprised over 1,500 houses, three sub-areas were identified - Mount Pleasant, a mixed housing area, Hyrstlands Road Council Estate, and the Warwick Road/Taylor Street area. Of these, the last contained the most acute problems and the UPA team decided to concentrate its work there, beginning with an area bordering Back Warwick Terrace, a small housing segment of 42 dwellings. According to the 1971 Census, 41 per cent of households in this neighbourhood lacked all three standard amenities and 30 per cent of dwellings - all through terraces - were overcrowded.

All the UPA team's initiatives cannot be recorded here, but the major emphasis was on house improvement and the environmental upgrading of the area. In general, the willingness of residents to improve their property was held back by an inability to bear their 50 per cent share of costs. Consequently, the UPA team argued that the greatest potential lay in treating areas of stress as GIAs and HAAs and, when work on housing reached the stage at which definite recommendations could be made, the resources of the UPA team and the Environmental Health Department were combined in an effort to declare a Housing Action Area, comprising approximately one half of the UPA area.

Preparatory work on the HAA started with an assessment of the social characteristics of the area by the UPA team, and an examination of the physical characteristics by the Environmental Health Department. In the initial negotiations which paved the way for the declaration of a Housing Action Area, a 'core' team was formed and regular contact with local residents was maintained. A news-sheet for the potential HAA was drawn up and published by the core team, with a Gujerati news-sheet to keep the immigrant community informed of developments. The recommendations of a two-part survey carried out in March 1976 were presented to the Housing Committee, and its support for declaration of a HAA was secured. Subsequently, in May 1976, a joint report from the Batley Urban Priority Area Team and the Kirklees Directorate of Environmental Health was submitted to the Department of the Environment (DoE), recommending that a Housing Action Area comprising 304 houses in the Warwick Road area be declared 'as the most appropriate way of dealing with the social and physical problems in the area'.²⁶ The HAA was considered as not just the best way of dealing with housing stress, but as 'the preferred way of dealing with the area as stated by the residents'.²⁷ Essentially, the Report to the DoE argued that, although housing in the area was nearing the end of its useful life, it was 'not sufficiently exhausted to merit wholesale clearance'.²⁸ The need for concerted action rather

than a fragmented approach added weight to the suggestion that only declaration of a HAA would solve the area's problem. (The presence of several indicators of housing stress militated against its treatment as a GIA which, according to DoE's policy at the time, were normally to be free from acute housing stress.) On 28 July, the DoE gave formal approval to the establishment of Batley's and Kirklees' first HAA in the Warwick Road Area.

There can be little doubt that the UPA team contributed in several ways to the declaration of the HAA. It brought the problem to the attention of the local authorities, and speeded up the actual process of declaring the HAA by the presence of its workers. At all points the UPA team fostered contact between residents and the local authority, explained the procedure to residents and brought individual problems to the notice of the Environmental Health Directorate. In bargaining for the interests of Batley in Kirklees, the UPA team scored a definite success. The mechanics of declaring a HAA were facilitated, and genuine lessons of application were learnt for subsequent HAAs. Of the first two HAAs declared in Kirklees - Warwick Road and Savillettown, Dewsbury - there was originally a strong likelihood that the latter would be declared first, since it met government criteria in size, and stress indicators, more conveniently. The re-ordering of this priority is a testimony to the energy with which the UPA team carried out its tasks. When the Savillettown HAA was declared the same questionnaire was used as in Batley, similar representations were made to the DoE, and liaison with immigrants was simplified. Unfortunately this success also had its negative side. The Warwick Road HAA was strongly identified with the Urban Priority Area team workers and, after the closure of the UPA, much of the impetus behind the Warwick Road HAA was lost and attendance at meetings dwindled, especially among immigrants.

A Study of Waiting List Policy

Reference has already been made to the CDP team's intention to examine waiting list policy in Batley, although it was unable to complete the work itself. After the CDP was terminated, the research programme on waiting lists and housing need was undertaken by the CDP Research Unit at the University of York, in a comparative study of waiting list policy with Cumbria CDP. The aims of the study were :

- (i) to describe and assess the housing circumstances of waiting list applicants in various categories of housing need;
- (ii) to examine, document and differentiate between the housing needs which reflect the persistence of low standard older housing, and those arising from demographic change;
- (iii) to examine the extent to which the local authorities' stock of council housing demands;
- (iv) to assess how valid the waiting list is as an indicator of housing need;
- (v) to examine attitudes to council housing and other forms of tenure;
- (vi) to describe applicants' choices and preferences, expectations and relations with the local authority.²⁹

In each of these there was a genuine concern to discover the policy implications of research findings and the research was formulated to provide an assessment of the reliability of the housing waiting list as a guide to policy making.

In September 1976, after consultations with Kirklees' Housing Director, work began on the study of Batley's council house waiting list, co-ordinated from the University of York. Two random samples of applicants were drawn from the waiting list, with the aim of achieving 150 completed interviews. In the event, from 238 addresses drawn in the main and supplementary samples, 147 interviews were completed, signifying non-response from 91 addresses. At the time of the survey over 760 applicants were waiting for a house in Batley. The major findings of the research were that :

- (i) the housing register overstated actual demand for council housing, emphasising the need for a regular review of the waiting list;
- (ii) council housing in Batley was being sought 'for different reasons at different stages in the family development cycle'. The variety of reasons given indicated the need for the local authority to provide a variety of house types;³⁰
- (iii) the local stock with the emphasis on small accommodation was roughly in harmony with demand : 68 per cent of respondents required one or two-bedroomed accommodation, and in January 1977, 64 per cent of stock was of this size;
- (iv) for most respondents the accommodation occupied at the time of interview was small and in many cases lacked basic amenities : 80 per cent of the applicants were living in pre-1914 property, a third lacked basic plumbing amenities and 18 per cent exclusive use of even an outside WC. A quarter lived in back-to-backs, half in terraced houses, and of the total interviewed over half had only between one and three rooms in their house, compared to a figure of 28 per cent in the 1971 Census in the town;
- (v) for those on the waiting list, improvement policies were not the ultimate answer to problems. There was some doubt about whether improvement could solve defects in properties, or indeed if those properties were suitable for family life. Though renewal and transfers could relieve the housing problems, for others 'slum clearance was considered a more likely solution';³¹
- (vi) a wider definition of housing need, which included the state of repair of the present accommodation, was urged upon the local authority;
- (vii) few respondents saw any advantages in council tenancy compared with owner-occupation, and many aspired to the latter;
- (viii) firm preferences for and against particular estates were well formulated. Some areas carried considerable stigma, such as Woodsome, Purlwell and Fieldhead estates. The local authority was urged to attend to these areas and to devise appropriate policies to reduce stigma;
- (ix) respondents expressed disquiet over the lack of information given to them on their application. 73 per cent of applicants claimed that they were given no advice when they registered, and since applying, slightly less than half had discussed their application with either an

official or councillor. Few applicants had knowledge of the basis upon which the system functioned, and many questioned its fairness. The report noted :

*On the whole one is left with the impression that acceptance of particular policies or detailed decisions is a smaller problem than the widespread ignorance and misinformation concerning both allocation and management. It is an important and urgent task to counter this confusion and ignorance.*³²

As a first step towards rectifying this ignorance it was recommended that a proper leaflet, setting out the Council's letting policy and priorities, should be widely distributed. Information points on private and public sector housing should be established, and a regular system of contact set up with applicants with the intention of keeping the list up to date, informing applicants of their position on the list and their chances of being rehoused;

- (x) a more comprehensive approach to housing policy was required and the local authority was urged to refrain from considering council housing needs 'in isolation from the context of the private sector'.³³ The degree of movement between tenures was cited to sustain the argument for a comprehensive approach.

Many of the points emphasised in the waiting list survey corresponded to conclusions previously mentioned in other CDP work. The Project had argued that Batley had not finished its slum clearance programme or defined housing need adequately. Furthermore, it had pointed to the need for the local authority to take a more comprehensive view. However, the conclusions of the survey on specific aspects of waiting list policy did not automatically square with those of the Project. It was accepted that the local authority waiting list was not the best indicator of need, a view coinciding with the Project's approach. However, the survey's conclusion that the waiting list over-estimated needs diverged from the main CDP view. The dangers of concentrating on the waiting list as the prime indicator of need were categorically stated and, rather than expecting a faithful reflection of total housing need, it was considered best to interpret waiting lists as a guide to the characteristics of housing need exhibited by applicants seeking council housing.³⁴

From the perspective of future policy formulation, and in the light of the recommendations of the subsequent Green Paper on Housing (1976) that allocation schemes should be published and more comprehensive local strategies prepared, the evidence submitted was of genuine use to Kirklees.³⁵ In the long-term the research offered the potential for the local authority to follow up some of the themes in order to assess changing needs in its area.

CONCLUSIONS

At various points in this chapter we have referred to the way in which Project work on housing reflected changing assumptions and priorities in the team. Work on the housing programme is in itself a barometer of the overall performance of Batley CDP. Mention should be made of the lasting benefits of work on housing. By drawing the attention to the local authority to particular problems, several achievements can be noted :

- (i) the opening up of a debate on homelessness;
- (ii) improved service provision, such as the Redfyre issue;

- (iii) declaration of GIAs and HAAs;
- (iv) assistance given to residents' and tenants' associations;
- (v) direction given for future policy, for example waiting list and rent area policy.

In his assessment of Batley CDP the Chief Executive Officer of Kirklees has drawn attention to some of the more outstanding features of housing work as examples of the productive achievements of CDP. He has written :

There are still echoes of the CDP work in a number of local authority fields. The report on the methodology for general improvement areas and for housing action area initiatives has had an influence throughout Kirklees with direct benefits for the local authority and its tenants.³⁶

In contrast, Project workers might argue that the time and effort invested was of little value until the local authority began to modify its practices.

The outstanding difficulties encountered by Batley CDP in using housing issues as the basis for organisation and community development may be attributed to the Project's failure to develop its own identity and to promote an understanding of how housing issues may be most effectively used in community work. One should also note the problems associated with the decision to take on housing issues, when past experience indicated that only short-term campaigns, such as that over the *Housing Finance Act*, could create a genuine town-wide movement. To compensate for this, efforts were made to concentrate on one geographical area - the Urban Priority Area - and the consequent benefits were more tangible. Issues were identified, alternative strategies were devised and the local interaction of forces such as employment and housing were followed through, though vigorous study of these inter-connections was cut short by the closure of the UPA Project. Nevertheless, in the short-term the advantages were clear, and a ready-made laboratory was provided to test broader perspectives on housing in the field.

Finally, however, some estimate must be made of the Project's ability to translate theoretical concepts into action, and on housing issues the gap between theory and action was never effectively bridged. In Batley the general run of events deflected attention away from housing towards political processes and the issue of ACT. Therefore, in the twelve months preceding its closure, the Batley Project was unable to refine or extend its work on housing issues. In the event, mainly the pragmatic elements in Project work survived to be acknowledged as of lasting benefit to the local authority.

NOTES

- 1 P. L. Henderson, 'Housing - Notes on the Way Ahead', January 1975, p. 1.
- 2 One of the Batley team was a member of the Group.

- 3 F. T. Burnett and Sheila F. Scott, 'A Survey of Housing Conditions in the Urban Areas of England and Wales 1960, *The Sociological Review*, 1962, (10), p. 50.
- 4 Eric Butterworth (ed.), *Immigrants in West Yorkshire - Social Conditions and the lives of Pakistanis, Indians and West Indians*, Institute of Race Relations Special Series, 1967, p. 5.
- 5 This section draws heavily on three papers :
- (1) *Batley, in Whatever Happened to Council Housing?* CDP Intelligence and Information Unit, Co-operative Press, 1976.
- (2) P. L. Edwards, *The Development of Public Housing Policy in Batley*, Batley CDP, January 1975.
- (3) P. L. Edwards, *Housing and Urban Renewal in Batley : A Case Study*, Batley CDP, September 1974.
- 6 *The Development of Public Housing Policy in Batley*, p. 9.
- 7 *Whatever Happened to Council Housing?*, p. 35.
- 8 See II, 5, *Information, Advice and Advocacy*, p. 94.
- 9 R. Lees, 'Redfyre Heating System', January 1973. The system had initially been installed because cheap supplies of coal were available, and as an alternative to more expensive electric heating.
- 10 'Redfyre Heating System', p. 1.
- 11 *ibid.*
- 12 P. L. Edwards, 'Some Notes on the Development of the Project's Housing Strategy', (undated), p. 2.
- 13 A paper written by P. L. Edwards entitled *Housing and Urban Renewal in Batley - A Case Study*, given at the National CDP Conference at the University of York, September 1974, reviews the GIA programme.
- 14 *The Development of Public Housing Policy in Batley*, p. 10.
- 15 It must also be acknowledged that these recommendations were only accepted after vigorous lobbying on CDP's behalf by Eric Dixon, then Town Clerk of Batley.
- 16 P. L. Edwards, 'Some Notes on the Development of the Project's Housing Strategy', p. 4.
- 17 'Some Notes on the Development of the Project's Housing Strategy', p. 1.
- 18 J. Rex and R. Moore, *Race, Community and Conflict : A Study of Sparkbrook*, Oxford University Press, 1974 Edition.
- 19 J. Rex and R. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
- 20 The housing classes are : (i) Outright owner-occupiers (ii) Council house tenants (iii) Tenants of whole private houses (iv) Lodging house proprietors (v) Tenants of lodging houses.

- 21 *The Development of Public Housing Policy in Batley*, pp. 11-15.
- 22 The Urban Priority Area Project was set up in September 1974.
- 23 *The Guardian*, 8 January 1975, 'Firmer Finance for Builders'.
- 24 Batley CDP, 'Notes on Housing in the Batley East Ward', January 1975.
- 25 M. McGrath, *Batley East and West : A CDP Study of Two Wards of Batley*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 5, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1976.
- 26 Batley UPA and Directorate of Environmental Health, *The Warwick Road Proposed Housing Action Area*, April 1976, p. 1.
- 27 Batley UPA and Directorate of Environmental Health, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 28 Batley UPA and Directorate of Environmental Health, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
- 29 Pat Niner, *Homes to Let : A Review of Housing Need and Waiting List Policy in Batley and Copeland (Cumbria)*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 18, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1978, pp. 9-14, 35-36.
- 30 Pat Niner, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- 31 Pat Niner, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
- 32 Pat Niner, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- 33 Pat Niner, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
- 34 Pat Niner, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
- 35 Green Paper, *Housing Policy, A Consultative Document*, Cmnd 6851. HMSO, 1977.
- 36 IV,2, Eric Dixon, *Batley CDP : The Assessment of a Chief Executive Officer*, p. 166.

The presence of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent has been a feature of Batley for over twenty years. There are two main groups : Muslims from Gujerat in India and Punjabis, also Muslims, from Pakistan. The former group is by far the larger, and the Pakistanis tend not to share in the religious and social life of the Indians. Their ties are more with the Pakistanis in Dewsbury, which is coterminous with Batley (though since 1974 it has been in a completely separate local government area) and they also have strong links with Pakistanis from the same areas as themselves who live in Bradford. In that city, a few miles from Batley, the proportion of Pakistanis to the total population is greater than anywhere else in Britain. Continuing and close links with other settlements containing kinsfolk in other parts of the country are a feature both of Indian Muslim and Pakistani groups.

Contact with the immigrant groups, particularly the Gujeratis, began at an early stage of the Community Development Project. Its extent and duration, and the successes and failures of what was attempted, require an overview of the minority groups and their historical experience in Batley before examining the nature of the action and research that took place. As a preamble, consideration should be given to the status of the newcomers. There is a danger that the term 'immigrant', continued in use many years after the arrival of the newcomers, can misrepresent the nature both of the members of the group and the experience they have. In that respect the stage at which people are 'immigrants', a term which tends to convey low status and a pejorative view of them in the way in which it has been used in Britain, is limited to those early years after arrival when certain adjustments are being made to ways of life to meet requirements of the new society. In what follows the term immigrant is not commonly used, although the groups were referred to as 'immigrant' in the publications from the Project, because by the stage the Project began their problems were largely those of minority status. Of course, there are certain respects in which issues concerning immigration remain significant : for example, there may be a whole generation which learns to speak English either not at all or to a very limited degree. At the same time the longer the migrant stays the more the circumstances of life are taken up with matters which affect his citizenship, and the associated rights and duties. Given this, it is necessary to have some view about the status of a member of a minority group. Size is not important in itself. A minority group has less than its share of the privileges and opportunities offered in society. A group may be subordinated in a variety of ways :

A minority group is in a relatively low power position in the society's system of stratification. As evidenced by the handicaps imposed on it it is not in the position either to make or enforce crucial decisions.

A minority group is in a relatively low prestige position in the society's system of stratification. The dominant group commonly stereotypes and assumes the inferiority of a minority group.

A minority group is in a relatively low economic position in the society's system of stratification.¹

The migrants who came to Batley are in a number of respects different from the people they have become, and the internal organisation of the groups has unique features about it. They have to be regarded not just as fractions

(or even replicas) of the people from which they are derived :

*since they may be, and often are, the result of secondary group formations due to conditions prevailing in the new social environment rather than in the old country.*²

This has a considerable bearing on the organisations and groupings which develop. The stages of settlement have reflected the composition of the newcomers : the progression has been from an overwhelming majority of men coming to find work in the early years of migration into Batley, to the entry of wives and children a few years later from the countries of origin, and then to the growing development of the institutions of the particular group and the changing balance of its population as more and more children are born in Britain.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINORITY COMMUNITY IN BATLEY

Any collective term such as 'Asian Community' or 'Muslim Community' is normally based on an 'outsider's' perception and may not necessarily have meaning for the members of the group itself.³ It has been suggested that the Gujerati Muslim group is a religious minority with special reasons for migrating since :

*their lives had already been disrupted by the partition of the old India into India and Pakistan, by the disorders that preceded and followed this event, and by the subsequent larger scale movement of population in both directions across the borders.*⁴

However, this does not recognise that many of the migrants came from the southern part of the Gujerat and did not have to move after partition, nor that a strong tradition of migration had been established there over hundreds of years. Migration away from the Gujerat should be seen in that context. Through Surat some Muslims migrated first to Burma and then to other countries in South-East Asia. When slavery was abolished, in 1834, a system of indentured labour replaced it, taking workers, for example, to the West Indies, Africa and other parts of the globe. A growing number of migrants joined these schemes from the Gujerat, and by 1900 almost all the villages from which Indian Muslims in Batley originated had sent young men to South and East Africa.⁵

To add to the global context of migration away from the Gujerat several factors peculiar to British society affected the Muslim Community that grew up in Batley, a community which developed its unique form from a combination of economic, socio-cultural, and religious factors. In 1956 an Indian Muslim had taken in lodgers from his own village, and others came into the town, living in an area which is now demolished, Cross Bank, but which is retained in the name of an existing Muslim cricket club. Not all migrants came directly from India or Pakistan : some had lived in other parts of England (most in nearby towns and cities in West Yorkshire) and had moved to Batley either because of the availability of suitable housing, or prospects of employment.

Growth and development arose through migration in which, as a rule, near and also distant relatives provided money and social support.⁶ This was not a purely 'mechanical' operation, as described by one writer, but one involving, in loan repayment, a sense of obligation as well as technical indebtedness.⁷ Two factors seem to have influenced the nature of the early settlement : the shortage of labour in particular industries, and the attitudes towards land. The majority of migrants were small landowners, and their desire for ownership was reflected in their increasing determination to buy houses, which were readily available, rather than rent them.

After 1945 several sectors of British industry had experienced labour shortages. Among them was the woollen textile industry, whose decline in the availability of labour had come about for two main reasons. The first was that the tradition of young men and women progressing directly from school to work in the mill had been broken, and the second that alternative opportunities for employment in secondary and tertiary industries had expanded. Initially, this shortage of labour was largely met by the introduction of labour from Europe. Most were displaced persons, Poles or others who had fought for the Allies during the war, and their numbers were continually being increased by the recruitment of European Volunteer Workers (EVWs), mainly women, from Eastern Europe, from 1947 onwards. They had to work in industries of national importance for several years; by the early and mid-1950s, however, there was a movement out of the woollen industry of those who had little alternative but to take employment there after arrival. In this way the path was open for the recruitment of a new source of supply of relatively cheap labour from the Indian sub-continent; the unacceptable alternative (for most employers) was an intensification of the drive towards mechanisation and modernisation.

Relatively soon after the introduction of Asian workers from the Indian sub-continent employers began to recognise their special characteristics, and in general to value them. These workers were dexterous in the processes they were called upon to master. Because of the economic motives behind their migration they were prepared to work long hours in overtime, or on night shifts which were unpopular with their fellow-workers due to the inconvenience and disruption of normal life. The principal motivation of Asian workers was to improve their earning power as much as possible in the interests either of buying property or of sending sums of money back to their families in their countries of origin. There were few women among the early migrants. An estimate made in the early 1960s, for West Yorkshire as a whole, suggests that more than four out of five Asian adults were economically active.⁸

The second factor which influenced the pattern of migrant settlement in Batley was the availability of very cheap housing. The settlements established in Batley were in run-down areas of the town, and although migrants had little in the way of purchasing power at the time it was possible for a newcomer to buy a house even if its expected life span was short, its size small, and the level of amenity low and with few rooms. In their country of origin most migrants had lived in houses owned by the heads of the extended family, and they found Western ideas of renting property unfamiliar. Thus they sought to become owner-occupiers. The low standard and age of these properties and the absence of some basic amenities did create other problems for their occupants, but in itself the situation allowed for the concentration of the settlement in two main areas of Batley. The close proximity enhanced the cohesion of its members and allowed for the creation of institutions such as mosques and madrassas, the latter a kind of school, and the establishment of a variety of shops designed to provide for their main requirements.

In a real sense then the community thus created was more integrated than that of the indigenous British population which lived in Batley. It had a tradition of endogamy, or marrying within the kin group, which ensured the continuation of close links between members. As Ismail Lambat has written :

The marriage code among the Indian Muslims starts with the marriage cousins. This is in keeping with the Arabic-Islamic pattern of marriages. When there are no parallel cousins of a suitable age, the next in preference are cross-cousins. In

*this way the marriage circle first extends to cover all the relatives and then only moves out to non-relatives in the village. Only when no suitable partner is available within the village is a partner sought from another village. But once a marriage has taken place with someone from another village more marriages may get arranged between young persons of the same two families.*⁹

This pattern, well developed in Batley, supplemented the various other ways in which Muslims made contacts with other areas, for example through the missionary body, the Tabligh Jamaat. By the time a CDP came to Batley a strong Indian Muslim settlement had been built up, with its homeland ties firmly focused upon Gujerat state in India, and with links with other communities from the homeland both in Britain and traditional areas of migration from Gujerat in such countries as South Africa and Kenya.

THE MINORITY GROUP

At the time of the 1971 Census, when Batley had an enumerated population of 42,004 inhabitants, 3,150 of these were Indians and 350 Pakistanis. Among the former there were four Hindu households. From the point of view of a Community Development Project it is to be noted that such a population, comprising over 8 per cent of the inhabitants of the town, was relatively homogenous and the overwhelming majority, from Gujerat, shared a great number of features of their situation. Moreover, two other factors must be taken into account. The first was the almost certain underenumeration of its members. The reasons for this were associated with the levels of English and literacy generally, the fears that information of this kind might be used against immigrants, say for purposes connected with rates, overcrowding and taxation, and the thoroughness of the procedures used in the Census. The second concerns the increasing numbers of children born to migrant parents who were classified in the Census as British by birth. By 1971 it would be reasonable to assume that over 10 per cent of the population of Batley were Muslims either born on the Indian sub-continent, or their children, and that this proportion increased quite considerably during the period in which the Project was in being. The rise in the school population from 1965 to 1967 was from 132 to 445, an increase of 237 per cent. Increases close to this level continued during the period of CDP.¹⁰

In relation to the Project in Batley the figures show that by 1971 a substantial number of wives and children had joined their husbands but most had been in Batley only a few years. The early settlement was changing its character, and children were born in Batley in increasing numbers to wives and husbands who had been reunited or to couples whose marriages had been contracted in the period after the men had entered the UK. The problems that groups such as the Indian Muslims of Batley faced were those of minority status as time went on rather than merely of being migrants to a society whose ways of life, procedures and forms of provision were unfamiliar to them. These matters will be raised again when the initiatives of the Project in relation to the minorities come to be considered. It is worth noting here that the groups were experiencing a change from facing problems which arose from their being migrants to one where they had an increasing number which reflected their minority status and the difficulties of gaining help against the discrimination they experienced which arose from this; discrimination in employment, credit, educational, housing and welfare areas in particular. At the same time the potential for community development with members of such groups is conditioned not only by this but also by the nature of the community, the existing apparatus for community relations, and the attitudes and expectations of the groups themselves.

In Batley there had been a Community Relations Committee (CRC) in existence in the town since 1969 in the two years to the setting up of the CDP but it had taken initiatives of a very limited kind. Those consisted in the main of attempts at either social or educational functions directed towards conventional ideas of harmony in race relations. After the appointment of the Community Relations Officer (CRO) in 1970 some advice-giving was provided on an individual basis. There were many areas of policy affecting the newcomers on which action needed to be taken. It was clear then at the time the Project was established that a considerable potential existed for community development with minority groups in Batley.

CDP AND THE MINORITIES

When considering the work of the twelve CDPs it is surprising how little was attempted with members of minority groups *per se*. In Batley the 'Project view' represented by the first Action Director, was that the level of operation of the Community Relations structure was so limited that much stronger links needed to be forged with the 'leadership' of the Muslim community. It was expected that this would lead to more effective forms of action than the limited and conventional initiatives of the Community Relations Council, seen as geared to the needs of the majority.

Having met the leaders of the Muslim Welfare Society (MWS) a more direct approach to Community Development with minorities was planned. The assumption behind this was that the issues needed to be seen from the point of view of the minorities and that the MWS could provide this. Such a view was open to some question on the basis of the information available on leadership among Muslims, including the differences between Indian and Pakistani Muslims, and, from research in Bradford and elsewhere in the 1960s, on the high level of factionalism between and within ethnic groups.¹¹ Although they shared a common religion there were considerable differences in language and culture between the two groups. Indian Muslims were from the Gujerat and spoke Gujerati; whilst the Pakistanis in the town spoke Punjabi. In the sample taken of 43 immigrant households 34 were Indian and 9 Pakistani.¹²

After contacts had been made with the MWS a list of questions was drawn up covering the main problems as seen by that body and a letter explaining the survey in Gujerati and English was sent to all immigrant households in Batley. The questionnaire was developed and agreement on it was reached. Those households in the sample also received a copy of the questionnaire in advance of the interview so that there would be time for individuals to ponder on the questions asked. Interviews were carried out by an MWS interviewer and a CDP interviewer, an arrangement which had advantages and disadvantages. In particular it was found that the MWS interviewer was often known to those interviewed. This may have affected and inhibited the respondents in their replies, given the possibility that an English interviewer would not wish to hear answers criticising the English community. It became clear that many of the responses to questions on discrimination were guarded.

The main conclusions of the survey (34 Indians and 9 Pakistanis) were summarised in the Report :

Language was felt to be the main difficulty. Nearly half the sample mentioned language problems, and 21 of the 30 men who felt that immigrants had problems cited language and/or education as one of the principal problems. Only 7 of the 40 wives in the sample spoke any English.

Housing was the second most commonly mentioned problem. Houses in the Batley Carr area were scarce and the need for larger, more modern accommodation was remarked upon. All but three of the sample were owner-occupiers in small, low standard terraced housing. Over one-third of households wanted a larger house and nearly two-thirds were overcrowded on Government Social Survey standards. Few households had knowledge of improvement grants.

Education. The majority of parents were satisfied with schools. Most had visited the primary schools but few had visited the secondary schools. Nearly a fifth of parents of primary school children and almost half the parents of secondary school children considered that their children had language difficulties that required extra tuition. Most parents disliked their children attending morning assembly but in general problems associated with religious education were uncommon.

Further Education. Although it was assumed that girls would leave school at sixteen years unless they wished to attend dressmaking classes at the Batley Art College, it was hoped that sons would stay on at school with some technical training in mind. (The jobs obtained by boys who left school after the survey suggested that these aspirations were rarely realised.)

Employment. The range of employment was small. 28 of the 37 men working were in textiles. There appeared to be a very high work mobility, a third of men had been in their present jobs under a year. The type of job taken by those 15 men who had training in India did not differ from those without training. Over a quarter of the men, especially those with previous training, were dissatisfied with their job. A clear demand for further training among younger men existed.

Welfare Services. Few difficulties were mentioned in this sphere. The Welfare Clinic had been visited by all but one mother. In general, however, there was little contact with social workers or other officials.

Links with non-immigrant community. The majority said relationships with English neighbours were friendly. About a third had heard of the Community Relations Committee or Officer, and four had had contact. The need for a number of general facilities to be provided was noted : examples suggested were library books in Gujerati and Urdu, an Advice Centre, Youth Group, Playgroup and Community Centre.¹³

From these observations the major conclusions of the survey were that :

- (i) there was an urgent need for language education for children and adults. As far as the young were concerned difficulties associated with language were decreasing in the primary and junior schools, but were still pronounced at the secondary school level where the employment opportunities for some immigrants were effectively reduced. At the playgroup, pre-school nursery, infant, junior and senior levels there was a strong case for extra provision of language teachers and for the provision of new learning techniques applicable to different age groups.

For adults the situation was severe. Language difficulties emerged in most areas of life, most noticeably in respect of employment, housing and welfare services. Because of language difficulties immigrant women, in particular, were vulnerable and socially isolated. Here home-tuition was seen as a possible answer, whereas as far as men were concerned, two answers were available : either individual or group home-tuition or formal instruction in classes devised for the purpose. Older men favoured the former method.

Though the problems were clear, and so were some answers, it was felt that increased language provision alone could do little to alter the situation. Parents must understand the basis of the Educational system in Britain, especially in further education, and it was suggested that time could profitably be spent in imparting the basics of such information.

- (ii) There was a significant demand for further education training, mainly technical for the younger men.
- (iii) As far as discrimination was concerned it appeared that job discrimination was under-reported. Where it occurred it was more often at foreman or chargehand level than at senior management level. Few men put themselves in a position where they were likely to be discriminated against, preferring instead to apply to those firms whom they knew gave employment to immigrants. In housing, too, it was likely that a higher level of discrimination existed than that admitted or reported.
- (iv) There was a strong indication that the immigrant population in Batley wished to remain in the Batley Carr area close to the mosque, even though this was an area of housing stress characterised by sub-standard, small and overcrowded dwellings. Half of the sample expressed a need for larger houses and less crowded conditions. In the same Batley Carr area a considerable underprovision of social facilities was reported. Many respondents stressed the need for Community Centres, Playgroup and Youth Clubs to be provided together with the provision of more books in Gujerati and Urdu at the Public Library.¹⁴

Just as the sample survey undertaken in conjunction with the Muslim Welfare Society was being completed the Community Development Project started its major Community survey based upon a one in five sample of two wards in Batley. Though it was related initially to the work of the Welfare Rights Campaign, the data offered further insights into the immigrant community, underlining the fact that the immigrant population of Batley's East and West wards contained a high proportion of vulnerable groups. The survey results revealed a number of disadvantages from which Indian Muslims suffered, and also some significant differences between them and the indigenous population. Out of the final completed sample of 850 a total of 54 or 6.4 per cent were immigrants and of these an estimated 75 per cent were Indian Muslims from the Gujerat.¹⁵

A higher percentage of them were employed than indigenous workers. Nearly two-thirds were semi-skilled or unskilled manual workers : the figures for

heads of households were : 63 per cent immigrants as opposed to 31.5 per cent indigenous in these social classes. A greater frequency of large families was to be found among immigrants : 44 per cent of immigrant families had four or more children, the indigenous proportion being 17 per cent. Over four out of five immigrant householders had children in them as compared with just over one-third of the indigenous households.

A great difference was seen in the age distribution - a consequence of the relatively recent migration of economically active males who were later joined by their wives. No immigrant head of household was over retirement age whereas 30 per cent of the indigenous heads were. Whilst 11 per cent of indigenous heads of households were under thirty years old, over 28 per cent of immigrant heads were. It was to be expected that a much higher proportion of immigrant heads were economically active because of the differing age distributions : there were 82 per cent economically active as compared with 50 per cent indigenous.

The general view of migrants has been that they were among the lowest earners. The Survey revealed that average gross earnings were very similar, the difference being between £31-61 for immigrants and £31-40 for indigenous. Both the figures are very low indeed and indicate dependence on earnings from other members of the family. Immigrant men in general worked longer hours, and 27 per cent of them had worked 60 hours or more at the time of the Survey as compared with 7 per cent of indigenous men. It appeared that immigrants had smaller savings than indigenous people : over two-thirds of immigrant heads of households had no savings, according to them, and none had savings of £1,000 or more. 6 per cent of indigenous heads claimed to have savings of £1,000 or more, and 44 per cent no savings. At the same time this conceals the reality that a larger proportion of immigrants were buying their own homes, and also that largely through kinship and community networks their chance of raising money when needed was much greater.

In the two wards in which the survey was conducted it was to be expected that the proportions of various categories will be different from those in a broader sample. The areas of higher deprivation will contain relatively more retired and lower proportions of the affluent or higher status groups. Quite apart from other considerations the numbers of people in immigrant households were much greater; 54 per cent had six or more persons living in them. There were only 9 per cent of indigenous households with six or more in them. Moreover, only two out of the fifty four immigrant households lived in council housing as compared with 43 per cent of the indigenous households.¹⁶

The findings of the Survey were largely in line with available information on other immigrant populations. Having clearly established these facts a number of conclusions could be drawn from them and opportunities for action devised, some relevant to the population as a whole and others of more significance to the immigrant population.

COMMUNITY WORK WITH INDIAN MUSLIMS

A number of possible initiatives in community work arose from the surveys which have been mentioned. The provision of language education for children and adults was one area, and already in a school in Batley considerable attention was being paid to this for adolescents.¹⁷ The Community Relations Council had a language scheme for women operating, but it was assumed that this was fairly limited in its scope. The problems of language schemes are not to be underestimated, and it is possible that the expectations which led to the scheme were hardly capable of being fulfilled. Given the subordinate

position of women many husbands would take exception to their wives studying a language which would enable them to converse with neighbours and make contacts outside the home of which they may not approve. The whole question of chaperoning women, and protecting them from other men, was of very great importance within such a community. The level of education among women was not high, and in addition to this there were many differences between the use of direct language training and the forms of tuition to which those who had been to school were used. Learning in the Indian sub-continent at the school level is geared to learning by rote and other techniques by which the teacher tells the students and they learn what is appropriate. The direct teaching of English involves the participation of pupils, and for that reason it has been difficult to develop, even on a one-to-one basis, among Asian women. The community in Batley was more conservative in many ways than elsewhere. The whole issue of the quality of the 'teachers' was also to be considered : many of these, whether full-time or volunteers, could be well-intentioned but not necessarily effective.

Given the involvement already of the CRC, and the work being done in secondary schools, it was unlikely that CDP would be able to move into the area with more confidence and knowledge and more resources than the existing facilities could provide. Where CDP might assist would be in indicating ways of improving provision, and also of those who were both in need of language teaching and prepared to take it on. Thus the contacts with the MWS could have helped to produce a larger group of people to undertake the learning of English. One scheme in Bradford, a few miles away, had made provision for mothers to learn English at the time that their children were attending a pre-school playgroup in an adjoining room. There was plenty of scope for this kind of initiative, but it was not one where CDP could help a great deal. Similarly, the conclusion that there was a need for further education training was again an issue on which CDP could lobby, inform and mobilise support but was not well placed to pursue in other ways.¹⁸

The evidence for job discrimination was apparent but again it was difficult to see ways in which action could be encouraged : apart from informing and creating a wider discussion of the issues, the role of CDP could only be limited. It was in the area of housing and the community needs of Indian Muslims living in the same area that CDP had considerable opportunities.

The two year period of contact from the beginning of 1972 between the Indian Muslim community and CDP was characterised by three approaches. These have been itemised at greater length in other contexts but are essentially :

- (i) *a study of existing services, and an understanding how the Community Relations Council was fulfilling its role;*
- (ii) *making contact with the official leaders of the Muslim welfare society to see in the main how they perceived the needs of their community; and*
- (iii) *a survey conducted in association with the MWS to identify further needs and place problems in a broad context.¹⁹*

All these are preliminary forms of community work, but there was also the intention of improving as well as understanding the situation. The approaches brought their own difficulties. In the first instance CDP became involved in the controversy between the CRC and the MWS. There had been two major bones of contention. One was that soon after his appointment the Community Relations Officer, who had been in the Indian Army during the war and had previous to his appointment been an Educational Welfare Officer, arranged a meeting to consider various important issues for the community in November 1971. The meeting was subsequently reported in the local press under the heading

'Help for Asian Women'.²⁰ The main speaker suggested that the standard of literacy among immigrants was very low, that they had come from small villages dependent on an impoverished peasant economy, that their religious feelings were strong and because of these, women were expected to remain largely within the home. In addition the Community Relations Officer was quoted as saying that :

one immigrant gave his three daughters a British education, and when they expressed wishes for freedom of English girls, he took his family back overseas and came back - alone.

The officer also predicted as a personal opinion that 'inter-marriages would take place between Muslim boys and white girls'. Whatever the merits of these assessments they were completely speculative. Raising them in this way at an early stage in the life of the Community Relations Council could not help its prospects. From the point of view of Muslims it seemed that the CRC was a body designed to serve the power structure rather than the needs of migrants.

What is termed 'community relations' emerged from the institutions and organisations that were largely in operation before 1968 in Britain. These origins, and the approaches to which they gave rise, are still apparent and influential. The whole ideology was based firmly on a traditional British approach, seen in the voluntary organisations, which postulated a situation where harmony 'can be steadfastly pursued in the face of whatever tensions and conflicts may arise'.²¹ A consequence of this approach is that when tensions and conflicts occur it is assumed they are caused by those who are not prepared to be 'reasonable'. The model which stressed harmony and respectability was acceptable because :

it appealed to the notion of organic social change and the "British tradition" ... it promised little that was specific, so it could be seen as offering many things.²²

The Batley CRC followed this model, and was a relatively inactive example of it. The money for the council came from the Community Relations Commission a quasi-governmental body which was financed by central government funds, and the local authority. The CRC nationally provided the money which was required for the salary of the officer and other staff as a rule, and the local authority provided the accommodation and usually any services or equipment that went with the accommodation. There was an aspect of the operation of the local CRCs which was obviously very much concerned with the perceptions of local politicians and particularly the parties which were in power. It could be argued that because of this financial support from two highly sensitive political masters, broadly defined, the scope of more radical activities was relatively limited.

The other important distinction to make about the activities of the Batley CRC was that it followed very closely what is being described as the initial approach to Community Relations, when the settlements of migrants from the tropical Commonwealth were in an early stage. The approach tended to be very much concerned with advice-giving to specific enquiries from migrants and also to a general educational function, which consisted of giving talks to a variety of organisations. It has been pointed out that up to about 1968 the committees tended to see the problems of race relations as being 'individual' problems and 'welfare' problems rather than those of discrimination and the denial of equal rights.²³ From roughly 1970 there were changes in that more CRCs began to be concerned about policy areas such as education and housing, but this was not reflected in the approach in Batley. In this respect Batley was by no means untypical of some of the smaller areas with CRCs, but it in no sense made a vital contribution to the welfare of the migrant communities in its area.

The meeting of November 1971 ensured that the council would get off to a bad start as far as the MWS was concerned. The President of the Association had been an unsuccessful candidate for the post of CRO, and there was a 'very stormy protest' from the Chairman of the MWS after the meeting was reported. The letter he wrote to the local newspaper 'vividly illustrates one kind of immigrant response to initiatives seen as seeking to criticise or interfere with cultural and religious values' :

The majority of the immigrant population in this town come from Gujerat state, which is perhaps the richest district in India. To suggest that the majority of our people living here were peasants who were living on a starvation diet and were completely uneducated before they came here is quite untrue ... Perhaps the worst aspect of the article was that it gave the impression that Muslim women are in some way oppressed. The proposals of the Community Relations Council to send English women into the homes of our people would be acceptable as a gesture of friendship, but there seems to be a strong suggestion that the Council wishes to change the attitude of Muslim women. The conditions in which Muslim women live in our homes are required by our religion, and for the Council to attack the basic tenets of Islam in this way can only lead to the undermining of family life and the deep religious feeling on which our members lives are based. 24

The consequence of the dispute was that the MWS did not respond to any initiatives from the CRC during the whole of the period of time in which CDP was in existence. What the leadership of the MWS required from the CDP was assistance in presenting and lobbying for issues which were of importance to it as a community. These included the need to maintain and extend the provision of religious education, which was closely linked with all aspects of life.

The Muslim marriage ceremony was another issue, and it was hoped that it could be recognised as legal in this country. There were questions about burial, circumcision, and the availability of buildings to convert into mosques. In addition, there was widespread concern about the effects of housing policies which might disperse the community. A question which was not resolved within CDP was the extent to which this leadership reflected the real views or needs of the migrant community.

There are several ways in which *need* may be defined. In the first place there is a *normative need*, and in this 'experts' frequently fix *need* with a particular definition and decide anyone outside it is *in need*. Over-crowding in houses, low standards of literacy, levels of amenity, are all areas in which *normative need* is defined.

Felt need is what people say they want when they are asked about it. In addition to this there is the area of *expressed need*, when a felt need is translated into a demand or active request by a pressure group, and *comparative need*, where resources available within certain geographical areas or to certain groups are assessed.

Most of the initiatives that were proposed were to do with *expressed needs*, and these came from the 'leadership' and partly from the questionnaire surveys. The *expressed needs* were basically geared to what leaders saw as being desirable for the community. Given the factional nature of much Muslim leadership in Britain, this could be treated with a certain degree of scepticism. At the same time there is some evidence to suggest that communities of migrants in Britain have become more organised over a period of time, and more orthodox than they were when they were initially established.

The explanation is that the leadership may have a vested interest in polarising issues between the migrant community and the other inhabitants, basically as a means of preserving and enhancing their own power and influence. This issue was certainly discussed within CDP, but little attention was given to it. Another factor in limiting involvement was the relative lack of interest by the Action team, other than the Project Director, in such initiatives.

Where the involvement of CDP became problematical was in its identification with particular objectives, such as the provision of a mosque or single-sex education. There was little scope for changing the system of education and the involvement, for example, in support of single-sex education, as desired by Muslims, could only be self-defeating.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Early in 1973 the first Action Director visited villages in Gujerat for several months. What the visit made much clearer was the links between the settlements in Gujerat and places of settlement in other parts of the world.²⁶ It appears that early settlers from Gujerat left for South Africa, as indentured labourers, in the middle of the nineteenth century. Money from such settlements in South Africa still comes in regularly. In one village that was visited there was an outstandingly beautiful mosque, financed from South Africa, a country that was also the source of money for a training college for priests with a complete campus on which hostel accommodation was provided for almost 500 students.

The visit also threw light on the religious organisation of villages. In Gujerat each village had its own group of Muslim elders who :

*concerned themselves with the immediate needs of their own village, in particular the upkeep, decoration or building of the mosque and of course the provision of education in Islamic.*²⁷

The district of Surat has its own *Sunni Vohra Muslim Education Society*, the name at the beginning denoting the particular sect to which these Muslims belong. This society states in its constitution, which is printed in English and Gujerati, that its aims and objects include :

- (i) *to establish, take over, affiliate, maintain, manage, supervise or help colleges, high middle primary and kindergarten schools, hostels, boarding houses, orphanages, and madrassas, dispensaries, maternity homes, co-operative societies and printing presses at suitable places within or without the aforementioned territorial limits in India;*
- (ii) *to impart commercial, agricultural, scientific, industrial, intellectual, literary, medical, religious, secular, technical and physical education and for the purpose to give scholarships for the attainment of religious as also secular education;*
- (iii) *to provide for stipends, scholarships, prizes, books and to arrange elocution and essay competitions and to provide necessary materials for education with or without conditions either as free gifts or as loans repayable by easy instalments ...*²⁸

The connection with Britain has also produced financial resources which go into provision in the neighbourhood, and to improve the financial and social

standing of the families to whom they are sent. The experience in Gujerat obviously heightened the extent to which the structure of leadership to be found in a place like Batley was divergent from that in the home area. At the same time what was also apparent was the enormous diversity of organisations and the extent to which the basic aspects of life were integrated into a cultural and religious whole. It also indicated the extent to which the migrants in Batley were 'from families of account and prominence in their local community, whereas in England they would be considered second-class citizens'. This was a comment made by the Deputy Minister for Education in Gujerat.²⁹ It indicates the levels of aspiration among the community, and bears out some of the investigations that went on in Batley.³⁰ The policy directions which were strengthened after the visit, according to the Action Director's analysis, were in two areas : the first was to support the second generation who were coming through the school system, and the second was to look in general 'at the nature and extent of the dependency of the Muslim community on its ethical identity'.³¹ Despite the preliminary work that was done the issues were not carried further in that form. Negotiations that were going on for a project on education with staff from the University of York did not bear fruit because the main person who would have been involved left to take up another appointment soon afterwards.

What occurred in the year between the visit in March 1973 and the resignation of the Action Director almost a year later, was therefore relatively minor. It was only after the re-establishment of the project in 1975 that a new focus for the work was developed. This depended on the appointment of a Muslim with high educational qualifications as a community worker. He operated as part of the Urban Priority Area (UPA) Project.

Although the visit may have provided new information it was disappointing in terms of the results which followed for the project as a whole. Soon after returning, partly through the pressure of other kinds of work, the Action Director gave up her involvement with the Muslim Welfare Society to a great extent. One of the problems which she had discussed with others in the past, but which she had felt able to overcome, became much more crucial : this was the extent to which some of the leadership of that Society saw her as a potential ally either against other parts of the same body or in initiatives on a town-wide basis. Her ambivalent position as a leader and a woman, accepted in the early stages of the association between the MWS and CDP, appeared to become a greater barrier.

In one sense CDP became identified as both a counterweight to the local Community Relations Council and in another respect its overt and implicit criticisms of the latter body led to expectations, which were not realised, that a new Community Relations Council would be organised which would tackle the problems in a more dynamic way and would be able to co-operate effectively with the MWS. In retrospect, it seems unlikely that any organisation would have achieved this level of co-operation with MWS, given their priorities and the need for the CRC to consider the interests both of all minorities within the town and the balance between minorities and majority. There were many areas of work which CDP staff could take on without in any sense threatening the existence of the local Community Relations Council, leaving it to get on with the work with which it was concerned. The CRC operation left a great deal to be desired, and there were many questions about how effective it was in relation to the resources it received. However, by focusing upon these, and in some ways giving the impression that the organisation needed to be changed as a *first step* the CDP team was limiting its scope of action.

In the conclusion of the Project Director's report on her visit to India she indicated a number of the issues that remained, in her view, in Batley, and viewed the Indian Muslims as a community which is disadvantaged and which is in a weak position. Whilst acknowledging the many disadvantages that members of the community faced it is also the case that they were also in potentially strong situations for a variety of reasons. If the estimate of the leadership of the MWS is correct, then they were in a position to raise a great deal of money; £3,000 per annum was mentioned. This could have financed many initiatives and provided the group, quite apart from the members involved, with strong bargaining power in policy areas. These were not taken up in any sense by CDP other than by lobbying for them. From the point of view of community work techniques CDP was on the one hand too involved with MWS, without being in a position to assess its influence in the community as a whole, and on the other hand too distant, in that it had to take the word of the leadership for the main needs which existed. When the survey revealed the gap between the needs the community were said to have and what the individual leaders considered the needs to be, the consequence was that the MWS took no part in discussing the results of the survey, and these never became a part of the programme of Community Development.

In their article Lees and McGrath comment that :

*the classic community development approach to immigrant organisations is unlikely to achieve quick results.*³²

This could be more as a consequence of failures to identify what is feasible, and to take into account conflicts of interest within the group and attempts to 'use' CDP, than any particular limitation of community development techniques as such. In fact, the Indian community was shown to be extremely strong by comparison with most groups of people living in run-down areas in the centre of British towns and cities. The Asian community was closer to the relatively harmonious model of an integrated community than the indigenous population : it may be a measure of the unreality of the perceptions that were shown that on the one hand CRC did not tackle the wider issues, preferring an individual approach (not pursued with great energy), and CDP preferred to advocate when advocacy would have come better from the group itself, which was potentially very strong and needing only relatively minor inputs to put its own case. CDP, or those involved with the minorities in it, was weak on power, except insofar as it commanded some resources. CDP could have done more in the area of *expressed need* as far as issues that were relevant to community work were concerned. In becoming involved in a range of issues which it was said Muslims wanted to see resolved CDP moved outside its sphere of expertise and could have been at the mercy of those who were able to influence those making decisions about its priorities.

It would have been better had the Project operated in areas either of *normative need*, involving campaigns for education which would make good use of the contacts that CDP had established, or *expressed need* which were within areas of public policy in which CDP could have some influence. However, a more successful kind of work with the Indian Muslim group came about with the appointment early in 1975 of a member of staff who took contact with migrants on an individual basis much further.

URBAN PRIORITY AREA (UPA)

In the period after the resignation of the first Project Director (in March 1974) little happened with Indian Muslims. The Summer of 1974 was taken up with the strike of four action workers which effectively led to the termination of a number of areas of work. Since the link with the Gujarati community

had been almost entirely through the Director there were no problems which arose on that score. Thus, when the new team was appointed during the early part of 1975 opportunities for work with the minority community were present.

The expectation that something could happen was reinforced by the establishment in the Batley East ward of an Urban Priority Area. The main thrust of this approach, to which some members of staff of CDP were allocated, was to focus upon the many problems of the area and provide intensive advice, help and advocacy to its inhabitants. In particular, the focus was upon deprivation and inadequate provision, the most significant of which was in housing. Whatever the success of UPA generally, this became secondary to a further issue which effectively split the Project and prevented it from achieving its aims.

Before the appointment of the Muslim worker, discussions about what might be done were generally vague. From her short experience in Algeria one worker considered that one of her first priorities should be to start a newspaper for women. However, the women she was concerned with were from a very conservative background in the first place and many were not literate in Gujarati. When this matter was discussed eventually by the team it was decided to attempt to create a newspaper for men, the title of which was *Batley's Other Voices*, but this lacked leadership and eventually, after some discussion, failed to materialise. In the final six months of the CDP that remained when the Urban Priority Area was established a number of things were done, most of which related to work with the Indian Muslims. Whilst others were involved in a variety of 'political' activities, some of those attached to the UPA attempted to carry out its expressed purposes in the designated part of Batley East ward.

CDP, from which UPA derived, had a number of things in its favour, and was better known than the Community Relations Council. It had undertaken a household survey of an extensive kind, the results of which had led to the proposal for the priority area. Moreover, it had had welfare rights leaflets translated into Gujarati for the benefit of those who could not read and understand English.³³ It had also made attempts, through the employment of a Sikh woman in 1972, to come at some of the problems and find out ways of helping the community to organise itself and present its views. Now could be the time for a more sustained attempt to introduce community development approaches which would have beneficial consequences.

In fact, the approach of the worker was to take up individual issues which in a limited number of cases had implications for group activity. UPA was located in two caravans on a derelict site which was central for the concentrations of Asian migrants; it was not long before it came to be looked upon more as a project or advice centre for them. Although there was some work with the indigenous population the number of callers increased substantially once the UPA project was relocated in the caravans (from the central office in the main street of Batley) and most of these were Asians.

Up to the time when CDP was closed some records were kept but these were not of a comprehensive type. Nor were they kept with the idea of reporting back to committees, but rather of indicating the pattern and range of enquiries that were developing. After the resignation of the first appointee the three remaining workers stayed with UPA up to the time when the project was discontinued through shortage of funds in the Summer of 1977. Ismael Lambat, the community worker, obtained the help of his colleagues on some of the issues where they knew more than he did, an example being housing, but the main focus was upon individual grievance-solving and information-giving.

The worker believed that the spread of enquiries that he had encountered was similar both at the beginning of his involvement, when UPA was part of CDP,

and when UPA was a project within the local authority. The enquiries were categorised according to subjects, and the number of enquiries were noted over the last year of the Project. The figures showed that the most important issues were, in terms of the numbers of callers who wanted action on them : immigration, housing, enquiries to do with the Department of Health and Social Security, inland revenue enquiries, and employment. The other issues, much less important, included : education, interpreting, trade unions, social services and marriage counselling. These did not necessarily, however, represent a low level of concern about such issues, callers went back several times to obtain the information that they required. In terms of his operating the worker indicates just how far he had to take any issue that was presented to him, whatever his level of knowledge. In a sense this reflects a particular style of work which undoubtedly achieved considerable benefits for the individuals who came to him but had little impact on the extent to which groups were formed and could present issues.

The advantages which the worker brought to Batley were considerable. He spoke Gujarati and was also fluent in English and Urdu which assisted his contacts with local officials and representatives from other migrant groups. He shared the conservative religious and cultural values of the group, and the fact that he was a man allowed him to enter the male-dominated society without any trouble. He was a regular attender at the mosque, and he and his family lived in a terraced home in what he describes as 'the most run-down area of Batley and in the heart of the Asian settlement'.³⁴ He also knew a number of people from his Indian contacts who were either in Batley or who knew people in Batley.

His own background was that he belonged to a settlement long established in South Africa and was born in that country. His educational level was high, and he was studying for a PhD. with a Dutch Institute at the time he worked in Batley. There were some reasons why he may not have been as acceptable as others : four local men had applied unsuccessfully for the position which he got. Two of them were from a village which was providing a large number of the Indian population of Batley and both these were related to a leader of high status in the community. The opportunity was therefore present for the leader to encourage people not to come to him. The extent to which such a post was prized has to be seen as a function of the limited opportunities which Asians generally have for obtaining non-manual employment. The problem with the 'outsider', who had implicitly offended a number of those inside the community before he started, was something which led to a low-key approach in the early stages. As the outsider was also an unknown quantity, it might be feared that he would bring in significant changes which would not necessarily be either to the liking or the benefit of either the community or its leadership. However, there is little doubt that during the progress of the Urban Priority Area Project the worker did little to worry the leadership of the community, although his offer of free advice on a range of subjects could be seen as cutting into some existing practices, such as paid advice-giving and filling in forms, which were present in the community.

As time went on the worker saw the personal problems of the community very clearly and did a lot about many of them. Altogether he dealt with over a thousand enquiries in the year for which he completed detailed records : a significant number of those in the community came for advice, even allowing for the fact that some of them appeared more than once in the records. Quite a number of cases affected several individuals. The areas of personal contact and advice-giving were those in which the workers were seen to best advantage. In terms of the work with groups the initiatives that were attempted were relatively minor and they did not at any time achieve importance. In discussing this matter Ismael Lambat considers that Muslims were reluctant to involve themselves in organising groups, were 'too busy,

were indifferent, or did not want to play a leading role'.³⁵ He suggests that most of them backed out even if they were interested in the problems.

Some progress was made in connection with information-giving or bringing people together to resolve misunderstandings or conflicts. Meetings were arranged between Muslim parents and the headmaster of a junior school who had made some rigid regulations, not acceptable to the parents, about what children should wear at school. Issues were also taken up with officials of the local authority's Education Department to discuss matters about children at school generally. Meetings were arranged between a candidate for a parliamentary election and members of the community, and some encouragement was given to the idea of political participation by joining one of the major parties.

Quite explicitly, however, the Muslim Welfare Society appeared to be opposed to the idea of other groups being promoted. Even when the worker assisted some friends to organise a social gathering at which poets from three towns in Lancashire presented their verses this was not regarded with favour by the leadership. They felt that the gathering was 'not in keeping with the community's religious feelings'.³⁶

It appears that although the opportunity for a more radical approach may have been present, and there were a number of key issues on which organising was possible, the MWS remained specifically concerned with religious issues (although these embraced a very wide area) and actively discouraged a wider remit. Among these latter were questions to do with the rehousing plans of the local authority, which required much more than individual assistance through the maze of regulations, and the whole vexed question of children at school and the conflict between the Muslim standards put forward by the leadership and the assumptions, values and practices of the English educational system.

There was the possibility of organising more effectively than could the MWS on issues to do with the internal arrangements of the community, and in particular on such matters as the ritual killing of meat, burial, marriage and religious observance. It appears that the worker accepted the prohibition of the leadership, although this never appears to have been explicit, in the interests of being allowed to continue individual work, and also because he happened by this time, along with his family, to have become an integral part of the community.

The description highlights not only the advantages of the cultural and religious similarities between the worker and members of the community but also indicates some disadvantages. One of these, he suggests, is that he was never able to say 'no' to anyone making an enquiry. It might have been more appropriate in certain circumstances to develop ways by which those who had been helped could in turn help others. But the system never developed this and always depended very much on the full-time participation of the worker, who gave an enormous amount of time and effort to the work.

Another area of difficulty was that of working for what was seen as an official agency, which led to some reserve on the part of members of the community. He brought about a cut in the earnings of the professional advice-givers, and may have antagonised some because of this. On the other hand the quality of what he offered was good. Whether he had to say 'yes' on every occasion to every enquiry is perhaps more doubtful. It may have been an aspect of his personality, as well as his perception of where he stood with the community, and it may have also ensured that all available time was taken up with individual cases rather than trying to help groups to organise, which was never really attempted.

Although the UPA began in a radical burst, and some of its members were militant in the period that led to the closure of the project as a whole, what was attempted at this level was conventional. If the question is asked whether this kind of work was better than more ambitious attempts to organise groups which failed then the answer must be that it was, and in that sense a great deal of good was done. Indian Muslims were helped to adapt to the new country in various kinds of ways, even if no attention was paid to the idea of their eventual autonomy or being able to bargain on their own account, or linking them with the agencies of local and central government to enable them to obtain those things to which they were entitled. In all this activity no attempt was made to make a link with the Community Relations Council and possibly pool resources which that body and UPA had available for what were obviously common purposes. The whole organisational question was never really examined within the lifetime of CDP. Nor did it get off the ground in any serious way during the remaining time in which UPA was in existence in Batley.

CONCLUSIONS

If one attempts to sum up the experience with the minority community of Indian Muslims in Batley then a number of conclusions may be drawn. In the early stages, a good deal of fact-finding went on which established a clear view of many aspects of the migrant experience and the issues that were likely to concern Indian Muslims. The information-gathering aspect was a long time in coming together, and along with it went an attempt to gain a foothold within the leadership of the group in a way which would enable basic changes to take place. This approach, conceived and put into operation by Marian Would, the first Action Director, mirrored some of the ideas about poverty which have been generally discussed within CDPs. This view of *cultural deprivation* combined with a view of *institutional dysfunctioning* stressed the vast differences between the premises upon which welfare services operate, and the way in which they are understood or perceived and received by clients. What might be seen as a priority here was the need to convey information to potential clients of social services and other agencies and also to organise around issues which were of common concern to them.

The aim of attempting to involve the Muslim Welfare Society initially in the survey which was conducted jointly with the project, and later the idea of extending this co-operation into areas in which policies could be changed, was partly influenced by changing perceptions of the situation. At the same time the approach foundered on a number of factors within the situation: the most important of these were the attitudes of the leadership, the extent to which there were factions within leadership, the limited objectives which were projected by the leaders (and in particular the desire to retain and enhance the homogeneous nature of the community), the conservative orientation towards adaptation to British society, and the lack of awareness of many of the processes of social change that were going on. It would appear that some of the leaders tried to use CDP as a bargaining tool both within the MWS and with the CRC and the wider society. In a situation where its capacity to effect change was questioned the emphasis came to be upon trying to effect major changes within CRC, and the dilemma of this was increasingly compounded by the lack of interest in the situation of the minority, generally defined, by other members of the action team. It was a consequence of the free-flowing organisational structure which had begun to change markedly during the second year of the project's life. The main outcome of this was the increasing isolation of the Action Director and the lack of support for what were often general ideas.

At least the activities at that time attempted to deal with important issues

and not just the individual situation of migrants who required attention and support. The logic of the visit to India by the Action Director was not particularly clear at the time, and it was opposed by a number of the organisations that were connected with CDP. By the time she returned her experience was redundant as far as the development of policy was concerned. It was decided that someone else should take over this area of concern where no one came forward. It was expected or hoped that new resources would be made available to follow on from initiatives, or ideas, which those devising them did not wish, or had not the time, to pursue. It was assumed that the identification of the issues, however general, was a sufficient substitute for organising around them.

Paradoxically, the later stages of the project in terms of this work were a regression to the initial model used within the Community Relations movement, characterised by information-giving to a variety of people who had newly arrived in Britain and general educative functions. The advice-giving was undoubtedly extremely successful but it meant that the contribution which Batley CDP made to the development of community work with minority groups was more limited than it might have been.

On the basis of the factual information provided much more action was possible, even if it has to be acknowledged that success may have been limited in consequence. It could be argued that one of the objectives of community work is to find leverage points somewhere within the network of relationships which exists, and one leverage point could have been the particular views of individuals who were not necessarily part of the MWS. Despite the expressed radicalism of some of the workers involved, the outcomes were conservative ones. That does not mean they were unimportant or not worth achieving.

NOTES

- 1 A. and C. Gouldner, *Modern Sociology*, Hart Davis, 1963, pp. 270-271.
- 2 E. K. Francis, *Minority Groups*, *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 2, 1951, p. 229.
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- 4 D. J. Smith, *Racial Disadvantage in Britain*, PEP, 1977, p. 32.
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The early studies of Batley by the Project action and research teams revealed that it was an ideal location for experimental action-research into the effectiveness of means-tested benefits. The welfare benefits project was proposed soon after a Conservative government had come to power, committed to selective social policies and cuts in public expenditure. New local authority means-tested benefits had been introduced and more were expected. Evidence suggested that large numbers of those eligible for these benefits were failing to claim and it was felt that the findings of a welfare benefits programme might help central and local government agencies to administer their schemes more effectively, or persuade politicians about the relative effectiveness of allocating benefits and exemptions in this way. Early explorations had revealed that Batley had more poor people than neighbouring areas, more large families, more immigrants, higher rents, more children on free meals, more old people. The local social services and supplementary benefit offices were in Dewsbury, and many people who had been rehoused in the last two decades lived in estates some distance away from council offices.¹

THE WELFARE BENEFITS PROJECT

Jonathan Bradshaw submitted a proposal which aimed to discover whether a locally-based and concerted campaign of education and publicity could increase the take-up of a range of selective social benefits.² The work was to be done by a 'welfare benefits worker', attached to the area office of the Social Services department. The worker's task would be to increase the amount of information made available by existing voluntary and statutory agencies. At every contact point, the public would be able to learn about all the benefits, and not just those administered by a single department. The worker would try to improve the skills and knowledge of those in a position to encourage and advise claimants, by training courses and the production of guides. He or she would also make direct contact with the public by leafletting, door-to-door knocking, by providing a mobile advice service and through talks to organisations and groups. It was also expected that an advice centre or information shop would shortly be established by CDP which could be used by the benefits worker.

A programme of research was also proposed, which would estimate the proportion of those eligible claiming benefits. Those not claiming were to be reinterviewed and statistics on the numbers in Batley would be compared with neighbouring towns to estimate whether efforts to encourage applications for benefits in Batley were effective. The whole two-year project was to be subject to close observation and analysis.

As Bradshaw has pointed out, when the action-research design was presented to the action team, no-one was very enthusiastic about the proposed approach.³ Generally, they were reluctant to be associated with a project concerned with testing whether means-tested benefit could be made to work more effectively, believing the system to be so intrinsically unjust that nothing should be done to sustain it. Furthermore, those who objected felt that strategies for change should come from local people in neighbourhood groups and failed to see any useful link between welfare rights work and community action. In the event, after discussions with the Home Office, the local authority and the Department of Health and Social Security, it was decided to go ahead, with additional funding provided to cover the project. Two welfare benefit workers were appointed in November 1972, one a graduate in social administration, the other a well known political

activist in the claimants union movement. The graduate was placed in the Social Services Department and the other was intended to work from Project premises.

In the first instance, a 20 per cent household survey was undertaken in two wards, partly as a means of assessing the level of take-up of benefits before the intensive campaigning activities began. The programme began in January 1973, with short publicity exercises coinciding with the introduction of rent allowances to private tenants under the *Housing Finance Act 1972*. This was followed in February with a more intensive campaign to encourage the take-up of Family Income Supplement (FIS).

Family Income Supplement (FIS)

The first publicity campaign undertaken in February 1973 was concerned with Family Income Supplement. Family Income Supplement was chosen because it was a 'passport' to other entitlements, such as exemptions from health service charges and free school meals, because it was a relatively straightforward scheme, and because the Project wished to examine the means-test system for those at work. The major disadvantage was that so few people were entitled - only 1.8 per cent of the sample population from the two lowest income wards in Batley qualified. £325 was spent on leaflets and posters - an informal leaflet was produced sharing the same caption as the poster - 'Are you getting your share?' - and was also translated into Gujerati. Leaflets were distributed commercially, and by Batley's Muslim Welfare Society to the 8.5 per cent of the population who were Gujerati-speaking immigrants. Leaflets and posters were also visible at shops, the Housing Department, and the Registrar's office and they were distributed at informal talks to health visitors, social workers, housing visitors, education welfare officers and probation officers. An article on Family Income Supplement and an advertisement appeared in the local paper, tenants' associations and other community groups were informed and contact was made with unions and employers, though the employers' response was not favourable, perhaps because they felt that the need for Family Income Supplement was a reflection of inadequate wages.

From information provided by sub-post offices, it was established that about 80 households received Family Income Supplement in Batley - a very low percentage, despite the traditionally low wages in the local textile industry. The probable explanation lies in the relatively large proportion of women working, and the large amount of overtime worked in Batley.

In the six weeks following the campaign, the Department of Health and Social Security received an extra sixteen claims for Family Income Supplement, eight of which were successful - an increase in take-up of 10 per cent. Fourteen of these sixteen claimants were later interviewed, but the CDP publicity was only mentioned by two of them. Principal sources of information were given as follows :

Television (Marjorie Proops)	4
CDP Gujerati leaflet	2
The Department of Health and Social Security	2
Parents	2
Friend	1
Social Worker	1
Post Office - form	1
Form with first family allowance	1
	—
Total	14
	—

The research was unable to establish how respondents' parents or friends had found out about Family Income Supplement. It is possible that the extra publicity on Family Income Supplement increased public awareness and had an indirect effect. When respondents were specifically asked if they saw the publicity material circulated the following replies (out of a total of fourteen) were received.

Leaflet	9
Posters	9
Newspaper article and advertisement	4

The eleven non-immigrants were asked about the publicity they considered most effective. Seven felt television was the most effective; five people were specifically against leaflets ('the dog chews them up', 'no-one reads them', 'no-one understands them').

Of the eight people who claimed Family Income Supplement successfully, two were still paying for prescriptions some months later, although production of the Family Income Supplement book automatically exempted a family from such charges. All families who needed free school meals for their children had claimed them, except for one who 'hadn't bothered'. Fourteen claimants were asked why they thought other people did not claim their entitlements, and they replied as follows :

Ignorance of eligibility	6)
Ignorance of where to get information	1) 12
Complexity of forms	5)
Pride	7)
Invasion of privacy	3) 11
Fear of officials	1)

These answers show that there was an almost equal division between those who thought the reason for not claiming was pride and privacy and those who thought it was due to ignorance.⁴

The Rate Rebate Campaign

In April 1973, a similar campaign was undertaken on rate rebates. Under the scheme at this time, CDP survey figures showed a 66 per cent 'non take-up' rate in the two lowest income wards in Batley. The Project was looking for people, especially pensioners, receiving a steady low income or national insurance benefit, and large families living on low incomes. The scheme was complicated, in that the income assessment period was taken for a six months rating period beginning nine months before the application date. The rebate was payable six months later, at the end of the rating period, when the claimants' circumstances may have improved. Supplementary Benefit recipients were excluded, but supplementary benefit was counted in the same way as other income during the assessment period. If one applied at the 'wrong time', the local authority would normally use its discretion favourably, but if it made a proportionate assessment (eg a rebate for two months of the six month period) very little rebate was payable, because the minimum rate payable was not able to be treated proportionately. Therefore, in order to get a worthwhile rate rebate it was necessary to apply at the right time with details of income from many months previously. One might very well not receive rebates when they were needed most, and precise information about income was also required. The scheme was revised from April 1974.

The Rate Rebate Campaign followed a similar pattern to the Family Income Supplement campaign. Owner occupiers and non-compound rated properties

were sent a CDP leaflet with their rate demand, and council tenants were circularised with leaflets by a commercial firm. Compound rated properties were informed by post. The Muslim Welfare Society distributed a Gujerati leaflet. Both Gujerati and English posters and leaflets were distributed to shops. Social workers, health visitors, old people's wardens, home helps and pensioners' clubs were visited, and articles and adverts were placed in the *Batley News*. The total cost of the campaign was £303.

A follow-up survey of twenty eight pensioners interviewed in the main sample survey, who were eligible but had not claimed, showed that 25 per cent had since claimed a rate rebate. More than half stressed the importance of newspaper adverts, and less than a quarter had heard about rebates from the CDP leaflets and posters. Even after the follow-up survey visit, when entitlement was fully explained by the research worker, take-up in this group increased to only 47 per cent. More than half the people interviewed gave reasons of 'pride' for not claiming. When the interviewees were asked about the best ways of disseminating information about such schemes, the majority stressed the importance of personal contact, from advice centre, or welfare workers, for example.

The leaflets had a tear-off slip for people to request an application form. Only fifteen of these were sent back to the Town Hall, and of these ten people claimed successfully. Other methods of claiming were also advised in the leaflet, and calling at the Town Hall or at an advice centre produced further claims.

Batley Borough Council ran its own scheme for its council house tenants, inviting applications for rate rebate on its rent rebate application forms. This method was extremely successful, resulting in 101 new claims from council tenants, many of whom had made little distinction between rent and rate rebates, and did not know it was necessary to make a separate application. The council's scheme therefore accounted for most of the increased take-up of rate rebates.

Overall figures for take-up of rate rebates for Batley, and for three 'control towns' were as follows :

Rate Rebate Take-up Figures

	<i>Half-year ended</i>	<i>Owner-Occupiers</i>	<i>Local Authority Tenants</i>	<i>Private tenants below compound-ing limit</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage Increase (%)</i>
Batley	31.3.73	488	134	73	695	
	30.9.73	496	308	79	883	27
Keighley	31.3.73	1131	51	76	1258	
	30.9.73	1277	73	48	1398	9
Morley	31.3.73	431	205	120	756	
	30.9.73	430	215	117	759	0
Brighouse	31.3.73	747	161	no compound	908	
	30.9.73	785	174	rating	959	6

Thus the take-up of rate rebates in the group of twenty eight pensioners drawn from the main survey sample increased by 25 per cent - compared with an overall increase in take-up in Batley of 27 per cent. Assuming an original

take-up rate of 34 per cent (as given in CDP's sample survey), the new take-up figure would be 43.2 per cent - a significant, if limited increase. However, over half the increase was directly attributable to the council's own scheme (101 new claims out of 188 altogether), so the remaining increase in take-up of about 3 per cent is relatively low. None of the successful new claimants referred to the council's scheme, which perhaps indicates that recollections about what prompts people to claim are not particularly accurate.⁵

The Rent Rebate Campaign

The Rent Rebate Campaign took place in June 1973 and again consisted of printed publicity, newspaper coverage and talks to agency fieldworkers. For this campaign a firm of design and publicity specialists produced the material which consisted of information cards, a 'personal letter' and a plastic carrier bag advertising rebates. Use was also made of the Department of Environment's own leaflet. By distributing these in different areas, it was hoped to monitor the differential effectiveness of the leaflets, and in follow-up interviews it was found that, in the marginal effectiveness of leaflets overall, the CDP information card was the most useful device for persuading people to claim.

Commercial distribution of the leaflets was carried out among all council tenants, and the usual visits made to agency staff. In addition, posters were placed in shops and pubs all over Batley, and the plastic bags were distributed in the market place on market days. Three newspaper articles were written, and two advertisements placed. The total cost was approximately £600.

Additionally, a similar campaign was undertaken at this time on rent allowances, which operate for tenants of private landlords. Information was made available at the same times and places as information on rent rebates. Two campaigns had also been undertaken on two previous occasions; at the end of 1972, and in the Spring of 1973. A special leaflet was sent to tenants of compound rated landlords.

A follow-up of the original survey interviews was made. This survey gave a take-up rate of 48.1 per cent for rent rebates and, after extensive publicity, this had increased to 56.4 per cent by August 1973. A review was undertaken by the Housing Department on 5 October, following an explanation of entitlement to the eligible non-claimers by the research worker, when the percentage take-up in the sample was found to have increased to 62.9 per cent.

As far as rent allowances were concerned, only sixteen eligible households were identified. Four of them had claimed after the campaigns, and seven had claimed by 5 October, after the research interview. These results coincide with the Housing Department's own figures on overall take-up, which show that 51 per cent of all rent allowances granted in Batley were granted in late March, April and early May, the period of the first CDP campaign. This period however also saw extensive national publicity. Three out of four people who claimed, however, said that they did so because of the CDP leaflet.

When successful claimants were asked about their reasons for claiming, 85 per cent gave receipt of the local authority claim form as the reason. However 79 per cent of the eligible non-claimers gave the council's notes as the reason for not claiming as they had been convinced that they were, in fact, ineligible. The complexity of the scheme obviously bewildered these tenants, as they did not realise that one could still claim success-

fully even if income was well above the 'needs allowance'. It was clear that the explanatory notes, based on the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountant's model, required revision.

From Publicity to Advocacy

During the Summer of 1973, plans were prepared for campaigns on education benefits, supplementary benefits and exceptional needs payments, but these were never implemented by the welfare benefits workers. The attempts to increase take-up therefore petered out. These are two explanations for this. As the campaigns progressed, it was revealed that they had little impact on take-up, and the welfare benefits workers became disappointed that their efforts reaped little discernible rewards. Moreover, the justification given for the termination of the campaigns also fitted in with their own views of the more general welfare rights problems, as stated in their report :

It was decided to devote the major effort to increasing people's sense of entitlement ... In this shift of emphasis the definition of the problems also changed - the primary goal changed from increasing the crude number of claims to encouraging a sense of entitlement and understanding of the benefits system.⁶

It was not only the workers' own inclinations but also force of circumstance that led them to abandon attempts to increase take-up. From the start they had been inundated with a stream of individuals seeking help with benefit problems. The burden of this work had already hampered planning and implementing the campaign as effectively as the workers would have liked, and eventually it led them to abandon the campaigns altogether.

It was expected that the project would have to engage in some individual advocacy but, because it was realised that this activity could overwhelm the workers, it was planned to keep this to a minimum and to provide an advocacy service by educating other people. In the event the workers' own inclinations and the pressure of referrals led them to become more and more absorbed in individual casework with claimants. Every afternoon one of the workers was available for consultation. The work with social workers also received less emphasis than had been planned and the worker placed in the Social Services department moved into CDP premises.

Although it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of an advocacy agency, an attempt was made in the Interim Report on Welfare Benefits, by describing the circumstances of people who visited the centre and estimating the help they received. Most of the people who came for advice were concerned with supplementary benefit claims. The CDP advice service was used by 365 people until it was absorbed by the Advice Centre for the Town in 1973. 251 of these cases involved supplementary benefits and 184 concerned exceptional needs payments. The workers wrote letters, made telephone calls, and represented 58 claimants at Tribunals. Without doubt the workers obtained more for the claimants than they would have received otherwise. The average exceptional need payment obtained in Batley was £43.37, against a national average of £9.50. One of the justifications for this type of advocacy is that it leaves long-term claimants with a sense of entitlement, which enables them to ask for help on their own behalf in the future. A follow-up study was carried out of those families helped by the welfare benefits workers. While these claimants were generally appreciative of the help given by the advocates and more knowledgeable of their entitlement, it is doubtful whether many of them had the expertise and confidence to argue their own claims.⁷

It has been argued that advocacy on behalf of one claimant can result in permanent improvements in the way bureaucracies respond to all claimants. CDP organised some follow-up interviews with the staff in the agencies that bore the brunt of the advocacy to see if they felt that the welfare rights workers impinged on their work in any way. Much of the brunt appears to have fallen on DHSS staff and, from the interviews with thirteen members of the Dewsbury office, there appeared to be a general feeling among staff of unfair treatment, due to some of the tactics employed during the campaign. Abusive telephone calls, unreasonable appeals to higher authority, and aggressive use of the media were mentioned in this context.

DHSS workers acknowledged that some effective work had been done and most of the criticisms centred on the need for more professional conduct and a broader approach to identifying need. Another group of agency workers interviewed during the campaign were social workers in the Batley office. Of these, only one worker felt that the campaign was misconceived and 'stirring up trouble' unnecessarily. On the whole, social workers accepted the need for advocacy tactics of a vigorous kind. Some attended the welfare rights classes given by CDP, which implied a greater degree of co-operation than achieved (or sought) with the DHSS.

The Advice Centre for the Town (ACT)

At the same time as the work described above was initiated by Batley CDP, local residents formed a Family Advice Centre to help tenants who were experiencing particular difficulties. The Centre evolved from the activities of a tenants' association originally formed to resist the implementation of the 1972 *Housing Finance Act*. When much of the support for this issue had subsided, the remaining group of activists applied to CDP for a grant to help to provide the office and equipment for an 'Advice Centre for Tenants'. As well as offering financial support, it was agreed that a working relationship with Batley CDP should be encouraged, particularly with the two members of staff then engaged in the welfare rights campaign. Subsequent developments in the relationship between CDP and the Advice Centre the disagreements with the local authority over funding, the strike of some Project workers and the final closure of Batley CDP - are discussed elsewhere.⁸ During this period of conflict, the Project research team was asked to evaluate the work of the Advice Centre, which was then handling an average of seventy enquiries a week. Although records of cases were kept, in many instances there was no indication of outcome, and the Centre's assessment was not necessarily a reliable assessment of the clients' satisfaction with the service. Therefore it was considered appropriate to discover the result through interviews with a sample of people who actually used the Centre.⁹

The intention of the survey was to discover what had happened to clients as a result of visiting the Advice Centre, how they felt about the service and how it compared with their experience, if any, of other agencies. Interviews took place in individual homes and it was made clear that the interviewer was not working for either the Advice Centre or the local authority. Of the thirty one people interviewed, thirteen were pensioners, four were unemployed, five were unsupported mothers and only nine were in full-time employment. Problems taken to the Advice Centre ranged from housing difficulties, social security benefits, financial debt and consumer problems to difficulties with personal relationships.

Whether or not the Advice Centre was successful in solving clients' problems was, of course, related to the nature of their need. For example, four couples who were living with in-laws and looking for housing accommodation were, despite pressure exerted on the Housing Department by the Centre, in



Batley Town Hall



The Advice Centre for the Town

the same situation at the time of interview, whilst other housing difficulties (such as threat of eviction) were dealt with successfully. The Centre usually achieved results with the financial problems of people receiving money from the DHSS, by obtaining either supplementary benefits or exceptional needs payments. Half the consumer problems brought to the Centre were successfully dealt with, difficulties in personal relationships were discussed and sometimes referred to professional agencies. What emerged particularly from these interviews, which were recorded on tape, was an appreciation of the friendly reception people had received at the Centre, and the feeling that the workers there were doing all they could to solve people's difficulties, a feeling which was not necessarily related to the actual outcome of the Centre's effort.

Twenty of the thirty one people interviewed, had previously been to conventional agencies with their problems and were critical about the service they had received. Difficulties about getting to see people and a general feeling of reluctance to help ran through these criticisms. On the other hand, they felt that the Advice Centre had 'done its best' to help them. Of course, this sample was not representative of the number of people who were helped by statutory agencies in the town, but it did demonstrate a need for alternative means of help and support. The aspects of the independent advice service most liked by clients were the general atmosphere of friendliness and the immediate willingness to take action. This may have been because the Advice Centre had sprung up as a result of expressed needs and action by local people themselves. There had certainly been an effort to escape from an atmosphere of impartiality. Advice Centre workers were on the side of clients, and were apparently very ready to take up the cudgels on their behalf. They seemed to see the problems in much the same way as clients did and understood the kinds of solutions wanted, even if they did sometimes prove impossible. The staff of the Centre were described as 'working class' and as people who had experienced the same difficulties themselves. The lack of privacy in the Centre was mentioned as a criticism by ten of the people interviewed, although in fact the premises did have rooms where private interviews could take place. Perhaps these were little used because Centre workers felt that some kinds of difficulties should be made known between people to stimulate group action - a view not necessarily shared by more reticent clients.

Respondents were asked what they felt about the Advice Centre's role in the field of community action. A recent effort in this direction had been the encouragement of the first case of squatting in Batley. A married couple with a two year old son living with in-laws was advised by the Centre to occupy an empty council flat and were helped to do this. The Centre organiser was then quoted in the local press as saying that he expected the local authority to take legal action against the family, while noting that, when the Court Order eventually came through, Kirklees would be responsible for rehousing them. It quickly turned out this way when a local court granted an eviction order, but insisted that the family should be given alternative accommodation, which was then provided. After the victory, the organiser was again quoted as saying :

If this is the only means of bringing the housing shortage into the open then we will carry on using these sorts of methods. Batley has a waiting list of 1,000 people ... the Advice Centre intends to attack private property as well as council. I don't see any reason whatsoever why private property should remain empty for months on end and I know of several examples in Batley.¹⁰

Although this event was well publicised in local newspapers, radio and on television, only fourteen of the thirty one people interviewed had heard about the squatters. Of these, ten approved of the action which the Advice Centre and the family had taken. Of the others, sixteen approved in principle when told about the incident. Whilst the majority of people approved of the Advice Centre being involved in community action, only a minority knew of these activities which in the past had included opposition to the Rent Act, exposing bad housing conditions, taking up cases of homelessness and campaigning about welfare benefits.

Finally, people were asked to comment on the future of the Advice Centre and on the need for financial support from the local authority. Of the thirty one people interviewed, only eleven knew anything about how the Centre was financed and whether the staff were paid workers. However, all but one respondent thought that the Centre should receive public money and that it needed some full-time paid staff. There was little knowledge of the dispute with the local authority over finance although it was featured regularly in local newspapers and on radio.

From this study it emerged that users held a positive attitude towards the Centre. Only three people of the thirty one interviewed definitely disliked its informal style, and had decided not to use the service again. The others appreciated its atmosphere, welcomed its advocacy style and saw it as a valuable addition to existing statutory agencies. However, there was little awareness of the efforts being made to stimulate collective group action to solve individual or community issues. The Centre was perceived as essentially an agency to help with individual problems and as one that did so in a particularly vigorous way.¹¹

Although little was known about community action among the people interviewed this did not mean that such initiatives were therefore unimportant. Certainly the motivation and drive of voluntary workers in the Centre was rooted in an enthusiasm for social action and, without this activity, their interest in the Centre might have waned. Public authorities had also felt the impact of petitions, demonstrations, surveys exposing community need and effective local publicity. As a result some officials and councillors regarded the Centre as always seeking to embarrass established agencies in order to make political capital for a radical point of view. Too little was known of the way clients perceived the Centre and its usefulness in individual cases.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to assess the overall implications of the work described in this chapter. In relation to the welfare benefits project, for example, considerable effort went into the campaigns - more effort than one could hope for in other local settings - but parts of the initial design were not implemented at all and the original hypothesis was not tested as effectively as intended. The campaigns concentrated on leafletting and publicity. There was little educational work with the helping personnel and local groups, no local advice giving or door-to-door knocking, and few attempts were made to work with local departments to improve their administration of benefits. The campaigns did not cover educational and health benefits, supplementary benefit or the benefits provided by Social Services departments. If any of these benefits had been the subject of a special campaign different, perhaps better, results might have emerged. However, it seems likely from evidence in Batley and elsewhere that it is not possible to push take-up of benefits beyond a certain point.

Regarding the individual advocacy work undertaken by CDP workers, it is clear that a number of claimants were helped to obtain benefits. Indeed, the very

presence of a watchdog for the claimants' interests may have resulted in officers of the Supplementary Benefits Commission operating their discretionary powers more generously. These achievements may have proved too temporary and marginal to be claimed as a success in the long term. No test cases were taken to the High Court by the welfare benefit workers, which might have resulted in the permanent changes in policy they aimed for. Working in a combative way with agencies, the workers were unable to effect permanent changes in practice.

It had been hoped that close observation of a welfare benefits worker operating in a local authority setting would reveal something about the potential for this type of role, which has since been established by more and more local authorities. The job of the welfare rights worker can be interpreted in varying ways. As can be seen from the interim report written by the welfare rights worker, the Batley workers took their main role to be working with community groups. The worker claimed :

Our emphasis on work with community groups has grown from the practical situation in Batley and from our attempt to define the role of the Welfare Rights Campaign in relation to the broad facts of poverty. We have seen the problem in terms of lack of money and lack of power. We have adopted a community development approach because we share the beliefs of community workers that the basis for social improvement lies in the slow and painstaking mobilisation of articulate demands for change from working class people. Shifts in the balance of power have occurred as claimants have discovered that they can have increasing influence over the decisions that are vital to themselves ...¹²

As this process is acknowledged to be 'slow and painstaking', it is difficult to know what should be claimed for this approach over two years work in Batley. Certainly the welfare rights workers would point to the Advice Centre for the Town (ACT) as a major development. However, the Centre was originally set up with only marginal help from CDP and, to some extent, in competition with it. The subsequent influence of the welfare rights workers was complex, although interviews with some of the key people involved suggested that, on occasion, difficulties may have been exacerbated, particularly in relation to local authority and DHSS officials.

The considerable emphasis on working with groups meant that an alternative approach to working within the social services or by direct co-operative contact with the DHSS was not attempted in a sustained way. Whether the benefits system can be improved marginally from within a local level remains largely unexplored, partly because it was taken for granted that this was both unlikely and in any case not really a worthwhile goal. One conclusion to emerge from the welfare rights campaign in Batley is that, in an effort to innovate on a broad front of agency co-operation, the effects of community group activity and publicity campaigns will reveal the tensions and contradictions between these different approaches. In Batley, radical community work became the favoured strategy, but perhaps this was not an inevitable conclusion.

The experience of the Batley CDP individual advocacy service did reveal the need for informed and vigorous assistance to claimants. In addition, the work of the Advice Centre indicated that this need for an independent and critical service for clients extended across a broad range of welfare concerns. As we have seen, such an agency can be effectively run by local people, in this case mainly by people who were unemployed. The necessarily critical stance inherent in this approach might also bring with it conflict with established agencies, and the need to handle this aspect of work proved to be a crucial factor in the history of Batley CDP.

After the welfare benefits campaign report was presented to the CDP Subcommittee of the Kirklees Metropolitan District authority in 1975, members of the research team became involved in an initiative by Kirklees to improve the administration of benefits throughout the authority. An officers' working party was established and Jonathan Bradshaw and Peter Taylor-Gooby acted as outside consultants and were commissioned to review the administration of benefits in Kirklees.¹³ The working party made some progress - rate and rent rebates were integrated, some improved publicity material was produced and the departments administering benefits became much more aware of each others procedures. However, no progress was made in integrating the administration of all benefits (as neighbouring Calderdale had done). This was partly because the departments concerned were unwilling to give up the sections responsible for administering their benefits to a central organisation or to each other, and partly because no resources were made available to implement such a scheme. This experience explored the potential of working for change from inside the local authority system in a way that action workers in the welfare benefits project never really attempted.

NOTES

- 1 J. Bradshaw, P. Taylor-Gooby, R. Lees, *The Batley Welfare Benefits Project*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 5, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1976, p. 3.
- 2 J. Bradshaw, 'Welfare Rights Research Proposal', University of York, 1971.
- 3 J. Bradshaw, 'Welfare Rights: an Experimental Approach' in R. Lees and G. Smith (eds.), *Action-Research in Community Development*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p. 109.
- 4 R. Laver, *Batley Community Development Project Welfare Rights Campaign, Interim Report*, Batley CDP, May 1974, pp. 7-9.
- 5 For a fuller study see D. Frettingham, 'Welfare Benefits Project Report', Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1975.
- 6 R. Laver, *Welfare Rights Campaign, Interim Report*, pp. 2-3.
- 7 P. Taylor-Gooby, *Welfare Benefits Advocacy in Batley: Official Discretion and Claimants' Rights*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 11, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1977.
- 8 See III, *Community Work and Conflict*, and IV, *Assessments*.
- 9 R. Lees, *Research Strategies for Social Welfare*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, and M. McGrath, 'For the People by the People: A Resident-Run Advice Centre', *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Spring 1975.

- 10 Quoted in M. McGrath, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
- 11 *ibid.*
- 12 R. Laver, *Welfare Rights Campaign, Interim Report, op. cit.*, p. 35.
- 13 P. Taylor-Gooby, *Welfare Benefits Advocacy in Batley, op. cit.*

From 1889, when the West Riding County Council was set up, to the reorganisation of local government in 1974, educational provision in Batley was largely based upon decisions made by the County Council. During the intervening period a local system of education was established with the Grammar School at its pinnacle, a position of pre-eminence it has doggedly retained. In Batley educational policy has consistently provided subject matter for discussion in the local press, and at public meetings. Various personalities have emerged who have influenced the course of educational development, the prime example being Councillor Mrs. Laura Fitzpatrick, one of the first supporters of a Community Project, and Chairman of the West Riding Education Committee from 1967-72.

During the nineteenth century education in Batley, limited in content and extent, and always influenced by religious elements, was afforded through non-conformist chapels, secondary and dame schools. For the most part the advantages of education were confined to the middle classes, and remained out of the orbit of working class children. The *Education Act* of 1870 ensured that at least some places were available to accommodate children in the town, but did little to alter the quality of a system based upon payment by results. In 1902 further legislation placed the town's elementary schools under the control of the borough, and secondary schools under the care of the County Council, but these measures alone were unable to guarantee quality in education for all sections of the community. Indeed, as far as education provision was concerned, Batley was disadvantaged until the progressive forces liberated by the *Butler Education Act* of 1944 took effect. Hereafter it was more likely that education could, and would, be provided for all.¹

Under the terms of the 1944 *Education Act*, County Councils and local authorities were required to organise themselves into schemes of divisional executives to implement the Act. Those areas wishing to state their claim for control of their own affairs were advised to seek 'excepted district status' either as boroughs or urban districts. Batley chose this course of action, but at this juncture its demands for a degree of independence from the County Council were not met. Again, after the more limited reorganisation of local government in 1958, boroughs and urban districts were allowed to seek 'excepted status' if over 60,000 in population, or if special circumstances justified their claim to that status. In the event, Batley was never able to secure the required government consent and hence its interests in education remained firmly tied to those of the West Riding County Council.²

The sheer geographical size and diversity of education in the county meant that as far as secondary education was concerned no single system could be claimed as that of the West Riding. A number of different styles existed, though most were influenced by the thought of the County Education Officer, Sir Alec Clegg. In Batley, the 'staying-power' of the Grammar School persisted, whilst in technical education the amalgamation of two institutions in Batley and Dewsbury produced one further education college (Dabtec) providing specialist training for the woollen textile manufacturing trades. In non-secondary education Batley, like other areas in the county, benefited from the brand of education inspired by Clegg and his committee, and was one of the first areas to which the Thorne scheme aiming to free junior schools from examinations was extended in 1955.³

Similarly, initiatives in immigrant education and other forms of special education were taken on aspects of educational disadvantage which were present in towns such as Batley. The flurry of official reports in the early sixties - in which the physical, emotional and moral care of urban schoolchildren was examined - profoundly influenced developments in the West Riding and Clegg was a member of the Newsom Committee which reported in 1963, and central figure in the debate on educational priority inspired by Plowden (1966), whose recommendations were quickly adopted in the county.⁴ However, well before this report, schools in the area were receiving special help from the County Council. In 1967 surveys conducted for the Department of Education and Science indicated that of 131,000 immigrant children in Britain only 841 attended schools in the West Riding, but this concealed the actual scale of the local problem where it was abundantly clear that specific areas of stress existed. In Batley 7.2 per cent of the children attending schools were immigrants requiring special attention and before government measures were announced in 1968, to release £3m for education in areas where there were high densities of immigration, some remedial action had been taken locally. In 1965 a special Immigrant Centre, which remained in operation to 1972, was set up at one of the town's junior schools followed by the establishment of a double classroom unit at Park Road Primary school designed to deal with language problems. This last scheme was subsequently carried further by the Batley Community Development Project.⁵

As a Community Development Project was established in Batley the educational service provided was under some pressure due to lack of financial resources as much as lack of spirit. The town was not classified as an Educational Priority Area (EPA) yet it experienced many of the problems, social and educational, associated with such areas.⁶ As far as community or social education was concerned few initiatives had been taken outside the formal educational system, and hence the potential to develop a community development approach with an emphasis on educational themes was considerable.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION

During the sixties and seventies a number of educationalists proposed that education should be radically reoriented to focus more firmly upon individual communities and meet more adequately the needs of people in an urban society.⁷ In this spirit community-based education has been seen as of practical value to the community worker engaged in the task of community development. As most initiatives in community development include the communication of information and an enhancement of community issues, education in the broadest sense is part of nearly all community work. In Batley CDP the first attempts to marry the concept of community education with that of community development took place through the initiation of an experiment in curriculum development in a local girls' secondary modern school. The experience gained in this experiment represents Batley CDP's first active involvement with the educational system and the findings of the research were a pointer to some of the difficulties which occur when the concept of community education is introduced into a traditional school system.⁸

Following meetings between the headmistress of Foxcroft Secondary School and the CDP Director, it was decided to pilot a course in community education designed to meet the needs of pupils in their last year. The programme occupied one day weekly over a period of ten weeks. Eighty girls were registered for the course. Five teachers were involved out of a staff of sixteen, and in addition six students doing a community education teachers' training course at a college of education participated in the planning and teaching. The CDP research team was asked to monitor and evaluate the course.

Once the scheme had started, early experiences suggested how difficult it would be to evaluate this kind of short-term innovatory programme. Detailed observation suggested that the different groups involved tended to perceive the venture in different ways, and it soon became apparent that no commonly accepted criteria could be established against which the success or failure of the scheme might be measured. Given this dilemma, the research approach focused on an attempt to identify the differing perceptions and interpretations of what the course was or should have been about. The method was based on participant-observation in staff group discussions and some teaching sessions, on face to face interview with key actors, and on the results of a questionnaire administered to seventy of the girls who participated as pupils.

The work has been described in detail elsewhere, but here it is useful to record something about the different views expressed on the nature and purpose of community education.⁹ For example, amongst teachers at the school there were significant differences between those who participated in the programme and those who were not involved. Those who helped initiate and run the course tended to see the community focus as offering an opportunity to develop a curriculum that would be more relevant to the needs and interests of pupils than the conventional subject-oriented approach. The theme of employment was chosen and various teaching devices, including outside speakers, visits to people and places of interest, taped interviews conducted by pupils, small group discussions and task-oriented projects were used. The teachers were young members of staff who felt that their previous classroom efforts had been largely received with boredom and apathy. They wanted the community initiative to provide a means for more effective communication between teacher and pupil, to promote confidence and more effective self-expression amongst the pupils, and for pupils to become better informed on matters considered relevant to their own environment. These were no more than the sum total of aims put forward by Halsey in the discussions of curriculum development that influenced experiments in EPAs. The impact that they had on the more traditional teachers is worth a closer examination.

Most non-participating teachers, normally more traditional in outlook, felt that the scheme was inimical to the ongoing work of the school. Some believed that any community emphasis should involve all pupils and staff strengthening the community within the school, and regarded any initiative concerned with less than the whole institution as divisive. Others felt that the community approach should involve some form of social service, such as visiting the elderly in the locality of the school, and stressed that the project was not forging links between home and school. Furthermore, the day each week free from regular studies was seen as interfering with CSE and O-level examination preparations, which they argued need not be taught in a narrow or uninteresting way. In the same vein, some teachers regarded community education as nothing more than 'a trendy but short-lived gimmick' which by encouraging a freer atmosphere had adversely affected discipline in the school. Moreover, at a personal level, there was some underlying resentment of the special attention and responsibility which the project had given to a group of junior staff members.

The student teachers who participated on the course were also critical, but for different reasons. They stressed the social elements in education and in essence agreed with Midwinter that children should be given :

*the social competence to examine the depressing reality of their world in the hope that they might learn to repair or change it in ways agreeable and pleasing to them.*¹⁰

Naturally this more radical direction suggested that authority distinctions should be abandoned, and democratic decision-making fostered. As far as the student teachers were concerned, it was axiomatic that pupils be given support in defining their own interests, and from this angle participating staff teachers were, in most cases, directive and authoritarian. Thus, it was argued, the spontaneous experiences from which pupils learn best could not develop unless teacher attitudes were changed and the traditional staff-pupil relationship substituted by one based on co-operation and full democratic discussion to which all individuals could contribute.

Once it was clear that community education and community involvement meant different things to different people a situation developed in which differing expectations caused frustration and conflict. Disagreements emerged over approaches to discipline and teaching method, the content of the course, the need for an open-day to display project work, the desirability of designing a syllabus on community education and how this might be devised, the possibility of creating a post of responsibility for community education in the school and the relationship of this type of initiative to other school activities. Since underlying aims were usually implicit and often conflicting, the issues could not be talked through or resolved to everyone's satisfaction. In this situation the CDP team undertaking research about the project were unable to make any positive contribution that would reconcile opinions.

The research report which CDP presented for discussion at the end of the school term made explicit the differing perceptions of the experiment's value and purpose. From the material it emerged that the pupils viewed the experiment as a general success, though there had been little agreement concerning its specific purpose. The main approach to understanding how pupils interpreted the project was by questionnaire, which provided for a range of responses, many specific, some open-ended. Seventy girls out of eighty who registered for the course were asked their opinion about its success, both from their own point of view, and from the teachers' point of view as they saw it. The results were as follows :

	<i>Own viewpoint</i>	<i>Staff viewpoint</i>
very successful	24	20
fairly successful	42	37
rather unsuccessful	1	5
very unsuccessful	-	1
no answer	3	7
	—	—
Total	70	70
	—	—

Overall, the girls thought that the staff were slightly less pleased with the course than they were themselves. Asked whether they had enjoyed the project more or less than normal school activities, forty eight said they enjoyed it more, eighteen that there was little difference, and two that they enjoyed it less. Six girls mentioned its usefulness in terms of thinking about their future employment, six appreciated the more relaxed atmosphere, three felt that they had learned more about the community and two that they had personally gained confidence through it. Ten girls felt that there was no difference between the project and normal school work.

A considerable majority (60) thought that discipline was less strict than in normal school activities, but seven of these felt that this was not a good thing. Twenty nine thought that discipline should have been more relaxed. A minority (9) felt that there was no difference in discipline between the project and normal school experience. Over half (38) of the

girls wrote that they found the student teachers more easy to talk to than the regular staff. These largely believed that the students were 'less stuck-up'. On the other hand, twenty two felt that their presence had made no difference to the course, eight found them harder to speak to than regular teachers, and five of the girls thought the course would have been more of a success if the students had not been there.

From this selection of responses it was clear that, though most pupils thought the project a general success, few understood the real purpose behind it. On the other hand the assessment of the school's headmistress was flattering. She said :

Our fourth year girls have clearly enjoyed this new type of education. Their self-confidence has developed rapidly and they are formulating informed opinions.

At the time these statements expressed a genuine optimism but in retrospect some caution must be exercised in judging the success of this early enterprise. To begin with it was envisaged that this work would lead to some ongoing involvement with the CDP team, whereas in the event this did not happen. Little time was given to any systematic attempt to refine or develop the approach, and after all the value of the experience in community development and pedagogic terms was limited. More effort should have been channelled into follow-up schemes which might have supplemented the initial programme with a more advanced scheme of widespread application. Furthermore, it should be recognised that the 'alternative' curriculum was neither more radical nor more community-based than that provided elsewhere, where education authorities are concerned to emphasise 'community', although this emphasis was new to Batley. Throughout, a genuine difficulty in marrying the ideas of community education with those of community development was experienced. The CDP team had ideas on community development and community education that extended beyond a basic environmental studies programme but in a context where educational values varied it was difficult to clarify to educationalists what, in practical terms, community development meant. Similarly it should be admitted that CDP's analysis of the role and function of the school in the community was unsophisticated and not informed by detailed knowledge of community education elsewhere, by an understanding of the physical constraints in school building nor the constraints of orthodox opinion amongst practising educationists.¹¹ The initiatives taken did little to break down the 'school-phobia' which can affect both parents and children and ideas on parental participation and school management were not as lucidly expressed as they should have been. In Batley, it is true, the low standard of school building does not lend itself to widespread community use, but, even when community use of school facilities was advocated, little headway was made in expressing the essential principle that joint use involves simultaneous use by children and parents to help break down traditional images and promote a situation in which schools actually reflect the total educational needs of a community. In the short term, the Foxcroft experiment had immediate advantages, but in the long run - by confining its energies to this single theme in community education - Batley CDP restricted the development of more progressive perspectives which may have influenced parents, children, teachers and educational administrators in a more fundamental way.

PLAYGROUPS AND PLAY ACTIVITIES

From the neighbourhood studies undertaken in the Winter of 1972, the CDP team identified several issues of widespread concern : lack of play space and shortage of facilities for the under-fives were two such issues which prompted the team to work with and encourage parents to press for more and better facilities. In the community programme that followed, two action

workers worked with this in mind, assisted in the initial stages by one of the research team. Major bursts of activity took place between February 1972 and July 1974 but declined as these workers left the Project, and as the team adopted broader structuralist perspectives in which community work practice was seen as less important.¹²

Despite the rapid growth of national and local campaigns to develop creative play opportunities to assist the personal and social development of children, the position in Batley had been static for years.¹³ Voluntary organisations had arranged for camping holidays for small groups, as the County Education Department had done by running its educational holiday classes, but in the early sixties the community in general was not aware of the possibilities which existed to extend formal and informal play provision. From the late sixties onwards this passive acceptance of the *status quo* was challenged and Batley Municipal Borough Council was made aware of the inadequate level of play provision in the town. In May 1968 a resident of Staincliffe Estate complained of the lack of playing facilities on the estate, and requested that the Parks and Cemeteries Committee rectify the position. No action was taken. In June 1969 the Town Clerk reported the receipt of a petition from residents of the Mount Street area of Batley requesting the local authority to establish a children's play area. Again no action was taken. In February of the same year, Batley Trades Council had received a negative response when it asked if the Town Council would be organising play leadership schemes in the Borough during the school holidays. This was followed in the following year by the local authority's refusal to sponsor courses in play leadership in the town.

After these preliminary skirmishes, by 1972 a vigorous lobby was demanding more play areas in the town. Residents from the Soothill and Staincliffe areas took the lead. In the *Batley News* of 13 April 1972 'Mothers press for play area at Soothill' achieved headline status, followed by further press coverage of a petition organised by children in Soothill in October 1972. In the Staincliffe area the pressure exerted on the council proved most effective. The Parks and Cemeteries Committee agreed to provide a play area on land owned by the Housing Committee and, in December 1972, Home Office approval for a grant of £1,000 from Urban Aid funds was given. At a meeting called to consider use of the Staincliffe play area members of Batley CDP spoke about the possible adaptation of the area as an adventure playground. A meeting was arranged in January 1973 and a management committee for the proposed playground was set up with the help of a community worker from Batley CDP. At this point, having established credible links with residents and officials interested in pre-school and play provision, the Batley team undertook a survey of play space in Batley.

The survey of play space indicated that several areas of the town were deficient in provision. Calculations based on the standards used by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFPA), and on the Parker Morris and the Liverpool Open Space Reports produced contradictory results. The first showed Batley as deficient in play space, the other two that there were acceptable areas given over to play activities. However, these last two standards did not take into account the possibility that Batley might have an adequate area committed to open space due principally to the existence of a few large parks and that - if calculations on the basis that parks should be no more than half a mile apart were used - several areas in the towns had underprovision. Furthermore, Batley had a total acreage of equipped play space of less than fifty, so that if NPFPA targets were used (twelve square yards of equipped play space per child within a quarter of a mile from home) there was drastic underprovision in areas such as Hanging Heaton, Soothill, Birstall and Fieldhead and serious underusage

in those areas with equipped play space. On local authority housing estates there was little evidence of planning with the needs of children in mind. None of the estates had a play area as an integral feature, and where sites existed they were at the periphery and unsuitable, either because they were dangerous or because noise problems aroused the opposition of local residents. The overall position, therefore, was of inadequate provision in the areas of urgent need; where it existed, provision was based on outdated ideas of the purpose of play. The play equipment was of the traditional type, installed with little effort to differentiate between the needs of toddlers, children of school age, and older children, and no provision for supervised play existed. Taking stock of this, in future work with local groups CDP workers stressed the need for an adequate planned provision which recognised the needs of different age groups and more flexible and constructive ideas of play.¹⁴

Batley CDP's work in the sphere of play activity falls into four distinct categories : work with playgroups; work on play schemes by demonstration activities; work with the Batley Adventure Playground Association; and work proposing the appointment of a full-time Play Organiser.

Playgroups

Based on the assessment of playgroup provision carried out in 1972, and in the firm conviction that children's play and pre-school provision were particularly susceptible to a neighbourhood community work approach, one member of Batley CDP was given a specific remit to encourage development of these activities. As a result, between late Summer 1972 and midsummer 1974 support was offered in the town to eight playgroups. The support took a variety of forms, organisational and financial, and most groups were formed out of relationships with tenants' associations, community associations, or through the pre-school visitors' programme. Of the eight playgroups, the Fieldhead group was by far the strongest and most able to develop a long-term capacity. It was formed on a council estate where 35 per cent of the population was under 16 years of age, and it served both the Fieldhead Estate and Central Birstall. Funds were initially allocated to it from CDP's Social Action budget, the first grant for 1972-73, the second for 1973-74, and a third for 1974-75, when the local authority failed to forward the group's application for Urban Aid to the Home Office. In receipt of this financial aid the group flourished under the direction of a committee comprising local mothers and employing a supervisor and three assistants. When the group requested its third grant, fifty two children were registered, a further twenty were on the waiting list, and the centre opened five mornings a week, allowing each child a minimum of two sessions per week.

Though Fieldhead playgroup developed without any serious problems this was not the general pattern and in most cases the degree of CDP support varied in proportion to parental commitment. In this the formation of Purlwell playgroup stands out as markedly different to the experience of the Fieldhead group. Initial contact with the Purlwell group was made through the Education visitor, who set up a Mothers' Club at Purlwell Infants' School in May 1973, and fostered by the Project action worker with the major responsibility for playgroups. The problems which arose typify many of the dilemmas associated with the establishment of small groups. In this instance the work of two CDP workers led to confusion over their appropriate roles in connection with their distinct interests, the Mothers' Club and Playgroup. As a demand for a playgroup was articulated, the CDP worker associated with it suggested that it meet separately from the Mothers' Club, to establish the identity of the group of mothers and to lessen the dependency on staff from the school. However

this took some of the direction out of the Mothers' Club and jeopardised its stability. As the playgroup developed it was confronted by other problems, notably over its efforts to acquire suitable premises for meetings and from its inception, in January 1974, there was a hint that the group had overextended itself. Several mothers expressed a genuine interest, and some attended an evening playgroup course at Cleckheaton, but few understood the amount of work involved. This situation, confirmed the view of one CDP worker who, in October 1973, had recorded that the group was particularly fragile. She wrote of it :

*They have much less cohesion and impetus as a group than the original Fieldhead group. They are more a collection of mothers who are interested because of their own individual needs.*¹⁵

These two examples, Fieldhead and Purlwell, illustrate how different groups acted in their relationship to the Project, and how their most vigorous members gave leadership. Each was in its own way important but neither was able to stimulate a wider commitment to play activity. The Summer playscheme enterprise encouraged by Batley CDP was probably more successful in doing this.

Playschemes and Demonstration Programmes

In March 1973 Batley CDP took the initiative by writing to community and tenants' associations, churches, pre-school playgroups, Youth Clubs and councillors aiming to cash in on any potential for starting a widespread campaign for play facilities in the town. A meeting was held at the CDP offices, attended by twenty two people, at which it was agreed to start a Summer playscheme financed by the Community Development Project. A committee was appointed, comprising three members of community groups, two teachers, one social worker, one student, two local mothers and two CDP staff, and it deferred detailed planning until the playscheme leader was appointed in June. Two CDP staff worked with the committee and dealt with most of the work generated from its meetings, for example on acquisition of premises and advertisements. Where they had to direct it was to encourage the committee to confine its activities to promoting one central scheme and not run three or four in different parts of the town when there was only limited local experience to be drawn on. However, some compromises were made, as in the case where three members argued strongly for 'something in the Birstall area of the town'. To satisfy this, a day trip was organised for 120 children as a forerunner to a more extended provision for the following year. At a broader level, CDP workers insisted that members of the local community be involved as much as possible, a request which the committee accepted and implemented in practical terms by encouraging local people to participate in the planning of a Gala Day. After the committee appointed a playscheme leader its directive role declined and major day-to-day administrative responsibility was handed over, though four members were heavily involved as helpers.

In the early stages the committee sketched out three major aims :

- (i) to test out the need and demand for such playscheme facilities during Summer holidays;
- (ii) to provide varied play activities and experience for children in a setting different from school; and
- (iii) to be a 'demonstration' playscheme in which people could develop skills to be used in future activities, and in which an awareness would be created of play-scheme possibilities in other areas.¹⁶

Based at the Central Youth Club, Purlwell Lane, and on Manorfields Infants' School playing fields, the Summer Playscheme ran for two weeks in August for children aged five to thirteen.

In the two weeks before the scheme started the full-time organiser spent his time arranging outings, trips and exhibitions for the playscheme weeks, and visiting all Junior schools in the Staincliffe-Mount Pleasant areas inviting children to attend. His assistant spent one week obtaining equipment and supplies. Secondary schools lent games and sports equipment, two schools lent art and craft materials, others were bought, and gifts were received from several local firms. Batley Borough Council allowed use of its swimming pool for an hour on six mornings and the town library donated one hundred books for temporary use and its Children's Librarian gave story telling sessions. Fifth and sixth formers were notified of the scheme in the hope that they would help out, and notices in Gujerati were posted in the Mount Pleasant area asking for helpers from the Asian Community.

From the beginning the scheme's ten paid helpers were supplemented by eight to ten mothers, and with students and older teenagers as additional back-up. The committee had assumed that it would attract local voluntary help to supplement the paid help and several helpers were recruited by the two mothers who attended the committee's meetings. That so many people were prepared to be regular unpaid helpers indicated the depth of the community's resources. The help of the unpaid workers was priceless and in practical terms their role differed little from that of the paid workers.

In most respects the enterprise was judged a success : 540 children attended officially, many more unofficially, and set against its expressed aims the scheme proved that there was a clear demand for holiday activities in the Staincliffe-Mount Pleasant areas, and that the necessary human resources existed in the local community to sustain these ventures. The demonstration potential was verified and plans were made to duplicate the scheme in other areas of the town. Only in the second of its aims, that of providing a variety of play activities and experience in a non-school setting, was there a limited and partial success. Children of some ages, especially those eleven to thirteen, found few activities related to their needs or preferences and the sheer size of the scheme cramped experimental aims and the time that could be given over to 'unorganised play', or small group work such as drama. In this the different attitudes of the helpers was crucial, and some tensions did develop between those who favoured a more didactic approach when others pressed for spontaneity. On balance, however, valuable skills were acquired, by parents especially, the need for close community involvement and local authority support was confirmed, and stemming out of the success of this, Batley's first Summer playscheme, five others in the Staincliffe, Purlwell, Fieldhead, Central Batley and Carlinghew areas were organised for the Summer of 1974.

The Batley Adventure Playground Association

In January 1973 a committee was set up to explore the possibilities for creating an Adventure Playground in the Staincliffe area. Within twelve months the Batley Adventure Playground was firmly established with an Urban Aid grant for five years. In the formation of this group the role of Batley CDP's community worker was critical.¹⁷ The first management committee, Staincliffe Playground Group, was set up to discuss the plan and included local residents, councillors, officers, and a CDP worker. In April 1973 the CDP worker reported that the West Riding County Council sub-committee had approved of a grant of £6,000 to be paid to the Adventure Playground out of the Batley CDP budget. This, added to £4,000 and a site officered by the local authority, ensured that a playground would be

established.¹⁸ Having secured a financial guarantee the CDP worker sought the advice of the Sheffield Adventure Playground Association (SAPA) and with children and committee members visited two adventure playgrounds in Sheffield. Richard Barrand of SAPA was invited to Batley to talk to committee members and residents and great benefit was gained from this contact. After establishing its constitution the Batley Adventure Playground Association registered as a charity and appointed a full-time playground leader. At a general meeting in November 1973, the Batley Adventure Playground Association's constitution was formally accepted and a new committee including two councillors was elected to manage its affairs. Once it was clear that the committee was well established, the CDP worker formally withdrew, though he continued to attend meetings in an advisory capacity.

The Batley Adventure Playground had a chequered history. In 1976, after the closure of Batley CDP, the Playground lay in a vandalised condition, a source of embarrassment to the local authority, and the subject of bitter memories for elected members associated with it. Nevertheless, in the first instance CDP's involvement with the Adventure Playground was seen as a clear example of the Project expressing the part of the Home Office brief which stressed the need to respond to community demands, and in so doing assist the relationship between the local authority and its residents. At the outset, play space was reviewed by the Project, alerting the local authority to the need to extend facilities. When money was not forthcoming from the local authority the finance was made available by CDP and local parents were asked to participate. At this stage the prospects were clear : in the short-term an Adventure Playground would be provided, and in the long-term CDP could use the Batley Adventure Playground Association as an umbrella organisation to stimulate similar developments elsewhere, or as a springboard to wider community involvement in the Staincliffe area.

As time went on the short- and long-term aims were frustrated. The official opening of the Playground was delayed - some felt due to the slowness of the municipal machinery in dealing with the Association's plans. Unable to finalise matters in Staincliffe, the chances of developing similar undertakings elsewhere were severely limited.

In the last analysis it would be hard to claim that the Adventure Playground was a success, and certainly more effort was put into it for a marginal reward than in any other activity in this sphere, and serious ruptures with the local authority occurred once the Playground came into operation. Proper commitment and co-ordination of efforts with the local authority never materialised, and in encouraging the Adventure Playground a situation similar to that concerning ACT emerged. Councillors accused the Project of fostering contacts with a vociferous minority who were only peripherally interested in the needs of the majority. The Parks Department, later the Recreation and Amenities Department, saw the Playground as ragged, undisciplined and unimaginative. In the end, only acrimony remained over this relatively innocuous issue.

Appointment of a Full-Time Play Organiser

Following the initial successes recorded with playgroups and with the Adventure Playground Association, it was feasible that a more consistent effort could be applied in this area. To transform a series of *ad hoc* and unrelated efforts into a more systematic scheme in May 1974 the CDP team recommended that a full-time Play Organiser should be appointed. The organiser would be required to stimulate and support a wide range of play initiatives through community development methods. Leaving aside

the specialised pre-school needs of the under fives and youth club provision, provided by the youth service, the tasks of the new appointee were :

- (i) to work with existing organisations, particularly community groups and the Batley Adventure Playground Association which was actively concerned to improve play facilities;
- (ii) to encourage greater awareness throughout Batley of the need for varied creative play opportunities for children of all ages, and greater knowledge and understanding of ways to meet these needs;
- (iii) in relation to Summer playschemes to link with and gradually take over the role of CDP staff in supporting existing community-oriented playschemes, and in encouraging additional holiday projects in co-operation with the local authority;
- (iv) to identify further areas of 'play need' and to work with local residents towards meeting such needs; and
- (v) to liaise with voluntary and community organisations and with local authority departments with a view to identifying areas of policy change, and encouraging implementation of such changes.¹⁹

In requesting Kirklees to approve this appointment, the Project stressed the co-ordinating role which the Play Organiser could fulfil in conjunction with local authority departments such as Housing, Planning, Education, Recreation and Social Services, and maintained that the appointment should be seen as a pilot scheme on which efforts elsewhere in the authority might be based. Though approval was given to the appointment, the position was first shelved, then deferred in January 1975. Before the Batley Project closed, no full-time appointment was made and the potential was lost to develop play activities as an integral feature of the community work programme.

It is a hard task to assess the effectiveness of a programme which was largely unfinished. Nevertheless, experience in Batley suggests that play activities are not always conducive to a 'go it alone' approach. In Batley the programmes devised required the physical and financial resources of the local authority, and an acceptable degree of co-ordination was vital. To secure this co-ordination, the local authority involved has to recognise (if not agree with) those principles upon which constructive play is based. When the opinions of groups and local authority diverge, as in Batley, uneasy alliances result and which the genuine losers are mothers and children. The evidence from Batley indicates that 'demonstration' can be of considerable utility in encouraging community participation in play activity. This work, however, is time consuming, difficult to organise, and requires a sustained follow-up; the 'experimental' features have to be carefully planned or else they will only be of very limited use. These suggestions are not original, and most have something in common with play-group activity established elsewhere without the help of a community project. However, most people involved in play activities, whatever the situation, will vouch for the fact that, though some community workers may feel that this work is only marginal to a solution of poverty, the benefits to parents and children alike can be considerable.

ADULT EDUCATION

With both the experiments in curriculum development and play activities it was envisaged that this early work would lead to some ongoing involvement by the CDP team. In the event, this did not occur. As the Project redefined its purpose and strategy around a concern with employment, income and housing as the main determinants of deprivation in Batley, it was regarded as inappropriate to give priority to work within or dependent upon the formal educational system. This move away from intervention in the educational system also occurred in other CDPs and reflected the increasingly articulated view that given a structural explanation for poverty, improving curricula, increasing resources in schools or sponsoring playgroups would not serve as an effective mechanism for achieving 'real change'. This, it was argued, could best be done by informal adult education aimed at raising political awareness. The *Inter-Project Report* for 1974 stressed that projects should :

*aim to relate selectively to the local community, forging links between its more active members and groups and organised sections of the working class. The intention is to sharpen local consciousness of the underlying problems, and relate action and pressure to the activities of the wider labour movement.*²⁰

It was with this kind of strategy in mind that the Project appointed an informal adult education worker in July 1974. Prior to that date some useful connections had been made with both Workers' Education Association (WEA) and trade union movements, but they were so loosely arranged that the appointment of the new team member to deal with adult education was seen as providing a solution to this 'ad hocery'. It was hoped that the new worker would introduce firmer and more methodical contact. After his appointment, this worker wrote :

*my job as I see it is to tap into the existing political and social structures, determine the existing level of social awareness and work within it and perhaps increase it when and where conditions allow. Clearly, this entails being aware of the possibility that new social and political structures may arise to challenge the ones existing at the present.*²¹

In practice this was taken to mean working with local trade unionists on issues of income and employment. In fact little of this work, which rested on the optimistic belief that traditional unions would see relevance in the Project's work and thereby respond favourably to its initiatives, was attempted. Soon after the adult education worker was appointed, tensions caused by the publication of *The Great Debate* created a final cleavage with the local authority which led to the Project's premature closure. It can be argued that the publication of this document, heavily critical of the local authority, reinforced the remit given to the informal education worker; certainly part of the intention was to raise political debate to a more intense level, and attract the attention and support of formal trade union organisations. Nevertheless, the document achieved little in real terms and it is valid to ask 'Who debated what?'. As an exercise in political communication the document failed, due to its ragged arguments and its inability to transmit what was actually at issue. Was *The Great Debate* an account of community development, an attack on the system, or a call to the people to organise? If the first, how could community development help people in Batley, if the second what was the nature of the attack, and if the third, who was to organise it and for what? The generality of the argument is illustrated in its last paragraph :

... let us restate the first principles of community development : to work towards a social situation in which the social, economic and political decisions are shared between the people; to work on the existing levels of awareness and to work towards promoting groups of people who will implement social change. In short, we as a team are involved in the job of developing the energies and abilities of working people so that confidence in their own abilities reaches the point where they can take control of their own lives. This is also the job of socialism. It is hoped that it is made clear that some of the elected Labour Party members are not in the same job. They are in the business of maintaining the rule of political elites.²²

Couched in these terms the limitations of the document are clear - questions are asked but only rhetorical answers are provided. In essence, then, *The Great Debate* indicated that the CDP team had misread the local situation. The support it required was not forthcoming, and this reflects in part the inadequacy of the Project's links with local unions.

CONCLUSIONS

All CDPs worked with groups of local residents, providing information, helping them to organise and enabling them to gain access to the necessary skills, though some of the Batley team began to question the relevance of these skills, and the overall commitment to participation as an end in itself. In Batley resources were put into work within and outside the formal educational system, but this hardly represented a sustained effort to support curriculum development to meet the special needs of children, or to develop locally matters of community education. The three aspects of social education put forward operated as separate rather than integral features of the programme. Early bursts of activity with playgroups took place independently and with only a vague developmental purpose in mind. Later, the drive behind this work declined as team perceptions altered, and as those workers who had devoted most time to play activities left the Project. This phase, and that devoted primarily to the formal educational system, is in essence different to later informal work which sought to inform and assist labour activists. Both approaches correspond to changes in the central and local CDP programme and the elevation of 'consciousness-raising' in community development above the limitations of improving particular services. In Batley the movement away from youth to adults points to changing aspirations, in which the earlier curriculum and community education perspectives were seen as expendable. In conclusion, the results of both these approaches suggest that the social education programme devised by Batley CDP was barely a limited success.

NOTES

- 1 For more on the historical background and the type of education provided see Frances Finnegan and Eric Sigsworth, *Poverty and Social Policy. An Historical Study of Batley*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 19, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1978, pp. 93-127.

- 2 See P. H. J. H. Gosden and P. R. Sharp, *The Development of an Education Service in The West Riding 1889-1974*, Martin Robertson, 1978.
- 3 P. H. J. H. Gosden and P. R. Sharp, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
- 4 P. H. J. H. Gosden and P. R. Sharp, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.
- 5 See II, 4, *Asians in Batley*.
- 6 Part of the reason for choosing Batley as a site for CDP took into account the fact that it was not an Educational Priority Area.
- 7 See, for example, J. Rayner, and J. Harden, (eds.) *Equality and City Schools, Readings in Urban Education Vol. 2*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.
- 8 A fuller exposition than that given here is to be found in R. Lees, *Research Strategies for Social Welfare*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- 9 *ibid.*
- 10 Eric Midwinter, *Priority Education*, Penguin, 1972, p. 19.
- 11 Few attempts were made to study new examples of community education promoted elsewhere, for example, in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire.
- 12 In Batley CDP's contribution to the *National Community Project Forward Plan, 1975-76*, playgroup activity is subsumed under the imprecise heading of 'General Community Support'.
- 13 The parameters of the national campaign are distilled in various official publications; for instance, DoE Design Bulletin No. 27, 'Children at Play', DoE Circular 79/72, 'Children's Play Space', and the Parker Morris Report, *Homes for Today and Tomorrow*.
- 14 See J. Fearnley, *A Survey of Playspace in Batley*, Batley CDP, February 1973.
- 15 H. Marsh, *Memo on Purlwell Playgroup*, 18 October 1973.
- 16 H. Marsh and K. Ward, *Batley Summer Playscheme*, Batley CDP, December 1973.
- 17 The terms of the Urban Aid Grant were announced in October 1973.
- 18 Minutes of the WRCC CDP sub-committee, 24 May 1973.
- 19 Proposal for Play Organiser, Batley CDP Report to CDP sub-committee, 31 May 1974.
- 20 National Community Development Project, *Inter-Project Report*, 1974, pp. 3ff.
- 21 Internal Memorandum, 'Ray Holmes to Colleagues', July 1975.
- 22 Batley Community Development Project, *The Great Debate, A Community Project in Action*, September 1975, p. 4.

III COMMUNITY WORK AND CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION

In the following part the theme of conflict in Batley CDP, which has attracted so much attention, is examined in detail through analysis of the Project's style of operations, the dynamics of group behaviour in the team, and the Project's relationship with its local sponsor.

In the 'Style and Image of Batley CDP' some of the central dilemmas of community development and the manner in which the Batley team attempted to deal with them are discussed. The principles that guided Project work are identified and some light is shed on the degree to which the Project was able to convey its aims and purpose to the local community. The difficulties associated with the Project's encouragement of individual local groups are examined, as is the manner in which the local media concentrated on the more sensational aspects of Project work.

In the next chapter 'Group Processes in Batley CDP' attention is turned towards elements in the CDP programme which have received little attention in most of the other reports on CDPs. The relationship of the Batley Project to the local authority, to the University, to the Home Office, are examined, though the main focus of attention is on the individual motivations of team members and the interaction between them. Three areas of weakness in Project activity are delineated. These are inadequate decision-making, conflict, apathy and non-participation, and attention is drawn to the way in which each influenced the Project's programme of work. In reviewing these and other aspects in team relationships a number of themes complementary to those raised in the Assessments in part IV are highlighted.

The final chapter in this part, 'Political Processes: Batley CDP and the Local Authority', traces the Project's relationship with its local sponsors, first the West Riding County Council and Batley Municipal Borough Council, later the Kirklees Metropolitan District Council. Considerable attention is paid to the formal and informal structures which were set up to deal with the Project's work, to the effects of local government reorganisation, and to the manner in which the Batley Project 'conflicted' with the local authority. One critical weakness in the Project's operations - its limited ability to gain the support of local elected members - is identified and documented. This weakness is explored further in the research findings which emerged from an investigation of councillors' and officers' attitudes to CDP, which are presented in part IV.

What is community development? What should a community development project do? How should it communicate and relate to outside bodies and local people? How should it be managed and to whom should it be accountable? Questions such as these constantly concerned CDP staff throughout the life of the Batley Project. In this chapter we discuss some of the central dilemmas of community development and how the Batley team attempted to deal with them. Regardless of the particular themes or topics investigated, the team was always conscious of the importance of its work style and public image. A unanimous view was rarely achieved and several influences accounted for this apparent fragmentation.

Community development was being discussed in various publications in the period when the National CDP programme was set up. The Seebohm Report, for example, stated that :

*Community development in this country is seen as a process whereby local groups are assisted to clarify and express their needs and to take collective action to attempt to meet them. It emphasises the involvement of the people themselves in determining their own needs. The role of the community worker is that of a course of information and expertise, a stimulator, a catalyst and an encourager.*¹

With the main exception of the Welfare Benefits Campaigns, an emphasis on assisting people to identify their own needs constituted the overall approach adopted by the Project team, following the exploratory studies of the first six months. After this preparatory phase, the Project team decided to get involved with activities throughout the town rather than to restrict initiatives to any particular deprived target population or neighbourhood. This decision to extend across the town was undoubtedly one of the most critical taken by the Project.² The general spirit of the team suggested that the town as a whole lacked community activity and that the Project should therefore respond to any opportunities that occurred for supporting action. A largely unforeseen consequence was that the Project quickly became identified with attempts to tackle the problems of the town as a whole. To a lesser degree, a similar transformation occurred after local government re-organisation. Then, instead of bargaining solely for the interests of Batley, the Project team framed many of its submissions with reference to the whole of the new metropolitan area.³

Team members were certainly conscious of the need to relate directly with local people in determining both Project goals and the style of operation. Meetings were held with councillors, existing welfare agencies, voluntary organisations, immigrant groups and so on. Representatives of community groups and voluntary organisations were invited to form a committee to advise the Project on how its action funds should be distributed, but the lines of accountability for the Project were never clearly defined or mutually accepted by team members or other organisations. For example, the Project's attempt to provide resources to assist council tenants in organising resistance to implementation of the 1972 *Housing Finance Act*, could be interpreted as responding to a spontaneous community issue. However, many Batley councillors felt that the action was irresponsible and at odds with their own representative role in the community. This fact was confirmed by the research of Dr. Lewis Corina, in which he argued that the Project's pursuit of community-oriented objectives alienated several councillors, who feared that their roles were being usurped or by-passed completely.⁴

CDP support was not always welcomed by community activists either. The case for giving financial support to ACT became a *cause celebre* when opposed by Kirklees, but it is instructive to note that, when an earlier grant of £8,000 was successfully made, the then Secretary of ACT resigned, observing that the centre should have tried :

*to get some money from independent trusts. Instead an application was made to CDP, the body none of us ever trusted because it was itself part of the official bureaucracy. We applied for £3,000 for one year. Later an offer of £8,000 was made to us. Of course, there were strings attached.*⁵

This theme was carried further, as the following quotation from *Hooter*, one of the town's community newspapers, illustrates :

What is the CDP doing then? We are not at all sure. This is until we got the 'Social Atlas'. We now know where the poor live, where the rich and where the blacks live. We also know what the CDP has been doing. But anyone with a Metro-Card and half a day to spare could have answered that.

Where did they get the information from? From the 1971 census! Already four years out of date and anyway the whole lot could have been done by the top class at school. It is not the sort of thing we would expect a Community Development Project to do.

*Why did they do it then? Because it is safe ... it (CDP) is a waste of both money and resources that could be used for people in and around Batley.*⁶

Some of the conflict inherent in these differing perceptions of the Project came to a head in the dispute over giving a further grant to the advice centre, which occurred after local government re-organisation. When ACT's grant came up for renewal, Kirklees Council decided to offer up to £6,000, conditional on having three Batley councillors on the advice centre's twelve man management committee. The advice centre resisted this, backed by four action workers from Batley CDP, who demanded that :

*Social action money should not be used as a method of imposing control on an independent group, and money should be conditional only on the public availability of accounts.*⁷

When Kirklees Council did not immediately agree, the four Project workers went on strike, hoping to embarrass the Home Office and spark off a national discussion about the 'reality' of participation in government sponsored community programmes.

After a three week strike they resigned, making a joint statement that 'CDP, in Batley at least, is a fraud', calling for 'the abandoning of the Batley CDP 'experiment' in its present form, and a fundamental re-examination of CDP nationally'. They accused the Home Office of 'abandoning its responsibilities', and hoped that their action would initiate a wider debate to end 'the serious confusion that predominates in community work at the present time'.⁸

However, this was by no means a unanimous view. The Action Director issued a statement, arguing that :

*Community workers have a classic dual loyalty, to the groups they work with and the agency they work for. By their link to the local authority, CDP workers have to face up to the tension of competing loyalties; they cannot ignore it ... those on strike have concluded that Kirklees Council sees social action money as a way of controlling grass roots activity rather than stimulating it. I am unwilling to accept this statement as proven because I feel that the situation has been so polarised that both sides have adopted rigid stances. There is a need for further discussion between the local authority and the advice centre in order to bring the issue to a more creative resolution.*⁹

Councillors also differed in their perception of the situation. Whilst all felt that there should be some accountability for public money, they did not all necessarily want to interfere with the activities of the advice centre. They accepted the principle of an advocacy-type advice centre, although some strongly disapproved of tactics such as squatting and 'unjustified attacks on the local authority'. The leader of Kirklees Council stated that :

*The advice centre issue is being used as a vehicle for the expression of discontent about CDP generally. I utterly refute the suggestion that Kirklees is trying to control local organisations in Kirklees and especially in Batley. If the social workers follow the politics of co-operation and compromise rather than confrontation the dispute can be settled.*¹⁰

A letter from the Home Secretary to the Batley MP stated that :

*Social action funds are intended for programmes of experimental action that the local CDP team considers appropriate to the needs and circumstances of its area and that its employing local authority is prepared to approve. It is within the discretion of the local authority to decide what schemes to support; the Home Office has no power of direction.*¹¹

Despite this apparent neutrality, representatives from the Home Office did argue in favour of continued negotiation with the advice centre in order to achieve an agreement over the way the grant should be given.

As for clients of the advice centre, the survey discussed in a previous chapter (*Information, Advice and Advocacy*) suggested that many of them knew little of the conflicts involving finance and management. They saw the centre as a vigorous casework agency and were less aware of its community action activities.

Of course, the dispute over ACT was to continue and, in some respects, became an argument over the Project's accountability to the local authority. During a correspondence between the Action Director and the Chief Executive Officer of Kirklees in late 1974, this theme, and the relationship of the Project to community groups, was examined in the context of the Home Office brief. The Project Director made two critical points. First :

*Some elected members of Kirklees MDC appear to perceive CDP as an extension or arm of the local authority, whereas our interpretation of the Home Office brief certainly does not give CDP such a role. On the contrary, CDP has the task on occasion to question and support groups in opposing council policies.*¹²

and second :

Similarly, there seems to be in existence the idea that the Project, and results of the Project's work, should be available to all sections of the community, rather than selected parts of it defined by the terms of the brief. Such an idea, in our opinion, runs counter to the purpose and focus of CDP.¹³

The question of positive discrimination in favour of certain groups was never adequately solved, but the view of Kirklees' Chief Executive about the Project's style is relevant here. He wrote :

It is inevitable that conflict situations will arise in the work of a local authority generally. Thus it seems to me the only implication of the interpretation is that from time to time the Project group will identify itself with those in conflict. It must surely also follow from that that sometimes the Project will find itself unable to support a group which is in conflict with the authority, unless the interpretation which you seek to put on the Project work is that the Project is always on the side of those who are in opposition to authority.¹⁴

Two points in particular are worth pursuing. First, many elected members had in the past similarly expressed their view that the Project was always ready to attack the established lines of power. The unproductive qualities of this style, as an alternative to consensus or bargaining, offended the sensitivities of both officers and members, who claimed that the excesses of certain agencies such as ACT, were CDP inspired. Second, the comment that the Project team might have a tendency to intervene on the side of those against authority expresses an established local authority view, although in fact the Project team did not seek only to support groups in conflict with the authority. For example, in a statement on the implications of the advice centre decision, the Action Director wrote :

The squat which occasioned the break off can be seen as merely the tail end of a process of conflict rather than as the real cause of the decision not to make a grant. We do not, therefore, wish to enter here into a debate about the merits of 'squatting' in general or in relation to this particular case. Nor is it our intention to justify tactics used by ACT during the negotiations.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the tone of the correspondence cited above is controlled and meticulous, indicating at this point the genuine concern of each party to find suitable solutions to the problems which divided the two. However, when the Project sought to preserve its independence on other occasions, the strident literature it produced had a definite dysfunctional effect. After the final £200 grant offer to the advice centre, for example, team members issued a document accusing Labour councillors of retreating from Socialist principles and labelling them as 'Labour Tories'. When the Action Director had resigned over the issue, the Council responded by forming a steering committee to co-ordinate Project work, which resulted in further resignations and the closure of Batley CDP.

The Great Debate, indicting the political structure in Kirklees in general, and the role and performance of the controlling Labour Party in particular, may be seen as the outcome of an ideological polemic initiated in 1974. The document aimed to expose the inadequacy of the local political system, and to explain the principles of community development to the public. It had a transitory impact, but little lasting effect : nevertheless, it was the last straw for councillors, and sealed the closure of the Project. Yet

its publication represented more than a brutal ideological clash. It indicated the general level of frustration which dominated team operations, highlighted the apparent lack of a useful public dimension to CDP and was ultimately a vain attempt to force issues about the Project into the open.

At this stage there were disagreements within the team over future policy and tactics. One action worker wrote :

*Immediately following the advice centre decision, a number of decisions, described by colleagues as 'hard line', were decided upon to challenge the decision the Council had made. I could not support most of them, but as before was allowed to express my disagreements in team meetings, provided I did not do so outside the team.*¹⁶

The above quotation and CDP records indicate that internal disagreements about the Project's image were never resolved, though team members did spend a great deal of time discussing both what they should do and what kind of public image they should attempt to communicate. This debate continued throughout the life of the Project, and considerable time was spent in considering the merits of social democratic and reformist methods, as against a more forthright and 'revolutionary' approach. However, the question of public image was often pre-empted by the local media, particularly the *Batley News*. This paper regularly featured news and articles on the Project, but, after an initial honeymoon period, emphasised criticisms of the Project, and its conflicts with the local authority over the advice centre. Furthermore, the late Sir Alfred Broughton, then MP for Batley and Morley, achieved considerable news coverage in his efforts to criticise CDP reports on Batley's economic prospects. He made public the cost of the Project and his view that it was a shocking waste of time and money. Naturally, such comments needed to be reported, but they were rarely balanced by accounts of some of the less sensational work in which CDP was engaged.¹⁷

As an attempt to overcome its problems over communications, the Project team toyed with the idea of producing a community newspaper. In early 1974 a background study was commissioned to assess whether Batley needed an 'alternative newspaper'. It was proposed that the paper should be produced by local people and supported from CDP funds. However, the feasibility study concluded that little local initiative existed to sustain a community-run paper. More fundamentally, it was discovered that local people expected CDP to run, write, control, finance and distribute the paper - as much a measure of the community's image of the Project as of this particular enterprise. The author of the Alternative Newspaper Study wrote :

*I did not realise when I started this project how strong local feeling about CDP is. I have quickly discovered that CDP has a reputation in the town which I consider to be very unfortunate, and one which is disastrous from the point of view of trying to encourage any new independent project into existence.*¹⁸

More likely, a study of the whole range of the Project's communications would have been profitable. The Report on the Alternative Newspaper concluded :

... the notion of an alternative newspaper (was) born within CDP as a response to the situation staff perceived in Batley, as a by now traditional response to problems and situations which are themselves quite common ... the notion had not been thought out sufficiently nor the situation analysed with

sufficient clarity. I also suspect that an alternative newspaper may have been seen as an easy answer to some of the problems that raise themselves in everyday community work.¹⁹

Once the scheme was dropped, *Batley News* retained its hegemony as the only regular interpreter of local activities, including the work of the Project. Of course, the Project did attempt to give an account of itself through its own local publications, but the main impact probably depended on interpretation in the local press. For example, with the studies of economic decline in Batley, *Batley News* featured the observations of the local MP under the headline 'Sir Alfred hits out at Report!'.²⁰ Sir Alfred Broughton was reported as having said of CDP workers that:

They have eyes but they cannot see, and they have ears but they cannot hear. They just don't seem to know what is going on in Batley at all.

These acrimonious offerings from Batley's MP were not uncommon. When the Project Director forwarded the team's first report on employment and industry in the Batley area in the hope that he would 'find it interesting', Sir Alfred gave his impressions of the report to the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* first. Batley's Project Director expressed 'genuine disappointment' at the criticisms Sir Alfred made, which prompted the following statement:

*I note that you dislike my comments on your report. Please let me assure you that your dislike of my comments cannot be more intense than my dislike of your report.*²¹

Fortunately, the response to other aspects of the Project work was not the same, although part of the Project's communications style included occasional bouts of sensationalism, including 'exposures' on local radio and television, as well as the angry statements associated with the strike and final closure of the Project. Although the team in internal meetings emphasised the need for both the Project as a whole and individual workers to adopt a 'low profile', with local groups taking the lead, the polarised public image captured the attention of most observers.

Whilst the local media was the main source of information for the public, the CDP team was directly and consciously concerned with presenting an image in meetings with organisations such as the employing local authority, the Home Office, the University employing the research staff, other CDPs, local welfare agencies, groups and voluntary organisations. Although it was the common practice to have a formal internal team discussion before such meetings to decide on strategy, no consistent approach was developed. Because agreement was often not easily attained, meetings tended to be frequent, long, highly personalised and often bitter. Discussions turned on issues such as team leadership, the role of the Director, the extent of professionalism or overt commitment to radical social change, the purpose of research and the research team's relationship to the University, the differing expectations of other organisations and the extent to which the Project should attempt to meet them, the nature and causes of social deprivation and the role and function of a community development project as part of an 'anti-poverty programme'. Despite the fact that discussion centred on such dilemmas, it would be wrong to assert that at all times one ideology overwhelmed others. In fact, several co-existed if not in perfect harmony, then at least with some mutual tolerance.

The manner in which difficulties were faced was, of course, influenced by developments in the national programme. At the outset, the objectives were roughly summarised as:

- (i) to describe fully the social conditions in each project area;
- (ii) to develop better communications between the community and local authority services;
- (iii) to develop co-operative action within local government to deal with local problems, and joint action with local residents;
- (iv) to create a more integrated community supported by integrated services;
- (v) to evaluate the action taken.

To support a complicated interlocking organisational hierarchy, with the Home Office at the pinnacle, a Consultative Council was set up after a joint meeting between Projects and the Home Office in 1972. The Council comprised Home Office officials, advisers, the Central Research Director and Project Action and Research Directors.

The CDP programme did not, in the event, operate as the initiators had anticipated. Central Research was phased out, after it failed to gain the co-operation of local Projects; the Consultative Council never met after 1974, when some Project workers formed their own Workers' Organisation with elected delegates to co-ordinate Project activities. Inter-project publications, produced by the newly-formed Central Intelligence Unit, increasingly emphasised the structural aspects of poverty rooted in the class nature of British society. By 1975 one group, part of the NCDP, claimed that :

CDP can no longer describe itself meaningfully as a 'Community Development Project'; most Project workers would not describe themselves as 'community' workers in any significant sense. An additional problem is that the more effective radical community workers are, the more likely they are to be pressurised out of their jobs. This is basically what is happening in CDP at the present time. With the development of socialist perspectives within CDP, both the Central and Local State have made it increasingly difficult for the Projects to operate.²²

The Batley Project both contributed to, and was influenced by, these developments in the national CDP programme, but different points of view co-existed among team members. For example, at the time of local government reorganisation, the first Action Director argued that :

the high visibility of the development of an advice centre out of one particular tenants' group, has tended to overshadow the amount of steady, developmental, co-ordinatory work with other voluntary agencies, statutory departments and council members on issues such as housing, social facilities and play.²³

This kind of representation emphasised the desirability of a low profile on the advice centre issue and corresponded with the opinion of action workers who did not join the strike in 1974. At that time they argued for greater acceptance of their 'professional' relationship with the local authority. Later, combined action-research programmes on employment and industry and housing, more structuralist in outlook, were also part of a conscious effort to create a new image for the Project. The pursuit of the structural approach, however, brought with it new problems, especially those bearing upon how the local authority could be influenced so that it might incorporate

new recommendations into its future planning procedures. Furthermore, on more than one occasion, local elected members and officers regarded structuralist interpretations as indicating that the local authority had an inherent inability to put its own house in order; in fact the documents in question wished to show that local stresses related to regional and national trends, and were thus in effect criticisms of the national structures at a local level, and not mere critiques of local forces in isolation.

The unpopularity of socialist perspectives referred to in the quotation from the CDP Political Economy Collective is also germane to the perceptions of action and research workers in Batley. In a forthright public statement, disassociating himself from *The Great Debate*, the Project's Industry and Employment Worker stated :

I regard myself as a socialist, I am a councillor and have been a Parliamentary candidate. How can I support the criticism of fellow councillors which describes them as 'Tories', and which says of the Labour Government that it has 'kicked workers in the crutch'? Of course, this does not mean that I think Labour Councillors and the Government are beyond criticism - far from it. But it does mean I cannot support the 'hard-left' direction that the Project has decided to take.²⁴

It is almost certain that every member of the action and research teams would then have claimed to be a 'socialist' but this by no means guaranteed that there was a basis for agreement over how the Project should operate.

In practice, the Batley Project frequently oscillated between different methods of presenting itself; sometimes as professionals with community work and research expertise, simply reflecting the views and needs of the local community, and sometimes as committed radicals who had themselves a clear theoretical view of what needed to be done. Part of this developed out of the need for essentially pragmatic responses to different pressures and audiences, part reflected the dominance of different views at different times, and part illustrated a sincere, but often shambling and ineffectual, self-scrutiny.

The style and image which Batley CDP presented is not therefore an easy matter to delineate. When the Project was set up, it was greeted with a flourish by the local press, whilst the local authority saw it as a means of bringing additional resources to support existing welfare agencies in the town. Team members were regarded as 'experts'. In practice, the Project involved itself in a broad range of activities, covering education, play, immigrants, housing, town planning, welfare benefits, employment and political economy. Increasingly, however, it was identified with attempts to tackle the problems of the town as a whole, and in this arena it could not point to any substantial improvements. Moreover, the Project was increasingly characterised by an aggressively argued political stance, and one not totally representative of all its members. In its brief existence, Batley CDP engaged in considerable conflict, particularly over the advice centre, and never succeeded in its efforts to gain some recognition as a long-term developmental agency. Finally, it took the stance of frustrated radicalism, a victim of oppression by the local state.

It is open to question whether the Project contributed to its own demise or not. Other CDP projects, such as Coventry, Newham and Tyneside, adopted a more overt Marxist analysis of community problems but still survived their expected life span. In Batley, dissension in the team was constant and

remained unresolved. Whether identified as professional community workers or committed revolutionaries, it is arguable that Batley CDP represents a failure in community development that could have been avoided.

NOTES

- 1 *Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services*, Cmnd. 3703, HMSO, 1968, Ch. XVI, p. 148.
- 2 See *Batley CDP Report to Home Office*, August 1972, p. 1 and *Batley CDP Report to the Minister*, October 1973, p. 28.
- 3 Several of the Project's submissions after local government reorganisation, especially those on housing and employment, argued that it could 'pilot' studies of more widespread application.
- 4 L. Corina, *A Selective Assessment of the Influence of Oldham Community Development Project on the Operations of the Local Authority, Comparative Case No. 5 Batley CDP*, Unpublished paper, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1976.
- 5 R. Lees, *Strategies for Social Welfare*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p. 47.
- 6 *The Hooter*, May 1975, p. 4.
- 7 Statement by CDP Workers, 9 July 1974.
- 8 Notice of strike action was given on 31 July 1974. The strike ended on 19 August 1974. The Community Workers' letter of resignation was submitted shortly afterwards. See IV, 4.
- 9 Statement by Project Director, 6 August 1974.
- 10 Statement by T. Megahy at Council meeting, 7 August 1974.
- 11 Letter from Home Secretary to Sir A. Broughton, MP, 17 July 1974.
- 12 P. Henderson to E. Dixon, Correspondence, 19 November 1974, p. 2.
- 13 P. Henderson to E. Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
- 14 E. Dixon to P. Henderson, Correspondence, 27 November 1974, p. 1.
- 15 P. Henderson to E. Dixon, Correspondence, 25 October 1974, p. 2.
- 16 M. Wedgeworth, 'Statement by the Worker for Employment and Industry', 22 September 1975, p. 1.
- 17 For sensational headlines, see for example :
'Attack on Open Cheque for ACT' *Batley News*, 13 June 1974
'£1,000 per week, MPs told' *Batley News*, 4 July 1974

'Close CDP Now'
'Is CDP Worth It?'

Batley News, 29 August 1974
Batley News, 15 May 1975.

- 18 M. White, *Batley Alternative Newspaper First Report*, 13 February 1974, p. 2.
- 19 M. White, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
- 20 *Batley News*, 9 January 1975, p. 1.
- 21 Sir A. Broughton, MP to P. L. Henderson, Correspondence, 15 January 1975.
- 22 CDP Political Economy Collective, *Community Work or Class Politics?*, CDP, 1975, p. 3.
- 23 Referred to in an internal memorandum by M. Would, Batley CDP, 1973, but see also *Batley CDP, Report to the Minister*, October 1973, Appendix : Case Study of an Advice Centre.
- 24 M. Wedgeworth, 'Statement by Worker for Employment and Industry', *Batley CDP*, 22 September 1975, p. 1.

Reports on community development projects have concentrated more on initiatives taken than on the dynamics of group behaviour. This tendency has a natural explanation, namely that the community worker should produce material on the community rather than on him or herself. Nevertheless, it is our firm contention that, although study of group processes cannot stand as a total explanation of all that happens, much can be gained through a more systematic study of relationships and group dynamics than has been provided hitherto in official reports and other community work literature. In Batley, opinion in the CDP team divided as much over personality as over ideology. Consequently, several periods may be identified through the personality conflicts, and group alignments which characterised them, rather than through the action-research initiatives taken.

When one attempts to analyse the dynamics of a small team of people working together, it is necessary to discuss personal motivations and the interaction between team members. Of course, this is a delicate business, but these questions can become important to group performance and therefore they need to be raised. Throughout its life, Batley CDP did exhibit symptoms of poor group cohesion, which can be usefully diagnosed in the following three areas of Project activity :

- (i) inadequate decision-making;
- (ii) conflict;
- (iii) apathy and non-participation.

Reaching satisfactory decisions was almost always a major struggle within the Project team - partly the result of status problems both within and between the action and research teams. The question was never really resolved whether there was a hierarchy of membership, or whether each individual was left to participate as best he or she could. The relationship of the Project to other responsibilities of team members remained confused - for example, between the Action Director and the local authority and Home Office, between the Research Director and the University, between team members and other CDP teams. In this context the Project team had difficulty in making decisions and in working them through. Examples of this difficulty can be seen in the plans for the Welfare Benefits Project, in the differing views over work with the Advice Centre for the Town (including the strike and resignations of some of the action team), the failure to operationalise the last phase of the Project, together with the resignation of the second Action Director, the inability to generate genuine community work action, and the long and often acrimonious team meetings that characterised much of the working life of the Project.

At a relatively early stage in the Project's life it was apparent that problems over aims and purpose were rooted in the dispositions of team members as much as in the programmes devised. Consequently, at the end of 1973 the Project team conducted an internal investigation into its organisation which partly consisted of each team member being interviewed about their perceptions of the problems of team communication and decision-making. Although the resultant paper mainly comprised compilations of a common viewpoint, or individually held views, it was hardly a masterpiece of diagnosis. Some of the statements made indicated the manner in which team members identified and expressed decision-making problems. In this consideration of the Project's organisation and work, several aspects bearing upon team work were called into question. There was common agreement that meetings took place too often, tended to hinge on personality questions and were confused in purpose :

Is the weekly meeting for discussion or decisions? For administration only, or for policy?¹

Team members asked how they were expected to work, when, as a whole, skills were general and aims unclear :

There is a predominance of generalistic skills. Therefore it is difficult to define what an individual's skills and contributions are We have no clear corporate aim, and therefore no group discipline.²

The most central issues which emerged, however, were related to the leadership provided, professional competence, and the role of conflict in decision-making. Team members were accused of being 'naive', 'amateur', 'blinker' and complacent, of having a low work rate, and of holding individual, rather than team, motives and interests.

The productive nature of conflict in a team setting was never adequately handled by team members. Most would accept that it was unrealistic to expect the team to operate without any tensions or crises. However, no effective method was established whereby conflict could be curtailed and issues solved. Traditionally, one would expect that group decisions might help overcome this problem, although one of the opinions expressed was that consensus and group decision-making were 'sterile'.³

Alternatively, as power struggles emerged over both minor and major issues, the team leader might have been expected to reconcile opinion, or to channel it into more effective outlets. However, it seemed that the leadership offered by the Action Director was under attack at the time from members who saw in it undemocratic propensities parading under the name of democracy. In effect, the operation of 'democratic decision-making' became crucial to the understanding of the situation at Batley. This situation developed from an early stage when the first Action Director arranged meetings which rambled on without a clearly defined agenda on the assumption that 'talking through' issues would help to clarify, and indicate ways of resolving, them. This tradition, which has become widely used in some community work in Britain, derives much more from ideas stemming from sensitivity training and encounter groups than from mainstream community work. In the formulation of this view each actor is seen as possessing equal rights to express views and determine decisions. However, in practice, the reality behind these hopes and assumptions often tends to be rather different. Disparities in knowledge and status are reflected in the kinds of decisions made, and in the ways they are arrived at. At several points in the early stages of the Project, team members challenged the 'nominal democracy' which appeared to be developing. Some felt that the Action Director's concept of policy-making reflected too strongly her own views, regardless of the dimensions which might be added through discussion with other team members or people outside the team. As an example, before the appointment of the members of the research team, discussions at the University of York stressed the importance of specific action at the earliest possible stage. In the event, the idea of immediate action was not well received and illustrates the extent to which group processes in Batley reflected the first Action Director's predilections and preconceptions.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that the difficulties which team members experienced individually or collectively in group decision-making were the consequence of the Action Director's style alone. Other members, although aware of the problems, were not necessarily agreed on how they should be tackled. As part of an attempt to solve difficulties, the first Action Director commissioned a study of Batley CDP by a consultant in management and organisational behaviour. In a largely inconclusive report,

this consultant gave his interpretation of the problem as follows :

Attitudes to authority and leadership are problem areas for some members of CDP staff. This is not a special problem for CDP people, but is true of a wide range of situations with which I have contact and is dominant in the under thirty age group. They are usually discovering how to work at the issue for themselves. In situations where their clients are caught up in this feature of institutional interaction it is very easy for the unresolved skills in the CDP specialists to become entangled with the dilemma experienced by the 'client' person or group in the community. A great deal of the current and past problems in the Batley CDP system are attributable to this issue from my contact and judgment.⁴

To some team members, this report was biased towards the perceptions of the Action Director. Certainly, there were conflicts of authority between the Director and team members within the Project, but it is arguable whether these were only (or even mainly) due to anti-authority attitudes. An alternative explanation could point to inadequate leadership. Leadership within the participatory culture of a community development project is a particularly difficult task. In this situation a leader may fail if he or she is not aware of the motivations and standards of the team. If the leader is unaware of the reasons why others think as they do, he or she is often unable to guide the team in such a way that the needs of each member are satisfied. A lack of sensitivity to the forces which cause difficulties in making decisions - such as conflicting loyalties, differing values, inter-personal conflicts and methodological inadequacies - may have exacerbated the difficulties in leadership which the first Action Director experienced. In the case of the second Action Director, divisiveness within the team undermined his efforts at leadership. He was perhaps the victim of his position to a greater extent than the first Director.

However, it would be mistaken to view the conflict within the Project at any stage as being simply between the Director and others. There was a lack of general cohesion among other members, so that over the whole life of the Project one can see a tendency to use issues as a means of jockeying for power, establishing alignments or cliques, or trying to suppress individuals or other cliques. Two instances of this process are the inter-team conflict stimulated by *The Great Debate* in Summer 1975, and a letter from a research worker in March 1974 to the University of York and Home Office, stressing general dissatisfaction with Project activities. In the latter case the research worker claimed :

Together with two colleagues, I had put forward a package of 'Action Research programmes' to the Project and these have been discussed with, and warmly received by, York University. We had put this forward to the Project in the expectation that it would have some central relationship to a general Project strategy and that our other colleagues would produce similarly detailed outlines for their personal work programmes. For the most part, such work programmes have not yet emerged and it is not clear that the definition of a collective strategy is accepted as a general priority. The reaction to our 'Action Research programme' appears to indicate that they are regarded as at best a piece of window dressing somewhat peripheral to the Project's central (but undefined) concern and as such can be allocated only a low priority in terms of resources of cash and staff-time. In these circumstances, and given the very recent resignation of the only colleague who would have shared the substantial work-load, I am in some doubt as to whether I have the capacity or optimism to proceed much further at this stage ...⁵

This statement was in turn refuted by six other members of the Project who wrote that :

On 6th March 1974, CDP staff received copies of a letter sent by a research fellow, containing unsubstantiated allegations about Project workers, and an analysis biased towards his own interests. This letter had been sent to his employers, York University, and the Home Office ... we totally reject the general charges of inaction, inertia, lack of vision, and cynicism. We consider that to extend the differences in interests and activities within Batley CDP to the level of public dispute has caused factionalism which will be difficult if not impossible to overcome, and that this in itself is cynically destructive.⁶

The Home Office and University's responses to the original letter were broadly similar, though technically the University had to deal with the problem. Each recommended that the worker concerned should be less hasty in his judgment and encouraged him to stand back and look at the problem more realistically in order to avoid intense internalisation of the issues. But leaving aside the substantive issues, which are discussed elsewhere in this report, this example does illustrate the high degree of professional and interpersonal conflict among Project members at this time. Examples of similar 'dissension' can be documented for other stages in Project activities, but this example is particularly significant because it involved the employing organisations and thereby reduced the element of trust that could exist between the then team members, increasing insecurity in the team generally. Shortly after this exchange had taken place, a new Action Director was appointed, and it was felt that part of his task was to bring cohesion to a team that had already experienced considerable interpersonal status and value conflict, and to ensure that a new sense of team responsibility would be shown to the local authority. To this end the action team leader attempted to initiate a review of the Project's work. The new Action Director had taken up appointment eagerly and with a more radical approach to community work than the departing Director. In the first few months, time was spent with the research team in an attempt to build up a base from which effective community development could take place within the area. A new team was recruited, a process which took up the next six to nine months, when efforts should perhaps have been focused upon the immediate needs of the Batley area. In fact, largely due to the composition of its members and the character of one of the research team already there, this 'rebuilding' process became a vehicle for expressing generalised dissent with the status quo. Once more, lengthy group meetings failed to resolve the differing perceptions between members, and splits again became public with the strike of four action workers over the refusal of the local authority to provide additional funding for the advice centre. Three of the strikers subsequently resigned from the Project, and new appointments were made largely to implement the proposed 'action-research programme'. In his own review of the period under examination, the then Action Director has stated that :

my immediate inclinations were to mediate between contesting parties, to gain some sort of breathing space.⁷

This tactic could only have short-term advantages, and, as the action-research programmes were pursued, internal conflicts persisted.

The Summer of 1975 is probably as critical a period as the Spring of 1974 to any analysis of Project team dynamics. In both cases divisiveness was paramount. During the Spring and Summer of 1975 new team appointments were made, and more localised schemes of work (for example the Urban Priority Area Project) devised. At this stage, specific group alignments emerged

more in line with political ideology. Some of the new appointees, frustrated by the endless theorising which dominated team meetings, chose to pursue short-term goals. The more established team members stressed structural issues and 'consciousness raising' as ends in themselves. Several clashes occurred as it proved difficult for the two approaches to merge. At this time, the team was operating without a Research Director, and, if the first Research Director had stayed in post, the two styles of operation might have continued to co-exist. As internal conflicts heightened, one team member denounced the 'hard left direction' that the Project team had decided to take.⁸ The document which stands as the embodiment of this 'hard' approach has been mentioned elsewhere : however, the process by which it was published has not been described.⁹ Essentially, after the local authority had refused to allow ACT a substantial grant, team morale plummeted, and the power void which existed at the time was exploited by those who favoured a hard line against the local authority. The then Action Director has since described the situation as follows :

The atmosphere in the team, accordingly, was depressed and desperate. Some staff turned back into their work, others like myself went on holiday. Into this void stepped those who believed in more militant engagements and in the cathartic qualities of a final showdown.¹⁰

As events took their course after the publication of *The Great Debate* team unity was shattered to such an extent that no common tactics could be determined. Issues polarised even further as the shadow of rhetoric substituted for action. Some wished to plot a dual course : technically disagreeing with the timing of *The Great Debate*, but wishing to avoid any break with those in the ideological 'elite'. Others who wanted to 'get on with the job' were in a difficult position. One member felt moved to stand out against the prevailing tendency, which he saw as Fascist in a number of respects, but those who thought similarly were reluctant to support him. The issues were polarised and there was virtually no effective opposition to ideas which ultimately led to confrontation with the local authority and to the abandonment of the Project. Finally, the Action Director resigned his post as much from an inability to control outputs, such as *The Great Debate*, as from any agreement with their contents. A cynical assessment might claim that the Action Director took the blame for actions outside his control, but there did not seem to be an intention on the part of those who released the document to undermine all team unity. All one can suggest is that much of the informal leadership was 'covert' : those playing the biggest part were not those who were most visible. Ironically, documents from the period suggest that even they saw unity as of the essence, as emphasised by this quotation from an internal team memorandum :

Whatever our differences of approach as individuals, I think we could all agree that our policy towards the local authority and the Committee is one of 'considered brinkmanship'. The Great Debate is both a political challenge to the authority and an explicitly political document which associates the Project very firmly with the Left. We can expect a strong reaction - how do we respond? In a situation where talk of disciplinary action, even Project closure, is bound to be in the air again, the greatest threat to the Project's position, in my view, lies in the open appearance of a split in Team opinion. We owe it to one another and the Project to try and prevent this happening.¹¹

The miscalculations in this assessment are now clear. The expected reaction could not be handled and, since so few team members were prepared to rally round the flag, visible splits did occur. The quotation also indicates how team members could misinterpret the views of other colleagues.

It is not difficult to show that the Batley Project failed to devise an adequate decision-making process, or that much of its work was produced against a background of internal conflict. On some occasions when tensions arose, there was a well developed tendency to opt out of or evade a critical decision, as in the production of *The Great Debate*. But, with the exception of this example, it is difficult to document the process of apathy and non-participation that occurred in the Project. One can identify this tendency in the form of group meetings, which were characterised by lengthy questioning of purpose, little relation between discussion and subsequent action, irrelevant contributions, frequent individual absences, repetition in discussion, low level of participation and so on. Despite the high level of personal commitment on joining the Project, the considerable number of resignations, due to frustration and lack of job satisfaction, was a further indication of the syndrome of apathy and opting out.

Of course, to identify group problems in this way does not in itself explain their cause. Although not all the reasons contributing to inadequate decision-making, conflict and apathy can be pursued here, it is possible to isolate significant general elements which influenced Project activities.

The teams had been given a difficult job at the outset and members became frustrated because they felt unable to meet the demands made of them. Furthermore, the structures of accountability were a further pointer to the weaknesses of CDPs and the frantic or vain efforts of team members to 'get on with the job'. Aside from the structures, though, the aims of the programme were always ambitious. Halsey, for example, identified the task of the Project as producing 'a theory of poverty', testing it in the 'very real world of the urban twilight zones', and Greve summarised the aims as improving the quality of individual, family and community life, covering social and economic opportunities and the capacity to exercise self-determination and control over their environment.¹²

These goals are worthy but vague, and more than a little grandiose in style. Because the tasks were ambiguous, the Batley Project team found it difficult to decide between alternative plans for action-research strategies. It must also be pointed out that few team members had previously worked in community development projects or in community work, and therefore had little direct experience with which to evaluate their capacity to tackle the given brief.

In addition to the problems inherent in the tasks given to CDPs, some note should be taken of the background of team members. In Batley, team members had differing interests, skills and values, and they failed to reach mutual understanding. From the beginning the team was drawn from a diverse background; including teaching, social administration, survey research, planning, child care, political science and political activism. People had worked in different settings, brought different skills to the Project, and had different interests and differing views on what they considered to be important for Project work. They also tended to have different political values, representing a broad left-wing spectrum; from populism to vulgar Marxism through to reformist social democracy. Whilst these differing skills, interests and values were often overlapping and complementary, they were also an important source of misunderstanding, disagreement, distrust and conflict. At worst, they fostered a tendency for team members to carve out particular areas of responsibility for themselves, in either action or research, regardless of whether these areas corresponded to total Project needs or, more importantly, to the needs of the community.

After a short time it was clear that team members had responsibilities and loyalties to outside organisations and community groups of conflicting

interests, and that these commitments could be in some instances inimical to the ongoing work of the Project. To compound this, the broad purpose and the management structure of CDP led to conflicting loyalties and responsibilities from team members to the Home Office, the local authority, the University, other CDPs and to groups of local people with whom they became involved. The formal responsibilities of individuals also differed leading almost inevitably to a high degree of role conflict - particularly for the Action Director, who was seen as having overall responsibility for the Project, and who tended to interact at all levels of Project responsibility, but who also tended to become mistrusted at all levels. The second Action Director, for example, has since stated that Project Directors were in the 'most vulnerable position'.¹³

In terms of the mechanics of team operations, in the absence of recognised leadership or agreed goals, there was a concern among members to find status within the team. It was decided at an early stage that the Project team should take decisions collectively and should attempt to operate a 'participatory democracy', despite differences in formal roles. When this process failed to achieve a working consensus, disagreements often involved efforts to deflate and reduce the prestige of opponents. This kind of power struggle could involve attacks on the formal leader, particularly in the case of the first Action Director who became deeply mistrusted by some team members.

The final consequences of this development are best observed in the period immediately after the resignation of the first Action Director, and in the Autumn of 1975. In the first instance, the Project had degenerated into a situation of *anomie* or anarchy, where there was agreement on the great problems facing society but no kind of practical consensus about what might be done about them. Eyes were turned to the distant horizons of a new social order, tackling the biggest problems with little reference to individual opportunities for Project members to perform at the specific and localised level. In the second instance, group processes in the final stage of the Batley Project were dominated by two people whose views were rigid, whose experience was limited and whose orientation was governed by their lack of capacity to act effectively in the circumstances.

Deep divisions among a few team members emerged from this desire to find status and dominated team discussions for prolonged periods. Two or three dominant members of the team frequently competed with each other, so that every activity in the Project was overshadowed by conflict between them. This happened both in the internal debate over ACT, and in the splits between the relative merits of 'non-directive' community work and the need for specific action-research programmes. In this kind of situation, less dominant team members tended to feel inadequate to help solve the conflict, became apathetic and withdrew from participation. Meanwhile their 'peers' made radical noises, in a situation where the action taken was effectively apolitical or traditional in nature, and they were bound to stress process at the expense of achievement.

The fact that team members at times felt powerless to influence final decisions, and that the decisions taken had no practical effect, was a significant debilitating factor within the Batley Project. This occurred where members felt so strongly that decisions were wrong that they decided not to operationalize them, as in much of the planned action-research programme for welfare rights. The lack of a genuine consensus made all decisions vulnerable in practice. In other cases, desired strategies were blocked and frustrated by the local authority, as in the proposed funding for ACT. There is no doubt that team members frequently felt that the Project was operating in a 'hostile' environment - a perception which is exemplified by the statements made by the workers who went on strike in 1974, and in the public statements made against the local authority in 1975.

CONCLUSIONS

So far this analysis has provided a negative interpretation of the fashion in which Batley Project members worked together as a group, because we believe that this was a truly significant feature of their interaction. However, it would be unfair and mistaken to give the impression that all disagreement was acrimonious, due to self-interest or irrational motivation. Team members frequently expressed impatience, irritation or disagreement because they had a real stake in the issues being discussed. They fought for a certain plan or particular action because it was important to them. On occasions, battles of wits or major confrontations took place when some team members pressed for a specific proposal which others could not 'see' or understand. When there was a clearly understood goal and continuing movement on a problem, conflict could generate productive decisions, and contributed to the production of useful work of which there is ample evidence in other sections of this report.

It is also our impression that the kind of difficulties discussed in this chapter were experienced to some degree by some, if not all, CDPs, and for largely the same reasons identified here. It is interesting that this kind of problem has been little discussed, if at all, in other Project literature, perhaps because it has generally been considered unhealthy to 'contemplate one's own navel', when the main task of CDP was clearly to help the local community. Against this, we would argue that some of the lessons to be learned from CDP include those concerned with the organising and running of community projects, and their internal efficiency; and that these factors will bear relation to what they are able to do for local people. Community projects typically subscribe to group decision-making and it is our view that this process can be effective, but it is not easy. In essence, the group processes operated within the Batley team were most crucial on the action side, except when they involved members of the research team in long discussions on issues which, in retrospect, appeared to be either unresolvable or not capable of resolution in the terms in which they were offered. A good deal of time was wasted because of a lack of peer direction which arose either because it was not clear in which direction the Project should go or, in the later phases, because some of those already entrenched in the structure had ideas different from those of newcomers. There was also a cavalier attitude towards authority among action team members, reflected in the kind of anomic attitude towards strategies and programmes. Thus, there was painstaking and literal-minded progression, usually through secondary authorities, towards certain kinds of long-term goals in a situation where many opportunities for short-term work were not being taken - usually on the grounds that they were palliatives and therefore not worth considering. Of course, this bears upon the fundamental relationship between community work theory and practice - a subject discussed in our conclusions - but it is possible to draw from the Batley experience the following factors which would, in our view, have facilitated group decision-making :

- (i) We have argued that the CDP brief was ambiguous and that this greatly impeded the task, as 'tackling poverty' was so general that the team members were largely unable to come to grips with it - especially if they interpreted it too literally. A problem needs to be defined clearly, the limits of the team responsibility need to be set, and any clarification relative to the problem should be encouraged. Of course, this procedure assumes that those concerned will accept the definition of the problem as adequate, and see relevance in the pursuit of a solution to it.

- (ii) When a group is asked to assume responsibility for a decision it should have an understanding about its freedom to act and the degree of its responsibility. As far as the Batley Project was concerned, the differing lines of responsibility - to the local authority, the University and the Home Office - were never satisfactorily worked out or accepted. This tended to undermine opportunities within the structure for co-operative ventures, and - with the local authority in particular - a real chance of familiarising politicians with desirable outcomes from community development or a community work approach.
- (iii) To achieve effective decision-making a group needs to realise that the attainment of the actual decision is only one step in the process : the implementation of the decision and the execution of appropriate action are equally important. A group needs to build into its planning responsibility, for implementation and action. Frequently within Batley CDP, failure to pin down responsibility led to ineffective action, and necessitated further meetings which resulted in frustration and apathy on the part of team members, and could have been avoided had commitment to the decision been built into this sphere of operations.
- (iv) A leader should be interested in, and honestly committed to, the process of group decision-making, and not in a predetermined idea or opinion of his/her own. The leader (or any other person with status) still has a right to make a contribution, but it is a mistake to try to dominate group discussion. In the first phase of the Batley Project, there is no doubt that some team members felt that the Action Director was attempting to act in this way.
- (v) On issues which are particularly controversial, and cause a split in the group, decision-making processes can become a real problem. If a group can reach agreement on the criteria and standards it will use in making decision, it will have established a basis for subsequent discussion - a factor that was never satisfactorily agreed within Batley CDP.
- (vi) Where crises in confidence, flash-points or group conflicts do occur, it is important for team members to consider whether these problems can be effectively resolved internally, without resorting to consulting 'experts' from outside. In Batley this desire simply reinforced resentment among the team, while the general tendency to fix on an outside problem, such as problems encountered in the National Project, did little to help swift resolution of internal difficulties.

NOTES

1 H. Marsh, 'Internal Organisation and Decision Making', Batley CDP, 1973.

2 *ibid.*

- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 M. J. Armstrong, *Management and Organisation of Community Development in Batley*, Report of Management Consultant to the Home Office, 1973.
- 5 P. Waddington, 'Personal Statement', March 1974.
- 6 K. Ward et al., 'Statement to the Home Office and University of York', March 1974.
- 7 IV,4, *Batley CDP 1974-75 : The Perspectives of the Action Director*, p. 179.
- 8 M. Wedgeworth, 'Statement by Worker for Employment and Industry', 22 September 1975. See also III,1, *The Style and Image of Batley CDP*.
- 9 Batley CDP, *The Great Debate : A Community Project in Action*, September 1975.
- 10 IV,4, *Batley CDP 1974-75 : The Perspectives of the Action Director*, p. 188.
- 11 P. Waddington, 'Memorandum to Colleagues', 22 September 1975, p. 1.
- 12 J. Greve, 'The British Community Project - Some Interim Comments', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1973, pp. 118-125.
A. H. Halsey, 'Government Against Poverty in School and Community', in D. W. Wedderburn (ed.), *Poverty, Inequality and Class Structure*, Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- 13 IV,4, *Batley CDP 1974-75 : The Perspectives of the Action Director*, p. 190.

BATLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL AND BATLEY CDP

When Batley CDP was established in 1971 there was no overall political control of Batley Borough Council. The Labour Party had suffered considerable losses in the local elections of 1968 and, at the time of the Project's inception, control of the council was balanced between the Labour Party, the Conservative-Independent Alliance, and the Liberal Party. Formally, the Project related to a Chief Officers' steering group set up by the West Riding County Council, but early attempts to stimulate their interest in the Project, by postal questionnaire, registered only limited success.¹ In the County Council contact with elected members was only partial and, according to the first Project Director :

*there was little understanding of, or sympathy for, democracy working from the grass roots upward and a weary concern with an area as small as Batley.*²

At the local level, in Batley, the Project benefited from the encouragement of Mrs. L. Fitzpatrick, a Batley and County Alderman, and Chairman of the County Education Committee. After her death, in early 1972, the Project team became even more isolated from officers and elected members.

In May 1972, the Labour Party regained control over Batley Council, making communication with the local authority easier for the Project team. The Project continued to express its aims formally, at the General Purposes Committee, and more informally through the Town Clerk, Mr. Eric Dixon, who was an early advocate for the Project and was soon to become Chief Executive in the new Kirklees Metropolitan District Council. However, the team did not establish direct working contact with the Labour Group in Batley until early 1973, by which time tensions surrounding Project work with local groups had already arisen.

The immediate consequences of local government reorganisation for Batley and the Community Development Project were soon felt. The Batley Town Council, a hundred-year-old representative body and a forum for local political debate, was effectively dismantled, and the roles of local councillors and officers changed considerably. In future, elected members were to be part of the new Kirklees Metropolitan District Council (a Labour-controlled council for the duration of CDP), and represented on the West Yorkshire County Council. Both of Batley's County Councillors became members of West Yorkshire's Planning and Transportation Committee, and local councillors were also well represented on the new Kirklees Council, which comprised over seventy members. Although Batley had 10 per cent of the population of the Kirklees area, it had become just one part of a larger political unit.

For Batley CDP local government reorganisation initiated two immediate changes. First, the swift appointment of Batley's Town Clerk as Chief Executive Officer of the new Metropolitan Council meant that the Project lost its most accessible link to the Batley Borough Council for a short period. Second, when the Kirklees Council took the decision to continue the Project, in February 1974, new structures were set up to formalise contact. After 1974, the Project related to the Batley CDP sub-committee of the Kirklees Policy and Resources Committee. This committee, referred to in council as the 'CDP-sub', consisted of nine Batley councillors, two councillors from coterminous wards, the chairman of the Education and Social Services Committees and the leader of Council.³ In the context of these new arrangements CDP became both a focus for crusading zeal and a popular *bete-noire*.

During the life of the Batley Project, the team was involved in three types of contact with the local authority. The first was through its ostensible aim to analyse the local community and political system and the various ways in which the local decision-making process was connected to regional and national interests.⁴ Effectively, the Project team would be monitoring the way in which the local authority handled CDP work and community action as political issues. The second form of contact was more formalised, through the Project's consultative contact with elected members and officers in local authority structures. This involved submission of papers on Project work, and regular meetings to explain the Project's aims and methods to the authority. Third, the Project was involved with the local authority through its active support of local community groups, which on occasion would be campaigning against the council. Of course, the very nature of the Project's action-research programme determined that, in practice, these different forms of contact merged, but these analytical distinctions are nevertheless worth retaining.

The Project's aim of analysing the political system in Batley was first set out in a *Report On The First Six Months*, in July 1972, and extended in subsequent papers, such as the *Report to the Minister* of October 1973, and the *National Community Development Project's Plan for 1975-76*. It culminated in the publication of *The Great Debate* (1975), a scathing indictment of local politics and an attempt to force issues involved in community development work into the open. In the various Project documents which stressed the need to analyse the local political system, three main themes are worth noting. The first concerns the view that local government reorganisation would disrupt well-established personal networks in Batley, through which local councillors kept in touch with their constituents.⁵ The second is an increased preoccupation with the institutions of local and central government, stimulated by work started in Coventry CDP, and the possibility that corporate management techniques might exaggerate a managerial ethos at the cost of local representation and accountability.⁶ The third theme is the strong, though poorly articulated, view that local decision-making structures reflect elitist class interests and that the relationship between the local and central state should be explored.⁷ Allied to this analysis, there was a growing feeling that the Project team should be involved in direct 'consciousness-raising' on a wide range of activities, from adult education to employment issues to work with tenants' associations.⁸

Despite limited contact with councillors and officers, the Project team was allowed considerable freedom from the outset, both in dealings with the local council and in requests for information. Its *Report* of July 1972 referred to 'the urgent necessity of community education for participation in the processes of local government' and to the relationship between the council and local groups as an opportunity for 'further opening up channels of information and discussion on the changing pattern of local government structures'.⁹ However, in practical terms, the Project's relationship with the local authority was not all it had hoped for and local councillors' lack of knowledge of Project work inspired the first Action Director to write to Batley's Town Clerk :

Following last Thursday's General Purposes Committee I think it is clear that many Councillors feel that they have not had sufficient access to the thinking behind the development of the Batley Community Development Project, nor sufficient opportunities to explore and discuss the Project's range of initiatives There is much that our Project could learn from the priorities which Batley Council will set itself, but also it would seem likely that our Project might be able to be of service

*to the Council, sharing information and plans concerning the needs and interests of, in particular, the disadvantaged people of Batley.*¹⁰

Other difficulties were specified, including the changes which local government re-organisation would bring, for elected members in the representative function, and for the Project in its contact with a new authority, and 'the whole area of decision-making and its relation to different levels of authority'. The need for improved communication between local government and constituents, as recommended in the *Skeffington Report*,¹¹ was recognised, as was the opportunity to estimate whether useful mechanisms for participation and involvement could be introduced into Batley.

In the Project's *Report to the Minister* of October 1973, the themes of representation and participation were taken further. A generous account was given of the problems confronting the councillor, due to long hours and civic and committee responsibilities. Reference was also made to the 'remoteness' of the elected member from constituents, and the tendency of some members and officials to label community groups as 'unrepresentative' or 'irresponsible'. It was argued that each contributed to the councillor's limited capacity 'to respond to ordinary people's expression of *felt need*'.¹² The Report claimed that the structure of local government tended to fragment community problems and, 'to make policy first in the light of organisation needs and to ask people what they think afterwards'.¹³ The need to examine 'participation' in local government within the wider social setting was spelt out thus :

*Our experience of working on the Project area, of observing and working both with local people and with the local government system, is increasingly emphasising that the problems of 'ordinary people' are not so much to do with 'apathy' or 'social inadequacy' or 'unwillingness to participate in local government'. On the contrary the main determination of their problems appear to lie in the wider social structure, with the relative shares of private and public resources to different classes and areas, with the relative exclusion of some interests by government and with the structure of government itself.*¹⁴

The Project's analysis of local government could have moved in two directions : towards an analysis which focused on process and on the roles of elected members and officers during and after reorganisation, identifying ways in which political effectiveness or responsiveness could be increased by introducing new experiments in participation; alternatively, it could concentrate more firmly on the way in which the local political or decision-making structures reflected class interests. Some movement was made in the direction of the first option. In 1974, a series of interviews with elected members from Batley were undertaken and a report submitted to the Kirklees local authority.¹⁵ However, the general orientation towards the consequences of local government reorganisation and ways of assisting the local elected members to secure more contact with constituents was gradually allowed to subside, although it did re-emerge in a later programme. In contrast, the second alternative, concentrating on structure, rather than process, was taken up. This decision was influenced by two separate developments; the direction in which the National Community Development Project was moving and, more particularly, recent events in Batley itself.

During 1972 and 1973 the Project team had given support to the Batley Tenants' Association and to the newly formed Advice Centre for the Town. This had

prompted elected members on Batley Borough Council to examine Project activities, especially the financial assistance given to the Advice Centre. The *Report to the Minister* had noted signs of 'developing hostility' to CDP,¹⁶ and had claimed that the local authority preferred resources to be channelled 'through conventional organisations', such as the Council of Social Service.¹⁷ These disputes with Batley Borough Council had clarified two issues for the Project team. The first was that it needed to prepare thoroughly for the impending transfer to Kirklees, and to secure a working arrangement with the new local authority which acknowledged its commitment to groups such as ACT. The second point took account of preliminary work on the local economy and the town centre issue, and the Project's decision to work across the town, and confirmed the wide scope for an analysis of central and local government policy and decision-making as part of the overall action-research programme.¹⁸ The themes included an analysis of the policy process, including an assessment of councillor involvement, and corporate management and social accounting, in order to estimate the effectiveness of new management techniques in treating problems of disadvantage. Second, an analysis would be made of the way in which public spending priorities were decided and the distributional outcomes of these commitments.¹⁹ For a small team these were ambitious aims but, if they had been successful, they would have had the effect of both diluting the controversy with the local authority over ACT, and of providing systematic and worthwhile information on how the local authority might deal with intensive social problems in one area. In the event, neither of the aims was realised; shortly after the Project transferred to Kirklees new controversy over ACT broke out and, as the situation gradually polarised, specific action-research aims were submerged in a more general debate on the relationship between CDP and the local authority.

KIRKLEES COUNCIL AND BATLEY CDP

Before Kirklees Metropolitan District Council actually assumed formal responsibility for Batley CDP, the Project was in close contact with the shadow authority. In meetings at the end of 1973 and in early 1974, the Project team described its work over the previous eighteen months, and commented on future Project policy directions. The Project stance, that problems of disadvantage were structural rather than individual, was made clear and a number of ways in which the work of the Project was important to local government were spelled out. To involve more people in the processes of local government, it was argued that :

*the acceptance and support of community development and involvement by Government is necessary to support the role of elected members in feeding needs into the system, as the essential complement of centralised corporate planning and management.*²⁰

Thus the Project sought to :

*assist elected members as well as 'area' officers to feed information about Batley's special needs into Corporate decision-making at all levels of government, and to find ways in which corporate management can become more responsive to the needs of the disadvantaged.*²¹

In the new local authority structure the Project team maintained that CDP should be seen as part of an experiment in area management which could provide a test-bed to assess 'the validity and practicality of concepts relating to local management in which the local authority itself is interested'.²² No attempt was made to gloss over difficulties, especially those pertaining to the poor working arrangement with the Borough Council and the County Council. To avoid a repetition, the Project team recom-

mended that new management arrangements should be flexible enough to allow for quick decisions to be taken and for citizen participation to be encouraged. A Project committee was envisaged, either as a sub-committee or as an independent committee with special area status.

The 'managerial' tone of these submissions was uncharacteristic, perhaps even opportunist, but the aim of continuing dialogue with officers and members of the new authority had its appeal. Eric Dixon, the Chief Executive of Kirklees, spoke on the Project's behalf, but recommended that CDP should be located within the local authority management structure. The new authority agreed to have the Project transferred to it and set up a special sub-committee, with a significant number of Batley members, to work with it. For administrative purposes the Project was attached to the Kirklees Directorate of Administration.

When the Kirklees authority assumed responsibility for Batley CDP it inherited a position of virtual deadlock over the ACT issue. Volatile reaction to the 1972 *Housing Finance Act* had provided an initial focus for direct community action in Batley, and from it emerged the Advice Centre for the Town. Tensions between Batley Borough Council and CDP had caused heated exchanges in 1973, when councillors argued that they had not been sufficiently consulted over the Project's plan to submit an application to the West Riding County Council requesting financial support for ACT. The councillors also claimed that Project members had acted presumptuously in helping the Advice Centre establish itself as an independent charitable agency, with a legal constitution and a management committee. Meetings between the Project and Batley Councillors were held in September 1973, and both parties reported their disagreement to a meeting of the County Council Project sub-committee which, after long discussion, confirmed CDP's action of giving financial support to the Advice Centre. However, the Advice Centre was advised at the time to broaden its management committee.

During the transfer of CDP to Kirklees, nothing tangible had been done to improve relations between councillors, ACT and CDP, and, as before, ACT's work with local residents, especially those under housing stress, prompted major criticisms of the Housing and Social Services Departments. Once again the local atmosphere became highly charged and highly personalised. When the time came for CDP to negotiate for a further substantial grant of £8,000 for future funding of ACT, out of its Social Action budget, the majority feeling in the council was turning against the Project and the Advice Centre.

Kirklees' refusal to approve the grant immediately; its downscaling of the grant to £6,000, and its insistence on a more democratic management of ACT, prompted four Batley CDP workers to take strike action, with the intention of raising a national debate about a number of issues concerning CDP and community work in general. They included :

- (i) the independence and right of local groups to receive social action money without direct local authority control;
- (ii) the need for local authorities to recognise that community work might encourage or support local groups which may be critical of the local authority;
- (iii) the need for local groups to be more involved in the decisions made about CDP work.

These arguments encouraged some councillors to combine their criticisms of ACT and CDP; they considered demands for £6,000 excessive, since ACT had

previously received a substantial grant, and since the Kirklees authority was trying to cut back on expenditure. For nine months after the collapse of the community workers' strike there was no resolution to the problem. The local authority agreed at first to a grant of £6,000 in September 1974, then there was deadlock over the conditions attached to the grant, until ACT agreed to amend its constitution in June 1975. Shortly afterwards a grant was made - of £200. In these nine months deep cleavages between the Project and the local authority were revealed. The issue developed into an argument over basic rights and principles, rather than just finance. The Project felt that the local authority was holding firm over an aspect of its work against which two years of general animosity had been directed. Furthermore, if social-action money was refused for ACT, what guarantee was there about other aspects of CDP's programme? Two other elements compounded the issue : the results of recent investigations of structural economic decline in Batley, and the apparent inability of the then Labour government to stem that decline, and a growing suspicion among some CDP workers that the local Labour Party was more interested in preserving its own position than in adequately representing local people, or allowing them to organise independently. The final consequence was the decision to adopt direct confrontation tactics through the publication of *The Great Debate*.

Though it is doubtful whether *The Great Debate* represented 'the Project view', its message was clear; the argument had moved on, from one over ACT and the role of the CDP sub-committee, to a critique of the majority party in the council, which was conceived as part of the state apparatus.²³ The document stated :

Because of their retreat from socialist principles we can only conclude that the Labour representatives are not really Socialist at all : that they have used the Labour Party as a way of surrounding themselves with elite status : and, because of the recent actions, they are using their electorally derived political power to prevent the growth of local action groups. By their very actions they have shown that they are more 'responsible' to the system than they are to ordinary people. They are responsible to the same system that creates hardships and deprivation for millions that are now out of work, to thousands that are homeless, and to hundreds that can't afford to live.²⁴

For CDP, this was a vain attempt to force issues into the open; for the local authority, it proved to be the last straw. On 28 November 1975, the CDP sub-committee resolved 'that subject to negotiation with the Home Office, the Community Development Project be discontinued in its present form'.

In the twenty one months (February 1974 to November 1975) that Batley CDP was responsible to Kirklees Council a number of important features in the relationship between a local authority and a community development agency were illustrated. Two deserve special attention :

- (i) the attitudes and abilities of the Community Development Project and the sponsoring authority, and their capacity to work with and understand each other, and
- (ii) the relationship of CDP workers to political parties and local elected members.

A number of studies have commented on the way local authorities respond to community groups. Factors considered important include the style and image of these groups and their access to the council, the extent to which they

pursue policies consistent with local authority aims and the degree to which the council is able to modify or incorporate their activities. In his study of Kensington and Chelsea, John Dearlove dealt with the varying access of groups to 'the ear and action of government'. He has written :

*The council response to groups revolved around councillor assessment of groups, demands and communication styles. Groups were seen as helpful or unhelpful, demands as acceptable or unacceptable; and methods of group communication as proper or improper. Patterns of assessment went together. Helpful groups raised demands that were acceptable because they were consonant with the policies which the councillors felt the council should be pursuing and they went through the proper channels. By way of contrast the unhelpful groups were involved in unacceptable demands which they were forced to push through improper channels. These were the two usual patterns.*²⁵

This analysis has much in common with the situation in Batley and, as we have seen, experienced councillors and officers paid little attention to the distinctions between ACT and CDP.²⁶ For its part, the local authority perceived CDP as an addition to the system of local government, and this in turn prompted the Project to comment that the council had failed to understand its experimental nature. In January 1975, confusion over the aims and purpose of CDP resulted in the team specifying ten fundamental principles to the Project. They were that :

- (i) CDP's basic purpose centres on problems of deprivation and poverty;
- (ii) CDP's task and strategy must be seen in a 'structural' and national context;
- (iii) CDP's task is concerned with social change;
- (iv) CDP's task is to secure the greater political participation of those who are relatively powerless;
- (v) CDP's primary concern is with those social groups which have the greatest need;
- (vi) CDP's concern with social change will lead to situations of conflict of interest;
- (vii) CDP's task implies changes of resource allocation by local and central government and 'positive discrimination' in favour of those whose need is greatest;
- (viii) CDP's brief puts great emphasis on 'experiment' and on innovatory approaches to meeting needs;
- (ix) CDP is a short-term experimental project and the brief emphasises the importance of the evaluation of experience and the communication of 'results' in order to promote wider changes in the government system;
- (x) CDP is a multi-sponsored agency.²⁷

To some leading figures in the local authority, this statement implied that the Project's resources were directed towards 'unrepresentative' or 'untrustworthy' groups, whilst the structuralist orientation was taken to imply that the local authority was responsible for not putting its own

house in order. In practice, the Project's attempt to live up to these principles led it into conflict with the local authority and councillors and officers frequently commented that CDP had 'overstepped its mark'. For some officials orderly procedures basic to the operation of the local authority - such as its housing waiting list policy, its strict rules of confidentiality and its right to make decisions behind closed doors - were challenged for the first time.

As in other Projects, a recurrent theme behind the tension with the local authority concerned the 'accountability' of community workers, and long and bitter disputes over this question were common. The local authority, which supplied 25 per cent of the funding for the action programme, argued that the Project should be made more accountable. This view was illustrated by the formation of a Project sub-committee identical to other council committees. Conversely, the Project team argued that the people on whose behalf it campaigned were entitled to a greater say in the programme. Thus it claimed that meetings with the Project sub-committee should be open to the press and public, and that more community representatives should be co-opted, to avoid merely token representation of local groups.²⁸ In addition, the team argued that a more general principle of community group independence should be allowed. When neither of these principles was satisfied, team members saw the worst in the local authority, and its actions were interpreted as an attempt to reduce the significance of community work and community involvement.

Despite acknowledging that the local Labour Party was important, Batley CDP workers paid little real attention to it, and preferred instead to dismiss it as simply part of the state apparatus. After conflict with elected members over ACT, the Project's message to local groups was clear : they too should struggle against the Labour Party. The emphasis on political and adult education was part of this strategy.²⁹ When the Labour Party was singled out *en bloc* for attack, the attitude of some local councillors who had not previously been opposed to the Project changed perceptibly. However, it should be noted that these pressures were not all locally based. Other Labour Groups were at this time looking under their beds for 'militants', 'left-wing forces', or 'neo-Trotskyists'.³⁰

In Batley, the established Labour Group found it difficult to respond to outside forces like CDP, and the Project had difficulty in penetrating political networks. In other CDPs, such as North Tyneside, some Project workers registered success in joining with the Labour Party to fight public spending cuts. In Batley, nothing analogous to this occurred.

As we have seen, a number of conflicts between CDP and the Labour Party had taken place before re-organisation. At this stage one Batley councillor had argued that the Project should be terminated, and her selection as Deputy Chairman of the new CDP sub-committee distressed some Project workers. However, the position was not wholly antagonistic and, up to the Spring of 1975, the support of two young and enthusiastic councillors and the persuasive powers of the Labour leader kept the Project alive. The first two argued that the local authority should examine Project work as consumers rather than as controllers, and should allow it to run its course. The conviction of one of these two councillors was illustrated by his refusal to recognise the Labour whip in council, after the CDP sub-committee had granted only £200 to ACT and then sacked the Action Director.³¹ This action had the effect of taking away the Labour Party's slim ruling majority in Kirklees.³²

In statements on future Project policy, several indications were given that Batley CDP would monitor developments in corporate management, and in the representative function of elected members.³³ In the first of these aims it is now clear that the Project had over-reached itself, and it is only recently that a full appreciation has been made of the intricacies of the thinking behind corporate management and local government reorganisation.³⁴ However, it was nevertheless possible for community development projects to analyse the representative function of elected members, and the ways in which specific policies could be shaped in the interests of the local community. On this last point, the Research Director of Oldham CDP has written :

*CDP's potential lay in operating as a catalyst in the local government context and especially in three areas in which by the local authorities' own definition there were weaknesses. These three areas, in which CDP operations could be in accordance with an authority's dispositions and could be conducive to CDP - local authority co-operation, are influencing the authority's dispositions and decision-making; fostering co-ordination of meeting need and detecting need; and strengthening the relationship between the residents and the local authority.*³⁵

If these criteria are applied to Batley, it will be seen that the Project was deficient, to varying degrees, in all of them, and if there were diverse interpretations of the representative function of elected members, the politics of influence, need detection and co-ordination was a tricky game to play.

The Project team's intention of pursuing a community-oriented style of operation was always apparent and councillors frequently complained that they were being by-passed or slighted. Complaints were often made that CDP had organised demonstrations without approaching councillors to seek help with tenants' problems, and that the Project was not interested in co-operating with the local authority. Many councillors saw themselves as local 'champions', and felt deeply aggrieved when the Project appeared to be either 'usurping' their role, or setting up parallel channels of communication which rendered their own contact with constituents redundant. For Labour councillors in Batley, there were formal mechanisms which could be used to raise community issues, so that many alleged :

*They (CDP) didn't understand the political process. If they could have got their views into the party Groups they might have got their views accepted.*³⁶

Though this might indicate an attempt to 'incorporate' community action or community development principles, in order to convert them into a less threatening form, there are nevertheless strong indications that Batley councillors expected the Project to function in a manner more similar to that of Oldham CDP. In that Project, it was accepted that structural explanations were valid, but that there was still room for reformist and ameliorative intervention which relied upon local authority support. In Batley, the fact that the Project had failed to penetrate the local authority's 'inner core of perception' proved, in the long run, to be a severe weakness that contributed to its eventual demise.³⁷

NOTES

- 1 To supplement the work of the special Project sub-committee, an advisory committee of all county Chief Officers, the Chief Probation Officer, and the Batley Town Clerk, was established.
- 2 M. Would, 'Synopsis of Batley CDP Development November 1971 to March 1974', June 1974, p. 4.
- 3 See IV,1 Tom Megahy, *Batley CDP 1974-75. The Assessment of the Leader of Kirklees Council.*
- 4 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister, October 1973*, pp. 24-29, 33-35.
- 5 A view expressed in several 'internal' documents, such as Hazel Marsh and Kevin Ward, 'Community Work Programme', March 1974.
- 6 Batley CDP, 'Internal Papers', November 1972. John Benington (ed.), *Coventry Community Development Project, Background and Progress*, Home Office, 1972 and J. Benington, *Local Government Becomes Big Business*, CDP Occasional Paper No. 11, Home Office, 1975.
- 7 As in two papers from Batley CDP; *The Great Debate*, 1975 and L. Dominelli, *The Structure of Poverty or the Necessity of Poverty*, Working Paper, August 1975.
- 8 See Section II, *The Work of Batley CDP.*
- 9 Batley CDP, 'The First Six Months', July 1972, p. 5.
- 10 M. Would to E. Dixon, Correspondence, 27 July 1973.
- 11 Report of the Skeffington Committee on Public Participation in Planning, *People and Planning*, Cmnd 2274, HMSO, 1969.
- 12 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister, October 1973*, p. 35.
- 13 *Report to the Minister*, p. 37.
- 14 *Report to the Minister*, p. 39.
- 15 Submitted in February 1975.
- 16 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister, October 1973*, Appendix.
- 17 *ibid.*
- 18 See II,1, *A Community Profile of Batley*, and II, 2, *The Local Economy and Planning.*
- 19 'Project Review : Proposed Programme of Work', January 1974.
- 20 Batley CDP, 'Discussion Paper on Project Policy and Structure from April 1974', 1974.
- 21 'Project Policy and Structure from April 1974', p. 4.

- 22 'Project Policy and Structure from April 1974', p. 5.
- 23 See IV, 4, Paul Henderson, *Batley CDP 1974-75. The Perspective of the Action Director.*
- 24 *Batley CDP, The Great Debate, 1975, p. 3.*
- 25 John Dearlove (summarising previous work in Kensington and Chelsea), *The Reorganisation of British Local Government; Old Orthodoxies and a Political Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 47.
- 26 See IV, 1, *Batley CDP 1974-75. The Assessment of the Leader of Kirklees Council.*
- 27 *Batley CDP, 'Project Re-assessment. Discussion Document on Principles', January 1975.*
- 28 In seven other CDPs, meetings were open to the press and public.
- 29 See II, 6, *Social Education.*
- 30 Prompted by radical left wing attacks on the then Labour MP for Newham, Reg Prentice.
- 31 See IV, 4, P. Henderson, *Batley CDP 1974-75. The Assessment of the Action Director.*
- 32 His views were set out in an open letter in *Shoddy News*, a local community paper, and in the *Huddersfield Examiner*, 6 October 1975.
- 33 See pages 140-141.
- 34 J. Dearlove, *The reorganisation of British local government. Old Orthodoxies and a Political Perspective, op. cit.*
- 35 L. Corina, 'CDP with God - or Satan - on Our Side', *Municipal Review*, November 1976, p. 206 and L. Corina, P. Collis, C. Crosby, *Oldham CDP. The Final Report*, Papers in Community Studies No. 23, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1979.
- 36 L. Corina, *A Selective Assessment of the Influence of Oldham Community Development Project on the Operations of the Local Authority. Comparative Case No. 5 - Batley Community Development Project*, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, May 1976, p. 62.
- 37 The term is taken from the work of Lewis Corina.

IV ASSESSMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Though evidence from Batley CDP has been used in a variety of books and articles to illustrate certain themes in community work, the written opinions of key participants are not so widely circulated.¹ Here, a number of personal assessments representing a range of approaches to and expectations of CDP from different theoretical and practical traditions are drawn together. Each represents a different point in the structure set up to implement local projects - the local authority, the action and research teams, and the University responsible for the research.

In the first four assessments, those of Tom Megahy, the Leader of the controlling Labour Party of Kirklees Metropolitan District Council; Eric Dixon, involved in Batley CDP from its inception, first as Town Clerk of Batley Municipal Borough Council and then as the Chief Executive Officer of Kirklees Metropolitan District Council; the survey of the views of councillors and officers devised by Dr Lewis Corina, Research Director of Oldham CDP, and Paul Henderson, the second Action Director of Batley CDP, several perspectives are brought to bear on a variety of subjects: the relationship between the Project and the local authority, the uneven understanding of the Projects' aims amongst elected members, the lack of political nous amongst Project workers, the practical usefulness of the Project to the local authority, the importance of the community workers' strike, ACT and so on. Yet, though these common points of reference are found each contribution has something distinctive to say about the Project and no one writes off its experience as irrelevant.

In his assessment Tom Megahy takes up a number of the themes discussed in part III, *Community Work and Conflict*. He describes the difficulties that the reorganisation of local government posed for elected members, the majority of whom had to think how far their roles as local representatives would be affected by the new style of management introduced in 1974, and some of whom were faced for the first time by the existence of the Batley Community Development Project in the new authority of Kirklees. He examines the structural arrangements introduced by the Kirklees authority to keep in close contact with the work of Batley CDP, and the Project's effectiveness in conveying its aims to the local authority. Tom Megahy stresses how many councillors' attitudes to CDP changed from favourable to more antagonistic as the Project expressed its criticisms of the local authority in more and more extreme ways, and how serious the implications of the debate on CDP were for the controlling Labour Party. Some of these matters are documented in some detail in the third assessment.

Among the local authorities sponsoring the twelve Community Development Projects it is unlikely that any Chief Officer had a more intimate knowledge of the aims behind the CDP experiment than Eric Dixon. He was involved with Batley CDP from the start, first as an officer in Batley, then as the Chief Executive Officer of Kirklees, and in his Assessment he has provided a succinct appreciation of the contribution that the Batley Project made to the local authority. Like Tom Megahy he identifies a discernible change in the attitude of the local elected member to the Project after 1974, and the centrality of the conflict over ACT in this. He comments on the difficulties that faced the second Action Director in his attempts at creating a coherent and cohesive Project view, after the first team had fragmented, and on the difficulties that the Project's style of operations created for it. On the question of whether the Project has had any lasting benefits for the local authority, Eric Dixon states that the answer must be 'a limited yes'.

The surveys of the views of councillors and officials were planned in the months before the Project terminated and carried out soon after it finished in the early months of 1976 by members of the Central Unit for research based at York. Undoubtedly the timing would make the results more negative than they might have been otherwise but the results demand attention. They show that little that was positive arose from CDP, according to the views expressed, with regard to the authority's dispositions and decision-making, and the relationships between local residents and the authority. There was a better response about the fostering of co-ordination in meeting needs and in particular in identifying them.

Paul Henderson's assessment as the second Action Director of the Batley Project completes the contributions of those who were most centrally involved in the crises of 1974 and 1975. In a candid statement on the Batley Project, and on his own part in it, he comments on the difficulties of running a community work team which represents a broad spectrum of ideologies and attitudes to community work. He stresses how different the CDP model of community work was from more traditional community work approaches, and how ambiguous the community work function became in CDP. On the relationship with the local authority he admits that the Project lacked political skills, but also claims that at critical times elected members backed away from compromise solutions. Though the Batley Project was terminated prematurely, Paul Henderson maintains that this 'does not mean that it was an unproductive failure without positive results'.

In the final two assessments in this section, Ray Lees and Eric Butterworth comment on the tools of action-research in social science inquiry and on the necessity for evaluation of practical community work initiatives. Their assessments are concerned less with the relationship of community projects to their sponsors and more with the different methods whereby evaluation may be made and more radical forms of community and social work devised.

In his contribution, Ray Lees develops some of the themes he has outlined in earlier papers on action-research.² He reviews how the action-research approach to social problems developed in the United Kingdom, and comments on the success of combined action and research projects in identifying community needs with precision. He analyses the different forms action-research took in Batley CDP, and the overall aims of both the National Community Development Project and Batley CDP. Seven major approaches in action-research and the ways in which they overlap are delineated. The 'political economy' or 'structural' approach is subdivided into its 'micro-structural' and 'macro-structural' elements and is commented on in detail.

From his experience as the Co-ordinator of research in three projects responsible to the University of York, Eric Butterworth selects a number of central issues in the national CDP programme and comments on them and the work of Batley CDP. His observations on the conflict between 'hard' structural research and 'soft' community work in CDPs are pertinent to the general setting of present day community work as are his comments on the transmission of particular ideological stances in CDPs. In questioning these and issues of policy, personality and orthodoxy in the national programme, Eric Butterworth provides a corrective to a number of views of CDP which have not so far been subjected to substantive criticism.

NOTES

- 1 See Part I, pp. 8-9.
- 2 R. Lees, *Research Strategies for Social Welfare*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976.
R. Lees and G. Smith (eds.), *Action-Research in Community Development*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.

It is possible that the seeds of Batley CDP's destruction were sown in the Project's earliest years before Kirklees Metropolitan District Council assumed responsibility for its management. Already battle lines had been drawn, most notably over the Advice Centre for the Town (ACT). What might have happened had Kirklees itself initiated the experiment is pure speculation, but presumably conditions allowing the Project to run its full course would have been established, if Kirklees had made a conscious political choice to be involved from the start. As the sponsoring authority, it would have been under an obligation at the outset to clarify its own objectives relative to those of the Project, and under a political imperative to strive for success. What is now clear is that in investing in a Project already in difficulty at the time of local government re-organisation, Kirklees assumed responsibility under the most unfavourable conditions. As Leader of the Council, and Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, I found Batley CDP to be a most intractable problem to deal with. Moreover the merger of eleven former local authorities, including two County Boroughs, two non-County Boroughs and seven Urban District Councils, covering an area of 101,425 acres and embracing a population of 370,000, hardly provided the most propitious setting for proper consideration of CDP's problems.

To begin with, few councillors had any substantial knowledge of the Kirklees area as a whole. Even outstanding and inherited issues outside the previous authorities were unknown to 'outsiders'. At an individual level, even the most tightly knit of groups, such as the Labour Group, had its old and new faces. With the exception of one or two councillors who had served on the old West Riding County Council, there were few elected members who had heard, let alone had intimate knowledge, of Batley CDP's existence. Furthermore, Batley's problems - whether physical, social, political, or economic - were inadequately appreciated even in the neighbouring areas dubbed the Heavy Woollen Zone. Although my own ward of Mirfield was only four or five miles away, my personal knowledge of CDP was derived from the odd press report on the national scheme. In this context, where most elected members knew little of Batley or the Project, Eric Dixon, former Town Clerk of Batley and the Chief Executive Officer of Kirklees, provided much of the background information on the Project and its area.

In the frenetic atmosphere that surrounded the period in question so much had to be decided that it was not surprising that most councillors rated the progress of the Project low on their list of priorities. Common policies had to be decided for the new authority, and councillors had to relate to larger wards, and devise new ways to make themselves accessible to electors' problems. Internally, each had to adjust to a new committee and management structure modelled on the Bains Report, which was foreign to most of us. The structure was the object of suspicion for 'backbench' councillors, who saw it as a method whereby power would be concentrated in the hands of a few. Externally, each had to face up to escalating public hostility stimulated by the 'rates explosion' and further intensified by attacks on councillors' use of new attendance allowances. Much as the activities of CDP and ACT might have stirred the readers of the *Batley News* (and this is not at all certain), they had little impact in Huddersfield, Denby Dale or Meltham. For many councillors, an excessive concentration on the particular problems of one segment of the new authority ran counter to the main political objectives defined in Kirklees's early days, prominent amongst which was a desire to combat 'parochialism' and to evolve a broader set of policies applicable to the whole of the new authority. This issue

itself provoked several arguments inside the Labour Group.¹

As the 'shadow' authority was set up, some members began to realise how sensitive the CDP experiment might become.² From discussions with Batley councillors I perceived that considerable differences existed over the Project, even though the majority view was sympathetic. A general willingness to persevere with CDP was clouded by the passion aroused by widely divergent views - from virtually unconditional support to almost total opposition. Consequently, I convened a meeting of all Batley Labour councillors in an attempt to reconcile opinions. It proved largely unsuccessful, like others that followed.

Divisions amongst Batley councillors severely complicated Labour Group decisions, cutting across the normal pattern of debate on local issues in which councillors from individual areas fought for their sectional interests. In Labour Group meetings were a final 'court of appeal', where dissatisfied councillors tried to alter policy decisions which they felt were detrimental to their locality. Batley councillors, comprising the biggest single block after Dewsbury, were very active in these discussions. Though the majority of the group frequently rejected their arguments, it was at least understood that members were fighting for the interests of their wards in a genuinely representative capacity. However, whenever CDP was debated, most non-Batley members were reduced to the role of uncomfortable onlookers at a private feud, rather exasperated at the apparent failure of Batley councillors to solve a 'little local difficulty'. For councillors outside Batley, the Project was no more than a distraction, peculiar to that area, and peripheral to the determination of policy, or identification of problems in the new Metropolitan area. To some extent this reaction was understandable, and inescapable. Councillors wanted to encourage deeper, maybe more 'lateral', thinking whilst retaining the essential representative element of 'parochialism'. The situation was confused, and the climate hardly appropriate for the acceptance of an experiment which divested its major efforts in one small geographical area. For some, this 'solo' approach to deprivation resurrected the tendency towards area introspection and undermined the liberating forces of area management.

Confusion and uncertainty in the national and local community development programmes simply compounded those problems of purpose. Elected members failed to appreciate how this programme slotted into their interests, and, where explanations were given, they were lengthy and invariably covered in terminology more suited to academics than busy councillors. CDP certainly never lacked publicists, especially when controversial views had to be expounded, but nothing was produced to capture the attention or satisfy the curiosity of councillors whose support, or lack of it, in the end proved decisive.

Perhaps circumstances were never propitious enough to allow a fluid take-over of CDP, but, it is still true that there was a considerable commitment at the centre pressing for continuance of the Project. As Leader of the Council I held that, having accepted responsibility for the Project, Kirklees should do all in its power to provide a proper climate in which the experiment could flourish. Likewise, Chief Officers most intimately concerned with the running of the Project shared a fund of goodwill as decisions were made regarding levels of responsibility and the appropriate structures to accommodate Project activities. In the event, the arrangements made were singled out for criticism and modified in response to the ensuing dialogue.³

Reports from CDP suggested one of two arrangements : (a) a semi-independent agency, with membership of councillors and 'disadvantaged people'; (b) a proper Project Committee which had special area committee status. In

Kirklees neither of these solutions was felt to be satisfactory. Method (a) was a complete departure from the system which had operated under the West Riding, and, given the bitterness that already existed, would have led to prolonged wrangling over the representativeness of the 'disadvantaged'. Method (b) was unsuitable because, in accepting the general parameters of the Bains approach with its severe strictures on area committees, there was little mileage to be seen in pursuit of area objectives. In considering the alternatives it was felt that the most appropriate arrangements should aim :

- (i) to establish a link with the centre, but not tied to any one functional area of the authority;
- (ii) to give Batley councillors a major share in the running of the Project.

The solution adopted was to establish a CDP committee as a sub-committee of the Policy and Resources Committee consisting mainly of members from Batley wards. It was hoped that there would be some incentive for Batley councillors to come to terms with the Project, and for the Labour Group leadership to intervene in any matters under dispute. In retrospect, I still feel that these arrangements were sound, and that the criticism that they centralised responsibility was wide of the mark. In effect, the Project sub-committee was left very much to its own devices, and surveillance by the Labour sub-group of Policy and Resources was kept to a minimum. There were few Batley members on Policy and Resources Committee, and the Chairmen represented on the CDP sub-committee had other major concerns. Unfortunately, there was not enough time at these meetings for a detailed consideration of CDP's aims, which might have increased elected members' knowledge of the Project. If more time had been given over to this, relationships would perhaps have improved. Since so little time could be devoted to this task too few of the leading members outside Batley knew what was at stake. Similarly, one might concede that a lack of leadership from the centre reflected weaknesses in the way the sub-group operated from the outset.

At the general level, the new committee structures took time to move into gear, and at first agendas were cluttered with non-essential items. Only a deliberate effort prevented the Policy and Resources Committee from developing into a General Purposes Committee. At crisis points for CDP then, perhaps, there was too little intervention from the parent committee, but, on the other hand, had it intervened there was no guarantee that it could act either as a watchdog, or as a conciliatory agent. When examining the structures set up to consider and relate to CDP, one is left with the impression that the more serious points of division between Project and authority lay outside of those associated with committee management.

For most councillors CDP was synonymous with ACT, an organisation formed before re-organisation. It is almost tragic the way the Project became over-identified with this particular enterprise, and it was in matters relating to it that divisions between councillors normally arose. The Centre's constitution and *modus operandi* were highly controversial, and the activities of its colourful organiser, 'Tivvy' Parkin, were guaranteed to provoke a reaction. In the light of the number of proposals germane to CDP which were accepted without division, one is tempted to think that, without ACT, a very different relationship between the local authority and CDP would have been formed. This is a temptation to resist, for it is likely that another issue would have emerged to provide a focus for 'attacks on the system' favoured by some CDP workers. There is no doubt that ACT was a central feature in CDP's community-based approach. However, the ensuing acrimony stemmed not just from the ideals which inspired it, nor from its operation, but initially from simple, perhaps futile, hostilities, which find their origins in the manner in which the Centre's first organiser was

appointed.⁴ When Kirklees undertook to continue Batley CDP it was evident that ACT had assumed a symbolic importance for the Project, and that Kirklees' reaction to it would provide the acid test of the genuineness of the council's commitment. Important as it was, the Project unwisely elevated ACT to such a level that it cornered itself on an issue without the protection which might have been afforded if other commitments had been identifiable elsewhere.

Prior to the final break, which effectively finished CDP in Batley, there were several opportunities to settle the ACT dispute, particularly at the time of the July 1974 strike. At this juncture, Kirklees was willing to discuss a grant of about £6,000, conditional on the appointment of three council representatives to sit on the twelve-man ACT committee. This was represented as a local authority attempt to control the activities of all voluntary bodies and it was alleged by the strikers and ACT's organiser that the council was using social action money to take over and control local groups through ACT. From ACT's angle, it was argued that councillor representation on the committee would be a hindrance, as the work of the Centre often brought it into direct confrontation with the local authority. From Kirklees' point of view, there was no intention to control ACT's activities. Clear precedents exist in local government for representation on voluntary bodies to which public money is allocated. Indeed, the original ACT constitution had in fact envisaged that one Batley councillor be appointed - an invitation which apparently was never acted upon. The argument hardly turned on matters of principle, therefore, given that a contingency for some council representation had been made. The number of representatives could have been negotiated. This, however, was only one of several examples of arrangements made in the pre-reorganisation period which assumed an apparently sinister connotation under Kirklees. At a later stage in negotiations with ACT Kirklees dropped its demand for representation, in return for regular consultations between members of the Project sub-committee and ACT. Again, this concession was interpreted as an alternative method of achieving the original local authority objective to influence and control ACT. Yet if Kirklees was anxious for control, why did its demand for representation only involve three councillors out of a committee of twelve? A compromise was possible at this point, but, for some elements in CDP, conflict was more important.

Members of ACT's committee were reluctant to embroil themselves in too close a relationship with local authority officers and members, fearing that they might be outmanoeuvred by full-time politicians. Individuals working for ACT also lacked confidence in their own basic political skills in a situation which rested on interaction with the local authority. In fact the Centre could have used the latitude it was given to particular effect. One councillor stated boldly to an ACT committee member, 'You always arrange meetings on Labour Group nights'. Perhaps this puts the point rather strongly, but it reflects the view that there was plenty of opportunity for ACT to continue its work as before, despite the presence of councillors on its management committee. A realistic assessment of the largely inactive role played by councillors on many outside bodies would certainly have reinforced that view. Furthermore, the ACT committee hardly controlled the day-to-day activities of the Centre, and most of the controversial actions taken on ACT's behalf stemmed from the initiative of individual workers or its Organiser. At the time I recall reflecting on the inherent possibilities in the situation for ACT - a £6,000 grant and little practical limitation of the Centre's work. Why the group failed to grasp its chances remains a mystery.

The strike of four community workers transformed the dispute with ACT into one of national significance. ACT was represented as the 'Ark of the CDP Covenant' and the issue was presented in a manner which smacked

of careful stage management - a national demonstration focusing on the doubts which had arisen about the whole CDP experiment. A good deal of skilful work from 'dissident' ACT workers ensured that their view was well publicised in the general media, and in specialist journals. At this time I was busily engaged answering questions from national newspapers, managing and dealing with correspondence and delegations, but I would accept that Kirklees lost this propaganda war hands down. The sheer complexities of the situation could not be adequately explained, and it would have been better if the local authority had been less defensive, taken the initiative and issued its own press statements. Pressures from other directions deflected politicians away from this task and, after all, if CDP was questioning its own role, then it was hardly local authority business to rescue it from itself.

In the last analysis the strike clarified two points : first, that the future of Batley CDP would rest on what happened to ACT and, second, that Kirklees was caught up in the midst of - indeed was almost a pawn in - a wide ranging national debate on CDP. To take the first point, it was unfortunate that no major new initiatives were proposed by the Project team in the sphere of voluntary action. Their insistence that ACT was the embodiment of the voluntary principle would have had a less hollow ring if the team had turned its attention to other fields of activity which commanded the less reserved support of councillors.

Evidence suggests that when support for other groups was requested, it was invariably given. The length of time the authority persisted with attempts to assist the ill-fated Batley Adventure Playground Association stands as a good indication of this.⁵ Yet councillors constantly found themselves under attack for failing to spend social action money, when, in fact, they were repeatedly informed that it was the task of the Project team to take the initiative in these matters.

Generalisations about the council's attitude to all voluntary bodies were made from ACT's experience alone, and part of the problem relates to the slightly patronising nature of the Community Development Project. It was assumed that outsiders could stand as judges, estimating the success of other community representatives, and in Batley a fairly small group of 'community activists' trod similar paths to CDP members. Where they were influential, groups were considered to be legitimate and representative. Others were suspect. In addition, the Batley councillors' claim that they represented the people was unacceptable to the more radical elements in CDP. At the time of the strike I wrote :

The community workers seem to arrogate to themselves the right to decide what is a working class point of view. I should point out that eight of the nine Batley councillors are Labour councillors who have as much knowledge and involvement with the working class as any of the CDP workers and are, therefore, entitled to say that their view represents that of their constituents.

This period, after the strike, was characterised by a wide-ranging ideological argument. At a Council meeting on 7th August 1974 I stated :

This ACT issue is being used as a vehicle for expression about CDP generally ... If the social workers follow the politics of co-operation and compromise rather than confrontation the dispute can be settled.

In the end it was the politics of confrontation which triumphed. CDP workers maintained that the cause of local problems was rooted in the structure of society, but they could never explain how this imbalance was reflected in the distribution of power in other than hysterical terms. For the Project there were no alternatives, whereas the local authority could have been persuaded to involve itself in a campaign designed to redress some of the structural inequalities which underpin all others. Nevertheless, to be fair, most local authorities would regard this as outside of their legitimate sphere of action, and more properly the concern of political parties. *The Great Debate*, a document which attacked the hegemony of the Labour Group, was no doubt intended as a contribution to the 'politicisation' of the conformist local authority view. On all counts it failed miserably, and was no more than a shrill pamphleteering polemic against Labour councillors, designed more to bring about a final rupture between the Project and the local authority than to foster any fruitful dialogue.⁶

Ideology apart, there were continuing attempts to resolve the ACT issue. These efforts were complicated by ACT's method of operation which increasingly aroused the indignation of local authority members. The results were played out in two ways. First, an unfavourable image of CDP was created, especially for those who had little prior knowledge or understanding of either organisation. Encouragement of squatting in council property irritated and offended many who might otherwise have been sympathetic; for those who had firmer attitudes, it provided ultimate proof of ACT's, and by implication CDP's, irresponsibility. Not all councillors were alienated by a degree of conflict with independent organisations such as ACT, but for most 'queue-jumping' for council housing undermined the concept of fair-play held by those who would normally have condemned squatting in derelict private dwellings. However justified on ACT's scale of values, the squats were undoubtedly a major tactical blunder, and adversely influenced the dispositions of Labour members when crucial decisions on financial assistance had to be made. It is not clear whether ACT or its Organiser knew or cared about the inevitable strong reaction to these actions, but the gross political ineptitude manifested at a time when ACT was prepared to compromise on other matters is staggering.

The ensuing controversy in the media fanned the flames of opposition which were already growing in council. The Conservative Group, hitherto uninterested in CDP, were shocked and alarmed by the squatting incident, and for those of us prepared to keep the possibilities of a grant open it always seemed a case of 'one step forward and two back'. A second unforeseen consequence of ACT's activities showed itself in certain committees - most notably Social Services and Housing. Despite the emphasis which the new management structure had placed on corporate working and the necessity of breaking down the strong relationship between individual departments and committees, old loyalties constantly reasserted. Committee members reacted sharply to what they saw as attacks on 'their Officers' or interference with their affairs. Because of the complex statutory basis of the social services, committee members were particularly resentful of 'outside' interference. They were critical of the attempts of untrained people to impinge on the responsibilities of professional social workers. As the Project Sub-Committee included the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Social Services Committee, these exchanges were a sore point in the relationships with ACT, and thus CDP. The Chairman, a Huddersfield councillor, was Deputy Leader of the Group and of considerable importance and influence. ACT's actions gradually alienated him and he became hostile to the Project, even in Labour Group meetings. After criticising squatting, he made the following statement to the *Yorkshire Post* :

*They (ACT) have given wrong information on several occasions. It is supposed to be an advice centre but it gets involved in a lot of incidents of which we don't approve.*⁷

After a while even representatives of his ability, who were clear about the distinctions between ACT and CDP, made little effort to disentangle their separate interests.

Whilst this argument proceeded changes took place in the political composition of the council. In the 1975 elections Labour's strength was reduced by nine councillors (including two from Batley), with the result that the Conservatives were now in a stronger position to take interest in CDP. It meant also that CDP lost two councillors who were sympathetic to their aims. One of them had been a forceful advocate for the Project. This fairly young councillor had already made an impression in the Labour Group by virtue of the sound and rational manner in which he marshalled his arguments. Had he stayed on committee the arguments for and against a settlement would have been more equally balanced. As it was, his removal coincided with the hardening of opinion against CDP. It became increasingly difficult to separate the conflicts of personality from argument over policies, and a good deal of mutual antagonism between individual councillors and leading CDP and ACT spokesmen occurred, exacerbated by publication of 'blacklists' of councillors. At this point, Sir Alfred Broughton, the local Labour MP, launched several virulent attacks on CDP, although without consulting the Labour Group. Perhaps this gave the impression to outsiders that a concerted Labour Party attack against the Project was in full flight. This in fact was not the case. The views of Labour councillors and the elected MP did not always correspond. For example, the MP slated a CDP report on industrial decline which local councillors applauded.⁸

Between 1974 and 1975 a huge number of reports and papers were produced by Batley CDP, many of excellent quality. In a sense they highlighted the contrast between action and research dimensions in CDP. Generally, publications were well received but rarely fruitful in terms of immediate policy change. At times there was a danger that councillors would disappear under the weight of documentation given to them. It was appreciated that the research was applicable only on an extended time scale, but, what use was an exaggerated time scale to members who saw themselves as in the business of decision-making and not as participants in an academic seminar? Research had to be made meaningful for them through the political change it promoted, and in this councillors, officers and Project members must share responsibility for inadequately expressing their needs.

On the 'action' side attempts continued to reach some sort of solution with ACT, and concessions were made on both sides. The local authority decided that a grant of up to £6,000 should be made, subject to discussion and prior agreement on a more democratic instrument of management. The council also dropped its insistence that three members be represented on ACT's committee, provided that regular bi-monthly meetings took place to achieve proper budgetary control and close liaison. Despite the difficulties caused by the squats, informed meetings took place between the Director of CDP, Officers, members, and ACT representatives upon general issues, and particular problems associated with housing policy and homelessness.⁹ Both these discussions and others about the terms of a proposed new constitution for ACT suggested, for the first time, that there might be a way forward. Indeed, those involved came within an ace of securing an agreement which would have enabled the Project to have completed its term of office. Unfortunately, concessions came too late in the day to overcome the tide of resentment which had built up within the local authority to prevent an amicable solution. A special sub-committee of four councillors agreed that, in return for amendment of its constitution, ACT should receive a grant; but the size of the grant it recommended finally sealed the issue.

I took no personal part in the later discussions which took place but always held the view that compromise was possible if the agreement of a majority of Batley councillors were obtained. On reflection, it might have been better to push this point more ardently. As the basis for agreement was reached, the sub-committee interpreted the commitment to give a grant more parsimoniously than I or others had anticipated. A grant of £200, rather than £6,000, was approved. Of course, it was argued that ACT had already received more than one grant and should therefore be treated as an ordinary voluntary body and receive the appropriate aid given to others. This argument was rather spurious and made nonsense of the protracted negotiations which had taken place with the view to committing a sizeable grant. The logic of earlier recommendations pointed in this direction, but, as events unfolded, the years of bitter argument and controversy surrounding ACT took their toll and enabled critics of ACT to gain the upper hand. There was only one possibility of altering the decision - to reverse it in full Labour Group, necessitating debate at the sub-group meeting of Policy and Resources Committee. This slim hope never gained any real credibility. The one Labour councillor totally committed to CDP went to press with a statement critical of the Labour Party and the CDP sub-committee, announcing that he would 'resign the whip' if the Labour Group did not reverse its decision. This made it necessary for the issue to be discussed at the next full Group meeting, in advance of any detailed consideration by the leadership. The Group resented the councillor's attempt to force a decision under duress, and most members spotted the critical connection with ACT and CDP. Despite my own plea that the decision be reversed, the Group voted to accept the recommended grant of £200.¹⁰

The reaction from CDP was fierce. From then onwards the Project lived on borrowed time. ACT had become so central to its thought that the council's attitude was a severe body blow. For a brief spell a rapprochement was likely, but on terms which would alter the original conception of CDP. The all-out attack on the Labour Group through the *Great Debate* suppressed all hopes of a settlement. With the resignation of the Director, and the new arrangements for management, the process of disbandment began. The most that could be hoped for was an absorption of certain aspects of CDP's work into a new local authority framework.

Would agreement on an ACT grant have guaranteed that the experiment ran its full course? It is possible, although the political changes caused when the Conservatives gained control in May 1976, would have imposed fresh strains. Could the Project be judged a success? In October 1975 the *Sunday Times* reported:

Towards the end of 1973 all of the Project staff came together in London and reached a consensus that urban deprivation was caused not just by the kind of people trapped by it but mainly by matters of national economics and income distribution.¹¹

The same article also stated that much of this argument was accepted by Whitehall. This was my position too, and in the final analysis my commitment to support CDP was based on the recognised need to complete the experiment, rather than any genuine conviction that it would provide a significant answer to the problems of urban deprivation.

NOTES

- 1 The Labour Party had gained overall political control in May 1973, taking 45 out of 72 seats. The Conservative Party held 18 seats, the Liberals 8 and Independents 1.
- 2 From November 1973 a shadow authority was set up, before local government responsibilities changed hands in April 1974.
- 3 Finally a CDP sub-committee was set up with its own powers. Some modifications were made at the suggestion of the CDP team - for example, that members could be co-opted onto the committee in an attempt to allow more community representation.
- 4 The Organiser was appointed without any official advertisement of the position.
- 5 See II, 6, *Social Education*.
- 6 See pages 112-3, 125, 143, for various insights into the document.
- 7 *Yorkshire Post*, 22 August 1975.
- 8 *Batley at Work. The Rise and Fall of a Textile Town*, Batley CDP, December 1974.
- 9 See II, 3, *Housing*, page 56.
- 10 The original press statement can be found in several newspapers. For reports see for example *The Batley News*, 3 July 1975.
- 11 *Sunday Times*, 19 October 1975.

It is too easy to write off the Batley Community Development Project as a failure - it is even easier to join those who, from whatever standpoint, would indulge in destructive criticism and condemn it as an ill-considered and inappropriate idea. If every experiment which did not achieve its objectives were to be so roundly and universally dismissed then the possibility of advancing knowledge and understanding would recede or even disappear. What, therefore, I prefer to do is to regard the Project as a means by which we have learned a number of valuable lessons about the way in which we may view society and about the kinds of approaches to the problems of disadvantage which are likely to be successful and those which are not. The advance may not have been spectacular but I would hope to describe here what I would consider the lessons that have been learned. It is possible to see CDP as a methodological experiment but not solely because of its commitment to action-research. One should also pay attention to CDP because of its novel and peculiar nature, within a traditional local government and political setting.

Having had the experience, which it is true to say that no one else has had, of involvement with the Batley CDP from its inception to its demise, it is possible for me to take not only a critical view of the moments of successive crises through which it passed but also an overview of the Project in its societal and governmental environment.

A general view of the experiment leads to a number of conclusions. It is clear now, although it was not at the time, that the Home Office, the Project team, and the sponsoring authority were not altogether sure of the precise aims of the experiment and how it would relate to the local authorities, whether as political or operational organisations. One of the particular problems which added to the general confusion was the location of the Project within a two-tier local government system. For whilst in order to 'succeed' it had to maintain close relationships with the Batley Borough Council, since it had its working location within that local authority's area, its link of accountability was with the West Riding County Council. The fact that the Project was caught up in the toils of local government re-organisation, which had the effect of removing this particular confusion, added at a crucial time the dilemmas of uncertainty and discontinuity of management and accountability to the Project team's problems.

The decision to set up the Project in Batley came after consultation between the Home Office, the West Riding County Council and Batley Borough Council, but the crucial negotiations and decisions were made as a result of negotiations between the Home Office and the West Riding County Council. This point became material when the work of the team began to have an impact upon life and activity within the Batley area. Although there was a Batley councillor on the formal sub-committee of the County Council and although I had a close association with the County Council (as Town Clerk of Batley) and held a seat on the County officers' steering committee, the decision-making machinery, at officer and member level, did not necessarily reflect the views of the local Borough Council. With the benefit of hindsight it seems rather odd that the community emphasis of the Project was not reflected in the decision-making structure which governed it. Whilst it is easy now to suggest alternative methods, there was no dissent on the part of Batley Council at the time to the proposed County structure.¹

The early days of the Project were taken up with the writing of a community profile and the formulation of decisions about the kind of issues which would be tackled and the team's method of working. During this time the recruitment of staff also took place. One of the important issues identified concerned the Project's working area. Should it be the whole of Batley, or some particular part of the town which would encompass the complete range of multi-faceted deprivation? Subsequently, it was decided that the field of study should be Batley itself, which meant that Project work was geared to a limited range of topics - unemployment, housing policy, welfare rights and community relations - rather than to an in-depth analysis of any particular neighbourhood in the town. This was a crucial decision for two reasons : on the one hand, it resulted in some fragmentation of effort, so that team members specialised in particular areas, and inevitably some disunity and problems of team direction arose; on the other hand, the decision to work across the town heightened tensions and conflict with the local Borough Council. The first of these consequences was highlighted by a crisis of confidence in the team's leadership, following the resignation of the Project's first Director. The interim period before a new Director was appointed was characterised by a stop-gap management arrangement directed by officers of Kirklees Metropolitan Council and the Home Office assisted by a representative of the University of York. Though this arrangement tried to bring some kind of order to the management of the Project and instill a greater certainty on the Project's objectives and purposes, it could not in any way substitute for day-to-day direction. After some misgivings on his part, the team's senior member assumed the role of temporary Project Director. The fact that this particular period coincided with local government re-organisation, and the change of accountability from the West Riding County Council to the new Metropolitan Council, added to the confusion.²

The second of these consequences - the heightening of conflict with the local authority - was marked by a changed attitude of local (Batley) councillors towards the Project. In its first contacts the Project was clearly welcomed by local authority members, but this did not last for long. Initially contacts were largely informal, but as time progressed and as the team became overtly critical of the local authority and its application of policy in relation to such matters as housing and voluntary groups, local authority members made little secret of their growing antipathy towards some of the team's activities. This criticism was reinforced after the election of the new Kirklees Metropolitan Council by the strongly expressed views of members representing other areas of Kirklees who, until that time, had not had any connection either with the establishment or the working of the Project.³

The single event which, above all others, impaired the relationships of the Project with the local authority was the conflict over the setting up and funding of the Advice Centre for the Town. Since the Project team had chosen to work 'across the town' and explore a number of loosely connected themes it quite naturally cultivated an association with activist organisations such as ACT, which had developed as part of the protest over the issue of 'fair rents'. As a vigorous community-based group, its symbolic importance was clear. That direct association with ACT led the team into a major conflict with the local authority was not seen to be in any way undesirable at first. However, the conflict placed team members in a considerable dilemma, for if they gave up the struggle to support the Advice Centre for the Town their credibility might be at risk with the community, whilst the alternative of extending a number of discrete and loosely connected activities without community identification was hardly satisfactory.

The loss of the first Director and the interregnum of strategic management led to a re-appraisal of the team's brief and, after the appointment of a new Director, the hope existed, certainly amongst members of the local authority, that useful and vital work in the more explicit fields outlined would be enhanced. There were at this time very considerable changes in the team's personnel which encouraged the local authority to believe that the difficulties surrounding the transition had been largely overcome. But ACT was still there : not only as a community force, for which the Project felt an almost parental responsibility, but also as an overwhelming attraction to individual members of the team.⁴

The new Director - despite the considerable and largely successful efforts to direct the Project along lines which had the general support of the team and the elected members with special responsibility for it - soon discovered that he had to make some kind of decision regarding the type of relationships which should exist between the Project and ACT. But in an attempt to preserve the community-based orientation the scene was set for the final show-down, which led to the ultimate demise of the Project. The issue centred, as it always had, around the amount of financial support which the local authority, out of the social action fund, would grant to ACT. When the local authority's contribution was fixed at what some team members considered a derisory level (but a normal level for a voluntary organisation to the council) the Project, and in particular its new Director, had to decide between community credibility and the wishes of the local authority sponsor. In the event it was impossible to satisfy both. I have no intimate knowledge of the re-appraisal and soul-searching which went on within the team, but it is self-evident that the pressures to which the Director was then subjected were of such an intensity that if he was to retain any influence over the Project and its programme then he had to take an overt and leading role in articulating the team's opposition to the council's decision.⁵

The eventual publication of *The Great Debate*, with its attack upon council members and its leadership, the subsequent disciplining of the Director, and in his enforced resignation, were the price paid for the decision. Whilst the subsequent attempts to salvage the Project through a system of more effective and deliberate control from the centre were genuinely made, the effect was to destroy any sense of Project unity and the decision was ultimately made to abandon the Project as it stood. Only two strategies were retained - an urban priority programme in a selected area of Batley, engaging three team members, and the transfer of the employment worker to industrial development work covering the area of Kirklees as a whole.⁶

It is tempting to speculate whether the ACT issue was the real cause of the team's failure. It certainly was the immediate cause, but the question that has to be asked is whether a clash over some major issue was inevitable because of the structure of CDP. The CDP concept raised difficult questions of accountability. The decision to set such projects within local authority systems and yet to expect and encourage them to work in an independent manner was always likely to cause tensions and management problems. Project teams working in the community and encouraging new initiatives and community expression are bound to create unease and discomfort for established departmental organisations and the political decision-making machine. Although this was so in the case of the Batley Project, it would not be true to say that every initiative and every criticism made by CDP was unwelcome. In the Project's work in housing (particularly in the field of general improvement areas) in unemployment and the causes of job loss and in work with community groups - particularly among ethnic minorities - the team was both forthright and critical. The

local authority was always prepared to consider and take account of the team's findings and recommendations. For example, two reactions to the Project's work on welfare rights can be detected. In the general field of research and information into the causes of the poor public response to benefits there was a ready willingness to accept the team's findings and to take up their suggestions for improvement. On the other hand, when the work became translated into casework advocacy, the attitude of members was distinctly hostile - not so much about advocacy *per se*, but because of the belligerent style in which such initiatives were pursued.

To press our analysis further, it is important to ask why the Advice Centre should have become the focus for the major confrontation. There are a number of reasons and, as with the welfare rights programme, many relate to the style and image of the organisation rather than its function. The Batley Council, supported subsequently by the Kirklees Metropolitan Council, had been instrumental in creating a local Council for Voluntary Service in Batley and it was therefore thought that there would be some duplication of effort. Nevertheless, it was recognised that a Centre with a more 'grass roots' emphasis might have some advantages. However, the Advice Centre's active support for squatting offended many councillors who could neither accept that illegal action was appropriate or justify apparent queue-jumping.

But, despite the tensions it may have created, did the CDP experiment bring any lasting benefits to the area? And could it have achieved any better results? With regard to the lasting benefits, an answer must be a limited yes. There are still echoes of the CDP work in a number of local authority fields. The report on the methodology for general improvement areas and for housing action areas had an influence throughout Kirklees, with direct benefits for the local authority and its tenants. The analysis of industrial decline and the approaches to industrial regeneration have had their uses in representations made to central government and the EEC about the district's needs, whilst the authority's response to the development of the government's inner city strategy has been made easier and more pertinent by the existence of CDP material. Proposals in the West Yorkshire Bill recently before Parliament (1978), dealing *inter alia* with industrial improvement areas, were consequential upon a number of separate influences, including CDP work. The growth of community activism was encouraged by the CDP team and, whether one regards this kind of activity as beneficial or not, the current activity in many directions must be regarded as a not inconsiderable legacy.⁷

On the second question, I am not concerned with the chosen brief and objectives of the Project, but rather with organisation and method of functioning. It is a common criticism that community development is not a comfortable strategy for established governmental and bureaucratic organisations. When, therefore, these projects were established under the aegis of local authorities the resultant tension and conflict was sharpened. Many times during the life of the Batley Project, rational alternatives of either complete independence or bureaucratic dependence upon the local authority machine were discussed. The first was not possible, whilst the second was unacceptable to the team. The period of interim management moved the Project closer to the second model, and the subsequent work on the urban priority area after the team's ultimate collapse was of this type. It was also suggested that a permanent Project team - recruited as part of the normal work of a local authority but related to the over-riding function of policy making Chief Executive responsibility - might be incorporated as a post-CDP strategy. Little or no support could be found for such a venture, and the local authorities' ability to consider alternative forms had largely been submerged by political and bureaucratic memories of the original Project.

The second question is largely unanswerable, because whatever the extent of one's disillusion with the Project as originally conceived, and whatever one's belief regarding possible alternative lines of accountability, the opportunity to develop the Project in a modified or radically different form never occurred. The modifications which did take place and the post-Project organisation which lingered on for a year were always infected by the germs of bitter memory.

To turn to the internal difficulties faced by CDP, it is certain that the directoral responsibility demanded by the nature of the Project called for someone of exceptional, perhaps even superhuman, powers. To direct a team of diverse interests and views in a cohesive way - and at the same time to expect a Project Director to act as a local authority manager controlling team members whose loyalties were more towards anti-establishment activity than co-operation - required someone of exceptional ability and considerable managerial adroitness. Even so, there would be times when even a successful Director's choices would have brought him into conflict with either members of the team or local authority. This alone underlines the inherent internal difficulties in the Project's structure.⁸

The CDP movement must properly be seen as one of a number of disparate strategies, pursuing goals which are by no means universally accepted. It fits in the ideological stream of egalitarianism and, as such, is part of a wider debate on the nature of society and deprivation. That this was inadequately understood and recognised was evident from the different judgments local councillors made about the Project. The fact that CDP was a national movement, with strong inter-Project intelligence and influence, constituted another dilemma. Unfortunately, the study of attitudes, culture and social and political structures did not figure at all strongly in the work of the Batley Project. It is an odd circumstance that an essentially community-based grass-roots programme should have been largely nationally institutionalised, and the consequence of a centrally directed initiative. Whether community-based initiatives of a more local and spontaneous nature might prove more valuable and acceptable is an open question - but experience suggests that this would be preferable to the alternative selected by the Batley Project team.

As an experiment, therefore, it is evident that CDP was not a popular and comfortable local formation. It created ill-will, resentment and misunderstanding. We have, however, derived certain tangible benefits from the Project which we have only grudgingly recognised. As an experiment in organisation terms, however, it revealed the difficulty of taking innovatory steps which challenge or threaten established and traditional pattern of local politics. As an experiment in community development, it awakened and aroused groups to express their views and participate in the decisions which govern their lives. Viewed in terms of social change, it can be regarded as a small contribution, although its significance is difficult to quantify. But it should not be ignored, either by those who sponsored it or by those who might wish to consider how they might structure and organise any future experiments concerned with social and economic deprivation.⁹

NOTES

- 1 Though the weaknesses of the management structure were soon manifested. See III, 3, *Political Processes*.
- 2 See III, 3, *Political Processes* in which the changing management arrangements are outlined.
- 3 Study of power groups in the new authority is most illuminating. Research undertaken by the CDP Central Unit at York, in 1976, examined the changing composition of committees and the way in which opinion turned against CDP. See Part III, 3, *Political Processes*, and Part IV, 3.
- 4 See II, 5, *Information, Advice and Advocacy*, III, 1, *The Style and Image of Batley CDP* and III, 2, *Group Processes in Batley CDP*.
- 5 See IV, 4, Paul Henderson, *Batley CDP 1974-75 : The Perspectives of the Action Team Director*.
- 6 These arrangements were made in November 1975.
- 7 See II, 3, *Housing* and II, 2, *Local Economy and Planning*.
- 8 See IV, 4, Paul Henderson, *Batley CDP 1974-75 : The Perspectives of the Action Team Director*.
- 9 See IV, 5, Ray Lees, *Action Research Strategies in Batley CDP* and V, *Conclusions*.

3 BATLEY CDP : THE ASSESSMENTS OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS IN KIRKLEES

In 1975, a short while before the Batley Project was terminated, Lewis Corina, the Research Director of Oldham CDP, began a brief study of the relationship between Batley CDP and the local authority, with the intention of providing a comparative dimension to work already underway in Oldham CDP.¹ The research was undertaken with the support of the Department of Social Administration and Social Work, at the University of York, and was written up in a comprehensive account entitled *A Selective Assessment of the Influence of Oldham Community Development Project on the Operations of the Local Authority : Comparative Case No. 5, Batley CDP.*² A summary of some of the main findings is provided below.

SOURCES AND METHOD

The main sources of data used in the report were interviews with elected members and chief officers, observation of local authority meetings, examination of council minutes, and an analysis of Project publications and the press coverage of Batley CDP. All of the interviews took place after the Project was closed and were conducted on a face-to-face basis from a prepared interview schedule. In all, twelve officers, including the Chief Executive Officer, the Directors of Administration, Social Services, Housing, Education, and Environmental Health, and forty elected members were interviewed. In the main period of interview, January and February 1976, twenty out of the twenty five members of the major Policy and Resources Committee were interviewed; three refused and two were unobtainable. Including the Labour leader, an *ex-officio* member of all council committees, thirteen of the fourteen members of the Batley CDP sub-committee were interviewed. One member of the Policy and Resources Committee, formerly a member of the CDP sub-committee, was also interviewed. At the time of interview, five of the councillors interviewed were chairmen of major service committees.

AIMS

The precise aims of the research were to investigate the Project's work in three spheres :

- (i) in influencing the local authority's dispositions and decision-making;
- (ii) in fostering co-ordination in need meeting, and
- (iii) in improving relationships between the local authority and local residents.

A more general aim was to provide insights into the operation of community programmes in the local authority context.

The Interview Schedule

For the major period of interview councillors were contacted by letter and personal interviews were arranged; in some cases at the councillors' homes, in others at Huddersfield Town Hall, and for some after ward surgeries. The interview schedule comprised thirty four questions and covered a number of subject areas : personal background and history, occupation, period of involvement in local political life, the reasons behind political involvement, the role of the councillor in terms of their representative functions, the significance of personal involvement in local issues, priorities in local

government, assessment of influence in committee and full council, a discussion of the councillors' understanding of and contact with the Community Development Project, and an assessment of its usefulness to the local authority. Respondents gave full answers to each of the questions asked and none refused to answer any one specific inquiry.

REORGANISATION, POLITICAL POWER, INFLUENCE AND CDP

Though the original research design was not explicitly concerned with them, it was plain that issues such as the effect of local government reorganisation, the strength of the whip system in the controlling group and the influence that a nucleus of experienced councillors had over discussions in council were vitally important factors in local political life. All three were closely linked and had a combined effect on the Batley Project.

During interview half the officers and councillors remarked that reorganisation had created difficulties for the Project in a number of ways. Officers and councillors were for the first time involved with a Project they knew little about, just as new work pressures generated by reorganisation were multiplying. For some, CDP became an unnecessary digression, while for those councillors outside Batley, it seemed inappropriate to devote additional financial resources to Batley, and time consuming and unproductive to spend a large share of council time on an issue deemed relatively peripheral to council work.

In the party political context, influential members were preoccupied with devising new party programmes for the new authority, with the consequence that initially CDP received only a small part of their time. Furthermore, when the Project criticised newly devised programmes, councillors responded by defending these programmes vehemently.

Though general councillor defensiveness and public criticism of councillors by CDP injected tension into the relationship, when Batley CDP was first made accountable to the Kirklees authority, there was a genuine opportunity for the Project to influence the new authority by way of the senior councillors present on the CDP sub-committee. In the event, these 'heavy-weight' members probably influenced the general run of events against CDP, but, as the composition of the first sub-committee indicates, clear potential for collaboration was missed. The first committee included :

- the Council Leader of Policy and Resources Committee;
- the Deputy Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee
(*ex officio* as Mayor);
- the Chairmen of Education and Social Service Committees, and
- the Deputy Chairmen of Social Services and Development
Services Committees;

the Chairmen of :

- General Staffing Sub-committee;
- Staffing Appointments Sub-committee;
- Appeals (Further and Higher Education) Sub-committee;
- Law and Parliamentary Sub-committee;
- Care and Assessment Sub-committee;
- Residential and Day Care Sub-committee; and
- Development Services Public Works Sub-committee;

The Deputy Chairmen of :

- Land and Estates Sub-committee;
- Education Schools Sub-committee;
- Care and Assessment Sub-committee;

Plans Sub-committee, and
Housing Services Sub-committee.

GENERAL COUNCILLOR ATTITUDES TO AND CONTACTS WITH CDP

As the Batley Project developed its own values and style of operation, mistrust increased between the local authority and CDP, and conflicts came to a head over issues such as ACT and *The Great Debate*. Local authority defensiveness grew, as many councillors perceived the Project as unco-operative. A number of elected members complained about the general Project attitude, expressed in reports and statements, in which words such as 'pure', 'truth', 'correct' and 'right' were used to describe its actions, as against words such as 'wrong', 'elitist', 'defeatist', or 'uncaring' to describe council aims.

In terms of the Project's influence on the elected members' role, some councillors felt that they were being by-passed, and that the Project team had failed to appreciate the close-knit nature of the local community in Batley, while others singled out for criticism 'quasi-Marxist' influences in the Project team and the widespread belief amongst Project workers that councillors were out of sympathy with large sections of the local community. On the motives of some CDP staff, councillors made the following comments :

Their sole aim is to stir things up;

Their version of events is always anti-authority;

They don't want this programme to succeed, they are Marxists;

They became involved with the moaners and not the people in Batley who needed help.

During the main period of interviews with elected members, each was asked when he/she first became aware of Batley CDP. Of respondents on the Policy and Resources Committee, thirteen out of twenty members had been aware of CDP before 1974, yet none of these thirteen had established any links with, or paid particular attention to, the Project. None of the remaining seven respondents had had any contact with CDP before 1974. Amongst members of the Batley CDP sub-committee the majority, since they were Batley councillors, had been in contact and had some knowledge of the Project's work. What is not absolutely clear is how far these elected members influenced others in the full Kirklees Council after 1974, though there is reason to believe that a strong anti-CDP lobby built up against the Project in a number of committees. This was remarked upon by those councillors who stayed sympathetic to the Project throughout.

From the results obtained during interview, it is difficult to classify or categorise attitudes to CDP with precision, for many councillors and officers approved of some features of Project work, but not its style of operation. Furthermore, correlations between attitudes to CDP and the actual benefit that officers and councillors experienced in their work due to CDP are extremely tenuous, if only because so few councillors and officers were prepared to admit that the Project had either helped 'sensitise' them, or had revealed problems they had not recognised beforehand. However, the Project had its advantages: for example, an experienced Batley councillor and CDP sub-committee member, who was at the time of interview Deputy Chairman of Housing in Kirklees, commended the Project's work with Tenants' Associations and commented that Project workers, by drawing his attention to particular examples of housing stress, had helped him solve a number of housing problems. Nevertheless, he also criticised the Project for overstepping the mark in attacking local councillors and some council departments.

While it is difficult to classify attitudes to CDP, if the general notions of 'in favour' and 'not in favour' are used as general indications of attitude on first acquaintance with the Project, and then at the time of interview, it can be seen that for the majority of officers and councillors attitudes changed markedly. Of the forty two respondents, thirty admitted that their attitudes changed to 'less favourable', eight remained 'favourable', and two sceptical or indifferent; two were openly hostile. Nobody experienced a change in attitude from 'less favourable' to 'more favourable'. These general attitudes can now be sub-divided by committee and between councillors and officers.

Amongst eighteen firm responses from members of the Policy and Resources Committee, three councillors remained in favour of the Project, though each referred to the detrimental effects of conflict with the local authority and noted a lack of political skills on the part of Project workers; ten councillors' attitudes had become unfavourable and among their comments a number mentioned squatting, defiance of the law, and criticism of council policy as major irritants; five who had formerly been in sympathy with the Project became ambivalent in their attitude. All the CDP sub-committee members interviewed remarked that in the first instance they had been in favour of the Project, but of these only two remained sympathetic. Of ten whose attitudes changed for the worse most mentioned personal attacks on councillors, personality problems in the CDP team, and the Project's overtly radical political orientation as contributing to changes in their attitudes. Of the twelve officers interviewed, ten stated that at first they had been in favour or open-minded towards the Project, while two were uncommitted. Of this twelve, two remained in favour and suggested that CDP had identified social needs in Batley; four admitted that their attitude had turned against the Project and two claimed open disillusionment and disappointment. The uncommitted stayed uncommitted and were joined by two others who became ambivalent in attitude. Included in the negative comments on CDP, officers made a number of observations on a lack of direction in the team, and on a poor understanding of the local authority and the constraints it worked under. Most mentioned the Project's unsophisticated style of public relations.

PERCEPTIONS OF PROJECT WORK AND PERFORMANCE

Though attitudes hardened against the Batley Project under the Kirklees authority, it would be inaccurate to claim that the Project was condemned in its entirety. Evidence from interviews quoted below indicates that CDP work had its positive as well as negative results. On the beneficial side councillors commented :

CDP has highlighted problems and provided insights into these problems;

CDP has provided benefits by its housing and welfare rights advocacy;

CDP's research documents have been of great use, I haven't the slightest complaint about that side;

In some areas CDP has encouraged local participation;

By identifying needs, CDP has helped to get Kirklees to concentrate some resources on Batley;

The work of CDP helped me increase my knowledge of the Batley area;

CDP has been useful in highlighting problems and putting councillors on their toes.

A number of similar comments were made by officers :

They have been instrumental in catalysing thought and drawing out attention to matters earlier than would have been the case without CDP;

It [CDP] has been of help to us in our improvement programme;

They have helped people to get information and benefits;

Their reports were useful at the time. We would have done these, but they speeded things up;

The gap between local government and residents is widening. CDP has made the authority aware of what some people need;

It has focused on a particular area which the local authority traditional brief does not provide for.

A number of general commendations on the success of work with tenants' associations, work with immigrants and playgroups, on rent arrear campaigns and analysis of welfare benefits take-up were made. Specific commendations, from 50 per cent of respondents were made on the standard of information gathering and research, on *The Social Atlas of Kirklees*, on the *Batley at Work* report, on the establishment of playgroups and on the identification of community problems and needs. To a large extent these commendations corresponded with the major commitments councillors felt towards particular subject areas, Housing, Employment and Industry, Social Services, Development and Planning. For example, it was understandable that many elected members should cite the *Batley at Work* report so favourably, when in twenty eight out of seventy one responses councillors had cited unemployment and industrial stress as one of the major three problems in the Kirklees region.

On the negative aspects of their contact with the Batley Project, both officers' and elected members' responses clustered around nine key criticisms. They concerned

- (i) conflict tactics pursued by the Project (here most councillors referred to *The Great Debate* and acrimonious meetings);
- (ii) the Project's reluctance to work with the authority and its inability to observe normal protocols;
- (iii) the Project's lack of political awareness;
- (iv) the tendency to by-pass normal channels and established procedures;
- (v) the Project's encouragement of squatting in council properties;
- (vi) the overall cost of the Project and its poor handling of financial affairs;
- (vii) the degree to which Project work duplicated work conducted by the local authority;
- (viii) the use of the press to criticise councillors and the local authority, and
- (ix) the Project's connection with the Advice Centre for the Town (ACT).

In general criticisms of the Project respondents were inclined to comment that the team was tactless, naive or utopian, but on the last two points -

open criticism of councillors and the local authority and the ACT issue - respondents made particularly impassioned statements. The following comments are drawn from the remarks made in interviews.

Councillors

CDP ignored the strong sense of fair play that councillors give weight to;

The last straw for me was when CDP suggested councillors knew nothing about the working class;

CDP has damaged relations and given rise to bitterness amongst councillors as well as between citizens and councillors;

CDP's criticisms of individual members of the council created a great deal of mistrust. From that point members of the council lost faith in CDP;

ACT has hindered relationships between the local authority and residents by its mud slinging at the council;

The ACT affair was mishandled by CDP. Their tactics made it impossible for those councillors who supported the increased grant to make an impression in committee.

Officers

I did not like the adverse and unfair press criticism which ACT and CDP stirred up. Officers were very, very annoyed about this;

They claimed that there was a lack of political will to help them. It wasn't true, we were very enthusiastic at first, but didn't get anything from them;

CDP appeared to want to go it alone and to be seen to be radical. They never gave the council a chance to be co-operative;

There is a place for pressure, but they went too far along the confrontation track;

ACT probably spoiled CDP;

ACT soured the relationship that CDP was developing with our department;

The financing of ACT was one of two crucial factors affecting councillors' attitudes to CDP, the other was squatting.

From these selected quotations it is possible to detect that a great deal of anxiety was created by some of the Project's activities, and that, on balance, for most respondents, the negative aspects overwhelmed the positive. As the Project was criticised in its handling of the ACT affair (the organisation most frequently cited in connection with CDP) a number of more general complaints were brought to bear, including those centring on the lack of direction in team affairs, and on matters of finance.

In broad terms, perceptions of CDP were confused. No one councillor suggested that he/she felt hostility to the Project at the outset, but only a few councillors displayed a genuine 'comprehension' of its experimental nature. For many councillors the Project's overall aims were rather different from those envisaged - that the major preoccupation would be to supplement and co-ordinate the work of the major service committees, especially the Social Services Committee. Fundamental contradictions in attitude were evident, so that some councillors were inclined to denounce the Project as a failure but still applaud some part of its work. Those who argued that it

was a complete waste of time stressed that it had not identified the needs of the underprivileged any better than the local authority. Furthermore, since other local authorities had experienced management problems with their own Projects, many councillors and officers felt that the responsibility for creating problems lay with the Project rather than the council.

THE PROJECT'S INFLUENCE ON THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

As stated earlier, the interview schedule was designed to assess how far the Project had influenced the local authority in three key areas :

- (i) influencing dispositions and decision-making;
- (ii) co-ordinating need-meeting and detecting need, and
- (iii) improving relationships between the local authority and residents.

The following table summarises general questions on the benefits that CDP had produced, responses to supplementary questions and miscellaneous *obiter dicta*.

Area	Elected Members		Officers		All	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
(i)	-	31	1	9	1	40
(ii)	10	21	8	2	18	23
(iii)	1	30	-	10	1	40

This table, based on the oral responses recorded during interviews, indicates that the Project had negatively affected the local authority's dispositions and decision-making. The general view of members and officers was that the Project had been a disappointment and had not helped them in their own work. Respondents frequently claimed that CDP had wasted vast potential by not liaising with the authority. One Policy and Resources Committee member alleged that the Project had affected dispositions adversely so that the authority was no longer favourable towards social experiment. A CDP sub-committee member claimed that CDP 'impaired its chance of influencing policy' by refusing to work with the CDP sub-committee. It should be pointed out, however, that whilst there was evidence that the Project had been at odds with the sub-committee, there was no evidence that it had refused to work with it. On the subject of decision-making, several respondents commented that the Project had had little influence because it failed to learn how policy was made.

In the matter of influencing dispositions, the responses were slightly more favourable. Three Batley councillors claimed that CDP had made the local authority look more urgently at the problems of their area, and four councillors and four officers that Kirklees was more attuned to the needs of the disadvantaged. Thus dispositions had been affected, but there is a lasting impression that the Project had only sporadically influenced the local authority's central deliberations, by way of changing the attitudes of experienced councillors and officers. (In comparison with the Oldham Project, this appeared to be a most significant difference.)

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Project had little influence on the authority's attempts to co-ordinate need-meeting. Whilst there is no evidence, other than the claims themselves, to support the

councillors' allegations that, by and large, the Project's tactics disrupted some of the need-meeting processes, neither is there any proof that the Project had instigated any action to co-ordinate need-meeting. Several claims were made by officers and councillors that the Project members preferred to work independently and to some extent resisted attempts to get them to co-operate with the departmental officers or voluntary agencies.

It is in the detection of need that the Project seems to have been most effective. Of the 41 respondents, 10 councillors and 8 officers claimed, more or less emphatically, that CDP had been instrumental in drawing the authority's attention to areas of need, particularly in housing and immigrant needs. Even the much castigated Advice Centre was accorded credit for bringing needy cases to the authority's attention. One particular area referred to was the detection of under use of rate and rent rebate. (There was an increased take-up of these benefits following a CDP campaign to publicise them.)

A majority of the 41 respondents said that they had derived some benefit from the information-gathering work of the Project and, in some cases, the respondents were strongly commendatory. These cases are exemplified by the remark of a leading council member who was undoubtedly in a position to assess influence on the local authority. Asked whether CDP had been of benefit to the authority in the functions being assessed, he replied :

Emphatically, yes. In the production of research material and in the identification of need.

As far as the success of Project work in improving relationships between residents and the local authority is concerned, evidence of the CDP's work in this area is probably distorted by the fact that it was an area which generates conflict between CDP and the local authority. One suspects that there were some tangible links made between the authority and the residents in the Project's early days, but these were broken and forgotten in the heat of the later conflict. In the event, not one of the respondents claimed that CDP improved local authority/resident relationships.

There were claims that CDP had actually worsened the relationships, partly by persuading residents to participate in militant action and partly by unfair public criticism of the council and its elected members. One councillor claimed to have been misrepresented and attacked by CDP and to have received poison pen letters and anonymous phone calls as a result. There is little doubt that Batley CDP's strategy of raising local political consciousness had an inbuilt confrontation potential, for, in spite of what they may claim to the contrary, most councillors prefer to be confronted with a less rather than more active electorate.

The Batley Project made contacts with councillors, but certain Project staff felt a need to direct public criticism against councillors which damaged the relationship. The existence of the CDP sub-committee was not in itself sufficient to offset the growing antagonism which a large number of Kirklees councillors finally directed against CDP. In the last analysis, some account must be taken of the critical effect that the opposition of elected members had on the Batley Project, and of the debilitating elements in the Project's own reluctance to admit that the implications of its brief meant that it would have to work within a local authority elected representative context.

NOTES

- 1 See L. Corina, *Oldham CDP : An Assessment of Its Impact and Influence on the Local Authority*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 9, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1977.
- 2 Unpublished paper, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, May 1976.

Whilst it is tempting to offer a personal narrative of my experience as Project Director the limitations of this approach are crystal-clear : the complex interactions and interlinkages of action-research programmes upon which strategy pivoted would simply submerge under the weight of the narrative. To achieve a balanced picture one must keep the following questions in mind

- (i) how did work undertaken reflect changes in Project goals and aspirations?
- (ii) how did the Project structure influence events?
- (iii) how did team members handle the classic dilemmas confronting community workers?
- (iv) what were the mistakes made?
- (v) what was the quality and impact of work done, and the overall level of achievement?

APPOINTMENT

For two years, prior to my appointment as Director, I had worked for the West Riding Social Services Department as a Community Worker. Despite little direct contact with Batley CDP, I had followed its development, albeit from a distance. For me it offered exciting and creative opportunities. The orientation of the national programme (NCDP) interested me, as did the importance ascribed to research as a corrective to intuitive or ragged community work interventions.

In discussions with CDP staff I learned how the previous Director had worked with a small committee of West Riding County Councillors and Officers - a committee largely advisory in function and isolated from Batley in more than a geographic sense. Only one Batley member sat on the committee. Thus, of necessity, the first Director built up a close working relationship with Batley's Town Clerk, later Chief Executive Officer of Kirklees. With local government reorganisation imminent, new management arrangements were drawn up. The new Director would report to a special Project Committee of nine Batley councillors plus representatives from the major committees, eg Education, Social Services and Housing. These arrangements reflected a genuine need to reduce the isolation of elected members from the Project. At the time of appointment, I had been warned, in very general terms, of tensions in the team. Acting Director and Research Director alike pointed to divisions of opinion, though both also indicated that problems were not insurmountable. Subsequently, I discovered that the information given to me was of limited utility. No mention had been made of the Project action team's refusal to recognise the legitimacy of interim arrangements established after the first Director's resignation, or of members feeling powerless to gain adequate representation at any level. Had I been more insistent, and demanded more information, my early perceptions would have been shaped differently. Having accepted the post I soon encountered bitter feelings, and firm alignments in the team. Although aware of these divisions, I had insufficient information on their origin. Broadly speaking, from the Winter of 1973 fundamental disagreements developed between those who favoured an extended community work programme and those who saw more value in a combined action-research strategy. Those who held the second view insisted that rigorous planning and strategy building was

necessary, and that to date the Project had attempted neither. Furthermore, the Project should, the argument ran, analyse the functioning of market forces and the relevance of government interventions to the town :

*If we are really serious that our analysis recognises that the problems of Batley, and the 'disadvantaged' are a function of wider forces which determine relative privilege and relative deprivation, then we need adequately to investigate, document and communicate this.*¹

The approach of local government reorganisation and the need to present a programme for the next year brought these disagreements into the open. A paper written by the Project team for the new management committee amounted to no more than an amalgam of different ideas with no unifying theme. This was unlikely to solve increasing internal divisions, which were exacerbated by lengthy and indeterminate debate on organisation and decision-making. The fear of fragmentation was paramount and a sure reflection of this growing divisiveness.²

Following visits to four other CDPs and observation of the problems which the Batley Project's own welfare rights workers encountered, the full magnitude of team disunity became evident. Colleagues in other CDPs offered conflicting advice and solutions, when my immediate inclinations were to mediate between contesting parties, to gain some sort of breathing space.

To compound these difficulties, dislocations wrought by local government reorganisation demanded considerable attention. The team had to adjust to new structural arrangements in a frenetic atmosphere never conducive to rational discussion, and where channels of communication were ill-defined. Moreover, the aims and purpose of CDP were not known to many elected members in the newly extended council. There was a true need to discuss with members means by which old paths could be unblocked and new ones cut. Regrettably, crucial planning and communication tasks were left untended, as Project, Committee and Council responded to immediate actions and fast-moving events.

EARLY CRISES

1. ACT

During the summer of 1974, debate on the Advice Centre for the Town (ACT) escalated into a questioning of the fundamental principles behind CDP. To add to the intensity of this debate, the strike of four Project workers turned an internal, or at least a local, division of opinion with Kirklees into an industrial dispute and ideological polemic capturing national attention, which demanded the intervention of the Association of Community Workers (ACW) and the Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staff (ASTMS). The total inadequacy of links between the Project and the local authority, and the lack of team consensus over aims and purpose, were exposed by this issue.

In its first meeting of May 1974, the CDP sub-committee approved the Project's programme and budget. A grant allocation for the Advice Centre was included in the budget, but, rather than treat the programme as a whole, the sub-committee chose to consider the application from ACT separately and made no firm commitment to funding. ACT's application included a report of the previous year's work and an outline of its management arrangements. £12,500 was requested; £4,500 was earmarked for the appointment of a community lawyer, and the remainder covered the salaries of organiser and secretary and general running costs. The CDP team, with the agreement of the management support group, submitted an application for only £8,000 and recommended that the appointment of a community lawyer be deferred.

At the next sub-committee meeting ACT's application was discussed at length. Some members argued in favour of ACT; others were openly hostile. A decision was deferred, pending more detailed accounts and information on ACT's opening hours, but finance was guaranteed to the end of June. The critical question of council representation on ACT's management committee, which at the time allowed for one Batley representative, was deferred.

Before the sub-committee met again, ACT wrote to the MP for Batley and Morley, Sir Alfred Broughton, asking for his support.³ Unwisely, in a generally unprovocative letter, reference was made by name to three members of the sub-committee as alleged opponents of ACT. The letter stated that ACT was prepared to try and form a working agreement with Kirklees Council, if it realised that ACT was 'an independent pressure group fighting for the rights of the people'. Broughton forwarded this letter to the local Labour Party, and it was passed on to the Chief Executive of Kirklees. The naming of the three councillors and the account of their views were interpreted as being 'leaked' by CDP staff. The Acting Director received a strong note from the Chief Executive, demanding to know if this was true and, if so, who was responsible.

This incident illustrates something of the feelings which surrounded ACT. Language which spoke of 'fighting for the rights of the people' was new to Batley members holding traditional ideas of leadership. They considered the 'leaking' of information as a breach of confidentiality, an affront and impertinence. The community worker responsible for passing on information to ACT argued that his loyalty was to the groups with which he worked, and thus, for him, no breach of confidence had taken place. True though this may have been to him, it said nothing of the nature of his representation at the meeting, and it did not subdue the mood of councillors shocked by an apparent breach of protocol. This event, and the Broughton letter, served to harden attitudes on each side. Hereafter, ACT was not a simple issue of funding, but of symbolic importance, a platform for heated debate on divergent premises. On the one side, it was argued that ACT had received enough public money, that it was unprofessionally organised, and that it duplicated services already offered by Batley Town Hall and Citizens' Advice Bureaux elsewhere. Not all councillors shared this opinion. Some argued that ACT met needs which traditional services could not, and that it was precisely the kind of organisation which CDP, as an experimental venture, should support.

After much equivocation, the CDP sub-committee agreed on a general policy towards ACT's application and produced a cautious minute favouring 'in principle and as a short-term measure, an advocacy-type advice centre'. The phrase 'short-term' was inserted so as not to pre-empt subsequent official developments in the field of advice and information, or by the recently-formed Batley Council for Social Service, and its potential offspring, a Citizens' Advice Bureau. Following this statement, the sub-committee authorised four of its members 'to discuss and resolve' the details of the application for a grant with the officials of ACT with a view to paying a grant not exceeding £6,000. The four members were also asked to examine ACT's trust deed, due to disquiet over its constitution. Eventually, three members were nominated to sit on ACT's management committee, and there was little doubt that any grant would be conditional upon this representation.⁴ ACT's response was to reject the grant on the terms offered, and to protest at the secrecy surrounding the sub-committee's handling of its application. The sub-committee Chairman retorted that the normal proceedings of Council had been observed throughout. His insistence on the correctness of the Council's approach further irritated supporters of ACT, who viewed it as arrogant and rigid. For CDP, this laborious attention to protocol stood in stark contrast to the swifter decisions made under the WRCC, and to the greater latitude the

Project formerly received. The sub-committee's demand for additional representation on ACT's management committee was not subject to any thorough analysis. It was not interpreted as a feasible political compromise but as an attempt to strangle and control an independent organisation by tightening its purse-strings. Several influences lay behind the decision to refuse Kirklees' offer, and the interpretation of four members of the CDP team soon began to outstrip those of others.

2. From Grant to Community Workers' Strike

Following Kirklees' offer of a grant conditional upon representation, the CDP team discussed the implications of the ACT situation. Four members disturbed by the affair issued a public statement which outlined the minimum conditions under which a CDP team could operate. If these were not met, they were prepared to strike.

In their public statement, and in a letter to the Home Secretary, the four demanded that a number of guarantees be met. They insisted :

- (i) that a meeting between them and their employers should be held within 14 days to work out definite policies about terms of employment;
- (ii) that the sub-committee should be changed to a full committee, meeting in public and answerable to the public;
- (iii) that the local authority's standing orders concerning the confidentiality of sub-committee meetings should be withdrawn;
- (iv) that social action funds should be granted on the basis of the applicant group's needs; its accountability to CDP and Council should be limited to public availability of accounts, 'and the judgment that the activity of the group is genuinely in the field of social problems', and
- (v) that there should be full openness of communications between community workers and local groups, and more discussions of CDP.⁵

It is interesting that, although these demands related to Batley CDP, the answer to its problem was offered through a re-adjustment of the national programme. The four argued that the experiment was obviously restricted if it could not incorporate and articulate the needs of working class people. They held that :

*CDP is supposed to be about social action, working class involvement in important decisions and increased control by working class people of their own lives.*⁶

Attempts to cramp ACT were therefore explained by the fact that CDP was sponsoring criticism of local and national structures which neither could accept, contain, or regard as relevant. 'Wide public debate' on CDP was stressed as an essential condition for preventing the Batley strike.

When the sub-committee next met it had before it the four workers' statement of 9 July. This meeting preceded by three days the arranged meeting between four sub-committee members and ACT's representatives to discuss the grant and management structure of ACT.⁷ A reluctance to engage in rational discussion characterised both meetings. Elected members over-reacted to the workers' public statement and failed to spot the distinction between it and ACT. Widely different interpretations of ACT's existence and history were given, and innuendos were made about its stability, reliability and relevance.

Clashes of personality and ideology obtruded, leading to a complete deadlock.

To parallel this stalemate, there was little cause to be optimistic over the meeting between the strikers' trade union, ASTMS, and Kirklees. The threat of strike action failed to force concessions from the local authority or sub-committee. A withdrawal of labour by the four workers was hardly a show of industrial muscle guaranteed to result in a breakdown of local authority functions or services. The key weapon in the hands of the strikers was publicity and the creation of an adverse image of the council. Since the strike, when declared, was unofficial, local and national support had to be generated in order to counterbalance an inherently weak position. From the publication of the first statement to the collapse of the strike, the initiative seemed to lie with the strikers. But this was only a partial picture.

The seven workers who did not strike were agreed that the drastic action taken by their colleagues was misguided. The general view was that the whole question of the grant, and the way in which the centre had been established, had been mishandled and that a strike would aggravate the rift between ACT and Kirklees. Each of the seven had their own perceptions of the situation, and some held more sympathy for the strikers than others. Common to all was an objection to the absence of discussion on strike action in any full team meeting. A publicly visible splitting of the team was considered counter-productive, and none of these seven wished to align themselves with the local authority. They felt that ACT should receive a grant and none wanted to weaken that possibility.

The CDP office was closed from 1 August to 14 August; the strike ended on 19 August. During this period a squat was organised by ACT, the first of its kind in Batley. Its coincidence with the CDP strike reaffirmed two factors in many people's minds; that ACT was irresponsible, and that its actions were CDP inspired. ACT defended its actions as a method of bringing the housing shortage to public notice and it underlined that it would continue to use such methods as the situation demanded. Kirklees Housing Directorate stated that it would take action to recover houses where squats were taking place.

The political timing of the squat was disastrous. It polarised the position further and prompted acrimonious exchanges between ACT and the local authority. The leader of Council argued that Kirklees had made several concessions and had given the sub-committee special delegated powers. He maintained that Kirklees had never intended to control voluntary organisations in any way. Brief references were made to the strike, but in his statement the Council leader contended that the ACT issue had been used to air grievances on the national CDP programme, and that these discontents were likely to militate against any solution to problems confronting ACT and CDP. At this juncture external factors contributed to the collapse of the strike.

3. Collapse of the Strike and External Responses

The strike of the four CDP staff ended as abruptly as it began. Never being officially recognised at the start, its birth was weak and its end positively anti-climactic, after it emerged that one of the strikers had secured appointment elsewhere. While this should not have detracted from the expressed reasons for the strike, in practice it had the effect of casting doubts on the motivations of the strikers, and encouraged the remaining CDP staff to re-open the Project office. Two days later, those on strike returned to work. Three of them submitted their resignations. One has since stated

We felt that our strike was getting us nowhere, and when our union, ASTMS, refused to give us official backing we decided to resign.⁸

Having no more than reinforced conflict and division with the local authority, the strike was perhaps of more fundamental relevance to community workers outside Batley. Two other CDPs, North Tyneside and Newcastle, sent a joint delegation to Batley to clarify their understanding of the situation. They, and other Projects, pledged monthly financial support to ACT. Southwark, Liverpool and Paisley CDPs expressed concern to take account of all sides of the conflict, and to promote a wider discussion on the lessons of Batley. When other Projects heard of the apparent reluctance of the four CDP workers to return to work and bring about some change there was a marked shift away from the cause of the strikers to that of ACT.

To add to letters and resolutions from CDPs, the leader of Council received a copy of a letter sent to the *Times* and *Guardian* by six Bradford Community Workers. This letter emphasised the Home Office's responsibility and argued that it should have overruled the local authority if the latter sought to dictate the allocation of Project resources and thereby usurp 'national money for its own ends'.⁹

Lost among the plethora of statements, ACT's views were severely critical of Batley CDP and the national programme, and of the local authority for attacking CDP through ACT. The confusions in ACT's position were evident following the collapse of the strike. From then on, the argument broadened from one centring on use of Project funds into two other spheres. The first concerned the conditions of work and freedom of action of a community project; the second concerned the relevance of CDP and the Urban Programme to any solution of poverty in Britain.

At an early stage in the strike, it had been remarked that the jobs of the four workers should be blacked by the Association of Community Workers. Multiple links between ACW and the twelve CDPs existed. ACW's chairman had been consultant to Batley CDP, and one of Batley's welfare rights workers, and myself, were members of ACW's Council. In addition, a fellow Council member worked for Newcastle CDP and urged ACW members to demand swift action from ACW.

ACW did, in fact, black the four jobs in Batley to exert the 'strongest moral pressure' on the authorities.¹⁰ It demanded that three conditions should be met, before the blacking could be lifted :

- (i) the granting of social action money to local community groups by Kirklees Council through the agency of Batley CDP should not be used as a means of controlling the activities of these groups;
- (ii) the meetings of the CDP sub-committee should be open to the public, and
- (iii) Kirklees Council and the Home Office received a delegation from ACW to discuss the implementation of such conditions.

These conditions were, in essence, similar to those of the four workers on strike.

As Project Director in Batley, I was implicitly committed to opposing ACW's decisions, although the issues raised in Batley were of critical relevance to community work. More than anything else, I was not convinced that ACW's response had been made in full knowledge of the situation. At the National CDP conference held at York in September 1974, a clear change of mood among

Community Workers was evident towards the 'streetfighting tactics' of community activists. One group's attempts to hold 'an alternative conference', at the same time as the York sessions, did little to alter this mood. The general unpreparedness of its participants accorded badly with the new concern for tighter theoretical framework and methods. Against these changing perspectives, 'Batley adventurism' lacked relevance and seriousness.

4. Significance of the early crises

Events surrounding ACT's grant and the Batley strike attracted the attention of outside observers and participants alike. Six factors are worth noting :

- (i) Although divergent viewpoints within the Project extended beyond disagreements over ACT, they were played out as if solution of the ACT issue provided the key to resolution of internal conflicts;
- (ii) The Advice Centre grew as a central focus for the team because the team failed to analyse ACT's position in CDP or the town;
- (iii) Few people outside CDP or ACT could distinguish between them - a process precipitated first by the Project's Welfare Rights Campaign run as 'part of the wider community action movement';¹¹
- (iv) ACT and CDP failed to understand the consequences of their strategies. Each lacked the political skills and understanding of political structure needed to keep a hostile local authority at arms' distance;
- (v) As Project Director I failed to spot the real divisions, ideological and personal, which characterised the Project. Rapid action could have been taken to counter-balance the firm ideological grip one team member had upon others, which required a tough single-mindedness from the incoming Director. Lacking adequate knowledge, the sensible choice was to mediate when bolder action might have been more effective. Mediation no more than stalled the problem, and
- (vi) ACT's struggle to obtain a grant on its terms was symbolically important to Batley CDP, other CDPs and community projects. The question of funding community groups was not new, but its combination in Batley with an aggressively argued case for community work autonomy singled it out for special attention.

These six points are of relevance to community workers even now; but in retrospect the alarming shortfall in political skills is the most distressing. Cheetham and Hill have argued that securing influence in local government is a matter of finding powerful allies, and 'fighting' on an issue, which necessitates the adoption of several strategies.¹² Popplestone has underlined the possible repercussions of conflict :

*Militant action by one side will be answered by retaliation of the other side ... It is important for any community worker to make a very accurate analysis of the bargaining position of both sides before embarking on action.*¹³

During these early crises such considerations went unrecognised and the careful analysis needed prior to the selection of issues was forgotten. One can only reflect on the likely success of campaigns had they been preceded by a sensitive analysis of bargaining positions.

A SECOND START

For the time being, it was unlikely that ACT's grant could be objectively discussed as an agenda item with Kirklees. A further controversial squat had polarised the situation further.¹⁴ Two tasks presented themselves : to survive local and national opposition, and to forge a new strategy acceptable to the Project and Kirklees. Accordingly, from the Autumn of 1974, energies were channelled in these directions.

1. Project Re-Assessment

To help re-establish the credibility of CDP with Kirklees, the Project team proposed that a reassessment of team aims and objectives should precede any further detailed planning of future appointments, programmes and methods. Discussions between the Chief Executive of Kirklees, senior politicians, the Home Office and other CDPs began. With the local authority, problems were laid bare in a refreshingly honest manner. Rational discussion of sensitive points fostered a rigorous analysis of aims. Other CDPs followed the exchange with keen interest.

The Project argued passionately that the central part of its brief focused upon change, and that this required analysis of the extent and causes of deprivation, followed by action programmes in which community participation was of central importance. Inevitably, when programmes extended into spheres such as housing, planning or employment, conflict might take place. In response to this argument, the Chief Executive maintained that his authority was 'alive to social change' and ready to recognise community-based initiatives as acceptable forms of self-help. But he also stressed that the Project had been irresponsible in appraising its relations to community groups and the local authority. He wrote:

It is no good for CDP to stand aside from this issue in a professional self-sufficient way, or to seek to impose, as certainly as it did in the past over ACT, an uncompromising strategy which encouraged the very conflict which has brought ACT and the Council to its present unhappy relationships.¹⁵

Taking account of the tense relationship with the local authority, the Project made explicit the principles upon which it could operate, pressing for some degree of autonomy. Demands for semi-autonomous arrangements were systematically analysed by the Chief Executive in correspondence with the Project Director and the way prepared for the release of a reassessment document. The Project sub-committee gave its assent to this document in February 1975.

The apparent willingness of the local authority to work with the CDP in its process of reconstruction and re-assessment gave new heart and added enthusiasm to the team. The reassessment document, in which nine principles were outlined as essential to CDP, pushed debate on the Project's objectives beyond the levels expected by many. Abstract and general ideas were made specific, and new clarity given to the brief.

2. Policies and Programmes

During its reassessment the Batley Project, in common with other teams, moved away from pathological models of poverty to wider structuralist interpretations. The main thrust of this argument is demonstrated in the *National CDP Forward Plan 1975-76*.¹⁶ In this publication, the Batley team outlined its plan to focus on key issues of employment and housing. This it did from the Autumn of 1974 onwards. The new strategic approach put less emphasis on community work and demonstrated determination to sweep aside 'Batley

insularity'. Issues were to be publicised and a local debate with the major political parties, trade unions, and local authority encouraged.

In this new phase Project work received its first substantial impetus from the publication of *Batley at Work*. Despite its pessimistic analysis of future employment prospects in Batley, this report attracted widespread attention and, from its recommendations, plans were made to organise coherent team efforts in the fields of employment and housing. Two members of staff were assigned to employment, two to housing and three others were to work in the Urban Priority Area Project. This was a neighbourhood-based scheme, with housing and employment as two of its dominant themes. The last prong of Project activity, adult education, was the final link in the chain. By promoting contacts with trade unions in a programme of politicisation, it complemented the new perspectives on employment and housing.

Publications from this period are less hazy and more cogently argued than preceding ones. Although to some degree this mirrored new coherence and rigour, there were some elements of opportunism in the new programme. It would, after all, have been difficult to pick up on former links with community groups. Work had tapered away in the ACT controversy and hesitation regarding the support CDP could give to groups was natural. As an antidote to this confusion, community work efforts were directed into one neighbourhood to create a positive constituency - the UPA. Unfortunately, by concentrating so heavily on strategy building linked to national perspectives, the Project team relegated community work to a less important position. Though explicable in terms of individual, Project and national interests, this decision did not accord with the true needs of the community in Batley.

3. *A New Team*

During the first half of 1975, six new staff were recruited to the Project team, and the foundation work for the new programmes in housing, employment and the Urban Priority Area project began. Some difficulties occurred, notably in the attempts to blend housing work with that of the UPA team. In addition, the effects of the Home Office embargo on team appointments were being felt, and a noticeable imbalance in team strength occurred.

Inevitably, a good deal of time was taken up with efforts to sponsor new team unity. An acceptable degree of trust was established, although divergent philosophies and opinions were plain. On the surface, considerable exchange took place in action and research roles despite disagreement over tactics and methods in specific work areas, such as employment. As the team grew in size, it developed a new identity and spoke as one voice at general meetings of CDPs, such as those of the newly-formed CDP Workers Organisation. Following the schisms of the previous year, the growing unity of 1975 was of profound psychological benefit.

As with other Project teams, morale suffered setbacks when the Home Office's embargo on team appointments indicated a reduction in central government support to CDPs. From the Spring of 1975, the Home Office began to disassociate itself from much of the literature emanating from inter-project groups, and from the Central Information and Intelligence Unit. For the Batley Project, this decline in Whitehall support for the national experiment occurred at an unpropitious time since, in Kirklees, old problems were re-emerging and the seeds of new ones growing.

4. Continuing Problems

During the months in which Batley CDP re-assessed its own position, little attempt was made to negotiate ACT's grant. Nevertheless, all interested parties gave over some of their time to the resolution of this long dispute. ACW held discussions with ACT and persuaded it to alter its constitution to Kirklees' satisfaction. It then turned to Kirklees and urged it to reconsider ACT's grant application. ACT, it maintained, was a responsible organisation, and had a legitimate right to use militant tactics where necessary. The Chief Executive of Kirklees accepted that no final decision had been made about a grant for ACT. At this juncture, it was conceivable for ACT to re-enter into the Project's life in an amount proportionate to its standing in total Project work.

A new storm over ACT broke when two of the four councillors who had met with ACT and recommended the voting of a grant announced that they had changed their minds. No reasons were given, but in this way the question was once more thrown into the balance. Gradually, the lobby against ACT gained strength, and a motion was carried offering a grant of £200. Since grants of up to £250 could be made at the discretion of the Project Director and sub-committee chairman together, the offer was a token gesture and a deep insult to ACT.

For Project staff, the decision was unacceptable and even those who had only recently joined the Project were shocked by its severity. For months CDP staff had been heartened by the positive improvement of its standing with Kirklees and hopeful that the local authority would fund ACT. When the £200 grant was offered, it brought ACT and the Project into a coalition formed with the aim of exposing to the public their unexpected disillusion and mutual experience. Both drew upon a range of arguments to persuade the local authority to change its decision. CDP documented the history of negotiations with ACT to demonstrate why it considered the council's decision to be a breach of faith with ACT. The Project argued:

By not allocating ACT a substantial grant, the sub-committee has shown its contempt for CDP's efforts to resolve this issue.¹⁷

Eventually a decision was taken to evolve a policy of controlled, escalated conflict. Ultimately, this lost the Project the support of the few senior officers and politicians who, up to this point, had been prepared to mediate on its behalf.

5. Conflict Tactics and The Great Debate

From its very beginning Batley CDP argued that some conflict with the local authority would take place. Both members of the Project team and independent community groups would at time express opposition to local authority policies. During the reassessment when the ACT controversy had simmered down, the team anticipated some further conflict, but it never analysed local government's capacity to absorb, dilute, defuse or overturn conflict through its own actions. Consequently, conflict remained a general concept when more specific definitions were required. After the local authority refused to alter its decision regarding ACT's grant, limited conflict turned into outright engagement, culminating in the publication of *The Great Debate*, a scathing indictment of local government and of the ruling Labour Party. This brought different perceptions of conflict into the open and marked the final cleavage with the local authority. This document, more than any other policy or publication, shattered team unity.¹⁸

The genesis of *The Great Debate* is interesting. Following the publication of two lengthy statements critical of Kirklees' decision on ACT, as Project

Director, I was called before the CDP sub-committee and told that the committee would no longer tolerate public criticism from the Project. I agreed that further statements would be released only after the Chief Executive and sub-committee chairman had been consulted. Subsequently, I was held responsible for the release of *The Great Debate*. Despite my claims that it did not criticise the council directly, although it referred to the ruling party as 'Labour-Tories', my resignation was called for.

It is wrong, however, to see *The Great Debate* as no more than a piece of simple political journalism that went too far. Opinions expressed in the document were not those of the whole team. A disenchantment with conflict strategies had set in well before *The Great Debate* was published, when most of the team were thoroughly demoralised by Kirklees' attitude to ACT and the Project. The atmosphere in the team, accordingly, was depressed and desperate. Some staff turned back into their work; others, like myself, went on holiday. Into this void stepped those who believed in more militant engagements, and the cathartic qualities of a final showdown. Once the document was released, there was little turning back from the standpoint expressed. The local authority response was predictable and swift. Discussions on the future took place in an atmosphere of half-hearted survivalism, the work of the Project was curtailed, and only a small part of it incorporated into new arrangements with Kirklees.

Three different forms of conflict were manifest through the actions and publications of Batley CDP. First, there was conflict over a specific issues, such as the *Housing Finance Act 1972*, in which the aims were clear and the strategy short-term. Second, a broad but rationalised conflict emerged, with the aim of introducing or raising the quality of the political debate within the formal lines of power. Much of the Project's structuralist analysis of employment and industry fits into this category. Third, team members pursued conflict as exposure, journalistic in its style, with short-term objectives in mind. *The Great Debate* is the prime example of this style which, by pushing a hard line against the local authority, forced team members to examine the nature and necessity of conflict.

Though it fits into a 'conflict as exposure' mould, many team members hoped *The Great Debate* would promote a political debate with the local authority, with the purpose of providing political answers to these tensions. As the document neared its final form, those who favoured this political discussion saw it condemned by an aggressive tone and language, more likely to create a final schism than a solution. These fears were articulated by the Project's employment worker, who retracted his early support for *The Great Debate* and issued his own criticism of it. His actions were interpreted by most of his colleagues as a betrayal. Yet outside observers might interpret his action as an honest attempt to convey a genuine and common dilemma. Certainly, *The Great Debate* forced team members to examine the aims and limitations of conflict, but it is debatable whether team unity could ever have been restored even if the ultimate result had not been the closure of the Project. As Project Director, I was committed neither to *The Great Debate* nor its overtly political stance. However, at the time I was prepared to agree to its release in order to promote meaningful dialogue with the local authority. In retrospect, the effects of its release are clear and convince me that those electing to use conflict tactics in the name of a team must first anticipate the long and short term consequences of utilising such tactics.

CONCLUSIONS

In reviewing the progress of Project work three features of the Batley situation acted as constraints and dogged attempts to overcome difficulties :

the nature of the community and the team's understanding of it; the levels of political comprehension on the part of the major actors from Project to local authority; and the Project's organisation and structure.

The insularity and close-knit character of the town's social and political organisation have been well documented in the *Report to the Minister*. Subsequent research undertaken by Dr. Corina underlined the complexities at hand.¹⁹ Nevertheless, as a whole, the Project team seldom took account of these factors when planning its strategies, or organising its style of work. When there was an urgent need to pause and review the effects of Project action on social and political networks, analysis was either neglected or prematurely abandoned because of an over-eagerness to start fresh work. Volatile activity surrounding opposition to the *Housing Finance Act* had emphasised the potency of grass-roots approaches clustered around a specific issue, but all too often the power and depth of entrenched opinion and resistance to change limited the success of this approach. The Project team often failed to establish links with local informal and formal organisations. A more systematic and rigorous analysis of our platforms and style could have arrested falling morale and set team work on a straighter course. In short, we expected too much from the community, and failed to understand the reasons behind its apparent reluctance to respond to our efforts.

Only after local government re-organisation did the Project grow in stature, as a subject of fundamental interest to the local authority responsible. Prior to 1974, controversy surrounding Project work tended to be diluted in transit from Batley to the West Riding County Council Chamber, and the sheer volume of work handled by the council reduced the attention it could devote to CDP. The CDP sub-committee was created by Kirklees to reduce elected member isolation from the Project, and to emphasise the Project's association with the town of Batley. However, this arrangement did not take account of the team's decision to broaden its field of analysis to encompass more than Batley, and it assumed that Batley councillors alone could handle all the political implications of Project work. Furthermore, it anticipated that CDP sub-committee recommendations would be automatically accepted by the full Policy and Resources Committee and Council. The reality was different. Recommendations were often forwarded without the full support of the sub-committee, and were on occasions seriously challenged by Policy and Resources - a sure measure of opposition to the Project and an indication of the lack of comprehension concerning CDP's aims and intentions. Challenges to the recommendations tended to undermine attempts at effective decision-making, and demoralised all parties involved.

Despite the acknowledged lack of skilful political judgment on the part of the Project team, they were not the only party open to this accusation. Councillors also showed that they lacked elementary political competence. At critical moments they backed away from compromise and pursued stubborn, irrational ends. After the strike, Kirklees councillors and officers persuaded ACW and CDP alike of their positive and sympathetic attitude to groups pressing for social change, and of their willingness to re-open negotiations with ACT. Then, at the last moment, they retreated into a position of retrenchment. If, as the local authority had argued, the loudest voices always gained the ears of CDP, then the same was true in committee and council, where the wishes of a vociferous anti-CDP lobby eventually prevailed. The strength of their argument increased as the 'middle-ground' Batley members experienced role confusion, between responding to issues raised by the Project in their wards and acting as managers of the experiment. A critical point concerned the inability of some councillors to separate their personal judgments (usually derived from 'grapevine' sources) from the policies for which they were responsible, as

local politicians. This syndrome was similar to failings pointed out in the US Poverty Programme by Marris and Rein.²⁰

Dearlove's study of the London Borough of Chelsea and Kensington has noted the facility which local authorities have to postpone uncomfortable decisions relating to community action.²¹ Bachrach and Baratz have likewise emphasised the role of 'non-decisions' and the various ways in which issues are prevented from reaching the decision-making process.²² Their observations have much in common with the Kirklees situation where a stalling process was evident over ACT's grant, as with other elements of Project work and community action. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that there was a 'conspiracy' against CDP, when lack of knowledge of Project aims on the part of councillors had been exacerbated by local government re-organisation. The Project and local authority were also expected to deal with a multiplicity of different pressures arising from Project work, in an organisational structure which did no more than aggravate tensions. The central sponsoring agencies must bear some responsibility for devising a structure which ultimately put the Project team in the most exposed position; vulnerable to the tensions and contradictions in the experiment. The Batley experience underlines the importance of securing a realistic match between sponsor and Project and of ensuring that purpose, goals, and style are understood by the sponsor before work starts.

If the Project as a whole was open to the attack of all parties, the Project Director was in the most vulnerable position of all. My own leadership could have been more positive, but it is no attempt at exoneration to point out that the previous Project Director experienced similar problems to my own - lack of support outside the team structure. In my case, contact with the sub-committee chairman was never strong enough; the weakness of this connection was epitomised by the failure to alert me to the possibility of a vastly reduced grant being offered to ACT.

It would be unwise to argue that these 'external' difficulties were the only ones facing a Project Director, for both the first Director and myself had to deal with 'internal' difficulties.²³ Some members of the CDP team pressed for democratic decision-making methods and the best formula for harmonising the democratic approach with strong and fair leadership was hard to discover. Moreover, some team members were unwilling to recognise the expectations which the local authority had of the Project Director. It was natural for a Project Director to retain too much identity with the Project and to pay less attention to team management as such, when the local authority expected the same Director to manage his team in much the same way as a local authority departmental director might manage his office. Neither the CDP team nor the local authority paid enough attention to the dilemmas facing a Project Director.

Perhaps the most delicate area of Project intervention surrounds the handling of conflict of interests, as demonstrated through handling of the ACT issue. To begin with, CDP may have raised ACT's expectations too high, when more limited ones would have been realistic. But, after the polemic had begun, the Project suffered from ACT's inability to pursue tactics other than those of confrontation. In this, the weakness of CDP *vis-a-vis* the most vigorous of community action groups was exemplified.

CDP was designed to stretch the political capacities of local authorities, to test out their ability to respond to demands made on them for social change. Donnison identifies one of the politician's tasks as being able to manage conflict constructively, not to eliminate it. Rein has exhorted staff of experimental projects to be prepared for, and to learn to live with, conflict :

*They cannot do their job without challenging existing practices and stirring up resistance. Too little conflict may well be proof of failure rather than success.*²⁴

The problem of CDP, which emerged in Batley, was that there were too many other potent factors at work to allow Rein's notion to flourish. Some have been referred to : the complex structure of the programme, the traditional nature of the Batley community, the effect of setting broadly-based goals and then changing them during the course of the Project, the lack of political skills among the various actors. But, in addition to initiating a range of innovations and new ideas in Batley, the Project team also succeeded in grappling with questions of central importance to programmes designed to bring about meaningful social change. That the Project was brought to a premature close does not mean that it was an unproductive failure without positive results.

NOTES

- 1 Batley CDP Project Review, 'Proposed Programme of Work', 15 January 1974, p. 1.
- 2 Batley CDP, 'Community Work Programme', 8 February 1974, p. 2.
- 3 ACT to Sir Alfred Broughton, MP, 16 May 1974.
- 4 *Batley News*, 11 July 1974.
- 5 'Statement by CDP Community Workers', 9 July 1974.
- 6 *ibid.*
- 7 The sub-committee meeting was on 15 July; the meeting with ACT representatives was on 18 July 1974.
- 8 *Yorkshire Post*, 21 August 1974.
- 9 Bradford Community Work Group, letters to *The Times* and *The Guardian*, 25 August 1974.
- 10 Note to all ACW members 'The Batley Strike', ACW, September 1974.
- 11 Batley CDP, *Welfare Rights Campaign Interim Report*, 1974, p. 35.
- 12 J. Cheetham, and M. Hill, 'Community Work : Social Realities and Ethical Dilemmas', *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1973, p. 343.
- 13 G. Popplestone, 'Collective Action among Private Tenants', *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1972, p. 385.

- 14 *Batley News*, 'ACT Irresponsible says Kirklees', 31 October 1974.
- 15 Chief Executive to Project Director, 30 October 1974.
- 16 CDP Intelligence Unit, *National CDP Forward Plan 1975-76*, CDP, 1975.
- 17 'The CDP and the Local Authority', Paper from Batley CDP to Kirklees Policy and Resources Committee, 23 July 1975.
- 18 Batley CDP, *The Great Debate*, September 1975.
- 19 Lewis Corina, *A Selective Assessment of the Influence of Oldham CDP on the Operations of the Local Authority*, Comparative Case No. 5, Batley CDP, Unpublished Paper, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, May 1976.
- 20 P. Marris and M. Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*, Pelican (2nd Ed.) 1974, p. 310.
- 21 J. Dearlove, *The Politics of Policy in Local Government*, Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- 22 P. Bachrach and M. S. Baratz, *Power and Poverty*, Oxford University Press, 1970.
- 23 M. Would, 'Synopsis of Batley CDP November 1971-March 1974', May 1974.
- 24 M. Rein, *Social Policy Issues of Choice and Change*, Random House, New York, 1970, p. 151.

It is largely within the last few years that the idea of an action research approach to social problems has received attention in academic circles in Britain. With the exception of the Bristol Social Project in the mid-fifties, major involvement came only with the setting up of the Education Priority Area (EPA) projects in 1968, followed in 1969 by the Community Development Project programme - each of these enterprises being described in initial documents as a new and different kind of venture in social science. An illustration of the excitement that this approach generated in some circles can be seen in the following quotation from Professor Halsey, who argued that :

easily the most interesting feature of these programmes (EPA and CDP) is that they postulate a new relationship between social science and social policy. The traditional mode of reform is to announce a nostrum which is held to be certain in its cure of the social ills to which it is addressed. Here instead there is the promise of a new style in politics and administration - a commitment to enquiry rather than the assumption of omniscience.¹

With the ending of the CDP programme, the overwhelming judgment of published comment appears to be that, not only has Halsey's expectation remained unfulfilled, but it has also embodied a fundamentally mistaken understanding of the nature of the problem. For example, according to Higgins :

The demonstration project strategy has been based on a fundamental misconception. This is that governments have failed to pursue change because they lacked the essential information upon which to base their actions. On the whole, this is not the case. Much of the information they would need is readily available from both primary and secondary sources. If the political will and the resources existed, the problems of many of the poor and the problems of the inner cities could be eliminated in the foreseeable future. Poverty persists not because we do not know how to eradicate it but because we do not wish to do so. Further research is not required to determine in broad outline how this might be done.²

In this way, action-research strategies can be dismissed as either ill-founded goodwill or as 'a cruel hoax'.³ Many of the participants in the CDP programme agree with this interpretation of their experience. As Professor Jones has pointed out :

the same story is emerging repeatedly in different settings, roughly on these lines : we set out with great hopes of social change, the local authority was obstructive, nobody understood what we were trying to do, we decided that the problems were basically structural and could not be tackled on a limited area basis, relationships between the action team and research team (or between different members of the same team) deteriorated, and eventually the whole scheme was rolled up.⁴

It is the purpose of this paper to discuss, in the light of the experience of Batley CDP, whether combined action and research projects to explore new ways of meeting community needs are inevitably doomed to failure, to be rightly condemned, in Trotsky's classic phrase, 'to the dustbin of history'. The Batley project was closed prematurely, after a history of apparently irreconcil-

able conflict with the local authority, and this experience has been quoted elsewhere in order to prove the essentially fraudulent nature of government sponsored community action programmes. As a participant in the Batley Project, leading the research team for most of its existence, I remain convinced that action-research is a useful, if limited, strategy, for more effectively expressing, understanding and meeting social need. In my view, the work of Batley CDP can be used to illustrate the potential, as well as the limitations, of the action-research approach.

What follows, therefore, is a personal evaluation of the Batley experience. Of course, in writing from personal involvement about a Project that failed to survive its intended life span, there is the ever-present danger of indulging in self-justification. However, it is not my intention to disclaim responsibility for events that went wrong. The discussion is intended to be constructive and not acrimonious.

Certainly, the activities of Batley CDP can be interpreted from one point of view as an almost continuous, lengthy and sometimes bitter debate over what should be the aims and function of a community development project. The aims of the national CDP programme were both broad and ambitious, described by Professor Greve as :

little less than reassertions of the fundamental ideals of social policy and democratic politics.⁵

Of course, the practical meaning of these ideals is not self-evident and was to remain open to interpretation throughout the life of the Project, causing tension in relationships both internally and externally to the Project.

A great deal of the disagreement over goals centred on the differing interests and expectations of Project members. Part of this division was between action and research interests. This kind of divergence is already well documented for similar action-research projects. For example, Eric Midwinter has written of an EPA :

Ours was called an action-research project and this was the cue for immediate conflict between actionists and researchers as to which work should be uppermost. There were men of action who resented what they regarded as the cloying, inhibiting attention of pristine researchers. There were men of research who were driven neurotic by the wild abandon of actionists whose ventures they found difficult to circumscribe long enough to measure.⁶

The experience of Batley CDP would suggest that, as well as this differing style of operation, there may also be conflicting self-interest between the role of action and research workers. The social scientist can find stimulation and professional advancement in describing the failure of initiatives in social policy, but to action workers an admission of failure may be taken as disclosing personal inadequacy. However, the difference between the committed social activist and the empirically minded social scientist did not prove to be the most significant value conflict. Conflicts between Project personnel emerged that did not reflect the action-research division. As the Project became drawn into live issues in the local community, conflict emerged over the nature of the CDP and the most appropriate method for bringing about desired change. In a report to the Home Secretary in October 1973, the Batley Project team distinguished different values and interests amongst the staff of nine members to include :

- (i) a 'professional' concern for the plight of the under-privileged and disadvantaged;

- (ii) a distrust of bureaucracy and a concern to help people to help themselves through organisation at local level;
- (iii) a political concern, either to radicalise the existing debate, or to develop new forms of political expression in order to achieve a radical change in society;
- (iv) a policy scientist's concern with the effectiveness of social policy and efforts to improve its quality;
- (v) a political scientist's approach to understanding the nature of the political system and its values, and
- (vi) a more academic sociological interest in assessing and interpreting the impact of change on a local community.⁷

The way that these differing perceptions operated in practice can be illustrated from the welfare rights and advocacy programme, discussed in the previous part (II, 5). The research proposals for this Project proposed that :

Welfare benefits are available to the poor if they apply for them but despite considerable expenditure on a national publicity campaign, it is clear that many eligible families are still not claiming. Very little is known about why people do not claim but three factors are thought to be important causes of non up-take :

- (i) *ignorance of the availability of the benefits or that the individual might qualify for them;*
- (ii) *complexity - difficulties of understanding forms and completing them, which are deterring applicants;*
- (iii) *stigma of having to prove poverty with a test of means.*

Evidence from earlier studies suggests that stigma is a highly complex phenomenon and it appears that it may not be so much an abhorrence of undergoing a means test that deters claimants. but an unwillingness to perceive oneself as poor enough to qualify for the benefit. Thus ignorance and stigma may be closely associated. The hypothesis of this study is that all three factors can be overcome by a local information access and advisory service - ignorance can be tackled by bringing information home to people where they live, work, worship, play and learn. Complexity can be tackled by improving the knowledge of the helping professions and the performance of the departments administering benefits. Stigma can be overcome by urging the entitlement to benefits.

Selective social policies have not been successful to date - can they be made to succeed? This is a key question in social policy and the central question of this research.⁸

It was felt that the results of the action would probably show that some change could be made to take-up rates, but that it would probably also show that even if a special effort were made to encourage people to claim, means tested benefits would remain unacceptable to a significant number of beneficiaries. The objective was essentially to test such propositions and to begin to distinguish the factors that were significant to relative success. This aim required considerable effort at trying to improve the up-take of the various benefits. However, after initial work in the field of rent and rate rebates, the action workers concluded that :

The market research model of the welfare rights campaign is inappropriate to our notion of what CDP is about - although some people who have different ideas of what CDP should be doing may disagree. We consider that welfare rights are most usefully employed as part of the tools of community groups, and that community projects should aim at working with people, not for them. Not only is it impossible to 'sell' a faulty system, it is wrong to try to overcome the obvious faults by sales techniques in an attempt to disguise those faults, particularly in a community project setting.⁹

A lack of internal consensus about what the Project ought to be doing was matched by an even greater diversity of expectations amongst local people, administrators and politicians. The Report to the Minister had described the situation like this :

To some people CDP was intended primarily to redress structural poverty and inequality; to others to 'innovate in the social services' or to provide 'a think tank for the local council' to others to 'stimulate action at the grass roots', either to 'rebuild lost community feeling' or 'to help people to participate' or 'control their own destinies' or 'start the revolution' (or 'to prevent it'); from others we were here 'to improve housing conditions and the environment'; for others 'to supplement the Community Relations Council'; or 'to obtain extra resources for existing agencies' or 'to bring the local educational system into the progressive mainstream'.¹⁰

These different expectations of the Project, both within and external to the team, clearly affected the form that action-research strategies could take. We did broadly agree that the aim of action-research should not simply be to provide a detached assessment over time of some aspect of performance, but that it should also set up a dynamic interaction between the research worker, action workers, local people and officials, as part of an ongoing exploratory process. In line with a widely accepted definition of the action-research approach, our aim was to contribute both to 'the practical concerns of people ... and the goals of social science' by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework.¹¹ But, if by ethical we mean what ought to be done, complete agreement on that aspect of the work continuously seemed to escape our grasp.

It is not difficult to explain why this should have been so. To some extent, it reflected differing views on the current academic debate about the nature and purpose of social research, what John Rex has called 'British sociology's wars of religion'.¹² The competing claims of empiricism, differing theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches were implicit in much of the discussion that took place. Interwoven with these arguments was disagreement about the nature of community work, and its relationship to social change and broad political issues. In these discussions we disagreed about how more resources, better co-ordination of services and more effective connection to community needs could contribute to ameliorating the extent and depth of individual and community problems in Batley. This kind of uncertainty was finding expression in other CDPs and the shifts that occurred at Inter-Project level have been typically characterised as a process of enlightenment whereby

the workers came to reject the assumptions upon which projects were established and to see individual and community problems as inextricably related to the class structure and the exploitive nature of the capitalist economy.¹³

In fact, in Batley CDP there was always some disagreement about what should and could be done. Action-research teams were certainly given idealistic goals, but they were faced with the daunting task of interpreting these ambiguous concepts in narrower operational terms. In the early phase of Batley CDP action-research strategies tended to develop in a piecemeal fashion, much influenced by the individual interests of team members. In the latter phase, a more concerted approach began to look at the problems of employment and housing, whilst the early work either continued or was being 'written up'.

An explanation that points simply to a shift in the 'consciousness' of team members is both mistaken and does not do justice to the varied work that was undertaken. An alternative approach is to analyse the differing action-research strategies in terms of particular assumptions and methodologies. The aim of this exercise is to acknowledge that there were disagreements about action-research strategies and to conceptualise how these were reflected in different pieces of work. The examples are chosen to illustrate these different approaches, to facilitate discussion of their relative effectiveness and to make possible a more realistic overall assessment of the value of action-research programmes. The following approaches suggest how this can be achieved :

1. *Professional survey approach.* This approach is to survey an area, using high-level professional techniques, in order to produce information that will be valuable to political and administrative decision-makers. For example, Barrowclough used a composite index of 'social well-being' based on 1971 census data to examine social differentiation and disadvantage in Kirklees at ward level. The index incorporated six items - tenure, housing amenities, demographic structure, socio-economic status, housing occupancy and immigrant settlement. Within Batley, two of the five wards (42 per cent of the population) - the East and the West wards - stood out as particularly disadvantaged.¹⁴ Batley CDP also conducted a 20% household survey in the East and West wards. The final samples contained 850 households. The questionnaire covered household composition and characteristics (age, occupational class, family size), income and employment, and aspects of living standards in general.¹⁵

2. *Community 'self-survey' approach.* In this approach, local residents are themselves involved in the actual process of studying 'needs' in their area. This involvement is intended to promote more general awareness of issues and to lead to some form of social action. Much of the action-research work in Batley was of this kind, such as the survey administered in association with the Muslim Welfare Society to identify the special needs of immigrants, and the survey of house heating needs on the Howden Clough Estate.

3. *Experimental planning approach.* The outcome sought in this approach to action-research is a set of field-tested proposals that might be relevant for application on a wider scale. For example, the welfare benefits project in Batley aimed to discover whether a locally-based and concerted campaign of education and publicity could increase the take-up of a range of selective social benefits. The research approach included a survey to assess the level of take-up before the campaigns began, a follow-up study to measure the impact of campaigns, some comparison with take-up rates in neighbouring 'control' towns and interviews with people found to be eligible but who still, after the publicity and the campaigns, did not claim the benefit to which they were entitled.

4. *Consumer research approach.* This approach examines the effectiveness of agencies from the point of view of the recipients of services. The most systematic single effort in consumer research in Batley was the survey of

people using ACT (Advice Centre for the Town), but many of the other surveys included some assessment of local services.

5. *Social consultancy approach.* In this approach, the research worker acts as a consultant to help to improve the effectiveness of an aspect of an organisation's activities. The work with the Foxcroft School Project in community education was of this kind and the research contributed to changes in an ongoing educational programme.

6. *Case-study approach.* This approach aims to provide an account of the processes of activities over time and attempts to draw out useful conclusions. Examples from Project work are the study of decision-making in the town centre renewal programme, the study of race relations in the town and the general account of the Project and its final closure.

7. *Political economy approach.* The aim of this approach is to develop an analysis of how structural economic forces combine to bring so-called 'deprived' areas into a situation of industrial and environmental decline. In Batley, the action-research employment study mainly analysed the decline in employment prospects in terms of the town's excessive dependence on the reprocessing of textile 'waste' products and the lack of other industrial investment. Proposals for action to rectify this 'spiral of decline' included the need for an economic monitoring unit for the local economy, community consultation and a comprehensive programme of public intervention.

Whilst there is no inherent contradiction between these approaches, there is a need with limited resources to settle on an order of priority. With hindsight, it seems to me that Batley CDP operated too widely and attempted too much with too little time to make sufficient impact. To some extent, the different strategies undertaken represent the development of changing views within CDP, but such changes tended to work against the need for sustained effort in particular directions. The welfare benefits programme is only the most dramatic example of how intentions changed during the life of the Project. Some of these changes both reflected and stimulated the conflict with the local authority over support for the voluntary advice centre. This ultimately led to the early closure of the Project and the need to abandon other uncompleted action-research work, some of which certainly had the support of the local authority.

Of course, it could be argued that, in view of these difficulties, a more authoritative lead should have been given by the team research leader or by the central research component in the University. One would have expected this to happen in a more conventional academic setting for research, but with CDP action-research the University interests were seldom in control of the situation. This was partly because of the dual management structure built into the CDP programme. The Action Director, leading the local authority side of the team, tended to be given more status and prominence, with over-all authority for both day-to-day work and for planning the overall programme. In the first phase of the Batley Project, the Action Director had scant sympathy for the notion of sustained research effort and there was little effective co-ordination between the local authority team and the University department. Given an 'integrated' action-research team, the Action Director claimed final authority for leadership.

The problem of leadership within a community project is further complicated by the emphasis placed by community workers on the need for equal participation in the decision-making process. Certainly, during the life of the Batley Project the Action Director was at times in conflict with other members of the CDP team and proved unable to control team activities. Both Action Directors resigned, partly because of this kind of frustration. The degree of frustration experienced by all team members, both action and research,

was also reflected in other resignations and the high staff turnover that was evidenced throughout the Project. As new people were recruited, different perspectives were introduced and arguments about aims were rekindled and prolonged.

It was in the 'political economy' approach that the Batley CDP programme most clearly departed from its original brief to examine, co-ordinate and promote participation in the local delivery of social services. A majority of local CDPs, by their last two or three years of operation, had begun to develop an analysis of how structural economic forces were the major determinants of area poverty and the Batley experience was part of this movement. Indeed, Batley CDP co-operated with Birmingham, Newcastle, Newham and North Tyneside CDPs to produce a summary of their combined findings in the economic field, *The Costs of Industrial Change*. This report examined the attempts of various governments to arrest the process of economic decline, mainly through regional policies which have now, in the latest stage of industrial development, been complemented by specifically 'urban' programmes. These latter policies were criticised for their initial assumption that the social problems of inner city areas can be resolved without reference to the local economic context. Ultimately, the report argued :

*the most relevant measures are not to be found in tinkering with labour or housing markets, nor with population dispersal policies, nor in the creation of special development agencies or of regional assemblies - but with measures designed to control the activities of capital.*¹⁶

It has been alleged that this shift in the emphasis of the CDP was largely the result of the infiltration of Marxists and other radicals into the programme.¹⁷ Though CDP was always radical in its professional purpose, it is not the case, despite the angry publications produced during the strike and final stages of the Project, that a particular revolutionary political ideology was dominant in Batley. What is true is that the political economy approach was not aimed at improving service delivery through organisational change or at promoting small community 'self-help' initiatives. This work was explicitly designed to inform and mobilise trade union and community initiatives to come to grips with the determinants of their collective poverty, which lay outside the area which they, as individuals, were able to control. There was a measure of appeal to local authorities in these types of arguments as well, in that the responsibility for failing to confront urban deprivation was no longer squarely placed at their own feet. Although communities would, it was argued, in the long run expect to improve their economic prospects by investigating the internal policies of local companies, the local authority was absolved from (almost all) improbity by the recognition that local problems are caused by structural factors outside the control of existing local agencies. Such research can therefore prove, particularly if not tied to an explicit Marxist purpose, perfectly acceptable to local authorities.

In Batley, what I have called the 'political economy' approach to action-research was pursued alongside other action-research strategies more in line with the original CDP brief to explore local initiatives in tackling aspects of existing deprivation. As has been shown above, these strategies took various forms, but had in common the aim of achieving marginal improvements in the local situation. None of these approaches implied a psychological distinction, perhaps, as between efforts to identify and express local need more effectively, to improve local service delivery - what one might call the aim to promote *micro-structural* changes - and action-research to identify, and ultimately change, major *macro-structural* determinants of a local situation, with a particular emphasis on economic causes.

Any assessment of action-research strategies must finally consider their effectiveness in influencing practical situations. This is clearly more

difficult to do with a *macro-structural* approach aimed at influencing major changes in the long term. However, the political economy approach is not without some immediate practical portent. The economic studies undertaken by CDP teams could to some extent be taken to justify later developments in government anti-poverty programmes. It is interesting to speculate on the extent to which the 'total approach' of the subsequent partnership arrangement with central government and selected local authorities owed a debt to the insights of CDP research on the determinants of local economic performance, rather than to the Inner Area Studies upon which it was explicitly founded. In a similar fashion, this type of research would be taken to justify national policy initiatives as advocated by sections of the Labour Party, to monitor more closely the activities of large industrial enterprises in order (among other things) to make them more accountable for the government subsidies which they are accustomed to receive. Even the proposal for 'enterprise zones', with its emphasis on economic factors, may at least be seen to follow the CDP shift from the pathological perspective, even though it arrives at a 'market economy' solution.

The *micro-structural* approach is more in line with the traditional purpose of action-research to promote organisational or small scale community change.¹⁸ In Batley this approach brought changes in areas such as estate management, school programmes, welfare benefits delivery and the official perception of the needs of ethnic minorities. It can be argued that more would have been achieved with sustained effort over time. Modest innovations of this kind are difficult to promote and require considerable skill to be successful. The final experience of Batley CDP shows how issues can become polarised and how relationships can break down. A closer look at some of the detailed work will also show how some small scale innovations can be achieved.

It should be clear from this discussion that action-research is a complex business that requires careful consideration in relation to specific goals. With broad community action-research programmes, this preparation is often neglected. This had been the case with Batley CDP and the resulting conflict over aims and style of operation had a debilitating effect on performance. Certainly, the various action-research approaches described in this paper may partly overlap in practice, but distinguishing different goals has important implications for sponsorship. CDP has involved central government, local authorities, universities and polytechnics in an often unwieldy partnership. Understanding and expectations of the purpose of the programme have varied and, in some cases, this led to disenchantment. This might have been avoided if greater care had been taken in defining aims and relating these to an appropriate institutional setting. The need for this preparation in an action-research programme is an important lesson to be derived from CDP experience.

As CDP workers have themselves pointed out, local projects are unlikely to eliminate poverty, but a more realistic assessment of goals would have avoided gross misunderstanding about what it was possible to achieve. The purposes and disciplines of action-research in policy analysis are comparatively new in British experience and its value should not be judged only in this way. Much of the approach is alien both to the traditions and methods of administration in British public service and conventional academic research in universities. Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation are necessary to the development of effective local services; but for this to happen, research methods must become much more integrated into administrative practice than has been the case in the past. Such research must also relate to community needs and community groups. Change is more likely to come about if it is related to outside needs and pressure. It is to be hoped therefore that public sponsorship for community action

research programmes will continue, but that efforts will be made to define more precisely their purpose and ensure their operational effectiveness.

Finally, the contribution that CDP economic studies have made to our understanding of the cause of social deprivation should be acknowledged. As Professor Hall has stressed :

*It is essential not to treat symptoms, but to isolate causes. That, surely, is the essential difference between the 1977 analysis of the urban crisis and the previous versions. There is general agreement that the central problem is economic; the rapid decline of the economic base of the inner city. Other evident problems need treatment, too - housing, transport, administration. But they need analysing, above all, in terms of their effect on employment.*¹⁹

In effect, most CDP reports have also emphasised this point which only now seems to be becoming generally accepted. It seems likely that the contribution CDP has made to this development will be remembered more than the experience of individual projects.

NOTES

- 1 A. H. Halsey, 'Government Against Poverty in School and Community', in D. Wedderburn (ed.), *Poverty, Equality and Class Structure*, Cambridge University Press, 1974, pp. 125-139.
- 2 J. Higgins, *The Poverty Business*, Blackwell, 1978, p. 141.
- 3 J. Higgins, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
- 4 K. Jones, *Some Reflections on CDP*, Unpublished Paper, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1978, p. 1.
- 5 J. Greve, 'The British Community Development Project - Some Interim Comments', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1973.
- 6 E. Midwinter, *Priority Education*, Penguin, 1972, p. 46.
- 7 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister*, October 1973, p. 11.
- 8 J. Bradshaw, *Welfare Rights Research Proposal*, Unpublished Paper, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1971, p. 1.
- 9 R. Laver and J. Kenyon, *Welfare Rights Project Interim Report*, Batley CDP, 1974, p. 16.
- 10 Batley CDP, *Report to the Minister*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- 11 P. Clark, *Action Research and Organisational Change*, Harper and Row, 1972, p. 23.

- 12 J. Rex, 'British Sociology's Wars of Religion', *New Society*, 11 May 1978, pp. 295-297.
- 13 P. Corrigan and P. Leonard, *Social Work Practice under Capitalism : A Marxist Approach*, Macmillan, 1978.
- 14 R. Barrowclough, *A Social Atlas of Kirklees*, Department of Geography, Huddersfield Polytechnic, 1974.
- 15 M. McGrath, *Batley East and West*, Papers in Community Studies No. 6, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1976.
- 16 CDP, *The Costs of Industrial Change*, 1977, p. 96.
- 17 J. Gould, *The Attack on Higher Education : Marxist and Radical Penetration*, Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1977.
- 18 C. Sofer, *Organisations in Theory and Practice*, Heinemann, 1972.
- 19 Peter Hall, 'The Inner Cities Dilemma', *New Society*, 3 February, 1977, pp. 223-224.

From many points of view Batley was an example of missed opportunities. It was also a classic case of community work or community development (and for present purposes these terms are interchangeable) being taken beyond the bounds of the possible into some areas in which it could not produce results. There are many aspects of the experience which have a wider significance in all kinds of ways. Among these I look at the background to the Batley Project and my own part in that. It is also appropriate to consider the 'historical' perspective of much of what was produced. Finally, there are many issues about the theory and practice of community work which arise, the ways in which the National Project has been presented and the lessons to be learned from it. With the exception of a paper I gave to an international seminar held in Sweden in 1976, I have made no written contributions to the debates about CDP. What follows is, however, based on strong convictions. Hopefully, it is frank. Any polemical element should be excused on the grounds that the issues are important, and after the passage of time it is necessary to help to correct many mistaken views and interpretations that have circulated in the meantime. It is for the good of community work, and a lot more besides, that a debate should be conducted about the real issues and the real nature of the experience, and not just dismissed out of hand. In reading my personal view I would expect that the reader would bear in mind my place in the structure and those aspects of my background and beliefs that made me less rather than more dispassionate, but that what I have written would not be dismissed for these reasons.

When considering Batley as one of the three CDPs for which the University of York provided the research teams, there is no doubt that it became by far the most difficult of them for a number of reasons. Lewis Corina, Research Director at Oldham CDP, saw on one of his visits to York, among the graffiti, a line which read : 'God is not dead, he has gone to a less difficult project'.¹ He felt the significance of it for Oldham. How much more was it applicable to Batley, and how paradoxical it was - something symbolic about this for CDPs and perhaps community work generally - that he, a visitor, had seen it and gained enlightenment whereas those who passed the wall on which it was written had somehow missed it.

From many logical points of view Batley should have had the best chance of success : it was the nearest Project (just over thirty miles away from the University), and some preliminary work and contacts had gone on there before the Project was set up. I lived through most of the Batley experience at one remove. I was responsible at the University for the three research teams, as one among a number of other duties, which came to be attached to it, the others being in Oldham and Cleator Moor in Cumbria, and I had carried on the negotiations to set them up. Batley was the first Project to be taken on by York as part of CDP and it was an area where I had worked in the past, and of which I had some knowledge. This arose from my experience from the early 1960s in working with members of minority groups from India and Pakistan in West Yorkshire. From early 1968 a number of people connected with the Yorkshire Council for Social Service had considered the possibility of obtaining funding for a project in West Yorkshire designed to develop community work approaches, particularly with regard to migrants from Asia. Batley had been chosen as the most likely place. My working experience there had included visits, analysis of Census data, and interviews with local people, migrants and officers of the council, in particular the Medical

Officer of Health, the Housing Officer and the Divisional Education Officer. Since that time I had continued to collect material about the town in relation to social conditions there.² When CDP began there I had rather more knowledge of the town than others who were to be involved, and I was of the opinion that Batley was most suitable for a project of this kind. I also considered it vital for a project to become involved in effective action early on.³

At York the students who were doing community work, which started in 1967, had worked with groups in the city and elsewhere, often very effectively. It was hoped that this could be extended and developed in Batley as a consequence of CDP, both in terms of relevant enquiries and the collection of data in the early stages and in ongoing action in community work later. It could provide a training ground for community workers and a support for local groups. In fact, neither of these expectations were really fulfilled in any significant sense. Far more was done, for example, with students on the Cumbria Project, although this was much further away. The reasons for this have a lot to do with the ways in which the action team in Batley saw their roles, and the defensiveness which, from a fairly early stage, began to be exhibited.

Moreover the first experience of fact-finding, whereby four people made their own individual assessments of areas in Batley, set a pattern which it was difficult to alter, ie to obtain impressionistic information at the expense of objective data which could have been collected just as easily. Furthermore few students worked in Batley, except on specific research projects such as the Welfare Rights Campaign, or on the collection of information and intelligence of relevance to researchers. These were disappointing outcomes.

In CDP in the early years views were expressed about the weakness of the central structures that were set up at the Home Office, both to co-ordinate research and advise on action. One formulation has suggested that because of the weakness of the central capability, or its lack of direction, the Projects achieved far less than they might otherwise have done. This seems to me to be fallacious in the sense that the Projects were intended to work at a local level and throw up relevant issues which could be looked at in a broader perspective. Confidence in the central capability for Batley was not helped by one report of a visit to Batley appearing in a paper from the Home Office as 'Visit to the West Riding of Lancashire'. Because of the extent to which these advisors were used in only a limited way, and because of the political hassles that rapidly developed, that particular structure was quickly dismantled. Some people used the advisors but it became a matter of choice. This weakened the position at the centre. But some of the teams, from an early stage, wanted a strong central structure ministering to the needs of people with particular interests in 'structural' research which seemed not to take into account the 'softness' of community work anywhere. Many teams tended to reject any idea of evaluation of performance for reasons which have a lot to do with the political stances they took up.

I favoured research of the kind that came to be known as 'structural' but as a part of the programme, not the whole of it. This is set out in a paper I wrote about the setting up of the Central Unit at the University early in 1973.⁴ Having mentioned the strong links we envisaged between Action and Research in the three Projects, I went on :

There are, however, general themes of research where the link with Action is less direct but some of which may be integrated into the scheme of research, either at the local Project level

or on a comparative basis either within the three teams or at national CDP level. Three categories, with a few examples of specific research themes, are :

Social Organisation

Community Structure (including social, economic and political aspects)

Housing

Poverty and deprivation

Social Education

Minority groups.

Policy Evaluation

Take-up of benefits

Distribution of income in relation to social policy

Alternative forms of provision

Social indicators.

Roles in Community Work and Community Development

How the traditional roles (of enabler, expert, catalyst, developer etc.) associated with community work are carried out during the projects. There would also be the opportunity to examine newer kinds of role (eg advocate, organiser etc.) associated with the use of techniques of bargaining and (possibly) confrontation.

Such research and evaluation has considerable implications for practice, for training, and for the demonstration aspects of CDP.⁵

What the new dispensation of the Information and Intelligence Unit (IIU) which came into being to give research support for the Projects did not include was that third category, which was most important, not to say vital.

In late 1972 a Central Unit for research had been set up at the University of York. It was always very small. By then the central capability at the Home Office had lost momentum and influence, which was very unfortunate, largely because a group of workers from some Projects had determined to replace it with their own creation, IIU, which linked with their ideological views. However, although it pre-dated the IIU the Central Unit came to be represented as a rival to it and an earnest of York's desire to go it alone. This was totally wrong. It was a great pity that the scale of the national research originally planned under John Greve never really got off the ground, largely by the use of the tactic that research was a form of social control.

It was desirable to have some co-ordination between the York teams and I expressed this as follows :

The University of York accepted responsibility for the research in three areas on the understanding that each local team would have three members and that a small central unit would be set up at the University. Some of the functions of a central unit have already become clear; others will develop according to the needs which have arisen or will arise from action on the one hand and from decisions to undertake research on themes such as those referred to in the previous section on the other.

It is the case that there is a good deal of overlap between research and action. This will apply to the relationship between the research teams and the central unit. What follows is a list of functions (relating to research and organisation) with which the central unit will be concerned. Its involvement will vary but it is likely to be greater in those aspects concerned with evaluation and the preparation and carrying out of research of more general relevance.⁶

In many of the publications from CDP nationally, and its successors, the attitude towards history is, at best, one which deals in large generalisations. I would subscribe to a similar view of history to that set out by Professor Elton :

The task of history is to understand the past, and if the past is to be understood it must be given full respect in its own right. And unless it is properly understood any use of it in the present must be suspect and can be dangerous.⁷

This was one salutary lesson from the studies of Dr Finnegan and Professor Sigsworth. In Elton's words history :

enlarges the area of individual experience by teaching about human behaviour, about man in relationship to other men, about the interaction of circumstances and conditions in their effect upon individual and social fortunes. Its lessons are not straightforward didactic precepts, either instructions for action or universal norms ...; there is far too much variety about the past, far too much confused singularity about the event, to produce such simple results.⁸

This kind of statement would be anathema to a view of history written solely in terms of 'setting the record straight' and demonstrating the inexorable logic of history.

It is a long time since R. H. Tawney wrote that :

the characteristic virtue of Englishmen is their power of sustained practical activity, and their characteristic vice a reluctance to test the quality that activity by reference to principles. They are incurious as to theory, take fundamentals for granted, and are more interested in the state of the roads than their place on the map.⁹

In the formulations from CDP the Grand Design appeared to become all-important.

In a diagnosis of British society written in the mid-sixties Edward Shils, the American sociologist, referred to the humiliated pride and once repressed resentment which came forward after the diminution of the power of the elite took place with the growth of democracy, the growth of trade union power, and the dissolution of the Empire. In consequence he saw a critical spirit abroad, but unfortunately 'much of it is a nagging criticism and offers only archaic solutions to real problems'.¹⁰ This is the context in which much of the structuralist debate in CDP ought to be set.

Indeed, a series of projects that were to be about action and the opportunity to learn from the forms action took so as to be relevant in other contexts became bogged down on one side in myth and polemic. One looks in vain at the publications for any suggestion that areas have people of different age-groups, that classes are not monolithic, that people actually travel out of their immediate neighbourhood for work, or that satisfactions in life are

not totally involved with political structures. It may be for most of those involved with those most 'ideological' of projects, who are in their own lives rather unattached and transient. The approach is informed by a fundamental fallacy which is that the more significant the issues the more important are the answers. One has to judge answers on their merits, and many of those about CDPs are not strong or relevant. Some stances would seem to rest on the need to find, 'out there', the 'perfect' form of organisation which would get over the main problems of modern society.

Certainly any account of CDP must take into consideration the operational structures devised and the structure of separate action and research teams. Despite initial good will that prevailed in some of the local authorities where the Projects were established, it was perhaps unlikely that any optimum results would emerge simply because of these built-in dysfunctional elements such as the division of authority, and its diffusion into different parts of the structure. As the programme unfolded the organisational structure was used for all kinds of time-wasting, confusing, or purely destructive ends. Perhaps this was one of the most significant weaknesses of CDP. I was never in favour of the structure adopted and anticipated that many difficulties would arise out of its form. But it was not possible to foresee how far even the most pessimistic expectations in this regard could be much exceeded, though they were. For example, any worker could in practice seek protection from the Project as a whole when the official employer wanted to find out what was happening. There was a ready made shield to cover his actions and then present his view in a manner guaranteed to arouse the sympathy of a team united in its attempt to resist 'interference'. It was only a matter of time before garbled versions and rumours filtered through from national levels.

It became commonplace in the heady days of the Workers' Organisation to be rung up or receive letters from people who had nothing to do with the issues and no responsibility for the outcomes who sought to change policies that were 'wrong'. One particular member of a London team, who had a role in the Workers' Organisation, was well known for his telephone calls to chief and senior officers in local government. These were to tell them about the error of their ways and to inform them that they were in the grip of 'false consciousness' for failing to act in the way that he thought necessary. In Batley some of the new Action Team (from 1975) were content to scapegoat and stigmatise one of their colleagues who had reservations about the publication of the document called *The Great Debate*. Some wished to discredit him by exposing his ambition to hold political office. There was no evidence to suggest that his views were determined by political ambitions, but this did not deter his opponents, or make his situation easier. Some of the nicest people were involved in this group totalitarianism.

Those who used these techniques were effectively removing themselves from possibilities of action as these were defined originally in the CDP brief. Several CDPs were concerned with community development and community work only to a marginal extent when compared to the effort invested in the collection of data on the economy and other issues. I am not attempting to suggest that such approaches cannot be used as a basis for organising but the fact remains that in Batley the Project, whatever its protestations and ambitions, never achieved an effective link with working class people, though this was the way the Project purported to operate. One is left with the impression of a Project which failed to understand the means of communicating with working class people, preoccupied with its own opinions and inclined to exclude those of others when they did not fit in with their own.

Performance inside CDP could differ greatly from its presentation. Instead the National Programme as a whole moved to a large scale debate on political and ideological issues which require action but have little to do with the practice of community work. For example advocacy has an important contribution to make in community work, but hardly formed an effective part of work undertaken in Batley with the exception of some work on Welfare Rights. In many respects action could have been much more radical than it was.

One consequence of dismissing research as a form of social control (and therefore undesirable) was that it was considered to be superfluous to any proper evaluation. The only research that could be 'justified' was to promote the cause of the working class. It is a pity that more in the way of action did not arise from this activity. Along with the abandonment of 'research' went the abandonment of any rigorous attempt to document what went on. In the case of Batley this took the form of individual files being taken away or destroyed either because some workers did not want them to be consulted or felt that they were 'their' property. In one particular incident, bearing on the 'protection' of data on action, an action worker, a relatively recent and extreme convert from a bourgeois life style, threatened a member of one of the groups interviewing on a research project with violence if the interviews continued. It was necessary to photostat all the files relating to particular cases in the Batley office and retain a duplicate copy of them in York so that the investigation could be completed. There were similar kinds of difficulties at other times.

At York, as I have said, we had set out our ideas on the relationship between action and research in the first document produced from the University. It accepted the idea that action was determined by the Action Director and team but was not necessarily restricted to those who were in the action team itself. A good deal of overlap in practical issues was envisaged and felt to be desirable, particularly since a number of those who were to undertake research in CDPs had had some community work experience.¹¹ As a team was recruited, and bearing in mind that the initial life span of the Project was three years with a possible extension, the field of available applicants was not particularly strong on experience - more so perhaps on commitment.

Disenchantment with community work has been one consequence of CDPs. It is an activity where small realities and large hopes exist, with the contrast between the paltriness of what is feasible and do-able in the locality and the allure and 'longing-after' what cannot be done. This is probably fairly common in societies where there has been a good deal of community work in recent years. The stated level of commitment of the worker, the expressed radicalism, may hide a lack of realism about situations and a lack of knowledge of the techniques which can lead to change and involvement. There may be a weakness for big questions such as : *What is it all about?* and particularly forms of the question *Who is going to bell the cat?* to the virtual exclusion of *how* things are to be achieved. The characteristics of the first questions are that there are no answers (although much interest, enjoyment, and opportunities for personal commitment may be gained) and of the second that these are absolutely vital to effective community work. Specht mentions, in the article referred to, how the community workers in local authority social service departments in Britain are committed to the idea of participation (and some thought it was the only important objective) but that not one among those he had met had considered the ways of structuring that participation in the decision-making processes.

This is reminiscent of the story told by Saul Alinsky, that most effective American community organiser, about the man who is travelling by car to a destination in the south of the United States. He gets lost and asks a local man the way. Eventually this man, after several attempts to explain,

says : 'If I were you I'd start from some place else'. Should community workers start from the situations they find or are they tempted to start from their own particular vision of the Heavenly City or the millennium? Obviously they have to start from where the people with whom they are working are. The role seems to me to be distinct from a political one : it may be, among other things, to heighten political awareness and strengthen commitment but it is not creating the Revolution, however personally satisfying some would find this. The name of the game is organizing.

A meeting held in York in the Spring of 1975 raised some important issues. Its overt purpose was to consider joint means of making research more effective but its purpose for some was to try and ensure the continued existence of the Information and Intelligence Unit and support for its approach to research, particularly in the later stages of the Project. The Oxford unit called the meeting, to which a representative from each of the originally established Research Teams, and a sponsor from each relevant University or Polytechnic, was to be invited. This would have meant a total of between ten and fifteen people had everyone attended it, given the fact that some Projects had wound up. The danger otherwise was that much wider issues would be raised which had to do with matters which were not unimportant but which needed in our view to be considered after discussion by research staff and sponsors. Agreement was reached about this, but by the time the meeting began it was obvious that a large number of others were there, notably from Newham, North Shields and the Information and Intelligence Unit. Thus, instead of the agenda we had agreed, ie a discussion on comparative studies and evaluation that might be undertaken jointly, the meeting became an attempt to gain support for the Information and Intelligence Unit. My own view was that whatever the IIU was doing (and one could not help but admire the high level of public relations skills that were exhibited in its publications whilst having reservations about the ways in which those publications were written and their content) it had marginal relevance to community work as such.

The meeting, not surprisingly, became acrimonious and at one stage polarised over the issue of official researchers as opposed to other members of the team. The argument led one member of an action team to refer to university sponsors as 'academic elitists serving your political masters'. The Chairman, an eminent scholar and foremost of egalitarians, reacted strongly and in disbelief to this implied criticism. This remark and the ensuing discussion occupied most of the rest of the meeting, and was probably not the least hilarious moment in the whole experience of CDP.

A further point of contention was the attitudes towards the documentation expressed at the meeting by some of those from the 'hard line' and ideological projects. This was the view that any of those who had been involved in the Project should be allowed to write it up in any way. It was also implied that except for the category of certain 'absent friends', people who had short experiences in teams but who presumably could be relied on to come to appropriate views about the Project, access to others should be restricted or even denied.

One main reason which emerged for taking this stance was the reaction among some of those present to the study of CDPs by Professor Harry Specht of the University of California at Berkeley.¹² This is a perceptive study of some important issues arising from CDPs, which does not take at face value the claims about the unanimity of the 'National Strategy'. The deceptive appearance of unanimity appeared to arise from the reluctance of many members of staff, to whom the issues were unimportant or about which they had reservations, to make their objections or doubts known. In a real sense the members of staff who fell in with 'dominant' views, and I consider these relatively passive people in the discussions to be a numerical majority, did

so for reasons which led them to attach more importance to their personal relationships with those expressing such views rather than stand on issues of principle. It was often difficult to have enough knowledge to counter dominant arguments and certainly few had the time necessary to stand against such tides, particularly if they were undertaking a good deal of work. Status, especially the length of time in the Project, and ideological purity appeared strong influences.

My main feeling was that any agreement to a major Report at that time would have placed the initiative firmly in the hands of those who would have produced a report which omitted in any detailed way a discussion of performance. The self-righteousness reminded me of a quotation from Richard Wollheim's book on Freud where he wrote apropos Palestine :

*(it) has never produced anything but religious, sacred frenzies, presumptuous attempts to overcome the outer world of appearance by means of the inner world of wishful thinking.*¹³

It would be tempting to think of Britain as a new Palestine; although the frenzies may be more secular than sacred the intensity of the emotions and the nature of the experience of wishful thinking are unmistakeable.

The IIU publications tended to be characterised by confident generalisations which did much less than justice to the complexity of the issues or the impact of the views of those who were dismissed as 'social pathologists'. Rarely was it acknowledged that there are interpretations which derive from ecological approaches, and those who study local social networks and the spatial perceptions of those who live in neighbourhoods, which are not covered by such a simple structural/pathology distinction. Researchers like Charles Booth in the past who pioneered the systematic study of urban poverty in Britain; and whose atheoretical approach would classify him as a 'pathologist' become much more aware of the relationship between structural features of the economy and poverty as his work progressed. At the beginning of his work he was convinced that the incidence of poverty would be accounted for by 'personal factors', the real issue being not 'poverty' but 'the poor', but his later analysis of the causes and concomitants of their condition :

*led him to consider such structural effects as the distribution of housing and opportunities for employment, especially the latter, and the role of trade unions, industrial organisations, welfare agencies and religious institutions.*¹⁴

Moreover, Booth mapped the incidence of poverty in a series of concentric zones and recognised the value of spatial constructs in indicating those parts of the city where poverty was concentrated. He also mapped the provision, in relation to local needs, of a range of services and institutions, including shops, places of amusement and churches. It would be difficult to recognise the social pathology model represented as being applicable even to Booth, let alone more modern writers.

Effectively, the dichotomy offered by CDP as represented by IIU attempted to show that structural factors are all important and personal factors of no account. An action worker from one of the CDPs has expressed his understandable frustration with the glibness of the formulation in this way :

Whilst accepting the notion of the inequalities in the distribution of power and wealth as being a major causal factor in the presence of deprivation in society, and conversely, rejecting the notion of personal pathology as being the major causal factor, Oldham CDP has not tried to 'sloganise' away reality by issuing its personal quasi-sociological/political/

philosophical treatise on how the world ought to be. This is not to say that Oldham CDP has been conservative or uncritical - it is to say that it has refused to be drawn to the land where Humpty Dumpty is King, Marx has been canonised and people walk around with their feet firmly planted in mid-air.¹⁵

In some of the early conflicts between Projects and Home Office it made sense to push for much greater scope in defining terms of reference than was present in the original remit. But this was carried into unacceptable areas, and those who supported the National Strategy often appeared to be more concerned with the suppression or deflection of other views. In the editorial process that took place with, for example, the *Inter Project Report* of 1974, compiled towards the end of the previous year, the impression conveyed was of omniscience and of a strategy put forward which was 'broadly supported by all twelve Projects'. In one part of his study of CDPs Specht points out, however, that of a particular approach represented as unanimous on the part of the Project Directors, in fact four of them had told him, when he interviewed them, that they were against it. The reason the four were unable to oppose it publicly was presumably because of the strong support of it that the others showed. The reasons had to do with personal relationships. Here again, the coercion of ideological norms can be seen as a powerful and particularly characteristic CDP phenomenon. Those who were geared to practice opted out or gave token support. Thus what was presented is more political rhetoric or editorial tidying-up than a programme.

This does not stop that impression of unanimity from being conveyed, since recent ones are presented as the products of the Inter-Project Editorial Group. The question whether the evidence collected and used as a basis for the change of emphasis (which I take at its face value at the moment) was already available before the Projects began has to be answered largely in the affirmative. Moreover, the IIU have to be examined in detail to discover how many Projects collaborated in the enterprises. For *The Costs of Industrial Change* there were five, and a similar number for *Whatever Happened to Council Housing?* The fact that the majority of Projects did not take part is concealed. For an enterprise with such ambitious plans for comparative studies, rightly regarded with scepticism by some of the Projects initially, relatively little was achieved. Much of the material used has been in existence a long time, and it has been skilfully cobbled together to make the maximum effect with the minimum of effort. It is of significance not as research or analysis, except of an extremely crude type, but as an exploitation of public relations, a 'soft sell' which underwrites in the most judgmental of ways what is wrong with the present system. The attraction of this approach is apparent. The unanimity may be a myth but it does provide for some the opportunity to speak for the people without the dangers of consulting them.

Specht comments about the Action Directors that :

Almost all of them came to their positions with a lack of training and professional experience to carry out the objectives of the CDPs.¹⁶

Equally, many of those working in the Projects were appointed on the basis of hopes rather than realistic expectations, that is on their potential rather than their performance. Of course, if the activity is in effect a political one then the skills required are going to be different from those of the community worker. Good intentions or commitment alone will not be enough. Issues such as the specifications for the job, and the terms of reference, can be crucial and often there may be uncertainty ambivalence about what are acceptable outcomes.

It is surprising that an approach which can be so judgmental with reference to the outside world, and in particular the *status quo*, should avoid this with reference to itself. Little useful self-criticism has taken place and since it is a potentially sensitive and disquieting subject it will be avoided. It is assumed either that those appointed to Projects, and their association in a team, have no relationship to outcomes : that is, that whoever was appointed could do equally well; or that the differences in capacity would have been straightjacketed by the system the workers were forced to operate in. On the contrary, I prefer some emphasis to be placed not just on appropriate organisational forms but on individual capacity :

The working of institutions, as of fortresses, depends ultimately upon the persons who man them; and the best that can be done by way of institutional control is to give a superior chance to those persons (if there are any) who intend to use the institutions for their 'proper' social purpose.¹⁷

That would seem an appropriate epitaph for Batley, but it can be viewed as a message of hope. Less so, perhaps, when some of the chief protagonists are now teaching community and social work students - jobs they would probably have regarded as bourgeois, academic and elitist in innocent, less disenchanted, headier days.

NOTES

- 1 Lewis Corina, CDP : with God - or Satan - on our side?, *Municipal Review*, November 1976.
- 2 See Eric Butterworth (ed.), *Immigrants in West Yorkshire - Social Conditions and the lives of Pakistanis, Indians and West Indians*, Institute of Race Relations Special Series No. 1, 1967.
- 3 This point was stressed in various papers, eg CDP - Outline of Research Programme, Preliminary Research Outline, CDP Batley, and Arrangements between the Action and Research Teams, Batley, all written at the University of York early in 1972.
- 4 *Research in Three CDPs*, paper by Eric Butterworth, April 1973.
- 5 *op. cit.*, p. 2.
- 6 *op. cit.*, p. 2.
- 7 G. R. Elton, *The Practice of History*, Fontana, 1969, p. 66.
- 8 *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- 9 R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society*, Gollanz, 1937, p. 9.
- 10 E. Shils, British Society in P. Hall (ed.), *Labour's New Frontiers*, Andre Deutsch, 1964, pp. 15-16.
- 11 Eric Butterworth, *Arrangements between the Action and Research Teams*, Batley CDP, 3 January 1972.

- 12 Harry Specht, *The National Community Development Project : National and Local Strategies for Improving the Delivery of Services*, National Institute for Social Work Papers No. 2, 1976.
- 13 R. Wollheim, *Freud*, Fontana, Modern Masters, 1972, p. 217.
- 14 See Elizabeth Gittus, *Deprived Areas and Social Planning*, pp. 201-11.
- 15 Neil Shenton, *Deneside - A Council Estate*, Papers in Community Studies, No. 8, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, University of York, 1976, p. 17.
- 16 Harry Specht, *The National Community Development Project*, National Institute, pp. 32-33.
- 17 K. R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963, pp. 133-134.

V CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

In preparing this report we have attempted in each chapter to bring out our assessment and evaluation of the details of the different work attempted and the style of activities undertaken. In this, our final section, we wish to reconsider, in the light of the Batley experience, the more general debate about the nature of community work, what it can achieve and how it should operate.

It is clear from the preceding chapters that there was no single orthodox version of community work within Batley CDP. Even when particular views became dominant and were expressed publicly, there were always individual team members who held different perceptions of the situation and how problems should best be tackled. Whilst such differences can be seen to reflect disagreements held in community work generally, in Batley they also posed the problem of team cohesion and the need for the Project to respond to demands made on it from the environment. In such a situation, if the position between workers becomes polarised, as it did in Batley CDP, performance suffers. Batley CDP is not unique in this experience. The need for some consensus is an important factor to consider, and the absence of it is likely to have a deleterious effect on any community initiative.

This is not to argue for the necessary imposition of any one standpoint on problems to do with either theories or practices relating to community work, but rather to point to the need to maintain at least a *working* consensus within particular organisational settings. If, as can become the case, community workers spend considerable efforts fighting amongst themselves, they are unlikely to relate successfully as a team or even perhaps as individuals to wider constituencies.

One must not minimise the difficulties of achieving a working consensus in this field, a problem that has become exacerbated in recent years. The optimism about community work and the expansion in employment opportunities that have occurred since the publication in 1968 of the first Gulbenkian Report, *Community Work and Social Change*, have tended to give way to increased pessimism and uneasiness about community work strategies.¹ Indeed, CDP national literature may have contributed to such a mood. With its emphasis on the structural causes of poverty and subsequent neglect of community work practice, there has been a tendency to undervalue or even oppose ameliorative work. All efforts must, it is sometimes argued, be explicitly geared to the aim of transforming society and structure. This may well leave the individual community worker bemused on how, or even if, he can effectively contribute to such a goal.

In fact, the 'structural perspective' does not preclude differing views on the way change can occur. For example, as we have seen within the Batley Project, some community workers maintain that significant improvements can be achieved in a local area even if the problems involved had structural roots. Work with resident associations, advice centres, pre-school play-groups, adventure playgrounds, holiday play-schemes, organisations representing ethnic minorities and groups for single parents were always an important part of Project activity and did not necessarily involve an overt politically radical stance.

On the other hand, there were those who maintained that such work could not be done effectively if financed by the state. In their view, all state initiatives have a linear 'social control' function and any community workers so employed, if not deliberately acting subversively, become caught up in such a role.

Some of the national CDP reports, such as *Gilding the Ghetto*, have also argued that the basic dilemma for the state was one of legitimation; how to respond to the needs of capitalism while maintaining the consent of the working class :

With the working class both the source of profit for capitalism and the greatest threat to its existence, the state has to be constantly sensitive to working class demands while at the same time ensuring that any unavoidable concessions interfere as little as possible with the long-term interest of capital.²

However, we believe that it is tautological to claim that state actions are repressive and merely serving the interests of capital or, when they appear less directly repressive, are simply short-term concessions to the power of organised labour. Such a position might be criticised for presenting a picture of the state as a monolithic force in a crude, conspiratorial and ahistorical way - it discusses the 'dilemma' of the state rather than its actual functions.

There is a danger that community work will get bogged down in this 'dilemma' particularly if much of its activities are sponsored directly or indirectly from government funds. Workers who believe that all state activity is oppressive, or necessarily only concerned with the interests of a dominant class, may, if not with conscious intent, move events towards a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' of ultimate confrontation or impotence when operating within state-sponsored community projects. Such a view can also provide a rationalisation for political martyrdom and seek to justify a radical stance that obscures important questions of tactics, individual skills and how issues should be identified and tackled. The Batley experience illustrates how such tendencies may work out in practice.

The 'official' view from government about CDPs has, as one would expect, also rejected the argument that the state is necessarily concerned only with the interests of business or in ensuring social control. Official understanding of CDP has rather been inclined to stress the extent to which the members of CDP teams have created difficulties and not been as effective as they might have been. A corollary to the rejection of CDPs by the government, the body which sponsored them, is the almost universal assumption that these have 'failed'. (This was part and parcel of the explanation offered after the American Anti-Poverty Programme and the more modest Australian Assistance Plan.) Accordingly, community development does not 'work' in the Inner City. It may be that this point of view has some strength, but it is totally misguided as a generalisation, since, for effectiveness, so much depends on the capacities of individual workers and the extent to which they can help to mobilise the 'zeal for betterment' (whatever form it takes) of the inhabitants. To reject community development *in toto* on the evidence of how workers in CDPs may seem to have operated may be tantamount in music to rejecting the claims of Beethoven on the evidence of the performance of his work by an inexperienced amateur or through a faulty recording.

Although there are many weaknesses in the community development approach possible achievements may also be identified. One problem - both in the CDP 'worker' view of the state as oppressive and in the 'official' view of CDP as a failure - concerns the underlying expectation that somehow the issues of disadvantaged areas will be resolved on a once-for-all basis. Against this, we would argue that so far as the issues reflect life they are bound to be piecemeal and fragmented, and the agonising over a 'perfect' setting or solution sets the priorities firmly in a land of ideological make-believe. To a degree some members of Batley CDP shared this search for 'perfection', or the ideal point from which to start, with

other Projects, but they also engaged in community work activities which it has been important both to record and to evaluate.

Our own view is that community workers as public employees, or in government-sponsored projects, do have possibilities for promoting social improvement and social welfare. Of course, this is not to see the state as necessarily benign. We would agree with others that often :

*state provision leaves a bad taste in our mouths. State institutions are often authoritarian, they put us down, tie us up with regulations.*³

But we would argue that it is precisely the role of community workers, amongst others, to work towards democratising institutions, making services more open and more closely related to expressed need. Of course this is a difficult task, but this is precisely why critics are wrong to see this type of community work as a 'soft option'.

There is also an important role for community workers in mobilising support within local communities to begin tackling collectively perceived problems. CDP, in its publications, has tended to emphasise the need for national action to tackle economic decline and largely to underplay what can be achieved by local community initiatives. However, the main thrust of community work will always be in working with community organisations and mobilising their resources. It is primarily in this area that community work must demonstrate its skills and potential. The Batley Project, with its final public emphasis on political conflict, failed to develop this potential and in this sense it indicated the danger of divorcing theory from action and effective local support, including that of the labour movement.

CDP publications have tended to argue that so-called 'anti-poverty' programmes are the product of bourgeois ideology, a set of beliefs and values which act to preserve and legitimate our social system. This approach acknowledges that the state has control over the allocation of some resources, including the kinds of resources that provide for the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force, such as housing, health, education and social services, but that they are operative to preserve and perpetuate the existing social order. To a large extent the typical CDP stance is a response to the inadequacies of social democratic policies that have dominated British politics in the post-war world, but these welfare policies are now being increasingly attacked from the radical right - a challenge that must be taken into account in any current assessment of CDP. For, if the welfare state has been seen as facilitating capitalism by the radical left, it is seen as parasitical on the economic system by the radical right, a burden that undermines incentives (whether directly through high social benefits or indirectly through taxation), weakening the work ethos, discouraging self-help and undermining fundamental institutions such as the family.

Such attacks are not simply a matter of intellectual debate. They are of immediate practical concern. Since May 1979, it has become clear that a radical right-wing government is intent on making major structural changes to the existing system of welfare services. Cuts in many services and benefits are a major assault on the welfare state. As Leonard has pointed out :

*For those on the left, the present situation is particularly poignant. We have been in the past deeply critical of the Welfare State, emphasising its deficiencies, its timid policies and the oppressive nature of much of its ideology and organisation. And now, as it is being restructured, apparently more fundamentally than ever before, we find ourselves defending it!*⁴

Those who regard the welfare state simply as a creature of capital may be relieved to have nothing to do with defending or extending it. At times, this appears to be the stance in some CDP publications. This does afford a useful antidote to those who are blind to the fundamental limitations and inherent contradictions of 'welfare capitalism'. For, contrary to the views of Crosland and others, national CDP publications have shown that the welfare state and the mixed economy do not signify the demise of capitalism or the end of poverty. Nevertheless, the welfare state is partly the product of progressive thinking and struggle. Whilst the negative aspects of welfare policies need exposing and attacking, their positive aspects need defending and extending, a stance that CDP was less inclined to adopt.⁵ Economic depression and monetarist policies informed by free-market ideology are currently forming the basis for a 'welfare backlash'. This development does underline the essentially political nature of social policy, a point often emphasised by CDP literature, but it also points to the need to discriminate between differing aspects of welfare policies and to acknowledge positive achievements.

Whatever the 'political climate' (and it should be remembered that significant welfare cuts began in 1975 under a Labour government) we believe that the community development approach can make a useful contribution to promoting social welfare. In the 1980s there will be a continuing need to monitor and improve local services, to identify local need, to mobilise local voluntary effort and to understand the local situation in a wider economic and social context. In our view, the experience of CDP in general and, despite its negative aspects, the Batley Project in particular, can be re-interpreted to stress the importance of this local work. Batley CDP will then be seen not as a failure, but as it was intended to be, an innovative pilot project from which lessons can be learned for the activity of community work.

NOTES

- 1 Gulbenkian Foundation, *Community Work and Social Change*, Longmans, 1968.
- 2 CDP, *Gilding the Ghetto : The State and the Poverty Experiments*, 1977, p. 42.
- 3 London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, *In and Against the State*, 1979.
- 4 P. Leonard, 'Restructuring the Welfare State', *Marxism Today*, 23, December 1979, p. 7.
- 5 An important exception is *Cutting the Welfare State (Who Profits?)*, a CIS/CDP Report, November 1975, which called for resistance to welfare cuts then being implemented by the Labour government.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE : STAFF IN BATLEY CDP

ACTION TEAM

1 Appointed by Former West Riding County Council

M. Would	Project Director	November 1971-March 1974
P. Edwards	Assistant Director	February 1972-September 1975
K. Ward	Assistant Director	September 1972-July 1974
R. J. Laver	Welfare Benefits Worker	October 1972-July 1974
H. M. Marsh	Administration Officer, Later Third Assistant Director	November 1971-September 1974
J. Kenyon	Welfare Benefits Worker	October 1972-September 1974

2 Appointed by Kirklees Metropolitan District Council

P. Henderson	Project Director	June 1974-October 1975
L. Dominelli	Action Research Worker	February 1975-November 1975
M. Wedgeworth	Action Worker for Employment and Industry	April 1975-April 1977*
D. Mylan	Housing Research Worker	May 1975-May 1977*
I. A. Lambat	Action Research Worker with Immigrants	June 1975-June 1977*
S. Richards	Action Research Worker	June 1975-June 1977*
R. Holmes	Informal Adult Education Worker	July 1975-December 1975

RESEARCH TEAM

R. Lees	Research Director	August 1972-April 1975
M. McGrath	Research Fellow	January 1972-August 1974
J. Fearnley	Research Fellow	February 1972-May 1973
J. P. Waddington	Research Fellow	September 1973-March 1976

*These workers were transferred to the Urban Priority Area Project in November, 1975.

APPENDIX TWO : A CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS IN BATLEY CDP

8 December 1970	Report to West Riding County Council on the establishment of a Community Project.
1 February 1971	West Riding decides to adopt project with Batley as target area.
3 August 1971	First Project Director appointed.
10 January 1972	First Research Fellow appointed.
6 February 1972	Second Research Fellow appointed.
14 February 1972	Assistant Director appointed.
February 1972	Work begins on neighbourhood studies.
25 July 1972	First formal report to West Riding County Council on <i>The First Six Months' Work</i> .
1 August 1972	Research Director appointed.
1 September 1972	Second Assistant Director appointed.
24 October 1972	West Riding County Council discussion on continuation of project after local government re-organisation. Welfare Benefits programme outlined and two appointments made to carry out the scheme.
22 November 1972	Third Assistant Director appointed. First grant to ACT (£267).
January-April 1973	Batley Community Survey. Muslim Welfare Association Survey.
1 March 1973	Second progress report to West Riding County Council.
18 May 1973	Second appointed Research Fellow leaves.
24 May 1973	Third formal report on CDP. Adventure Playground starts.
18 September 1973	Research Fellow appointed.
9 October 1973	£8,000 grant to ACT. Batley CDP <i>Report to the Minister</i> affirming decision to work across the town.
5 February 1974	Kirklees agree to continue Project.
22 February 1974	Resignation of first Project Director accepted. Report on Project work 1972-73. <i>IOR Report on Town Centre</i> .
March 1974	CDP sub-committee set up by Kirklees Metropolitan District Council.
8 April 1974	Second Project Director appointed.
May 1974	Action Research themes devised. Economic studies programme begins. ACT's second major grant deferred. Draft Census Atlas.
June 1974	Interim report on <i>Welfare Rights</i> .
July 1974	Statement by four Community Workers.

August 1974	The Strike. ACW intervenes. Resignation of three workers. Collapse of strike. Deadlock over ACT. First Research Fellow leaves Project.
September 1974	Preliminary investigations prior to setting up of Urban Priority Area Project.
24 September 1974	Kirklees agree to grant of £6,000 to ACT on a <i>more democratic instrument of management</i> .
October 1974	Further meetings on ACT. Correspondence Project Director and Chief Executive Officer on the CDP brief.
30 October 1974	No grant to ACT.
December 1974	<i>Batley at Work</i> produced. Beginnings of Project re-assessment.
January 1975	Articles on <i>Housing in Batley</i> . Further application for grant aid to ACT submitted by CDP. <i>Social Atlas of Kirklees</i>
February 1975	Project re-assessment document approved by Kirklees.
March 1975	ACW notifies Kirklees that all community work jobs in Kirklees are blacked to its members.
2 April 1975	Worker for Employment and Industry appointed.
30 April 1975	Research Director leaves. Report on Welfare Benefits Project.
May 1975	First major report on Urban Priority Area Project. Housing Research Worker appointed.
June 1975	ACT agrees to amend constitution. Second Action Research Worker appointed to work with Immigrants in the UPA area. Third Action Research Worker appointed to UPA. CDP sub-committee recommends grant to ACT. Grant of £200 made to ACT.
July 1975	Project urges CDP sub-committee to reconsider size of grant to ACT.
14 July 1975	Informal Adult Education Worker appointed.
24 July 1975	Public statement from CDP stating that confrontation with local authority was likely.
1 August 1975	Director of CDP undertakes not to release statements critical of council or CDP sub-committee.
September 1975	Resignation of Assistant Project Director. Publication of <i>The Great Debate</i> .
29 September 1975	CDP Director asked to resign.
October 1975	CDP Director tenders resignation.
November 1975	Collapse of CDP. UPA team transferred to Directorate of Administration.

December 1975	CDP sub-committee discontinued. UPA panel set up.
January-March 1976	Study of Elected Members and Decision Making by University of York Central Unit.
September-October 1976	Housing Waiting List Survey undertaken by University of York Central Unit.
June 1977	End of UPA as a result of cutbacks.

APPENDIX THREE : A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHED MATERIAL
ON BATLEY CDP

BOOKS

- G. Smith, P. Topping
and R. Lees 'Participation and CDP' in C. Crouch (ed.)
The Yearbook of Political Sociology, Croom
Helm 1977
- R. Lees 'Research and Community Work' in D. Jones
and M. Mayo (eds.) *Community Work Two*,
Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975
- R. Lees *Research Strategies for Social Welfare*,
British Library of Social Work Series,
Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976
- R. Lees and
G. Smith (eds.) *Action-Research in Community Development*,
Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975

ARTICLES

- J. R. Bradshaw Welfare Rights : An Experimental Approach in
R. Lees and G. Smith (eds.) *Action Research
in Community Development*, Routledge & Kegan
Paul, 1975
- P. Taylor-Gooby Exceptional Need, *New Society*, 7 October,
1976
- P. Taylor-Gooby Publicity for Rent Benefits, *Municipal Journal*,
1974
- P. Taylor-Gooby Rent Benefits and Tenants' Attitudes, *Journal
of Social Policy*, January, 1976
- P. Taylor-Gooby Welfare Rights and Social Work, *Social Work
Today*, 22 July, 1976
- R. Lees Action-Research in Community Development,
Journal of Social Policy, 1973
- R. Lees You and Research : experiencing an experiment,
Social Work Today, 31 December, 1973
- R. Lees Action-Research in Social Policy, *Policy and
Politics*, March, 1975
- R. Lees and
M. McGrath Research and Community Work with Immigrants,
New Community, Spring, 1974
- R. Lees and
M. McGrath Community Work with Immigrants, *British Journal
of Social Work*, Summer, 1974
- M. McGrath For the People by the People - A Resident-Run
Advice Centre, *British Journal of Social Work*,
Spring, 1975

APPENDIX FOUR : BATLEY CDP, A CHECKLIST OF PAPERS AND
PROGRESS REPORTS 1971-75

(All papers presented to the Committee responsible for the Project)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title of Report/Paper</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>West Riding County Council</i>			
25 May 1972	<i>Verbal Report from Project Director on progress made emphasising that 'a high priority had been given to the blending of the work of the Research and Action teams'</i>	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received
25 July 1972	<i>First Formal Report on the first six months, 'Gave an account of the aims and methods in the first phase, the findings of research into the problems of Batley and some indications as to how the action programme would work in the next phase'</i>	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Resolved to receive and release Report
24 October 1972	<i>Consultative Committee : Director outlined the imminent setting up of the Consultative Committee recommended in the first six months report</i>	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received
1 March 1973	<i>Second Progress Report on the Batley Project outlining work of each team member especially work on housing, the adventure playground, immigrants, and the development of advice and information service</i>	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received
	<i>Announcement of Institute of Operational Research Batley Town Centre Study; Panel to be set up including CDP representatives and others</i>	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received and approved for action
	<i>Report on the formation of a Consultative Group as 'the first step' in the move to a greater participation in our democratic structures</i>	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title of Report/Paper</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Result</i>
24 May 1973	Project Director submitted the <i>Third Formal Report on CDP</i> with recommendations for strategy in the coming year, budget estimates, and the 'broad allocation of the Social Action money for the Project'	To WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received
	Project Director outlined scheme for an <i>Advice Centre</i> : 'to offer information, advice, support and training concerning individual problems and broader community issues for those people in Batley who have not previously had easy access to professional or sympathetic advocacy'	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Approval in principle given
24 October 1973	<i>Report on the Project</i> , its brief, accountability and experimental nature. Implications and recommendations submitted	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received
3 December 1973	<i>Report on Batley ACT</i> its management committee, etc.	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received
	<i>Report of the Batley CDP to the HO</i> November 1971-November 1973 submitted	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Received
22 February 1974	<i>Report on Project Work 1972-73</i> (i) Community Development (ii) Welfare Rights (iii) Service Provision Studies (iv) Background Studies	WRCC CDP sub-committee	Report Received and Approved
	<i>Report on Town Centre Study</i> by IOR: 'Community Influence in Town Centre Renewal'	WRCC sub-committee	Received, approved and referred to Kirklees MDC
31 January 1974	Paper on <i>CDP policy and Structure from April 1974</i> plus Report from Chief Executive	Kirklees MDC Policy and Resources Committee	Resolved to support CDP under aegis of Kirklees MDC, to form a sub-committee and to attach Project to the Directorate of Administration

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title of Report/Paper</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>Kirklees Metropolitan District Council</i>			
13 May 1974	<i>Future Programme and Budget Estimates 1974/75</i>	Batley CDP sub-committee	Approved in Principle
	<i>Proposal for Economic Studies Programme</i>	CDP sub-committee	Phase I Approved and Submitted
20 June 1974	<i>Welfare Rights Interim Report Interim Report on the Welfare Rights Programme of previous two years.</i>	CDP sub-committee	Accepted and publication authorised
	<i>Summer Holiday Playschemes: Written Report</i>	CDP sub-committee	Recommendations approved and £300 granted for financing two schemes in Carlinghow and Central
	<i>Draft Census Atlas</i>	CDP sub-committee	Report and its Recommendations referred to Management Team
11 July 1974	<i>Census Atlas: Upon the recommendation of the Project Director Plans made to release results</i>	CDP sub-committee	Resolved to make the Census Atlas available for public distribution.
16 September 1974	<i>Written Report on ACT by Lees and McGrath</i>	CDP sub-committee	Discussion of ACT, its management structure and proposed grant. Resolved that there be a further meeting with ACT
	<i>Future Development of the Project A written report on the future of the Project discussing</i> (i) National Issues (ii) Response of CDPs (iii) Local Situation (iv) Feedback (Paper concentrated on ACT negotiations)	CDP sub-committee	Resolved to prepare Press statement upon future development of the Project
	<i>Priority Area Project Written Report by Project Director</i>	CDP sub-committee	To be received and used as a discussion document

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title of Report/Paper</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Result</i>
21 October 1974	<p>Report on the <i>Progress of the Programme of Economic Studies</i></p> <p>(i) Implications for Project Strategy</p> <p>(ii) Sub-Committee's handling of Reports</p> <p>(iii) Appointment of Action Worker</p>	CDP sub-committee	Report received. Appointment of Action Worker approved
	<p><i>Representation of Community Group at Sub-Committee Meetings</i> : Project Director argued that two members of discussed group be present when matters relating to their sphere of activity were discussed</p>	CDP sub-committee	Report approved and Director given the authorisation to arrange for group representation and to report further upon scheme at a later meeting
28 November 1974	<p><i>Study Report - Batley At Work</i></p>	CDP sub-committee	Report received and an informal seminar set up
	<p><i>Fieldhead Playgroup Report</i> by Director on this CDP-supported Playgroup</p>	CDP sub-committee	Grant of £450 made
	<p><i>Project Reassessment Report</i> on the need for reassessment of the Project's beliefs and aims, followed by a Home Office Paper : <i>CDP, a General Outline</i></p>	CDP sub-committee	Report noted
6 January 1975	<p><i>Batley At Work Report</i> on the paper's distribution and the reluctance of the Department of Employment to release up-to-date information</p>	CDP sub-committee	No action on information
	<p><i>Housing - The Development of Public Housing Policy in Batley</i> Project Director submitted above report as 'a starting point and a context for the development of the Project's work on housing'</p>	CDP sub-committee	Consideration deferred
	<p><i>Project Minibus Report</i> on its use</p>	CDP sub-committee	Warnings given against misuse

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title of Report/Paper</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Result</i>
27 February 1975	<i>A Written Report on Project Reassessment Outlined National CDP ten basic principles essential to CDP, policy on grants etc.</i>	CDP sub-committee	Resolved - 'That the basic principles, fundamental to Community Development Projects, as outlined in the report be accepted, and the policy for dealing with grant applications, also as outlined in the report, be approved and adopted'.
	<i>Project Planning Document 1975-76 Submitted for information</i>	CDP sub-committee	To be forwarded to Home Office
	<i>CDP Management Review Written report on the Management Review, and its proposed changes submitted by Director</i>	CDP sub-committee	Review Received and the team's comments not the views of the local authority.
	<i>Project Work and Radio Leeds Written Report from Project Director on Radio Leeds' interest in producing four programmes on Batley</i>	CDP sub-committee	Project Director's recommendations on organisation approved, instructed to liaise with Council's Public Relations Officer
	<i>Political Processes Written Report from R. Lees on interviews with nine Batley representatives</i>	CDP sub-committee	Noted
	<i>Batley - Social History University of York to prepare a Social History of Batley from 1850 to date.</i>	CDP sub-committee	Most suitable way of making document available to the public to be discussed with Public Relations Officer.
	<i>Adult Education Project Director submitted a Report on Adult Education and the need for an Adult Education Worker</i>	CDP sub-committee	Appointment approved

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title of Report/Paper</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Result</i>
24 April 1975	<i>Welfare Benefits Project</i> Project Director reported on Lees and Bradshaw's recommendations arising from the Welfare Benefits Project, recommending more detailed administration of rent and rate rebates, and a review of the administration of all benefits with a view to introducing an integrated system	CDP sub-committee	Report received and 'accepted in principle that the above matters be examined, subject to a further report thereon'.
	<i>Community Lawyer Project</i> Director submitted a Report on the needs for work for, and precedents established in other areas for the employment of a community lawyer	CDP sub-committee	Approved in principle, further information required
	<i>Urban Priority Area Project</i> Report on work, recruitment and recommendations	CDP sub-committee	Agreed in principle, further report asked for
	<i>Co-options to Sub-Committee</i> Project Director reported on Co-options to Committee to help the Sub-Committee's report	CDP sub-committee	Recommendations approved
	<hr/>		
22 May 1975	<i>Research Team</i> Director reported on the Research Team and its organisational arrangements and commitments. Urged Council to express its concern at the present unclear situation on the future of CDPs	CDP sub-committee	Report received and recommendations approved and adopted
	<i>Employment A</i> report on the contacts made	CDP sub-committee	Received
<hr/>			
6 June 1975	<i>The Councillor and Corporate Management</i> Project Director's Report on Corporate Management and the politics of Urban problems	CDP sub-committee	Received and to be discussed at a further meeting
<hr/>			
25 September 1975	<i>Use of Social Action Money</i> Report from Project Director	CDP sub-committee	Noted

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title of Report/Paper</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Result</i>
	<i>Community Development Project in Action The Great Debate</i>	CDP sub-committee	Meeting to be held on 29 September 1975 to discuss matter. Publication considered a breach of confidence.
29 September 1975	<i>The Great Debate Disciplinary options to be taken against Project Director reviewed</i>	CDP sub-committee	Project Director invited to tender resignation
3 October 1975	<i>The Great Debate Project Director's Resignation accepted</i> <i>Future Management of Project Officers to investigate best means of managing Project</i>	Policy and Resources Committee	Accepted
14 October 1975	<i>Future Management of Project position of team members and conditions of Service discussed</i> <i>Paper from Chief Executive a Revised structural arrangement</i>	Policy and Resources Committee	Approved
22 October 1975	<i>Project Team Progress Report. Reports on Housing, Adult Education, Industry and Employment. Team members remark on difficulty of operating as a team, owing to lack of director and research workers</i>	Policy and Resources Committee	Noted
28 November 1975	<i>Future Arrangements for Urban Priority Area Team Agreed</i>	CDP sub-committee	Approved
3 December 1975	<i>Future of CDP Sub-Committee</i>	CDP sub-committee	To be discontinued and panel set up to deal with all matters relating to the Urban Priority Area Project

APPENDIX FIVE : BATLEY CDP, A CHECKLIST OF PAPERS AND REPORTS FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AND ELECTED MEMBERS CONCERNING THE WORK OF THE PROJECT AND ITS ORGANISATION 1970-75

<i>Date</i>	<i>Report and Author</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>West Riding County Council</i>			
1 February 1971	Clerk and Education Officer. Paper on promoting <i>Community Development</i> , and enquiry into the effective- ness of the Social Services 'in broadest sense'. Paper prepared ground for decision to locate Project in Batley	WRCC CDP sub- committee	In accordance with this memorandum resolved that : 'approval be given to the establishment of a Community Develop- ment Project'
25 May 1972	<i>Staff Establishment</i> Education Officer reported that the administrative work of the Project required a full-time appointment	WRCC CDP sub- committee	Agreed that a recommendation be sent to Finance Committee to increase staff accordingly
	<i>Review of Progress</i> Education Officer reviewed background. Project Director outlined progress so far	WRCC CDP sub- committee	Received
	<i>Children's Home</i> Director of Social Services wished to co-ordinate the demands for a Children's Home with those of CDP	WRCC CDP sub- committee	Received
24 October 1972	Clerk reported on the <i>Continuation of Project</i> <i>after Reorganisation</i> He reported that the Joint Consultative Committee had resolved that the Project be continued under the District Council after Reorganisation	WRCC CDP sub- committee	Received
	Education Officer advocated that Batley Borough Council have local representation on the sub-committee		Resolved that Batley Borough Council be asked to appoint a representative to serve on the sub- committee
9 October 1972	<i>Proposed Advice Centre for</i> <i>the Town</i> Report from Director of Social Services	WRCC CDP sub- committee	Considered

<i>Date</i>	<i>Report and Author</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>Kirklees Metropolitan District Council</i>			
31 January 1974	Report and discussion paper on <i>Batley CDP</i> by Chief Executive, Kirklees MDC	Policy and Resources Committee	Resolved to support a CDP and for administration and communication purposes regard the Project as attached to the Directorate of Administration
29 March 1974	Report of Director of Administration on the setting up of a <i>Community Development Project sub-committee</i> Report on the size of the Committee. Suggested that terms of reference be expanded and defined with the assistance of the new Project Director	Policy and Resources Committee	Report received
13 May 1974	<i>Advice Centre</i> Chief Executive reported on the background to the above, its demand for a £12,500 grant, and CDP's report recommending £8,500	Batley CDP sub-committee	Consideration deferred pending further reports and audit
20 June 1974	<i>Financial Arrangements</i> Report by Director of Finance on arrangements and safeguards	Batley CDP sub-committee	Approved
15 July 1974	<i>Advice Centre for Town</i> Report from Director of Administration on the proposed grant, negotiations, and council representation on ACT's management team : date fixed for meeting <i>Relationship of Sub-Committee to Policy and Resources Committee</i> Report from Director of Administration stating that Project staff wished to attend sub-committee meetings, that members of sub-committee be able to form working groups on certain issues, that subject to budgetary approval by Policy and Resources and Council, the sub-committee be given full delegated powers	Batley CDP sub-committee	Received Resolved that Project Staff attend meetings to speak on their work, that working groups be formed and that Policy and Resources Committee be requested to grant the CDP sub-committee full delegated powers

Date	Report and Author	Committee	Result
Friday 19 July 1974	Chairman reported that negotiations with ACT had proved abortive	Policy and Resources Committee	Report received
Thursday 27 February 1975	<i>Communication of Project Work</i> Director of Administration reported on the Public Relations Officers wish to liaise with CDP in view of the imminent Radio Leeds programmes on Batley	CDP sub-committee	Resolved Project Director and Public Relations Officer liaise accordingly
	<i>J. Kenyon Industrial Tribunal</i> Director reported on the results of Appeals Tribunal	CDP sub-committee	Resolved not to re-engage Mr. Kenyon
24 April 1975	<i>Report on Management Review</i> by Director of Administration stated that Council had been asked to submit its observations	CDP sub-committee	Report received. Home Office to be made aware of Council's specific observations upon the management proposals
22 May 1975	<i>Welfare Benefits Project</i> Report of the Director of Administration indicating that management team had agreed to the setting up of a group of officers to pursue the above mentioned Project	CDP sub-committee	Report approved
4 June 1975	Negotiations with ACT. Report by Chief Executive on alterations to its constitution	CDP sub-committee and Special Sub-Committee	Since ACT's constitution was to be changed it was recommended that the sub-committee make a grant to ACT. Approved
29 September 1975	<i>The Great Debate - Report of Director of Administration</i> Report on the general situation; and setting out the various disciplinary options open to the sub-committee	CDP sub-committee	Considered, and Project Director accused of gross misconduct
3 October	Report by Chief Executive on <i>Future Management of Project</i>	CDP sub-committee	Resolved that Officers investigate best means of managing the Project for the future

<i>Date</i>	<i>Report and Author</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Result</i>
14 October 1975	<i>Report from Chief Executive (written) Report from Director of Administration on meetings with Project team to discuss the future of the Project</i>	CDP sub-committee	Revised structural and managerial arrangements 'agreed in principle and implemented forthwith'
23 October 1975	<i>Formation of Officers Steering Committee Report of Chief Executive on setting up of above</i>	CDP sub-committee	Report noted
17 November 1975	<i>Future of Project Chief Executive reported on his meetings with the Project team from 14 October onwards to discuss future management. From these meetings he felt that 'the Project had collapsed in its present form because of irreconcilable difficulties regarding the future'</i>	CDP sub-committee	Resolved that : 'the Community Development be discontinued in its present form'. Arrangements to be made for Urban Priority Area work 'to be continued on an individual basis under the general direction of the appropriate Directorates of the Council'
28 November 1975	<i>Future of Project</i> (i) Director of Administration reported that the Employment and Industry worker be attached to the staff of the Chief Executive (ii) Director of Administration reported on the Urban Priority Area Project, that its work be continued and attached to his Directorate (iii) Adult Education Worker	CDP sub-committee	Approved. Recommendations approved. Council recommended to acknowledge its commitment 'and that such a commitment may require discrimination in terms of resources in favour of the area' No firm result - more discussion required
8 December 1975	Director reported on premises for Urban Priority Area Team	CDP sub-committee Special Sub-Committee	No permanent building, caravans to be used if no suitable accommodation found

After December 1975 the CDP sub-committee was discontinued. Any work continued in the Urban Priority Area, and discussion of policy is to be found in the papers to, and minutes of, the Urban Priority Area Panel.

APPENDIX SIX : SELECTED REFERENCES FROM THE PRESS ON
BATLEY CDP 1972-76

1 NATIONAL

The Guardian

- 8 February 1972 - Guardian Extra, Batley CDP
- 6 November 1975 - Another Community Project
Member Resigns
- 18 November 1975 - Team Loses Autonomy
- 6 December 1975 - Council Discusses Community
Worker

2 REGIONAL AND LOCAL

Yorkshire Evening Post

- 21 August 1975 - Social Workers Resign
- 8 May 1975 - MP Asks *Is it Worth it?*
- 24 May 1975 - Free Lawyer Scheme
- 22 August 1975 - ACT in Difficulties
- 7 October 1975 - Sacking Leads to Protest
- 8 October 1975 - Socialist Quits over last straw
- 27 December 1975 - Status Quo
- 6 January 1976 - Death of the People's Project

Huddersfield Examiner

- 4 October 1975 - Director Resigns
- 6 October 1975 - Balance of Power Shift in
Kirklees
- 20 October 1975 - Kirklees Axe Over Batley CDP
- 17 November 1975 - The End of the Road for Batley CDP
- 18 November 1975 - Destruction planned for weeks
- 13 December 1975 - Growing Anger at Sacking
- 17 January 1976 - Batley MP in Storm over CDP

Batley News

- 13 June 1974 - Attack on Open Cheque for ACT
- 4 July 1974 - ACT Grant - Half Figure Sought
- 4 July 1974 - £1,000 per week MPs Told
- 15 August 1974 - Kirklees Attack on ACT Staff
- 29 August 1974 - Close CDP Now
- 19 September 1974 - County Council No to Grant
- 26 September 1974 - CDP Office Blacked
- 3 October 1974 - Grant up to £6,000 if Constitution
changed

31 October 1974	-	ACT Irresponsible say Kirklees : Grant Refused
12 December 1974	-	Batley on Dole
12 December 1974	-	The Batley Problem
26 December 1974	-	Citizens' Advice Bureau to Re-open
9 January 1975	-	Sir Alfred hits out
30 January 1975	-	Gas Chamber Remark in Squatting Case
10 April 1975	-	Why ACT Remains on its own
15 May 1975	-	Is CDP Worth It?
8 June 1975	-	Free Lawyer Scheme Approved
3 July 1975	-	Why a Councillor Walked Out
10 July 1975	-	Fellowes Out
18 August 1975	-	ACT Encouraging Homeless
21 August 1975	-	Vital Questions about CDP developments
9 September 1975	-	Resignation may be end of CDP
30 October 1975	-	Steering Committee for CDP
13 November 1975	-	CDP is dead Council Told
4 December 1975	-	Agreements with CDP will be honoured
31 December 1975	-	Grant from CDP saves Centre fund
11 December 1975	-	Immigrants the Real Losers

APPENDIX SEVEN : GRANTS AND RECIPIENTS

General arrangements observed in the decision to make Social Action money available were that the Action Director could administer resources up to £100 independently, that sums of £100 to £200 had to be agreed to by the Batley CDP sub-committee Chairman, and that sums of over £200 had to be agreed to by the Committee responsible for the Project. When the Project operated under the WRCC it appears that the Action Director had greater freedom.

The list below illustrates the range both of the size of grants and of the activities supported from funds available for Social Action. No fully comprehensive list has survived.

DECEMBER 1971 TO FEBRUARY 1974

Major Grants

	£
Advice Centre for the Town (October 1973)	8,430. 00
Batley Adventure Playground Association (March 1973)	6,000. 00
Batley and Birstall Boys Club	1,000. 00
Mentally Handicapped Society	1,000. 00
Fieldhead Playgroup	900. 00

Small Grants

Fieldhead Advice Centre	450. 00
Fieldhead Playscheme	436. 00
Howden Clough Community Association	200. 00
Claimants Union	200. 00
Healey Community Association	180. 00
Foxcroft School Project	100. 00
Housing Association (Unidentified)	70. 00
Mount Pleasant Residents' Association	63. 00
Field Lane Mothers' Group	60. 00
Civic Society	45. 00
Staincliffe Residents' Association	22. 00
Batley Old People's Welfare Committee	20. 00
Wilton Tenants' Association	5. 00

Playgroups

St. Thomas's	50. 00
Purlwell	50. 00
Howden Clough	50. 00
Birstall	30. 00
Soothill	15. 00

AFTER FEBRUARY 1974

Central Batley/Carlinghow		
Summer Playscheme	June 1974	200. 00
Fieldhead Playgroup	November 1974	450. 00
Advice Centre for Town	July 1975	200. 00
Children's Centre Group	December 1975	5,500. 00
Fieldhead Playgroup	December 1975	450. 00

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