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Nottingham Voice

IN A RECENT DISPLAY of police violence against black people in Nottingham a 54 year old West Indian man was handcuffed to a fence opposite his home and five other black people were arrested, most of them charged with assaulting police officers.

We cannot give any details relating to these charges. But we can give details of the way the police handled the affair and the way they went about arresting people.

The trouble started in Tennyson Street on 4th July when a window was broken by a cricket bat while about a dozen black teenagers were playing cricket. No-one has been charged in connection with the broken window.

A white woman living on Tennyson Street will be lodging a complaint against the police. Her statement says:

"As a white person living in a black community I am bound to protest against the police brutality against young black boys. In one such case I was witnessing a policeman doing his job investigating an incident where a window was smashed.

"I was shocked to see instead of the policeman asking who had broken the window he immediately approached a boy who he knew and accused him. When the boy replied and told him it was not him and before the real culprit could own up the policeman pulled and ripped the first black boy's jumper and told him to get into the car. On this the black boy got upset and pushed away the officer.

"The policeman sent for reinforcements. Then the boy's father came over and asked his son if it was him that had broken the window. The son replied 'no' so the father sent him home. Then the father turned to explain to the police officer. But the police officer completely ignored the father and went after the boy.

"The reinforcements arrived and before much longer a scuffle had broken out

started by the police. Children, elderly people and women were hurt during this fight including myself. I received a bruise on the back of my calf after picking a two year old boy up from the middle of this scuffle. This was done by a police sergeant.

"I would like to state that the whole affair was avoidable if the police had acted in a proper manner. The result in this matter was that a group of six people was arrested. And may I also add that none of these was responsible for smashing the window." - C.E. Smith (Miss).

The "scuffle" started when the boy, 18 year old Peter Shand, and his father returned to their home in Larkdale Street. Three policemen followed them into the garden and grabbed Peter. He was forced to the ground and handcuffed. Mr Shand was dragged over the road and handcuffed to the fence around Windley school.

By this time there were a large number of black children and teenagers on the street, many shouting at the police. Peter's 16 year old brother and a 15 year friend were arrested accused of assaulting police officers. And a 56 year old man - Peter's godfather - was arrested and charged with using "threatening, abusive, and insulting words" which may have caused a "breach of the peace".

An 18 year old boy from Cinderhill was overpowered by police and charged with "maliciously wounding" a police officer "with intent to cause grievous bodily harm". He and Peter were remanded to Lincoln for a week

but are now out on bail and curfewed to be in their houses from 9pm to 6am each night. All six cases come up on 26th July but at least three are likely to be committed to the Crown Court.

Mrs Marquis, mother of the 15 year old arrested, told the Voice that she was coming from the shop and found Tennyson Street "blocked with about twelve police cars and there was a black maria outside my house". Her immediate thought was that someone may have been run over so she rushed round to see. She heard Peter shouting and saw "about eight policemen on him. Two had grabbed him by the hair, one was holding a handcuff to his neck, and one was kicking and punching him".

After Peter and his father were handcuffed Mrs Marquis said that Peter's brother came out of the house without a shirt or shoes on... "One policeman thumped Michael while two more held him and put on the handcuffs" ... "A policeman grabbed my son by the hair, pulled him to the floor, and kicked him while three more held him on the floor. I lay down over him and said 'that's my son, don't kick him, kick me first'. One punched me in the side. My daughter screamed 'don't hit my mum again'. A policewoman came and held her hand while a policeman tried to put handcuffs on". But she escaped.

On the following day the Evening Post quoted Chief Superintendent Alf Bowley as objecting to the way West Indians have a "disturbing habit of banding to-

gether to support one another".

After the incident the police were treating the area as a no-go area with at least one reported break-in going uninvestigated.

This incident follows a number of cases where police have been called to help evict young black people from the Victoria Centre which have caused a number of arrests and a lot of bad feeling between these people and the police. Many young people, a lot of them unemployed, congregate in the Victoria Centre because they have nowhere else to go. The security guards with their alsation dogs have been accused of having a racist policy of hounding blacks out of the Centre while leaving young white people alone.

But not all black people are totally suspicious of the police yet. Mr Shand told us he thought young policemen couldn't be being trained properly. He said an older policeman would have been able to sort out the problem over the window without all the trouble that was caused.

Mrs Marquis has a different attitude now. She asked the police whether they wanted to make it like Northern Ireland. And she told them that as a woman she wasn't going to stand by and watch a policeman harm her children without any reason.

Black people in Nottingham are going to be much more suspicious of white people as a result of this incident, and particularly suspicious of the police with their big boots and little brains.

Paul Chambers, an ex-policeman who is a community

teacher at Windley school, would like to see police based in the community. And that would be a better way of solving such problems than sending in the cowboys in their panda cars.

But that isn't going to solve the problems which black people face. It would help if our society could promise a secure future for young black people.

That means, amongst other things, getting rid of the policy of mass unemployment for school leavers as well as providing decent leisure facilities. And it means putting an end to the racist policies of many employers which help to produce a "dual labour market, one for blacks and one for whites" as the local Senior Community Relations Officer put it recently.

To give one example: at Raleigh, one of the largest local employers, upto half of the production workers are black whereas only a small percentage of craftsmen are black and virtually none of the clerical staff.

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EMERGENCY social services cover is threatened from August.

Senior Social Workers in the city issued an ultimatum earlier this month to the management stating their intention to withdraw completely from out-of-office hours emergency work as from 1st August.

This is because of delays in setting up a new emergency cover scheme due to start on that date. None of the special duty workers needed to provide partial cover at nights and weekends are

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likely to be appointed by then. The problem is that no payment for unsocial hours is included in the budget for this half-baked scheme so applications have been few and far between.

The present service is entirely run by a rota of social workers who work during the day. They are paid £4.70 to be on call at home from 5pm to 8.30am the following morning (this is about 15p per hour after deductions).

Not surprisingly many social workers object to working all night as well as all day. And Nottinghamshire is dragging its feet - many other authorities already have additional workers to cover all out-of-office hours emergency work.

At a meeting on 13th July about three-quarters of the social workers who have to work at nights and weekends attended and decided to follow the Seniors' lead. They agreed they would no longer work at the weekends after August 1st and would not do night work during the week unless suitable senior staff were available for liaison work.

Collapse of the emergency service will cause extra hardship for many people and extra work for the police who will be forced to deal with homeless people, psychiatric cases, and emergency referrals to old people's homes and children's homes.

But as we go to press we hear that the management is attempting to buy off the Seniors by offering them £2.27 per hour to do liaison work overnight on a voluntary basis. This offer

does not of course apply to ordinary social workers who presumably will have to carry on working for peanuts.

The solidarity of all social work staff involved will be severely tested. And since their union NALGO is so incompetent that it couldn't even organise a meeting on the issue they can't expect any support from them.



AS WE GO TO PRESS we have just been presented with the long-awaited City Council report on the Tory promise to bring forward the clearance programme.

And Chief Executive Michael Hammond must have been ashamed to put his name to it. It has taken two months to be hacked around by the liars and cheats in the Tory group led by Jack Green.

Hammond was told to present a report on bringing forward 1,032 families to this year and 1,409 to next. He "forgets" to mention these figures and completely avoids any analysis of how these numbers can be brought forward. That is because the numbers are impossible to reach (see Voice 66) but the Tory liars do not wish this to be made public.

Hammond is a charlatan who does not have the backbone to stand up to the two-bit hustlers who are running this city. He should resign.

GRUNWICK - meeting to discuss further action, 7.30, Wed 20th July, Queens Walk Community Centre, The Meadows.

NOTTINGHAM is no exception when it comes to the inhuman treatment of homeless people.

The People's Centre, Nottingham's independent advice centre, has recently dealt with three cases where the various statutory bodies have refused to help families and have resorted to the Poor Law expedient of hounding them out of their parish. All were families with children and all had become homeless as a result of attempts to get out of an impossible situation.

The first family comprised a couple and four children. Since the father retired and lost the tied house which went with his job they had lived a life of constant upheaval moving around friends and relatives and various temporary homes. When they came to Nottingham they had just moved out of a caravan loaned to them temporarily.

Since they were not Nottingham people the city's Homeless Families Unit refused to help them. At the Social Services Department they made the mistake of mentioning they had friends in Scotland and were told to get a travel warrant from DHSS and pay them a visit. DHSS refused a warrant on the grounds that they had cash available (the man had cashed his pension the day before). After the tickets were bought DHSS refused to make a payment for subsistence over the weekend saying they were not prepared to finance trips around the country.

The second family, a couple and four children, came from

Darlington to escape chronic unemployment. They found bed and breakfast accommodation but DHSS stopped their benefit after one payment saying that as they had a house in Darlington they would only be paid when they returned. Clearly the unemployed must be discouraged from making attempts to escape their predicament. After the family was thrown out a welfare officer from Rushcliffe's Housing Department put them up for one night but refused any further help after they refused a travel warrant back to Darlington.

The third family consisted of a mother and children who came to escape from the father in Liverpool. After spending one night on the streets they were, of course, refused help by the Homeless Families Unit. Social Services could only suggest one bed and breakfast address which could not take them. The People's Centre provided other addresses which were also unsuccessful partly because of problems with guaranteeing Social Security payments as in the Darlington case. Finally the family went to Nottingham Women's Aid who had to find somewhere for them outside the city.

It is obvious that this kind of thing can only be avoided if councils will take responsibility for all homeless people no matter where they come from.

So long as people are trapped in impossible circumstances by the shortage of decent accessible housing they will be forced into dependence on short term crisis

intervention by local authorities and other bodies. The least that can be done is to ensure that this intervention is effective.



TORY SUCCESS in the May elections promised drastic changes in the organisation of the County Council Social Services Department. Two Tory proposals excited considerable concern and alarm amongst social work staff.

Firstly, they said "We shall withdraw resources from the work done by the community social workers", which most people interpreted as meaning the abolition of community workers in the Department. This threat was dropped immediately the Tories came to power thanks partly to some frantic wooing of the incoming Social Services chairperson Brenda Borrett by the new American community work adviser Al Kestenbaum.

Secondly, the Tories proposed completely restructuring the Department into three specialist departments dealing with the elderly, the young and the handicapped, thus returning to a situation which existed before the Department was unified in 1970. Again the Tories failed to translate breast-beating manifesto pledges into action (much to the relief of most people in the Department). Instead they have just formed three sub-committees to deal with the separate areas.

The Tories have also failed

to act on their promises to prune the absurdly long hierarchy. "Too many chiefs and not enough indians" is an old criticism of the SS bureaucracy which is truer today than it has ever been. Borrett told the Voice that she intended to move some of the middle management out of County Hall into the area offices. And the Tory manifesto promised to cut the power of Divisional Directors like Norman Caudell who is in charge of the six area offices in the city. But, surprise, surprise, nothing has happened.

Tory motives here were no doubt geared to aiding the cause of financial cutbacks rather than any genuine interest in democracy within the Department or the transfer of power to disenchanted grass-roots employees. In the unlikely event of the somnolent Tories actually chopping middle management any transfer of power is likely to be upwards.

The national magazine "Community Care" asked Borrett how she explained the climb-down and she confessed: "I freely admit that I allowed myself poetic overstatement. But if you don't overstate at the beginning, you don't get people to read the rest of (the manifesto)".



IT IS IN THE NATIONAL interest to keep building workers working rather than unemployed. This amazing piece of economic insight comes from a County Council report presented to the last Education Committee.

Ray O'Brien, the Chief Exec-

utive, has worked out that the cost to the State of keeping a building worker with two children unemployed is £75 a week - £45 in social security payments and £30 in loss of tax and national insurance.

He says that 13 men can build a new primary school in a year, costing £50,000 for labour and overheads. And if the State kept these men unemployed it would cost £50,700.

To some degree, Mr O'Brien says, the same argument applies to firms making the construction materials because if their order books are improved it avoids forcing their workers onto social security.

And at the end of the day you would have an extra school - all for a net payment of nothing.

What Mr O'Brien maybe doesn't realise is that his economic reasoning is dangerously subversive as it is completely opposed to the international bankers who are insisting that the only way to make Britain pay is to put everyone on the dole and stop producing anything useful.

Or perhaps Mr O'Brien has secretly been a committed socialist all along.



TENANTS in the Basford flats are getting more and more angry with the City Council over problems with repairs and promises that people with children would be moved out.

So at a recent meeting attended by about a hundred people they thought their two Tory coun-

cillors who turned up would be able to tell them what was going on.

But they had no such luck - Barbara Ricks made a hasty exit after only half an hour and Derek Holeý refused to say anything. After the meeting cllr Holeý confided in the organisers that he hadn't come prepared and didn't have any information. He said he had only come to learn a bit about the problems.

In other words, after a year as a councillor he still hasn't the faintest idea what he is supposed to be doing.

TORY city councillors are not being allowed to attend any public meetings. This was claimed by Tory housing chairman Charles Borrett in a letter to the Shipstone Street Action Group. He refused to attend a meeting with them. The residents are angry because the council has gone back on promises to rehouse them from the clearance area quickly. And now they are calling for further action from the Federation of Tenants Associations.

NEW TENANTS action groups have been set up in Top Valley and Clifton. In Top Valley over a hundred people attended the first meeting called to fight rent increases. And in Clifton 60 people set up a group to fight for better repair standards and the right for people to transfer from one council house to another - a right now denied by the Tories. They are both highly critical of the Tory sales policy and the decision to run down the direct works department.

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IT HAS BEEN a black fortnight all round. Council rents are to go up by as much as £1.75 on top of a similar increase last year meaning that for many people the increase in rent alone will be more than the increase in take-home pay allowed by phase two of the "social con-trick". Bus fares are to go up by 2p on fares over 7p and the "free" city-centre buses will cost 2p from August. This follows the decision to chop at least 55 peak-hour buses.

On-street car parking is to be reintroduced in many areas of the city centre and it will be easier for cars to move around. This is in spite of the fact that accidents were cut by two-thirds when the restriction on cars was introduced four years ago and the city Transport Manager said they gained the equivalent of twenty-five buses because time lost in traffic jams was cut by two-thirds.

Labour councillor Len Maynard said it was a dreadful situation, encouraging the private motorist to the detriment of the public transport system while under 50% of the public owned cars. Labour councillor Peter Burgess quoted the Leicester Mercury which said last year: "We cannot compete, as things stand, with Nottingham's range of shops, with their ample, spacious and cheap parking and with their free shoppers' bus service".

We can always hope that city busmen follow the example of bus-workers in Leeds. 200 voted unanimously at a union branch meeting not to collect proposed increases in bus fares

and this will now go to a ballot of all 2,000 bus-workers in the district. Meanwhile South Yorkshire intend to keep their fares at present levels until 1986 when they will be abolished altogether. They are the only transport authority to show an increase in passengers. The area also re-elected a Labour council. (Information from Leeds Other Paper and Sheffield Free Press)

It is not just council tenants, bus passengers and pedestrians who are being clobbered. So are the homeless and also workers who have to occupy their factories to preserve their jobs. Parliament has slashed the provisions of the Homeless Bill so it is virtually useless - it will do nothing to help the sort of cases detailed on page 6 of this Voice. And the Criminal Justice Bill has been passed which will allow the police to arrest squatters and factory occupiers without any need for a court hearing.

VOICE TO CHANGE FORMAT YET AGAIN - SHOCK.

In the autumn it is very likely that the Voice will become bigger, better and, of course, a lot more expensive. Any readers who want to discuss what changes should be made are welcome to a meeting: 7pm, Mon 25th July, People's Centre, 33 Mansfield Rd. Or write in with suggestions and comments.

COUNCILLOR Ben Allsop tells us that two bungalows purpose-built for handicapped people have been sold to non-handicapped

people. These are at Nethergate, Clifton and have been sold by the City Council under the Tory policy of selling all the houses there.

Cllr Allsop says the officers did all they could to sell to handicapped people but none of those who were interested could meet a mortgage on the £12,000 price.



ALL 600 City Council building workers were on strike on July 5th. And most of them joined a march through the city to a rally in Victoria Park.

This was in support of a one day strike in all local authority direct works departments in the midlands called by UCATT, the building workers union, to protest against the attacks on

direct works departments by Tory councils and the government spending cuts which mean massive reductions in the building of schools, hospitals and houses.

Mick Stout, the Nottingham convenor, told the Voice what is happening to the city's direct works department. Since the Tories took over control, he said, the number of workers employed has dropped from 760 to 594 by "natural wastage".

He says this means the work force is very unbalanced because hardly anyone who left had been replaced. This has created chaos with workers sitting around waiting for someone else, say a plumber, to become available to do an essential piece of work.

This has encouraged workers

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to stagnate, says Mick, and many have left for this reason. He reckons the Tories want the number employed to drop to 500 and this will make the department unviable.

And evidence that the reduction in workers is making the department less viable was provided in a report on the department put to the last Housing Committee.

This shows that last year although the amount paid for wages and materials was slashed from £4.6 million to £2.8 million the cost of overheads actually went up from £1.4 million to £1.5 million. And that helped to turn a £178,000 surplus in the previous year into a deficit of £74,000.

So at last the Tories are realising their dream of proving that the direct works department cannot pay its way. That will give them the excuse they want to close it down and hand over the work to their friends in the private contracting business who are much more expensive and often turn in shoddy work.



THE DEPARTMENT of Health and Social Security have effectively been found guilty of defrauding claimants out of £4¼ million.

Last November when benefit rates were increased practically every claimant was underpaid by amounts ranging up to five pounds or more for some families.

This came to light at a recent appeal tribunal in Bristol. DHSS were ordered to pay a claimant an extra five days

increase in benefit.

Barristers for the claimant have said that this can be considered as a test case. If DHSS does not pay the extra to everyone claiming last November they will take the case to the High Court.

The fiddle was dead easy. Claimants are paid weekly on different days of the week. But legislation ordered DHSS to calculate the increase from a single date, Monday 15th November.

The rip-off merchants in the civil service couldn't resist the temptation to make a bit on the side for the Government. So they decided not to pay the increase until each claimant's pay day after this date. No increase was paid for the odd days.

Anyone claiming on 15th November last year should write to their local DHSS office to demand the extra payment (Quote Supp Ben Appeal Tribunal, Bristol, chairman Dr West, 26th May 1977, Ref Sheet 3/6 GP No. 107-412266). For a single supplementary benefit claimant the extra is up to £1.80 with more for couples and children.

If extra payment is refused don't appeal. If a different tribunal decided against a claimant this would make it more difficult to get the High Court to order DHSS to pay up.

Instead write to: 15th November Group, c/o 42a Upper Cheltenham Place, Montpellier, Bristol. They also want individuals and groups to write offering support.

(Story from Bristol Voice)