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**Over-Policed and Under-Protected: the Black Community and Legal Activism in
London, 1965–1975**

by Kate Bradley

Abstract

Following a call for workers from the Caribbean to come to Britain to rebuild the metropolis after the Second World War, the Black community in London grew considerably. Despite being British subjects through birth in a British colony, Black Britons experienced racism, violence, and harsh policing. By the mid-1960s, inspired by Malcolm X and the Black Power movement, activists established legal services to promote the civil rights of Black people and to address the limitations of state services – a “welfare state from below”. Crowd-funding techniques were used to organise 24-hour telephone lines to connect people with legal support and advice on arrest. This voluntary work influenced later campaigning to reform police practice from the 1970s: issues which remain live in the 21st century.

1. Introduction

The first half of the twentieth century saw the expansion of state-funded legal aid in both criminal and civil legal cases in England and Wales, with the Legal Aid and Advice Act 1949 essentially bringing such assistance into the welfare state.¹ Welcomed as the introduction of state-funded legal aid was, by the later 1960s serious critique of the scheme and the legal system as a whole was prompted in part by the impact of Brian Abel-Smith and Robert Stevens’ seminal socio-legal study, *Lawyers and the Court*, and interest by the Society of

¹ *Tamara Goriely*, Rushcliffe Fifty Years On: The Changing Role of Civil Legal Aid within the Welfare State, in: *Journal of Law and Society* 21 (1994), 545–566; *Tamara Goriely*, Gratuitous Assistance to the “Ill-Dressed”: Debating Civil Legal Aid in England and Wales from 1914–1939, in: *International Journal of the Legal Profession* 13 (2006) 1, 41–67.

Labour Lawyers in US-based experiments in making the law more accessible.² Shortly before this, however, Black activists in London were using self-help and mutual aid to organise a voluntary response to a serious problem: the issue of young Black men being mistreated by the police and the difficulties they experienced in obtaining effective legal support with their cases.

In the context of England and Wales, charities and non-governmental organisations have been framed as innovators who test out solutions to welfare problems, who then prepare the case for these initiatives to be scaled up and formalised into state policy. This was the view of early welfare historians such as David Owen and Maurice Bruce, whose ‘welfare escalator’ model of British welfare history pointed to an inexorable process of charitable innovations leading to ever-improving state welfare.³ The role of the state expanded during the nineteenth century, providing public health and welfare services, as well as through the growth of tort law, legislation around safety standards, and regulatory bodies such as the Factory Inspectorate.⁴ The Wolfenden Committee, a committee of enquiry, reported in 1978 on voluntary organisations and their work in the context of the welfare state, introducing the idea of a ‘voluntary sector’ who worked in a mixed economy of welfare with the state and private providers.⁵ With the rise of Third Way politics and welfare modernisation in the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of charities and NGOs as full partners in the provision of state welfare was cemented.⁶

In this narrative, the voluntary sector and voluntarism is presented as an important part of the welfare landscape in Britain, working in conjunction – if not always harmony – with the state. However, this did not prevent voluntary efforts to challenge the limits of state welfare and, indeed, to actively counter state indifference and aggression. Caribbean migrants in post-war Britain experienced such obstacles and organised accordingly. As Hakim Adi demonstrates, political activism and organisation by African and Caribbean people in Britain grew throughout the twentieth century, challenging British imperialist ideologies and

² Brian Abel-Smith/Robert Stevens, *Lawyers and the Courts*, London 1967. *Morris Finer/et al*, *Justice for All*. Society of Labour Lawyers Report, London 1968.

³ David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660–1960*, London 1965; Maurice Bruce, *The Coming of the Welfare State*, London 1965.

⁴ John Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society and Reform since 1800*, Basingstoke 2002; Julia Moses, *The First Modern Risk: Workplace Accidents and the Origins of European Social States*, Cambridge 2018.

⁵ *The Future of Voluntary Organizations: the Report of the Wolfenden Committee*, London 1978.

⁶ Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: the Renewal of Social Democracy*, Cambridge 1998.

behaviour in the colonies alongside the racist treatment of Black people in Britain. From the foundation of the African Association in London in 1897 and the first Pan-African Conference in 1900, through to organisations for African students, by the late 1930s there was an established sphere of activism.⁷ In her biography of the activist Claudia Jones, Marika Sherwood examines the civil society groups that emerged in the later 1950s that Jones was involved with both before and in response to the Notting Hill riots of September 1958.⁸ The emergence of Black radical activism and Black Power in Britain from the later 1960s has been explored by numerous historians, examining the development of political thinking and direct action. Looking at London and Nottingham respectively, Kennetta Hammond Perry and Radhika Natarajan investigate both the growth of radical activism, but also its engagement with more ‘mainstream’ Black and white organisations.⁹ James Cantres and Rob Waters both explore the development of Black radical activism in post-war Britain, but, critically, its grounding in the doing of voluntary work, following the Black Panther movement in the United States.¹⁰ Camilla Schofield and Ben Jones explore the emergence of anti-racist community work in Notting Hill in the 1950s and 1960s. As they show, ‘community work’ was not merely voluntary work by another name: it sought to come from and be for the community, not imposed from outside.¹¹

A focus on voluntary action and the idea of community work coming from the community allows us the opportunity to refocus on the question of how action reflects a group’s values and world view. Writing for the Institute of Race Relations think tank in 1970, Nicholas Deakin viewed the plethora of self-help activity around savings schemes, social clubs and church groups run by Caribbean migrants in the immediate post-war period as being devoid of ideology or political goals.¹² Much of this activity was surely instrumental, based around helping someone to save money for a house, but self-help is a political response as much as it is a response to the limitations of state or mainstream voluntary welfare. Self-help, mutual aid and co-operativism have been studied in British contexts as being a means by which the

⁷ *Hakim Adi*, *African and Caribbean People in Britain. A History*, London 2022, 207–317.

⁸ *Marika Sherwood*, *Claudia Jones. A Life in Exile*, London 2021, 97.

⁹ *Kennetta Hammond Perry*, *London is the Place for Me. Black Britons, Citizenship and the Politics of Race*, Oxford 2015; *Radhika Natarajan*, *Organizing Community. Commonwealth Citizens and Social Activism in Britain, 1948–1982*, unpublished dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2013.

¹⁰ *Rob Waters*, *Thinking Black. Britain 1964–1985*, Oakland 2018; *James G. Cantres*, *Blackening Britain. Caribbean Radicalism from Windrush to Decolonization*, Lanham 2020.

¹¹ *Camilla Schofield/Ben Jones*, “Whatever Community is, This is Not it”: Notting Hill and the Reconstruction of “Race” in Britain after 1958, in: *Journal of British Studies* 58 (2019) 1, 142–173.

¹² *Sherwood*, *Claudia Jones*, 97.

working classes could support themselves through insurance schemes to protect against the risk of ill health or unemployment and making consumer goods more affordable, as part of the wider efforts of the labour movement.¹³ Alex Mold's work on Release, a drugs legal advice charity which emerged from the networks around Black radical activism in the 1960s, looks at the group's work but also its positioning as a new social movement, and its relationships with 'traditional' charitable work and political groups.¹⁴

In this article, my intention is to look at the ways in which self-help and mutual aid offered a framework for Black activists, exploring this in the light of the Notting Hill riots in late 1958, and then the formation of 'Defence' by the Racial Adjustment Action Society (RAAS) and associates in the mid-1960s. The founder of RAAS, Michael de Freitas – later known as Michael X – had himself been arrested following the riots and was progressively radicalised into activism in the 1960s.¹⁵ Self-help offered de Freitas and others a means of organising a 'welfare state from below', through crowd-funding the money, in this case, to cover legal costs. To do this, I will draw upon a combination of published sources and oral history interviews. Whilst one of the individuals in this study – Frank Crichlow – deposited his papers at the Bishopsgate Library, the others did not. Michael de Freitas published an autobiography in 1968, and his high public profile then and after his murder conviction and execution in the 1970s resulted in biographies being written about him, with his friends and family interviewed.¹⁶ Courtney Tulloch and Colin MacInnes were both writers, producing articles on their work with Defence as well as being profiled for pieces in the national and local press. Tulloch, MacInnes and de Freitas all wrote for the countercultural press – the *International Times* and *Oz*. Obituaries have been an important source for this work, often written by friends active with the individual during this time in the 1960s. As many of the

¹³ *Nicole Robertson*, *The Co-operative Movement and Communities in Britain, 1914–1960: Minding their Own Business*, London 2010; *Lawrence Black/Nicole Robertson* (eds.), *Consumerism and the Co-operative Movement in Modern British History*, Manchester 2009; *Bernard Harris/Paul Bridgen* (eds.), *Charity and Mutual Aid in Europe and North America since 1800*, London 2007.

¹⁴ *Alex Mold*, "The Welfare Branch of the Alternative Society?" *The Work of Drug Voluntary Organization Release, 1967–1978*, in: *Twentieth Century British History* 17 (2006) 1, 50–73.

¹⁵ *Michael Abdul Malik*, *From Michael de Freitas to Michael X*, London 1968, 73–76, *Rosalind Eleanor Wild*, 'Black was the colour of our fight.' *Black Power in Britain 1955–1976*, unpublished dissertation, University of Sheffield, Sheffield 2008, 32–33.

¹⁶ *Derek Humphrey/David Tindall*, *False Messiah: The Story of Michael X*, London 1977; *James Sharp*, *The Life and Death of Michael X*, Waterford 1981.

people involved in this activism are no longer alive, oral history interviews undertaken by Jonathan Green and Colin Grant are important.¹⁷

2. Building a Community

Following the Second World War, the British government faced a labour shortage at the same time as it attempted to rebuild its economy. Despite considerable opposition from within government and the trade unions, the government looked for sources of labour from outside the UK. As historian David Olusoga states, one source was the Polish Resettlement Corps and Displaced Persons who could not return to their countries of origin. Another source came from within the British Empire, as it had during both World Wars. With Jamaica and other Caribbean nations experiencing harsh economic conditions, invitations to come to Britain to work seemed like an ideal solution. Whilst there were earlier ships sailing from the Caribbean to Britain, the Empire Windrush garnered intense media attention, not least as it was the one to arrive after the passing of the British Nationality Act 1948, which introduced the right for all Commonwealth citizens to live and work in Britain.¹⁸

The new arrivals often experienced a cool reception, especially in relation to securing housing. Many landlords in London refused to rent property to African Caribbean people. Perc Rachman, however, was one landlord who would. A Polish refugee, Rachman settled in London in 1948 and bought up substandard housing in West London. He rented out poorly maintained and overcrowded properties at vastly inflated prices. Rachman became the byword for slum landlords in 1960s Britain, when he became notorious through his involvement in the John Profumo scandal which brought down the Conservative Government.¹⁹ In this way, Rachman and his property portfolio led to the concentration of the

¹⁷ *Jonathon Green*, *Days in the Life: Voices from the English Underground, 1961–1971*, London 1998; *Jonathon Green*, *All Dressed Up. The Sixties and the Counterculture*, London 1999; *Colin Grant*, *Homecoming. Voices of the Windrush Generation*, London 2019.

¹⁸ *David Olusoga*, *Black and British. A Forgotten History*, London 2016, 490–496. By the twenty-first century, the ‘Windrush generation’ had come into use to describe those who came from the Caribbean from the 1940s before Commonwealth immigration was restricted in 1971. These changes meant that many who had come to the UK as children from what were then British colonies believed that they did indeed have British citizenship, only to discover much later that they did not – when they might be denied much-needed medical treatment or informed they must leave the UK. These problems were exposed in 2017 and called the Windrush Scandal. The situation was compounded by the government not retaining key paperwork about people’s arrival in the UK, and further destroying landing cards from the ships in 2010. See *Amelia Gentleman*, *The Windrush Betrayal: Exposing the Hostile Environment*, London 2019.

¹⁹ *Grant*, *Homecoming*, 93–94. *Richard Davenport-Hines*, *Rachman, Peter [Perc] (1920?–1962)* in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004,

African Caribbean community in West London, specifically around Notting Hill. Darcus Howe, who moved from Trinidad to London in 1961 to study law before becoming a racial justice campaigner and a well-known broadcaster, noted that where people found housing, they also built an associational culture through cafés, eating houses, social and gambling clubs and the like.²⁰ As Colin Grant observes, a British-style public house culture was not a common feature of social life in the Caribbean, where people tended to socialise at home or at the rum shop. In London, Caribbean people gave over their front rooms or cellars to hold blues parties, which began as informal gatherings but grew into parties held in hired halls before becoming paid events.²¹ Whilst these gatherings offered fun in a familiar and welcoming setting into the early hours of the morning, they also attracted the attention of hostile white neighbours through concerns about the illegal sale of alcohol and noise.²² Indeed, the police were called by such neighbours to break up parties, and the police presence could itself prompt further trouble for partygoers.²³ The journalist Donald Hinds recalled the BBC coming to his rented accommodation to record a such ‘West Indian’ party. No-one at Hinds’ party was drunk or throwing bottles, simply a little on the noisy side. The recording was originally intended for the Home Service programme to address the complaints about parties that occupied news coverage in the 1950s and 1960s, but it was broadcast on the BBC Caribbean Service instead.²⁴

Police interest in African Caribbean social life was not restricted to parties, as cafés, restaurants and social clubs also caught their attention. These venues were associated with an increase in the consumption of illicit drugs. As James Mills observes, cannabis use in Britain was extremely rare before the 1920s, though this was not the case within the British Empire. For millions in Asia, Africa or the Caribbean, cannabis consumption was commonplace.²⁵ Until the later 1940s, police reports of cannabis use were confined to Lascar seaman in the dock areas of cities like London, who came to police attention during shore leave or awaiting

<https://www-oxforddnb-com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-53680> (17.4.2023).

²⁰ *Darcus Howe*, *From Bobby to Babylon. Blacks and the British Police*, London ²2020, 50.

²¹ *Grant*, *Homecoming*, 214–215.

²² *Ibid.*, 219–221.

²³ *James Whitfield*, *Unhappy Dialogue. The Metropolitan Police and Black Londoners in Post-War Britain*, Cullompton 2004, 29.

²⁴ *Donald Hinds*, Interview, 16 of 38, 13.12.2012, <https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Oral-historians/021M-C1149X0025XX-0016V0> (17.4.2023), from 80 minutes.

²⁵ *James H. Mills*, *Cannabis Nation. Control and Consumption in Britain, 1928–2008*, Oxford 2012, 5; see also *James H. Mills*, *Cannabis Britannica. Empire, Trade, and Prohibition 1800–1928*, Oxford 2005.

new employment. Police attention increasingly came to bear on the growing community of arrivals from the Caribbean, and then on fears about how cannabis was beginning to spread amongst the white population.²⁶ As Louise A. Jackson shows, there was particular concern around venues that sat outside the reach of licensing laws. Young white people might spend time in these places without ‘suitable’ adult surveillance, where the clientele might include people of colour, and where there might also be access to illicit drugs. In the 1920s and 1930s, cafés that were popular with Lascar seamen in Liverpool and London attracted police attention; by the 1950s and into the 1960s, late-night coffee bars and ‘beat clubs’ in Manchester and elsewhere did.²⁷ The Piccadilly area of London was associated with heroin and barbiturates, and with runaway youth.²⁸ The Metropolitan Police had also been monitoring the cannabis market in Caribbean clubs since the 1950s, and by the early 1960s were aware of young white ‘Beatniks’ beginning to frequent them.²⁹ Clients could be stopped and searched near the premises, or the establishments raided, with greater powers added by the Dangerous Drugs Act 1964. The police were also willing to take bribes from gambling club owners in return for overlooking illegal activities – though Frank Crichlow, owner of El Rio café and later the Mangrove Restaurant, unlike other illicit gambling club owners in the area, refused to pay bribes to the police.³⁰ Police raids ostensibly searching for drugs were also, more implicitly, about dealing with tensions over ‘locals’ being displaced from the pubs and clubs they were used to attending.³¹ In his work on Metropolitan Police culture in this period, James Whitfield notes that the force had an inward-looking, military atmosphere, which did not encourage empathetic engagement with the public – and certainly not people from the African Caribbean community.³²

Cafés and eating houses were foremost leisure venues, but they also offered an environment in which community activism could be launched in a time of crisis, by bringing people together to share information and offer help. In the 1950s, Oswald Mosley’s Union Movement – essentially a revival of his British Union of Fascists – whipped up racist discord

²⁶ *Mills*, *Cannabis Nation*, 81.

²⁷ *Louise A. Jackson*, “The Coffee Club Menace”. *Policing Youth, Leisure and Sexuality in Post-war Manchester*, in: *Cultural and Social History* 5 (2008) 3, 289–308, 293–294.

²⁸ *John Davis*, *The London Drug Scene and the Making of Drug Policy, 1965–73*, in: *Twentieth Century British History* 17 (2006) 1, 26–49.

²⁹ *Mills*, *Cannabis Nation*, 117.

³⁰ *Howe*, *From Bobby to Babylon*, 50.

³¹ *Mills*, *Cannabis Nation*, 79.

³² *James Whitfield*, *The Metropolitan Police: Alienation, Culture, and Relations with London’s Caribbean Community*, in: *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History and Societies* 7 (2003) 2, 23–39, 31–32.

amongst disaffected white ‘Teddy Boy’ youth in Notting Hill, culminating in riots in August and September 1958.³³ At the time of the riots, Trinidadian Michael de Freitas was living in Notting Hill and working for Rachman as an enforcer.³⁴ As he recounted, the first riots occurred in the city of Nottingham, and Notting Hill was initially calm. However, following violent incidents in the area, the police increased their presence. Extra police patrols resulted in Black people being moved on, or in the case of de Freitas and others, arrested. De Freitas was freed after a friend paid his fine.³⁵ Following his arrest, de Freitas attended a meeting at the Calypso Club in Ledbury Road, which included Frances Ezzrecco, Hubert ‘Baron’ Baker and Frank Crichlow.³⁶ Speakers at the meeting initially called for a peaceful response, lobbying Members of Parliament and the Police Commissioner. De Freitas, however, called for action against attacks:

“I don’t think anybody was too clear about who the enemy was: the police, white people, anyone who’d raise a hand against us. We began preparing for whoever it might be. People were standing around discussing strategy; others were bringing in all sorts of implements for weapons; a few American servicemen were demonstrating how to make petrol bombs. [...] We had a full military operation going, sallying out in small groups while the women in the club made coffee and sandwiches.”³⁷

By evening, over three hundred people were waiting for the Teddy Boys, fighting back with Molotov cocktails.³⁸ The preparation and waiting took place at Totobag’s Café. Totobag’s was owned and run by Leopold ‘Totobag’ Williams. Baron Baker and Williams were key individuals in the African Caribbean community at the time. Baker had served in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War and remained in Britain afterwards. He was instrumental in finding accommodation for Windrush arrivals in 1948, including obtaining the use of a disused air raid shelter in Brixton in south-west London. Williams’ café served as an information centre and community resource in the daytime, with gambling and gaming in the evening. It was the natural choice for a venue to prepare resistance.³⁹

³³ *Christopher Hilliard*, Mapping the Notting Hill Riots. Racism and the Streets of Post-war Britain, in: *History Workshop Journal* 93 (2022) 1, 47–68, 60–62. De Freitas would later be better known as Michael X.

³⁴ *Humphrey/Tindall*, *False Messiah*, 48. I use the name de Freitas/Michael X used at the time.

³⁵ *Malik*, From Michael de Freitas, 73–76.

³⁶ *Cantres*, *Blackening Britain*, 69.

³⁷ *Malik*, From Michael de Freitas, 76–77.

³⁸ *Cantres*, *Blackening Britain*, 69.

³⁹ *Henry Bonsu*, *The Archive Hour*. *Fortress Totobag: The Story of the Notting Hill Riots*, [Radio programme], 16.08.2008, BBC Radio 4.

As the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police observed, in the aftermath of the riots came greater organisation and activism. Norman Manley, the Jamaican Chief Minister, visited London. Manley was dismayed by the hostility and racism towards African Caribbean people but gave a speech at Friends House on 7 September. Here, he called for people from the Caribbean to work in support of each other. The West Indian Standing Conference was formed following a recommendation by Manley.⁴⁰ Crichlow noted how Manley's words landed with people from the Caribbean, who began to bond in both social settings and political meetings.⁴¹ Crichlow himself took these words to heart. Crichlow was from Trinidad, travelling to Britain in 1953, where he worked first in transport and then as a musician.⁴² The café he opened in 1958, El Rio, was inspired by Manley's words in aiming to unite people from across the Caribbean. Open 24 hours a day, it served food and drink and offered a place for those "people who were rebellious and a bit smart, those with street intelligence, those for whom the factory was not their speed" and it was "a kind of school, a university. It just happened".⁴³ Crichlow was not the only one to act in this way around 1958, and particularly in the light of the riots. Baron Baker established the United Africa-Asia League to further lobby for anti-racist legislation and improved rights.⁴⁴ Amy Ashwood Garvey established the Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (AACP), alongside the hostel and Afro Centre she already ran.⁴⁵ Frances Ezzrecco founded the Coloured People's Progressive Association (CPPA), with de Freitas serving as its Vice-President. Amongst other activities, including advocating on behalf of tenants in Notting Hill, the CPPA sent delegations to the Notting Hill Police station to protest police harassment.⁴⁶

The murder of Kelso Cochrane, an Antiguan carpenter, by a group of white youths on 17 May 1959 outraged the community. Cochrane's murder led to campaigning for better anti-racist legislation, but also to activism to counteract aggressive policing. Claudia Jones, activist and editor of the *West Indian Gazette*, held an indoor carnival at St Pancras Town Hall in January 1959. This event was a celebration of the African Caribbean community in

⁴⁰ Wild, 'Black was the colour of our fight', 39; Whitfield, *Unhappy Dialogue*, 72.

⁴¹ Cantres, *Blackening Britain*, 76.

⁴² Mike Phillips, Crichlow, Frank Gilbert (1932–2010), in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2014, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-102642> (17.4.2023).

⁴³ Tony Gould, *Inside Outsider. The Life and Times of Colin MacInnes*, London 1993, 194.

⁴⁴ Cantres, *Blackening Britain*, 79.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 79; Tony Martin, Amy Ashwood Garvey. Pan-Africanist, Feminist and Mrs. Marcus Garvey no. 1, or, A Tale of Two Amies, Dover/MA 2007.

⁴⁶ Cantres, *Blackening Britain*, 79.

the face of hostility, and it is now understood as being the forerunner of the world-famous Notting Hill Carnival.⁴⁷ Yet the indoor carnival was also a fundraiser for those defending charges brought during the riots. A Defence Committee was also launched.⁴⁸ This committee, the United Defence Committee Against Racial Discrimination (UDCARD) was set up in late 1958. On 30 January 1959, a journalist from the *Kensington News* visited Ezzrecco to highlight this work. The journalist noted her painstaking work to raise a total of £155 to pay the fines of six men who, without this financial help, would be sent to prison. Ezzrecco was clear: these men had been provoked by racists, and violence had been their form of self-defence. Whilst the fines had to be paid by 7 February, any remaining cash would be put towards a permanent fund for legal defence.⁴⁹ Under UDCARD's banner, the CPPA, ACCP, the Africa League, the *West Indian Gazette*, and the African-Asian Congress held a social at the North Kensington Community Centre on Saturday 14 March 1959 to raise funds. Ezzrecco's husband, the jazz drummer Don, acted as disc jockey for the event.⁵⁰

Crowd-sourcing was not without precedent, as in the case of funds set up to support disaster victims.⁵¹ However, it built on existing practices for getting by in the Caribbean. The pardner scheme developed in Jamaica as a means of group saving. A group of friends would agree on a set amount to pay into the scheme at regular intervals, usually weekly or monthly, with one person acting as the banker. At an agreed interval one person in the scheme would receive all the payments made into the fund that week or month. For those whose payments came early in the scheme, it was essentially a form of loan to be paid back. In Britain, the pardner scheme served as a means of getting credit and saving money without having to navigate the banking system. People could buy a house outright or set up a business with the cash saved, thereby avoiding the strictures of building society and bank mortgage schemes.⁵² But this approach of solidarity could be used in other situations. Carlton 'Stanley' Gaskin gave an account of a Jamaican woman, Averill Wauchope, who stowed away on the Windrush.

⁴⁷ Colin Prescod, 'Carnival', in: Marika Sherwood, Claudia Jones. A Life in Exile, London 2021, 168–169.

⁴⁸ Cantres, Blackening Britain, 81.

⁴⁹ Fines Fund Fights Against Shadow-of-gaol Deadline, in: Kensington News, 30.1.1959, 1. British Newspaper Archive (BNA), www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk, Image © Reach PLC. Image created courtesy of the British Library Board.

⁵⁰ Benefit social for Coloured Fund, in: Kensington News, 13.3.1959, 7; Social to aid UCARD, in: Kensington News, 20.3.1959, 6 (BNA).

⁵¹ Sarah Roddy/Julie-Marie Strange/Bertrand Taithe, The Charity Market and Humanitarianism in Britain, 1870–1912, London 2018.

⁵² Vince Hines, How Black People Overcame Fifty Years of Repression in Britain, 1945–1995, vol. 1: 1945–1975, London 1998, 162–163.

Wauchope gave herself up, which meant that she had to find the cash for her fare, or face arrest and ten days' imprisonment. A concert was put on to raise funds for her, with performances by the Calypsonians Lord Kitchener and Lord Beginner, and the singer Mona Baptiste.⁵³ The *Gleaner* wrote that Mortimer Martin, a bottling manager, organised a 'subscription' to raise the cash, and provide some living expenses for Wauchope.⁵⁴ The timing of Wauchope's discovery was fortunate: two other stowaways were detected in time for the ship's crew to put them ashore on Bermuda, whilst others were found on arrival at Tilbury, where they were greeted with fines and ten days in prison.⁵⁵ Acts of solidarity such as Wauchope's fundraising concert or the creation of the UDCARD defence fund differed from the pardner scheme insofar as they did not have an equal contribution from all members with a guaranteed payout during the life of the scheme. However, these acts and the pardner shared the principle of using the crowd for creating collective resources. People did not contribute equally to the fund, and it was not a given that all donors would ever need to use it: yet it was there. The defence funds were considerably less onerous to navigate than the criminal legal aid system. The UDCARD and subsequent schemes offered a collective solution to an individual's experience of hostile policing.

3. Challenging Hostile Policing – Founding Defence

Policing in Britain evolved dramatically from 1829, when the Metropolitan Police was established in London by Sir Robert Peel. This was followed by other forces across the United Kingdom. These professional police forces were civilian, though they had much in common in terms of discipline and organisation with the armed forces. In tandem with what has been described as the 'administrative turn' in criminal justice, police forces increasingly became the main prosecutors of offences, rather than citizens bringing cases to court themselves.⁵⁶ This also meant that the role of police officers in preparing cases for prosecution came under scrutiny from the judiciary. In the British legal systems, judges and magistrates are not involved in investigating cases, but in trying the cases in court. As

⁵³ *Grant, Homecoming*, 55–56.

⁵⁴ West Indians arrive in UK in search of jobs, in: *Gleaner*, 23.6.1948, reprinted 24.6.2022, <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/esponsored/20220624/jamaicans-refuse-refugee-label> (17.4.2023).

⁵⁵ 200 Jobless Jamaicans come to Britain, in: *Shields Daily News*, 22.6.1948, 4 (BNA); It was roast beef for the Jamaicans, in: *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 23.6.1948, 1 (BNA); Dick Adler, *Voyage to the Promised Land*, in: *Sunday Times Magazine*, 30.6.1968, 10 [S].

⁵⁶ See *Clive Emsley, The English Police. A Political and Social History*, Harlow 1996; *Leon Radzinowicz/Roger Hood, The Emergence of Penal Policy in Victorian and Edwardian England*, vol. 5: *A History of English Criminal Law and Administration from 1750*, Oxford 1990.

Charles Wegg-Prosser notes, criticism of police tactics around interrogation emerged from the 1880s, with concern about how the police treated the people they had arrested. A 1906 letter from the Lord Chief Justice to the Chief Constable of Birmingham police about the inconsistencies of practice within police forces and the impact of this on fair trials led to the first set of the Judges' Rules in 1914. The Rules were not legally binding on police forces, but they did lay out a set of expectations. The Rules were revised several times up to 1964, not least in the wake of the 1930 Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedures.⁵⁷ The Judges' Rules were revised in 1964, along with a set of Procedures. These critically included the ability to make a telephone call to a solicitor, family member or friend on arrival at the police station.⁵⁸ Solicitors were able to attend the police station to give advice to those who had been arrested but, at this point, the individual had to be able to pay the solicitor. The application process for state legal aid in criminal cases did not begin until the individual's first appearance at the magistrates' court – and it was the decision of the magistrate's clerk as to whether it would be granted. Furthermore, there was no list of solicitors who could be called to the police station to assist the arrested person: hence the importance of being able to at least phone friends or family members who could arrange for this to happen. Lawyers were far from neutral participants in Black people's experience of the criminal justice system. Howe recalled a lawyer in the 1960s who found himself being given many cases that resulted from police raids on house parties. The legal principles that the lawyer had absorbed during his training centred upon trying to reduce the number of cases that were contested: or encouraging people whose cases were likely to end in a conviction to plead guilty. However, the lawyer's African Caribbean clients asked for him to defend their cases to the best of his ability – as a lawyer should, and he did. In contrast were the 'police lawyers', who were seen by the community to favour the police.⁵⁹

The catalyst for Defence was, as the writer Colin MacInnes described it, a "rather sensational immoral earnings case" in 1966, in which the defendant, originally from Trinidad, was accused of profiting from his wife's sex work at their home.⁶⁰ Following the case's hearing in

⁵⁷ Charles Wegg-Prosser, *The Police and the Law*, London 1973, 91; see also *John Carter Wood*, *Press, Politics and the 'Police and the Public' debates in late 1920s Britain*, in: *Crime, Histoire et Sociétés/Crime, History and Societies* 16 (2012) 1, 75–98.

⁵⁸ *T.E. St Johnston*, *Judges' Rules and Police Interrogation in England Today*, in: *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 57 (1966) 1, 85–92, 91–92.

⁵⁹ *Howe*, *From Bobby to Babylon*, 29–30.

⁶⁰ *Colin MacInnes*, *RAAStus: WI in W2*, in: *Oz*, 2.1967, 15; *Four Years for a Bully and a Pest*, in: *Kensington Post*, 11.11.1966, 11 (BNA).

November 1966, the defendant was found guilty and given a four-year prison sentence. In coverage of the case, Inspector Sallabank told the court how the defendant spent a considerable amount of time in various cafés in Notting Hill, places that the Inspector saw as immoral and decadent.⁶¹ However, the café-going people that Sallabank was so disparaging about and the wider community believed in the defendant's innocence, and raised the funds to support his legal defence. In MacInnes' account, these supporters got in touch with the Racial Advancement Action Society (RAAS), leading to the formation of Defence.⁶²

Defence was established to provide Black people with legal support following arrest. To access this help, a telephone number was staffed twenty-four hours a day, connecting people to criminal law solicitors. Defence shared many of its personnel with RAAS. RAAS was founded by Michael de Freitas in 1965. The Notting Hill riots put de Freitas on a path away from being an enforcer for Rachman and into activist and countercultural circles. Hearing the American Black Power advocate Malcolm X speak at the London School of Economics on 11 February 1965 brought de Freitas into radical politics. De Freitas converted to Islam, changing his name to Michael Abdul Malik, but he was swiftly dubbed Michael X by the press on account of his supposed relationship to Malcolm X.⁶³ RAAS was founded shortly after Michael X's visit to the LSE, with Roy Sawh, Jan Carew and Abdullah Patel, initially as a group that was only for Black people.⁶⁴ However, Michael X befriended MacInnes, being impressed by MacInnes's voluntary work with the Black community. MacInnes would go out at any time of day or night to try and obtain bail for those who had been arrested, and to offer advice as best he could on a range of matters. MacInnes was allowed to join RAAS as an associate member, and thus was the only white person involved with it.⁶⁵ MacInnes gave an account of the formation of Defence in *Oz* magazine, talking about how they initially began finding criminal solicitors who were willing to take on the cases and able to wait until legal aid could be granted to be paid.⁶⁶

Courtney Tulloch was born in Jamaica in 1942, sailing to Britain to join his family in Nottingham around 1958. In 1966, he moved to West London, where he intended to work as

⁶¹ Four Years for a Bully and a Pest, in: Kensington Post, 11.11.1966, 11 (BNA).

⁶² *MacInnes*, 'RAAStus', 15.

⁶³ *Wild*, 'Black was the colour of our fight', 32–33.

⁶⁴ *Humphrey/Tindall*, *False Messiah*, 45–46, 51.

⁶⁵ *Malik*, *From Michael de Freitas*, 163.

⁶⁶ *MacInnes*, *RAAStus*, 14–17.

a writer. Tulloch also became involved both with Defence and the counterculture.⁶⁷ In 1972, Tulloch gave a more detailed account of the formation of Defence. Rather than linking Defence to the specific case MacInnes mentioned, Tulloch stated that Frank Crichlow called a meeting at his Rio café on a Sunday afternoon in late 1966 to discuss how to deal with the increase in arrests of Black people in the Notting Hill area. Six other people attended: Tulloch, MacInnes, a lawyer, a club owner, a sound system owner and a drummer in a steel band. The steel band drummer spoke at length about his experiences in England, leading up to his arrest and losing his musical instruments. Whilst the others in the meeting resolved to set up Defence along established lines – appointing a chair, a treasurer, a secretary and a press officer – both the steel band drummer and Tulloch sat in despair about how this was going to tackle neither individuals’ legal issues nor wider troubles faced by the community.⁶⁸ In Tulloch’s account, Michael X was not at this initial meeting, although Humphrey and Tindall placed him there in their 1977 biography and Williams, writing in 2008, attributed Defence’s creation to RAAS.⁶⁹ Certainly, MacInnes claimed responsibility for the idea, when he took the idea to Michael X after he had become an associate member of RAAS.⁷⁰ Whether Michael X was at the initial meeting, or whether MacInnes solely came up with the idea of offering legal advice, both were involved from an early point in proceedings with Defence. That ambiguities have emerged in the literature about who was involved with the formation of Defence and its relationship with RAAS reflect the processes of image-making that were happening around Michael X at the time. MacInnes was invested in being a white writer who was well-embedded within the Black community and having ‘insight’ that others could not provide.

The group established an office with a telephone running 24 hours a day, and a part-time secretary.⁷¹ Michael X was appointed treasurer, whilst MacInnes was press officer and Tulloch became Defence’s caseworker.⁷² Most of the work fell to Tulloch as a volunteer, who answered the telephone, secured lawyers for cases, found the money for bail sureties, and kept the paperwork on people’s remand cases up to date. Tulloch was frustrated with Defence

⁶⁷ *Mike Phillips*, Courtney Tulloch, 11 December 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/dec/13/guardianobituaries.obituaries1> (17.4.2023).

⁶⁸ *Courtney Tulloch*, *The Reading Collective, 1967–68*, in: *Race Today* 4 (1972) 3, 95–97, 95.

⁶⁹ *Humphry/Tindall*, *False Messiah*, 53; *John L. Williams*, *Michael X. A Life in Black and White*, London 2008, 148.

⁷⁰ *MacInnes*, *RAAS*, 14.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷² *Humphry/Tindall*, *False Messiah*, 53–54.

in the seven months that it operated in 1967, as it appeared to him that the line of people queuing up to use their services was getting longer – but Defence’s ability to make a difference with the outcomes of their cases was not keeping up.⁷³ Defence’s income was volatile. As MacInnes put it, whilst criminal solicitors would accept legal aid cases, the task for Defence was in finding solicitors who would be willing to take their cases on, and to charge the minimum possible fee for their first appearance (and subsequently, if legal aid was denied). The people associated with Defence often ended up putting their own money in to support cases, and the solicitors were forced to be patient in waiting for payment to be made to them.⁷⁴ Some of the solicitors that Defence worked with, such as Raphael Dean Sargeant, who MacInnes found, were at the start of their careers and interested in questions of social justice. Sargeant would go on to have a career specialising in criminal and civil rights law, including working with Release, a charity established to provide legal advice to people arrested on drugs charges, which will be explored in the next section.⁷⁵ However, Tulloch despaired of other lawyers associated with Defence, who he described as being “loose in their defence of arrested people”. Tulloch was also frustrated by the cycle of people serving prison sentences recommending their lawyers to people in pre-trial detention, thereby keeping lawyers who had arguably failed their first clients in business.⁷⁶

Defence’s work was overshadowed by the events of late July 1967. Michael X was prosecuted under the Race Relations Act 1965 for stating that white people who attacked Black women should be killed when standing in for Stokely Carmichael at an event in Reading, a town in Berkshire to the west of London. Carmichael was an American Black Power activist visiting the UK that summer. Whilst his speech at the 1967 Dialectics of Liberation Congress in London was highly influential, it also led immediately to him leaving the UK earlier than planned, before he was banned by the government.⁷⁷ Michael’s arrest and subsequent trial attracted considerable attention in the press, but the reason why Defence and RAAS were in Reading to begin with has been overlooked. In the spring of 1967, Tulloch was visited by an African Caribbean man from Reading, who had been arrested on cannabis charges. The man told Tulloch about how there was a growing community of Caribbean

⁷³ *Tulloch*, Reading Collective, 95.

⁷⁴ *MacInnes*, RAASTus, 14.

⁷⁵ *Williams*, Michael X, 148–149; see also Dean Sargeant, ‘Experience’ <http://deansargeant.com/experience.asp> (17.4.2023).

⁷⁶ *Tulloch*, Reading Collective, 95.

⁷⁷ *Adi*, African and Caribbean People, 440.

people in Reading who had moved there from Notting Hill, only to find the same discriminatory behaviour and problems. Tulloch, along with Michael X and others connected with Defence drove down to Reading to meet the man and his friends for the day.⁷⁸ Nothing immediately came out of the visit to Reading, though it coincided with the beginning of the winding down of Defence. Following discussions with Crichlow, Tulloch returned to Reading around the end of May 1967, spending the summer there.⁷⁹

Tulloch spent the summer studying the housing, working and educational conditions faced by Black people in the town. The outcome of this work was the West Indian Register. The Register was a record of those conditions and the needs of the Black community in Reading. The register informed the work of what Tulloch referred to in *Race Today* as the Reading Collective, or the group of activists that emerged around this work. The register helped the activists to target their work effectively, whilst also providing a source of reliable information on the Black community's needs for the local authority. By early July 1967, the Register had set up Reading's first Black barbers' shop.⁸⁰ Tulloch encountered a man called Sam during his day trip to Reading, and Sam spoke about how the town desperately needed a professional barber who had expertise in cutting Black hair. Sam had the skills: what he did not have was the cash to buy a barber shop from a man who was looking to retire. Tulloch helped Sam and friends set up a collective to get to work on organising a Barber Shop Blues Dance to raise the £50 needed.⁸¹ The shop, called Jimmy's, went beyond cutting hair to offer an advice service and Christian worship through a revival centre, as well as general comradeship and support. The Register and barbers' shop were holding a further dance at the Town Hall at the end of August to raise money for a children's nursery.⁸² The nursery was desperately needed. Tulloch's research had found that work for Black people in Reading was either working in a chemical factory ten miles outside town, or in the local biscuit factory, or in the neighbouring towns. Families were therefore under pressure to find affordable childcare that could accommodate shift patterns and travel out of Reading. A volunteer working with the collective found a former nurse who would be willing to set up the nursery.⁸³

⁷⁸ Tulloch, Reading Collective, 95.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 96.

⁸⁰ Reading study of West Indians' problems, in: Reading Evening Post, 11.7.1967, 4 (BNA).

⁸¹ Tulloch, Reading Collective, 96.

⁸² Lee Wilson, Down at Jimmy's – in the shadow of the gas works, in: Reading Evening Post, 8.8.1967, 8 (BNA).

⁸³ Tulloch, Reading Collective, 97.

Carmichael was asked to come to Reading to speak.⁸⁴ According to Tulloch, Carmichael was keen to see the grassroots activism happening in the town.⁸⁵ However, following Carmichael's departure, Michael stood in for him.⁸⁶ As *The Times* noted, an unnamed speaker from the West Indian Register opened the event with their own speech, before Michael took to the lectern.⁸⁷ As the prosecutor, Doiran Williams, stated, the event was intended to inform people about the Register, and that it was a "proper social venture" that the Director of Public Prosecutions had no concern about.⁸⁸ From the perspective of 1972, Tulloch was scathing about Michael X's involvement, seeing it as bringing about "good theatre" for the national press, but not helping in any substantial way to address the needs of the Black community in Reading.⁸⁹ Both in Notting Hill and Reading, Defence continued the practice of using community-funded or crowd-sourced approaches to build up resources that could begin to tackle the existential problems of hostile policing and exclusion from public services. This was perhaps more successful for occasional asks, such as a dance to raise funds for a barber's shop, and more challenging in the case of keeping a service going in the longer term.

4. The counterculture and Release

Tulloch's time in Reading coincided with major developments in Notting Hill. Police interest in the consumption of illicit drugs was moving beyond a focus on the Black community to include young white people involved with the counterculture. Most notoriously, the Rolling Stones were pursued by the *News of the World* Sunday newspaper, who appeared to be determined to expose band members' drug use.⁹⁰ Drug busts were not exclusive to pop stars: young white people were also being arrested. John 'Hoppy' Hopkins, one of the leading figures of the counterculture at the time, was imprisoned for six months in 1967 on drugs charges. The experiences of young people attracted much less mainstream coverage, but they were subject to being stopped on the street or police raids of their homes in the middle of the night.⁹¹ The underground press did address the emergency, however. Hoppy covered drugs

⁸⁴ Black Power leader to visit Reading, in: Reading Evening Post, 21.7.1967, 1 (BNA).

⁸⁵ Tulloch, Reading Collective, 97.

⁸⁶ Williams, Michael X, 155–56.

⁸⁷ Michael X for trial on race hate charges, in: The Times, 30.9.1967, 10.

⁸⁸ Michael X speech flagrant breach of Race Act – claim, in: Reading Evening Post, 29.9.1967, 1 (BNA).

⁸⁹ Tulloch, Reading Collective, 97.

⁹⁰ See *Marcus Collins*, Permissiveness on Trial: Sex, Drugs, Rock, the Rolling Stones, and the Sixties Counterculture, in: *Popular Music and Society* 42 (2019) 2, 188–209.

⁹¹ *Caroline Coon*, We were the welfare branch of the alternative society, in: Helene Curtis/Mimi Sanderson (eds.), *The Unsung Sixties: Memoirs of Social Innovation*, London 2004, 183–197, 184.

policing in the *International Times* (hereafter *IT*), under the byline of “Bradley Martin”. In January 1967, he wrote about calls for a “Marihuana Bust Fund”. This fund would campaign for the legalisation of drugs through a “smoke-in” of a thousand people smoking cannabis in Trafalgar Square in London, as well as providing “basic legal advice and brief people as to their rights under arrest. It would be a clearing house for all information of any use”.⁹² Hoppy was himself sentenced on 1 June 1967 to nine months in prison for possession of cannabis, further galvanising *IT*’s position on drugs.⁹³

Caroline Coon was then an art student whose Jamaican friend, Lloyd Ellis, was being prosecuted for possession of cannabis and a firearm.⁹⁴ Coon supported Ellis by working to enlist lawyers with suitable expertise and learning a considerable amount about the law in the process. Ellis put Coon in contact with the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination and other groups, and this brought her into Michael X’s circles.⁹⁵ Michael X had been calling for some time for the counterculture to adopt a similar approach to Defence. As Joe Boyd, a record producer and the co-organiser with Hoppy of the countercultural UFO nightclub on Tottenham Court Road, recalled:

“The police were getting much more aggressive, busting people in the queues for UFO, searching people for drugs. We had a ‘pass the bucket’ plan to raise money to help people, but it was very haphazard. Michael said ‘Come on, the police are now starting to behave towards hippies the way they’ve always behaved towards Black people, and there’s only one thing to do, and that’s to get organised, but you’re not doing it. This bucket is not going to do the job.’”⁹⁶

In *IT*, Michael X gave an account of a phone call he received from Hoppy, telling him that a mutual acquaintance of theirs had been arrested. Michael wrote:

“In the world I come from, one does[n’t] think of who’s a charming person to have to dinner. No, there one thinks of Who Could I Call When I Am In Trouble. Today I look at what is called the underground and see that they too are thinking in this way

⁹² *Bradley Martin*, Interpot Report No 5, in: *International Times*, 16.–29.1.1967, 12.

⁹³ Free Hoppy, in: *International Times*, 2.6.1967, 1.

⁹⁴ *Robin Bunce/Paul Field*, Darcus Howe. A Political Biography, London 2014, 140.

⁹⁵ Interview with Caroline Coon, 3 August 2022. At the time of publication, this interview is being archived in the Release collection at the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

⁹⁶ *Williams*, Michael X, 149.

[...] My reaction to Hoppy's call was to get a lawyer and a doctor, for one hears such terrible stories about the police framing people and beating them up."⁹⁷

It was unsurprising, then, that Michael X was involved in organising the protests outside the *News of the World* offices.⁹⁸ Coon's reputation for legal activism was growing. The artist Clive Goodwin, who Coon knew from her art school, called her to ask her to help him phone around to get people to the Saturday evening protest.⁹⁹

Protests were held outside the offices of the *News of the World* on 29 and 30 June 1967, marking young people's outrage at the newspaper's involvement in the arrests.¹⁰⁰ Whilst the first two days of protest were spontaneous, the evening of Saturday 1 July brought a co-ordinated 'sit-down' protest with the aim of preventing lorries from leaving the premises with newspapers for distribution.¹⁰¹ These protests were part of an intense period of organisation and activism. As Coon recalls, countercultural social networks gathered to discuss what could be done. Coon met Rufus Harris, who would become the co-founder with her of Release in the aftermath of the protest, as demonstrators were milling around Piccadilly Circus in the early hours. Coon remembers one meeting taking place at Boyd's flat with Michael X and MacInnes in attendance, along with others associated with *IT*, such as Jim Haynes. Coon volunteered to take on the work.¹⁰² Boyd recalled Michael X being instrumental in pushing the underground to go beyond collecting money for those who had been arrested at UFO club nights, and to adopt the strategies used by the Black community to protect themselves.¹⁰³ Steve Abrams said that he and Harris met on 30 June at the *News of the World* protest, and attended meetings called by Michael X and Boyd: "The aim of the meetings was to form an organisation for drug users modelled on a group called Defence, representing Black people, formed by Michael and the writer Colin MacInnes. MacInnes thought the plan over-ambitious and stormed out." As Abrams also recalled, the folk singer Julie Felix had donated

⁹⁷ *Michael X*, Michael X Words, in: *International Times*, 265.1967, 11.

⁹⁸ *Green*, Days in the Life, 346.

⁹⁹ *Coon*, Welfare branch, 183–184.

¹⁰⁰ *Ronald Faux*, Gaol sentences on 2 Rolling Stones, in: *the Times*, 30.6.1967, 1.

¹⁰¹ Newspaper denies planting allegation, in: *Guardian*, 3.7.1967, 3; Two fined after sitdown in Fleet Street, in: *Guardian*, 4.7.1967, 14; Demonstrators sat in road, in: *The Times*, 4.7.1967, 6. The *News of the World* was a national Sunday newspaper.

¹⁰² *Coon*, Welfare branch, 184; *Green*, Days in the Life, 197.

¹⁰³ *Williams*, Michael X, 149–150.

to Hoppy's defence fund, and this was repurposed to be the initial financing of Release.¹⁰⁴ Unlike the others, Coon was still an art student and able to work on setting up Release. As Coon subsequently took on the work, Michael X stepped back.¹⁰⁵ Release was launched in July 1967 at the Legalise Pot Rally in Hyde Park in Central London, with a 'bust card' containing brief notes based on the Judges' Rules and a 24-hour emergency telephone line that anyone arrested on drugs charges could call for legal assistance.¹⁰⁶

The rise of Release coincided with the decline of Defence. After being introduced to Coon, Sargeant went on to work with Release. Sargeant reflected that Michael hadn't anticipated "how much boring graft went into something like that" and his enthusiasm wore off.¹⁰⁷ Defence did not invent the bust card, though, as Coon noted, "there was a nascent bust card" in Sargeant's mind.¹⁰⁸ As Tulloch recalled in 1972, MacInnes and Michael X thought about ways in which they could "shunt off" the work of Defence to other groups. Michael was pushing for the 'Flower Children' of the counterculture to take on Defence's work, not least as he believed that the counterculture had more money available to it to fund a Defence-style legal project. Tulloch was invited to work with Coon in developing these new avenues but declined.¹⁰⁹ The experience of Defence and the Reading Collective cemented Tulloch's commitment to activism and community work. Tulloch would go on to launch the *Hustler* newspaper, before training as a youth and community worker.¹¹⁰

Legal activism became a staple of Black community activism by the end of the 1960s, not least as the police remained intransigent and unwilling to reflect upon or change their practices and assumptions. Crichlow closed El Rio and opened the Mangrove Restaurant in 1969. As with El Rio, Totobag's and other cafés in the Notting Hill area, the Mangrove was as much a community centre as it was a place for refreshment and entertainment.¹¹¹ It was, however, raided by the police at least once a month, who were looking for drugs – fruitlessly,

¹⁰⁴ Steve Abrams, Obituary: Rufus Harris, in: Guardian, 30.4.2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/apr/30/guardianobituaries.drugsandalcohol>. (17.6.2022).

¹⁰⁵ Williams, Michael X, 149–150.

¹⁰⁶ Coon, Welfare branch, 184–186.

¹⁰⁷ Williams, Michael X, 148.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Caroline Coon, 3 August 2022.

¹⁰⁹ Tulloch, Reading Collective, 96.

¹¹⁰ Mike Phillips, Obituary: Courtney Tulloch, in: Guardian, 13.12.2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/dec/13/guardianobituaries.obituaries1>. (17.6.2022); Bunce and Field, Darcus Howe, 98.

¹¹¹ Hines, Black People, 174.

given Crichlow's hatred of drugs, and therefore them being consumed or sold on his premises. The raids were tantamount to harassment, with Crichlow losing business as a result. Before the events that would lead up to the trial of the Mangrove Nine, Crichlow had a barrister based in the restaurant, who was a source of legal aid and advice, and who monitored the behaviour of police at the local stations.¹¹² The manifesto of the British Black Panther Party founded in 1968 included the group's intention to go to court to support any Black person on trial against a racist system, and, more generally, to provide "any possible assistance needed in the legal defence of Black people". They also sought to keep in touch with Black people forced into isolation in prison.¹¹³ It took considerable work, but Coon and Release succeeded in developing strategies to bring in an income for the group, allowing it to build a secure foundation and to expand in time.¹¹⁴ Whilst these more radical forms of activism continued, they also influenced more "mainstream" work, as will now be seen.

5. Help-on-Arrest Schemes

The Race Relations Act 1968 resulted in the creation of the Community Relations Commission and related Community Relations Councils (CRC) that corresponded to it at local government level.¹¹⁵ The Community Relations Commission was an 'arm's length' governmental body, being associated with the state but not under its direct control. Likewise, the Community Relations Councils were funded through local authority grants, but were voluntary organisations rather than state ones. This gave them independence by not being aligned with the state, but also prevented them from having any power.¹¹⁶

Whilst not as radical in their aims as Defence or Release, the CRCs picked up the concept of bust cards, but developed them into 'Help on Arrest' schemes. The first was launched in Brixton in early 1970. Whereas Defence and Release were both projects that worked independently from the police, the Brixton scheme was more collaborative and aimed to improve relations between young Black people and the police: at least in theory. The advisory text on the cards was developed between youth workers in the area and the local

¹¹² *Howe*, *From Bobby to Babylon*, 50–59.

¹¹³ *Hines*, *Black People*, 88.

¹¹⁴ *Coon*, *Welfare branch*, 188, 191, 196.

¹¹⁵ Race Relations Act 1968, 1968 chapter 71, 25.10.1968, available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/71/enacted>. (30.10.2022).

¹¹⁶ *Michael John Mulloy*, *Community Relations. A Personal View*, in: *Community Health* 4 (1973) 4, 170–172, 171.

police, and then distributed to young people at twenty youth clubs. The cards had the number of a youth worker who could be called.¹¹⁷ A similar scheme was launched by the neighbouring Wandsworth Council of Community Relations later that year – though the Community Relations Officer for Wandsworth noted that the Brixton scheme had already collapsed by that point. Despite police involvement in the scheme, the Brixton police refused to co-operate with requests to make a phone call, and young people had not developed trust in the police. The Wandsworth card was like the Release card. It was described as the “size of a folded postcard”, so a piece of card around 105 by 148 mm folded in two. This small piece of card nonetheless contained notes that distilled the Judges’ Rules of 1964 into a ready reference form that could be used to give the individual rapid and clear guidance on what to do on arrest, and numbers of people to call for help. However, the card led to the total breakdown in relations between Wandsworth Council of Community Relations and the police. An African Caribbean man who had one of the cards was arrested and taken to Chelsea police station, which was outside of Wandsworth but within the Metropolitan Police area. The man was denied the opportunity to make the telephone call. The police argued that this was justified on the grounds in the Judges’ Rules that permitted them to not allow the call if it would delay the investigation, but the damage was done: Wandsworth Council of Community Relations put on a ban on the police’s liaison officer attending their meetings until they were given a satisfactory explanation for the incident.¹¹⁸

In late 1971, the government appointed a Select Committee to review policies in relation to the Race Relations Act 1968 and immigration into the United Kingdom. In the summer of 1972, the first volume of its report on Police/Immigrant relations was released. This took evidence from community representatives, CRCs and police forces in major towns and cities across the UK, but Notting Hill and Wandsworth figured highly.¹¹⁹ Of the Wandsworth card, the Select Committee argued that the card “did not make it clear that arrested persons have no automatic right to telephone anyone; final discretion rests with the police officer in charge.” Getting the right amount of accurate information onto such a small piece of paper or card was a challenge: but a concept that the Select Committee thought was important. Their

¹¹⁷ Youngsters get ‘lessons’ in case they are arrested’, in: *Daily Mirror*, 13.2.1970, 2.

¹¹⁸ *Eric Clark*, Police in row on arrest card, in: *Observer*, 14.11.1971, 2.

¹¹⁹ *Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration*, Police/Immigrant Relations. Volume 1, Session 1971–72, London 1972.

recommendation was instead for such information to be held at police stations.¹²⁰ This suggestion did not address the issue of ensuring that the arrested person was supplied with it as a matter of course. It also overlooked the importance of broader education around legal rights *before* someone found themselves under arrest, and the bust card/Help on Arrest card was certainly part of that. Their report also revealed the way in which Notting Hill was perceived by the police to be an area of exceptional difficulty – and the Caribbean community’s poor experience of the work of B Division, the command unit of the police that covered Notting Hill.

The origins of the Wandsworth scheme were given to the Select Committee, when Charles Boxer, the Community Relations Officer, John Franklin, the Assistant Community Relations Officer, detached youth worker Gavton Shepherd, and Aubrey Rose, solicitor, all of the Wandsworth group, gave verbal evidence to it. They were accompanied by David Dunne of the NCCL and the local legal advice centre.¹²¹ Boxer told the Select Committee that

“an enormous number of young Black kids were being picked up, they were being arrested and they then disappeared. Perhaps two or three weeks later the mother of one of them would come along and say, ‘Can you do something for my boy? He is at Ashford [Remand Centre]’ [...] The actual cards were introduced because on one occasion seven or eight Black youngsters were picked up and we came on the scene too late. But this sort of thing does go on the whole time.”¹²²

Having heard about an experiment with such cards in Brixton, the Wandsworth group decided to try this in their area. These cards were designed with the police: “We were going to get complete approval from the police. We felt it was important there should be co-operation and we felt it important it should be effective”. Whilst the wording satisfied the police liaison officer, the NCCL did not agree, believing the card to be weak. Another weakness was the Borough Commander not approving of the scheme. However, 5,000 cards were printed, and distribution began first through youth workers.¹²³ The Chairman asked the group why, if the incident where the young man was prevented from making a phone call happened in Chelsea, in a different division, the breakdown in relations occurred in

¹²⁰ *Select Committee*, Volume 1, 87–88. *Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration*, Police/Immigrant Relations. Volume 3, Session 1971–72, London 1972, 672.

¹²¹ *Select Committee*, Volume 1, 69.

¹²² *Select Committee*, Volume 3, 694, para 2867–8.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 694, para 2867–8.

Wandsworth. In Boxer's account, the Wandsworth police liaison officer agreed to examine the matter, but there was then a five-month period with no news. The Council then assumed that the police saw Help on Arrest as "a scheme they did not really want to work". Press coverage fuelled the further breakdown of the relationship.¹²⁴ Even the more official basis of the CRC could not prevent tensions with the police.

The Help on Arrest scheme was an indicator of a radical strategy – the bust card – moving into a more mainstream form of work, and funding, however indirectly, by the state into the 1970s and beyond, into the twenty-first century.¹²⁵ The things that Defence, Release and the Help on Arrest schemes were calling for – better treatment of people who have been arrested in being able to access independent legal advice and making telephone calls – were incorporated into the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.¹²⁶ However, the issue of the difficult relationship between police forces in Britain and minoritized ethnic groups remains one that has yet to be resolved.

6. Conclusion

As the African Caribbean community in Britain grew in the course of the 1950s and 1960s, so did the scale of the problem of aggressive policing, particularly in London. Faced with an indifferent and sometimes hostile state, the African Caribbean community adopted self-help and mutual aid strategies to counteract issues with obtaining funding from mainstream sources. Whilst some of these strategies, such as partner schemes, were a way of circumventing the discrimination that led to exclusion from mainstream banking, they reflected the philosophy of the community being a source of succour in times of need. Forms of crowdfunding – from holding a concert or carnival – offered a means of using the collective to raise cash in a short-time frame. In the case of finding money to cover the fees of a Windrush stowaway, or to pay the legal fees of people arrested during the Notting Hill riots, crowdfunding was effective. The purpose of the money and its outcome were clear. Crowdfunding was also well-suited to communities that had strong networks and social

¹²⁴ Ibid., 694, para 2867–8.

¹²⁵ For example, see the work of *Nadia Joanne Britton*, Race and Policing. A Study of Police Custody, in: *British Journal of Criminology* 40 (2000) 4, 639–658.

¹²⁶ Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, 1984 chapter 60, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/contents>, (30.11.2022).

spaces, where news and information could be shared, and action taken quickly. Building on the efforts to raise funds for legal fees after the riots, and specific cases in the 1960s, Defence tried to use the crowdfunding model – and the goodwill of lawyers to wait for payment when their clients were eventually awarded legal aid – to run a service. For Defence, crowdfunding offered a means of gathering the necessary resources to address something that the community lacked: the legal expertise needed to mitigate police aggression. Its success was inevitably tempered by the willingness of the police to allow a phone call on arrest, and the quality of the lawyers who were prepared to work with them. Yet crowdfunding enabled a rapid response that was by the community, for the community. Defence was short-lived, partly because this model made it difficult to sustain a service in the longer run, and Michael X rightly surmised that the counterculture might be better placed to take on the principles of running a 24-hour telephone line linking people to legal advice and support. Release had the same financial model of using crowdfunding, at least to begin with. Defence introduced the possibility that there could be a “welfare state from below” that could be created from the community’s own funds and shaped to meet its needs, and Release developed this. The idea of getting timely help to people on arrest was influential, shaping Help on Arrest schemes throughout the 1970s, which in turn was part of wider campaigns to require the police to change their practice.

Contrary to Deakin’s 1970 view, self-help and mutual aid were political and ideological: whether such groups were set up to deal with the vicissitudes of everyday life or tackle structural injustice, they saw the community of peers as being a source of support through pooling resources. Exploring the role that such approaches played in tackling aggressive policing in London in the 1950s and 1960s furthers our understanding of the development of voluntary community work and anti-racism activism that challenged an indifferent or hostile state.

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