

SOAS ICOP Policy Briefings

To Inform Government and Parliamentary Debate



The Broken 'Social Contract' - Episode 1: Policing (Transcript) *Bollo Brook Youth Centre, in collaboration with Renata Albuquerque and Simon Tullett, SOAS, 25th September 2020*

POLICE: *[indcipherable]*

YOUNG PERSON: I want to understand, am I being detained, sir? Why? Why?

POLICE: ...detaining you sir for a Section 23

YOUNG PERSON: Why? Why? But why?

POLICE: Because my colleagues have suspicion that your friend has drugs on him. *[Sound of car door being opened.]* Thank you, right, one second.

YOUNG PERSON: Wait, wait, wait. What are you doing? What are you doing?

POLICE: I'm putting cuffs on you...

YOUNG PERSON: Why?

POLICE: ...because it's Section 23 *[indcipherable]*.

YOUNG PERSON: You guys are just talking about these acts. What's your badge number please?

POLICE: My shoulder number?

YOUNG PERSON: What's your badge number and your name?

POLICE: My badge number?

YOUNG PERSON: Yes, yes, yes. No, don't take, why are you taking my phone for? OK, no, what are you doing? *[Sound of scuffle]* Jesus. Wait, hold on, hold on, hold on. *[Sound of thud]* Oh my God, what are you doing?

[Intro Music]

INTRO: This is the first in a mini-series of podcast shorts by Bollo Brook Youth Centre for Corridors of Power. Each episode will focus on a different element of the broken social contract. This episode is on policing.

YOUNG PERSON 1: The first time I got stopped and searched, I was 13. It was outside my house, like in the alleyway outside my house. Erm, I think I was wearing a black jacket in my school uniform. So my shoes were black and so were my trousers. But my shirt was open and you can see my school tie and whatnot. It was three white men and there was a car parked in the car park, like a police van. And as I was walking, they came up, and they came up to me. They put me up against the fence and just

told me some BS about how they're invoking the search and stop rights act or something like that, and that because I looked suspicious. And so they searched me and whatnot and I just felt like I felt like a criminal. Like, they didn't ask me how old I was, if I was going to school, you know, if I live there. They just told me I looked suspicious and now they're going to search me. You know, and I just felt like violated.

YOUNG PERSON 2: When we take the idea of protection and the idea that we're exchanging the social contract is ultimately protection. Firstly, I'd say protection of what? That social contract emerged, not as a social contract for the whole of society, but as a social contract for the ruling class to have protection for their property fundamentally. And that's why when we look at institutions such as the police and other various arms of the state, they are there to protect property and to protect things rather than protect people. And that's why we see this, this false idea of protection being about the protection of all people; but in reality, what we mean is the protection of property and an extension, the protection of the people who own the property.

YOUNG PERSON 3: My viewpoint about my community is that speaking to the police in my community doesn't make you any safer because you're either going to get yourself arrested or put on some gang matrix or something. And even when you do speak to them, you don't get any protection from them or any protection when you go back to the community from any reprisals. There is no such thing in the policing system as anonymity, so people just don't talk to them because they feel like if they don't, they'll be kept safer.

YOUNG PERSON 4: Living my life with my experiences, I feel like it's so easy for a police officer to just come approach you and bamboozle you with just a whole load of section this, section that. And where the problem lies is that, a lot of us don't even know what section this or that is. So it's so easy for an officer to come and talk a whole load of rubbish, like.

YOUNG PERSON 5: I believe we should move funding away from TSG that creates tensions within communities, and instead use that money to help community projects such as Bollo [Brook].

YOUNG PERSON 6: My viewpoint on how the police can make a better system is basically the police need to be educated in working with communities and not see all of us as criminals. They need to be measured on whether they really do keep us safe and not on how many arrests they make.

YOUNG PERSON 7: What I'd like to see done is, we need to have the acquired knowledge in order to defend our freedom and defend our rights because without our rights for nothing. And that's just taught me that, when they say knowledge is power, that is power, because they've got the power, they've got the knowledge to use that power, if that makes sense. Whereas us, we haven't got that knowledge, so there's no power there. And that's why you're made to feel like you're obligated to cooperate with an officer whenever he's just talking anything to you. And it's just like, that's their power and that power is that knowledge; whereas with us, we lack that. And, you know, it's not fair. It's not, it's not fair.

For further information on the issues raised here, please contact Colin Brent at bollo@ealing.gov.uk, Simon Tullett at st92@soas.ac.uk or Renata Albuquerque at ra40@soas.ac.uk. Please also visit our website for further briefings (<https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/cop/>), and contact Professor Alison Scott-Baumann and her team for further briefings and access to other experts, at as150@soas.ac.uk.