Running up a Down-Escalator in the Middle of a Class Structure Gone Pear-Shaped

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Sociological Research Online, 18 (1) 8
<<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/18/1/8.html>>
10.5153/sro.2867

Received: 21 May 2012 Accepted: 27 Nov 2013 Published: 28 Feb 2013

Abstract

Whilst widening participation to higher education was approaching New Labour's target of 50% of 18-30s (for women at least), it was presented as a professionalisation of the proletariat but in reality and in hindsight it can be seen to have disguised a proletarianisation of the professions - for which HE supposedly prepares its graduates - with many reduced to para-professions at best. It is argued therefore that education as a whole faces a credibility crunch. However, many have nowhere else to go since without qualifications they face falling into the so-called 'underclass' which was widely seen to have manifested itself in the riots of summer 2011. Like other commentators, we point out that the majority of youth did not riot and focus instead upon the children of the new working-middle class who are running up a down-escalator of devalued qualifications. This only intensifies national hysteria about education as the Coalition's reception of Browne's Review restricts competitive academic HE entry to those who can afford tripled fees, while relegating those who cannot to 'Apprenticeships Without Jobs' (cf. Finn 1987) in FE and private providers. With reference to Allen and Ainley (2011), this paper speculates as to the likely outcome of this generational crisis.

Keywords: *Riots, Olympics, Social Class, New Middle Working Class, So-Called 'Underclass', Education, Training, Higher Education, Further Education, E-Bacc*

Introduction

'...the responsibility to understand how the society has produced citizens capable of the scenes we witnessed and the conditions that gave rise to them taking to the streets and conducting themselves in those ways.' *Open Letter to Prime Minister Cameron from Professor Gus John* 13/8/11

1.1 The original abstract for this paper was submitted on 5th August. This was the day after Mark Duggan was shot by police in Tottenham, leading to a week of riots in the capital and elsewhere in England. While the exact causes and consequences still have to be determined, it is argued here that the riots represented the crystallization of an emerging new (English) social formation, which has fractured a 'rough' and unskilled section of the formerly manually working class from a newly constituted 'respectable' working-middle of the employed population (Roberts 1977). It is these latter who are the main focus of this paper.

1.2 It is acknowledged by most sociologists who still understand social classes as things made up of millions of people in similar social situations, whose relations explain if not determine the development of modern societies, that things have changed. Insofar as this is still of academic concern, given the predominance in what remains of sociology departments in British universities of a 'discursivity' that denies the facticity of class to see it as one amongst many gendered and racialised etc subject positions, a spectrum of opinion ranges from a world of rationally calculating individuals, through sliding scales of status to the eight occupational groups of the soon-to-be-abolished UK Office of Population and Census Statistics. The five A-Es of market researchers with their additional electorally crucial C1s and C2s are reduced in the conventional three upper-middle-working class pyramids, while Marx's two basic classes have been recast worldwide as other intermediate classes and the peasantry have collapsed into a proletariat that globally is now more numerous than ever.

1.3 One example of the acceptance of such change is Owen Jones who, in his widely read 2011 book *Chavs*, sees change imposed by a deliberate political strategy of successive Conservative/ Coalition and New Labour governments which has attempted to 'chavify' the entire working class, recasting it 'From salt of the earth to scum of the earth' (p. 72). 'What the Tories are [now] doing is placing the chav myth at the heart of British politics, so as to entrench the idea that there are entire communities around Britain crawling with feckless, delinquent, violent and sexually debauched no-hopers' (p. 80). This follows from 'Thatcher's ruinous class war' in which 'those working-class communities that suffered most were... herded into an "underclass" whose poverty was supposedly self-inflicted' (p. 67). However, where New Labour redefined poverty as social exclusion to focus on a minority blamed for their own 'unemployability', Jones quotes polls showing half the population still describe themselves as working class, a constant figure since the 1960s (p. 33). The demonization of this majority is 'the flagrant triumphalism of the rich who, no longer challenged by those below them, instead point and laugh at them' (p. 269).

1.4 Unlike Jones' who adjusts the conventional pyramid into an 'hour glass', Guy Standing (2011) not only argues that 'globalisation has resulted in a fragmentation of national class structures' (p. 7), but that increasingly large numbers of people are being pushed into a new class that he calls 'the precariat'. Drawn from different sections of society, this new, growing and mainly youthful class is also 'dangerous' because it may be hostile to the privileges it sees enjoyed by labourism's dwindling core. 'First used by French sociologists in the 1980s, to describe temporary or seasonal workers', in Italy *precariati* implies 'a precarious existence as a normal state of living', though it is not Hardt and Negri's (2005) *Multitude*. In Germany 'the term has been used to describe not only temporary workers but also the jobless who have no hope of social integration' (p. 13). This is not, however, a recreation of Marx's *lumpenproletariat*, 'that passively rotting social scum' – far from it. Standing's precariat is much larger and politically more explosive: 'It was not a proletariat being formed but a temporary precarious labour force' that, though it includes millions of migrants in developing countries, stretches well beyond the 'working poor' (p. 9) and is far from homogeneous. So 'The teenager who flits in and out of the internet cafe while surviving on fleeting jobs' (p. 13) shares a general feeling of economic insecurity experienced by the precariat as the 'four As – anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation', the result of blocked avenues for advancement (p. 19).

Stuck in the middle with who?

2.1 In our view, Jones insufficiently differentiates 'the middle class' from 'the rich'. So when he writes, 'the myth of the classless society gained ground just as society became more rigged in favour of the middle class' (p. 167) and 'The result is a society run by the middle class for the middle class' (p. 182), though this is well put, typically of most class analysis, it leaves out the ruling class. Unlike Roberts (2001) who devotes a whole chapter of his *Class in Modern Britain* to this 'clearest of all class divisions', which splits 'a tiny minority (less than one per cent) on one side, from the great mass of the people on the other'. This is, he says, 'the best organised and most class conscious of all the classes' (p.169-192). Similarly, Standing (2001) sees 'an elite', consisting of a tiny number of absurdly rich global citizens lording it over the universe... Below that elite comes the "salaried", still in stable full-time employment, some hoping to move into the elite, the majority just enjoying the trappings of their kind, with their pensions, paid holidays and enterprise benefits...' (p. 104). Like Roberts above, Standing sees 'no fence' – as Roberts puts it – between these managers and professionals and the upper or ruling class to whom they accept 'a service relationship'; but Standing describes a 'proficiens' – another portmanteau word combining professionals and technicians and including self-employed contractors – alongside this traditional (upper) middle class.

2.2 Jones though, recognises 'Most middle-class people cannot afford to go private, and want good properly funded local schools and hospitals' (p. 268) and he adds 'middle-level occupations... are shrinking' (p. 152) as 'More and more university graduates are forced to take relatively humble jobs' (p. 176). This indicates a polarising class structure going pear-shaped rather than an hour glass with the bottom half recast as 'chavs'. As Jones confirms, right to buy 'drove a wedge through working-class Britain, creating a divide between homeowners and council tenants' (61). It is the formerly unskilled, 'rough' and 'unrespectable' section of the traditionally manually working class that has been 'demonized', leaving a new 'respectable' middle-working/ working-middle class between the 'snobs and the yobs', as reported by Ainley 1993 (chapter 5). These 'hard working families' are often contrasted in a familiar strategy by politicians and their supporting media with the undeserving poor beneath, contributing to the hysteria surrounding selective education, for instance. This is another bubble about to burst, so that, as Jones rightly says, 'at the centre of a new political agenda must be a total redefinition of aspiration' (p. 258).

2.3 Our own interest concerns the recomposition of this 'middle' and, rather than the creation of a mass precariat, how the class structure is turning 'pear shaped'. In our own reaction to the riots (in *Guardian on-line* 14/8/11), we pointed out that even if this was the second confrontation of youth with the police following the winter 2010 student protests, 'the number of young people who have taken to the streets still remains comparatively small. Most haven't!' Therefore, while it is tempting to lump them all together as 'angry youth', the student protestors who first took to the streets in winter 2010 represented a very different constituency. The student protestors can be defined as middle- or 'aspirational' working-class. They had played by the rules and worked hard at school but quickly became politicised in response to the way university was being put beyond their reach and that of their younger brothers and sisters. Despite government and opposition promises, they also realized their generation will be the first to be worse off than their parents. Even if many will eventually find work, in many cases it will not be anywhere near commensurate with their hard earned qualifications and may be part-time and 'para-professional' at best.

2.4 On the other hand, the urban rioters – *The Guardian* (12/08/12) estimated that almost 80% of those up

in court were under 25 – ‘the criminals who shame the nation’ as *The Telegraph* called them (10/8/11), have become marginal to society. Failed by an academic education system, without work and without hope, they no longer play by any rules. Not having any commitment to ‘fairness’ or any faith in ‘social justice’, they were referred to by the New Labour acronym of NEET (Not in Employment Education or Training). They have become youth’s new ‘underclass’. Not ‘political’ compared to the students, according to some Manchester youngsters interviewed by *BBC News* (11/08/11) – though not we assume, charged with any of the violence – the riots were ‘the best protest ever’ against a system that denied them access to the consumer goods they see flaunted around them.

2.5 There have been opportunities for these two groups to come together, when FE and school students joined the university student protests against fees and to demand the restoration of Educational Maintenance Allowances, for instance. It is difficult to imagine them ever being united for long, however. Even though they often live next door in the same neighbourhoods, ducking and diving at the same part-time McJobs – if they are lucky and despite recession worsening the situation of all youth – they are often antagonistic to one another in their day-to-day living despite some cultural overlaps (as described eg. by Winlow and Hall 2006).

2.6 In emphasising that most ‘ordinary kids’ (Brown 1987) did not riot we also wonder whether, without economic policies that ensure reasonable employment prospects and at least a sniff of prosperity, they will continue to cram for exams when they have little chance of getting into the top universities. It seems not so many as the government intended have been tempted by cut-price ‘apprentice-degrees’ in FE while apprenticeships and the training agencies delivering them have suffered a very poor press and, indeed, in many cases appear indistinguishable from workfare. Maybe the riots have tipped the new middle towards the worst of both worlds – getting even more into debt (‘a small mortgage’, as the NUS President described degrees estimated at £60,000) in desperate hopes of a secure job in three or four years, ‘when the economy has picked up’. Thus, they may continue to scramble up the down-escalator of devalued qualifications so as not to fall into the ‘underclass’ beneath; but they may not be so far from them as their parents think!

2.7 The danger in accepting such a class reformation in the ‘working-middle’ of the post-war tripartite social pyramid is that it accepts the reality of an ‘underclass’ beneath, tainted as this notion is by the racist eugenics of, *inter alia*, Charles Murray. Kirk Mann’s 1991 book *The Making of an English ‘Underclass’* began by observing that sociologists who advanced the theory of a new class division in society separating ‘the underclass’ from the rest were given publicity not usually granted to anyone claiming to prove the existence of other class divisions. Charles Murray’s 1990 polemic *The Emerging British UNDERCLASS* (with no inverted commas but capitalized in its original publication), was featured in a special issue of *The Sunday Times* magazine (26/11/89), Murray’s ‘research’ in the UK having been sponsored by Rupert Murdoch’s News International.

2.8 As Mann points out, this merely follows ‘a long tradition of commentators who have observed a stratum of hopeless degenerates’ (p. 2) at the bottom of society. The names for this section of society have varied down the years:

‘excluded groups, marginalized groups, underclass, residuum, the poor, reserve army of labour, housing and social security classes, stagnant reserve army, relative surplus population and the lumpen proletariat are all terms that have been used to describe a layer within, or beneath, the working class.’ (p 160)

2.9 Mann even added his own contribution to the list – ‘lapilli’, meaning ‘small fragments of lava ejected from a volcano’ (*ibid*) and, presumably, melting back into the molten flow when the temperature rises again. For, ‘while each generation has seen a sub-stratum within the working class, each period has also witnessed the rehabilitation of that sub-stratum.’ (p. 107) Predictably, this would happen again – if and when recession ends in recovery and resumed growth; the question now being whether this is ever likely to occur (See discussion below from Gamble 2009).

Young people – a ‘reserve army’ or a non-class?

3.1 Where, asked Mann, did this leave the theory that the underclass reproduced itself through a culture of poverty transmitted down the generations? It relocates it, rather, within a reconstituted reserve army of labour (RAL). Andrew Gamble’s 2009 book *The Spectre at the Feast* follows Marx in seeing ‘One of the key functions of economic crisis is to reconstitute the reserve army of labour’ (47). As Gamble argues, this previously occurred at the time of the last recession which ended ‘the long boom’ of more or less full employment (for men at least) from 1945-73. Monetarist economics then relied on maintaining millions in the poverty of structural unemployment as a drag on the wages and a threat to the conditions of those in full-time employment.

3.2 The reconstitution of the RAL involved in the state’s resolution of the latest capitalist crisis goes further than in the 1980s and implicates education rather than training to an extent it has not done before. What we called ‘Education without jobs’ (Ainley and Allen 2010: 13) replaced the *Training without Jobs* described by Finn in 1987. With the return of permanent and structural unemployment, education and training – alongside housing, social security, policing and regional policies – helped reconstitute through the provision of ‘worthless’ vocational certifications a ‘rough’, ‘semi-’ or ‘unskilled’ section of the formerly manually working industrial proletariat into an irregularly employed peripheral so-called ‘underclass’ of NEETs. These were the main focus of New Labour concern and were reduced to a claimed 8% of 16+ year-olds, now nearly doubled to 15% (Allen 2012a).

3.3 The extent of young people’s disengagement from the labour market was illustrated in the latest

(November 2012) employment figures from the Office for National Statistics. There were 963,000 unemployed 16-24 year olds, down 49,000 from the previous quarter, counteracted by a 50,000 increase in the number of 16-24 years in full-time education. The same figures show that only 57% of 18-24 year-olds are in employment – a 2% fall from two years ago (Allen 2012b).

3.4 The 'reserve army' thesis implies a temporary status; its members return to employment when the recession ends and remaining there until the next crisis. However, we have argued (Allen and Ainley 2011a) that rising youth unemployment, which is the result of longer term, structural changes in the labour market, has been exacerbated by the decline of manufacturing employment and its accompanying 'time serving' apprenticeship system. This has left a permanent reserve army since the 1970s and the grandchildren of this 'YTS generation' is today joined by many more young people who are not just 'warehoused' in lengthening schooling and sixth form, FE and HE thereafter, but actively 'wasted' in every sense (see Winlow and Hall 2006 but also Cheeseman 2011). It is also bizarre that young people should go into debt for the chance of being exploited in the wage relation of employment as well as working for nothing for 'work experience' and in unpaid internships. This new form of indentured labour is becoming widely accepted however.

3.5 Gorz (1980) refers to a permanent 'non-class' within post-industrial capitalist economies – the result of increases in the technological capacity of capitalism:

'This non-class encompasses all those who have been expelled from production... or whose capacities are under-employed as a result of the automation and computerisation of intellectual work. It includes all supernumeraries of present day social production, who are potentially or actually unemployed, whether permanently or temporarily, partially or completely.' (Gorz 1980: 68)

3.6 Gorz uses 'non-class' with reference to the classical Marxist sense that this group, because of its disparate nature (like Standing's precariat), is no longer able to develop the class consciousness of the traditional working class – now, according to Gorz (as Standing), representing a privileged minority of the population. When published, Gorz's arguments may have been rather premature, but at the start of the 21st century deserve to be revisited. Certainly, Marxist theory has yet to confront situations where, as in the case of countries like the UK, large numbers of the working population remain outside of mainstream labour as a normal state of affairs (see below). In particular, Labour movement organisations, not to mention socialist parties seeking 'to lead the working class', also have to understand and adapt to these changes if they are to become credible with marginalised youth and others.

Implications for education

4.1 Regardless of whether young people are best defined as part of a reserve army or a 'non-class', the education sector has become increasingly important in the management of a growing number of 'students'. As well as in relegating many school and college students to worthless vocational qualifications (see Wolf 2011), education to all levels was also complicit in 'upgrading' occupations in the expanded services, sales, middle-management and administration of a post-industrial economy in which much manual labour that was not automated and deskilled was exported (Brown and Lauder 2010). Expanded higher education in particular provided supposedly higher level courses certifying the 'skills' required for many of the new and often graduatised jobs in the so-called 'knowledge economy'.

4.2 Yet, insofar as institutionalized education and training have any remaining direct economic function, it is not to construct some 'new correspondence' with a reconstructed economy but to inculcate competitive 'personalised' attitudes into its pupils/ students/ trainees (Furlong and Cartmel 1997). For, rather than 'employer demand for skills', it is the absence of work – particularly the disappearance of specific 'youth jobs' – that has been the reason for young people staying in full-time education for longer and experiencing a more prolonged transition to adulthood – if they are able to make a transition at all. Education thus plays a larger part for longer in all young people's lives – but also for many adults in and out of employment who are often subjected to training and retraining as a form of work discipline now that, as Winlow and Hall say, 'Accreditation has expanded to every nook and cranny of economic existence' (o.c., 184). Without work however, education has little economic rationality. It functions instead as the main means of social control over youth by enhancing existing divisions amongst young people and replacing the social control formerly exercised in the workplace by wages. For many, particularly those in the 'middle', the education system is like running up a downwards escalator where you have to go faster and faster simply to stand still.

'Personalisation'

5.1 Collective appreciation of this increasingly common situation has been undermined by on-going class reformation mediated by the differentiating role of education to all levels referred to above. New Labour's 'standards agenda' in schools and 'widening participation' to HE have also contributed to 'individualizing' social class. So it is not surprising that surveys show students, even though they are aware that different types of courses and institutions attract people with different social characteristics, consider class differences as being unimportant in the determination of destinies and see their sixth form, college or university as treating everybody 'the same' (eg. Ainley and Bailey 1997, chapter 5). Because, though becoming increasingly high stakes and competitive, 'learning' has also been reinvented as a personalised affair. The implication of being asked to take responsibility for their own learning is that students are also expected to regard their own failure as the consequence of individual inadequacies – 'You only have yourself to blame' if you do not achieve, as their teachers repeatedly tell them.

5.2 While recognizing the role of business and media corporations in the promotion of a new identity

culture, claims that the disappearance of the 'old certainties' of class from the consciousness of young people will result in new entrepreneurial strategies to survive the transition from youth to adulthood can be rejected (MacDonald and Marsh 2005). Neither is it the case that inter-generational inequalities are now the main dividing line within society as Willetts alleged (2009) and also Howker and Malik 2010 (but see discussion in Coatman and Shrubsole 2012). Even though young people may not be 'class conscious' in the traditional sense, class differences run through the process of transition from youth to adulthood. In particular, differences in economic power continue to determine access to the 'good schools' that ensure what Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 1988 with Passeron 1990) calls 'cultural capital' is reproduced. For example, the 7% of parents (12% in London; 20% in Bristol) still able to afford private schooling can rest assured that not only are 50% of 'A' grades at A-level achieved by this sector, but that one third of those being privately educated will achieve three grade 'A's' (Ainley and Allen 2010: p. 90). A place at a Russell university, while not certain, is therefore much more likely.

5.3 As graduates on average earn more than non-graduates and Russell graduates more still, it is quite understandable that young people continue to queue in large numbers for higher education despite speculation about just how much of a lifetime salary premium graduates may enjoy. However, while the relative advantages of being a graduate might hold up in a 'labour queue' for employment, the ratio between graduate earnings and graduate costs is likely to fall as the balance between well-paid permanent employment and casualised 'Mcjobs' continues to tilt. Perceptions that the cake is no longer worth the candle seem supported by UCAS 2012 application data – down 8.7% in the UK and 9.9% in England.

5.4 The 'graduatisation' of a further tranche of jobs will continue though, pushing those with lower levels of qualifications further down the jobs queue and even closer towards a situation where holding a degree becomes a new 'norm' for hopes of securing 'core' employment. Also, as average levels of income continue to fall – the median ('middle') weekly income being just £375 – and with more and more graduates consigned to low-paid 'customer services' employment (Allen and Ainley 2011b) then the Coalition may well regret raising the starting point for repaying student loans to an annual income of £21,000. Indeed, many universities – even as they raise their fees to the maximum £9,000 p.a. currently permitted – are indicating to potential students that many of their courses are available well below their official 'guide price', given bursaries and other allowances..

5.5 The Million+ Group of former-polytechnic new universities claim to be contributing to 'the development of a knowledge economy' through 'sustaining... social mobility' (Hadfield *et al* 2012: p. 18) but real upward social mobility ended in the 1970s with the economic development and an expanding welfare state that sustained a growing professional middle class (Marwick 1980). Since then upward social mobility has been largely illusory, as service sector growth has redefined many occupations as professional or para-professional while, ironically, disguising a proletarianisation of the traditional professions that are being steadily reduced towards the conditions of increasingly insecure and contractual waged labour. Nevertheless, claim Million+, 'the earnings of these graduates were likely to be 15 per cent higher than the earnings of people with lower qualifications, many of whom could have progressed to university but did not do so' (*ibid*: 19). This is the rub, for, while it is clearly the view of Coalition Education Ministers, Willetts and Gove, that too many working-class kids have gone to university and should be returned to the apprenticeships and to FE from whence they have strayed, if masses of young people supported by their parents are prepared to become indebted up to £27k+ in hopes of '15 per cent higher than the earnings of people with lower qualifications', then the government welcomes Million+'s report which turns large parts of what was HE into FE, if not Youth Training for flexible paraprofessional labour.

5.6 As for young people/ students themselves (since adult/ 25+ students have already been largely lost to HE), one of Winlow and Hall's interviewees at a new university typifies their instrumental attitudes:

"I think at the back of my mind I was thinking, I don't want a job. Going to university gives you three years extra, and at the end of it you should be able to get a better job so really it probably makes sense." (2006: 68).

5.7 As the authors comment,

'Those with better A-level results select upper tier traditional universities or new universities in "cool" British cities, leaving these other new universities with a surfeit of less academically interested or able students. These students tend to receive low-grade or mid-grade degrees that carry progressively less currency with corporate employers seeking high-achievers for their "fast-track" management schemes in an "employers' market", where in many sectors the supply of qualified young people greatly outstrips demand.' (p. 61)

And conclude:

'Higher education is thus increasingly focused on "outputs" – awards and references confirming knowledge, skills and personal qualities – which students can then take to the market. The more diverse benefits of traditional higher education, in terms of general enlightenment, disseminating social and scientific knowledge and helping to create the educated and critical population upon which genuine democracy would depend, is forgotten as universities are increasingly seen as machines for moulding young people to fit the labour market.' (p. 60)

5.8 Now that universities in general are moving from delusions of widening participation (as perhaps Million+ above) to being complicit in the cruel con trick they play on most of their students, this is indeed,

Education's credibility crunch

6.1 These developments threaten to burst the whole educational bubble of recent years, the 'crunch' being that for many young people education is ceasing to be seen as a meaningful way forward in their lives but becomes increasingly alien (Lave and McDermott 2002). Students are mortgaging their uncertain futures for fees while many universities could be said to have speculated in sub-prime student markets. With qualification and grade inflation from GCSEs to degree classifications apparent to all save Vice-Chancellors and exam boards, concern persists about quality – including the basic literacy and numeracy of many of those starting university courses. Teaching to the test has made subject knowledge and understanding a thing of the past as students prepare for a succession of competitive exams that start earlier and end later. Decomposing learning into 'bite-sized chunks' also reduces coherence and lowers attainment (McArdle-Clinton 2008), contributing to the allegations of what is incorrectly called 'dumbing-down' that have paradoxically but not coincidentally accompanied the emphasis on education-education-education. Even where formal study allows genuine intellectual development, educational participation starts from the largely instrumental motive of gaining labour market credentials. This is recognized as 'overschooling' when school, college and university graduates fail to find employment comparable to the level of qualification they have acquired as the value of this level of qualification declines. Consequently, a crisis of legitimacy is endemic for overschooled but undereducated pupils/ students and their teachers/ lecturers at all levels of learning from primary to postgraduate schools.

6.2 The heightened competition between the 'free schools' and academies intended by Michael Gove's 'post-bureaucratic education' is competition only in cramming for more 'academic excellence' exemplified by the independence of the private schools and is only for the few who can demonstrate more or less expensively acquired cultural capital in tests of levels of literacy. For the majority who fail and are made to feel that they are failures, vocational qualifications become even 'more practical'. In any case, what is ignored by all the calls for vocational relevance and a return to apprenticeships (the Conservative Manifesto promised 400,000 but the Coalition only announced 100,000, adding to the c.75,000 surviving by 2010 – some in supermarkets and similar, rebranding Train to Gain as apprenticeships for instance) is the fundamental fact that most employers no longer require apprentices. Any employers who do need them run in-house apprenticeship schemes but precious few remain. 'The demands of employers', like retired Tesco boss, Sir Terry Leahy, amount to 'paperwork kept to a minimum and instructions simple' (quoted approvingly in *The Daily Mail* 14/10/2009)!

6.3 Raising the participation age in 2013 and 2015 to warehouse young people in schools and colleges is perhaps preferable to preparation for such employment as at least it can keep dreams (delusions) alive. Certainly, cutting back on post-compulsory education abandons more people to the corrosive consequences of unemployment that are much more costly in the long term. These, however, are mitigated by the prevalence of part-time working, an experience that is habituated from sixth form/ FE onwards and which typically continues post-graduation, often in the same occupations in which students worked their way through uni'. Meanwhile, non-student youth who are squeezed out of graduated employment and who cannot find or stick routine employment or the apprenticeships and trade occupations that are still available, find at best insecure, irregular employment in 'the grey economy'. There they join the many students and trainees who are amongst the 8.2 million who work part-time, approximately 27% of all workers – including 1.42 million unable to find a full-time job (ONS September 2012).

6.4 Only some of those from elite universities are likely to be guaranteed 'graduate jobs'. Others – possibly up to one in three graduates – are likely to be 'underemployed' in jobs previously done by non-graduates, assuming they are able to find a job at all. As many of those in their late teens remain dependent upon their parents for much longer and with nearly £40,000 debts once fees rise according to NUS, they are faced with a housing market which, despite moving from boom to bust, remains difficult if not impossible to enter, while in London private rents have risen to half average wages. This returns us to the class structure gone pear-shaped, the effects of which, we argued, was presented by the riots and which has influenced events since – whether in the 'coming together' of the middle during the Olympics and/or the more usual attempt by government to turn that middle against the 'undeserving poor'.

Conclusion

7.1 Today's 'education without jobs' lasts much longer for more young people and is more far-reaching than Finn's 1987 *Training Without Jobs*, which was still 'front-loaded' even if going nowhere. The end of post-war full employment (for men at least) and the reconstitution of the RAL from the 1970s on, was, Gamble (2009) suggests, a permanent legacy of the Thatcherite resolution of the economic crisis of the welfare state. The new and expanded RAL, under the reconfigured and reconstituted new market and post-welfare state will – unless it is opposed and resisted, be equally permanent.

7.2 This paper has suggested that a new class configuration is prefigured in new patterns of part-time and temporary contractual employment that are reaching up the generations. In addition to condemning a stigmatized section of the formerly manually working class to long-term structural unemployment, as happened from the 1970s on, in the latest economic crisis the RAL is reconstituted so that part-time work and study/ training are intermitted throughout the life course of many more people. Institutionalized learning then plays a larger part in everyone's life than previously, although including the 'learningfare' already familiar in FE where receipt of benefits has long been conditional on attendance on some courses.

7.3 If these developments are viewed as a form of work sharing, it can be argued that at least work is being shared more evenly amongst larger numbers of people. However, none of them are working to

capacity, while those who are full-time employed continue to work the longest hours in Europe, others remain full-time unemployed despite the benefit cuts and workfare regimes visited upon them. So, whether the growing prevalence of part-time work with breaks between temporary contracts will afford opportunities, possibly using ubiquitous social networking, to bring the different constituencies of youth together again and change the situation remains to be seen.

7.4 As education and training becomes even more involved in social control through learningfare and warehousing for youth (perhaps extending the National Citizens' Service and other forms of 'volunteering' and 'work experience'), those teachers and others fighting to return education to its true purposes of critically transmitting culture from the past in order to develop it in a sustainable future, can attempt to use the critical space remaining to them to enable their students to comprehend their situation so that together with them they can overcome it. Part of this understanding will involve coming to terms with the reconstitution of social class which this paper has suggested contributed to the 2011 riots and which explains also why most people did not riot.

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