HOW BLACK WORKING-CLASS YOUTH ARE CRIMINALISED AND EXCLUDED IN THE ENGLISH SCHOOL SYSTEM

A London case study

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Preface

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT of Boris Johnson, who once described black children in Africa as having 'water melon smiles', is appointing people to inform and head inquiries on racial disparities, who are scornful of the very idea of institutional racism. They front a system of denial, where the structural causes of racial disparities and disproportionalities are brushed off as 'flimsy' – the result of the 'internalised perceptions' of 'BAME communities' and their 'grievance cultures'. A particular view of the British black Caribbean heritage community, as mired in gang culture and prone to violence, is also advanced. And the black family – absent fathers and weak single mothers – is discussed as dysfunctional.

Such views are not new, nor do they exist in isolation. There is a long history of New Right thinking (that first came to prominence under Thatcherism) placing the blame for racial disadvantage on the failures of the black family. But, today, this racial stereotyping is bolstered by a common-sense racism popularised by the media and its reporting on serious youth violence and knife crime, often discussed as though it was the disease of 'black on black violence'. The 'disease' parallel informs police strategy, resulting in relations between the Metropolitan Police and London's black communities now being at its lowest point since the 1980s. London has the highest rate of child poverty in any English region and more children living in poverty than the whole of Scotland and Wales combined. Yet, in the stampede to embrace a quasi-pathological view of knife crime as rooted in black gang culture, there is next to no interrogation of class, or the way austerity has stripped communities of any hope of a more racially and socially just future.

Thankfully, though, a new generation of researchers and activists are challenging media and policy frameworks. They know that racial stereotyping, force, surveillance, stigmatisation and repression are not the answer to social problems like youth violence and knife crime. Community campaigners, charities, academics, researchers and even some voices in parliament argue that the systematic dismantling of vital services, especially youth provision, and the restructuring of education to the detriment of the working class as a whole, has quite literally created an educational underclass, whose only prospect is a downward spiral from school exclusion, to youth detention and ultimately prison.

How Black Working-Class Youth are Criminalised and Excluded in the English School System is a follow up to the IRR's 2019 report *The London Clearances: Race, Housing and Policing.* In her passionate defence of young poor working-class black Londoners' right to a 'shot at life', researcher Jessica Perera amplifies the voices of existing campaigners, while offering her analytical perspective of 'educational enclosure'. She argues that, from the 1980s onwards, the state has been engaged in an ideological onslaught on the black radical tradition and its vision of a democratic,

anti-racist and culturally inclusive education. She sees this as part of a system of 'educational enclosure' through which the state takes back control of education and stymies the dreams of those black and anti-racist educators who have fought so valiantly for a more egalitarian and just education system. In the process, the state has also imposed its own ethnocentric view of British culture on the school curriculum. Perera sees a connection between this 'colour blind', monocultural approach and the alienation of young black people from an educational system that erases their lived reality.

Many young people, whose campaigns today centre around decolonising the curriculum, may not know that in the 1980s and 1990s – when the original New Right created the ideas that inform Conservative structural racism deniers today – there was indeed a vibrant anti-racist movement in education. The IRR contributed to that movement with the publication of *Roots of Racism* and *Patterns of Racism* and *How Racism Came to Britain*. Our office is now home to the Black History Collection, an archive of the documents, magazines and leaflets that prove beyond doubt that the black self-help educational movements and anti-racist curriculum campaigns of that time, were making ideological inroads. That all too brief period of black radical anti-racist history in this country (we will not call it a 'moment'), was overtly contested by the Thatcher government and the New Right of *that* time, which viewed anti-racism as a subversive force. *How Black Working-Class Youth are Criminalised and Excluded in the English School System* recounts that history to show how the past continues to shape the present.

Perera's findings echo the demands of the Black Lives Matter movement which heralds a new struggle for transformative change, similar to that of the 1980s. In today's fights for racial justice, the education and criminal justice systems have emerged as key concerns. But, as Perera argues, they are in fact not separate sites, but conjoined – part of a continuum, as technologies of control, such as CCTV and biometrics make schools the labs in which the securitisation of society is trialled.

Undoubtedly there exists, today, a trajectory that takes young black children from mainstream education, to Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and Alternative Provision, to youth detention centres, and, on reaching adulthood, to prison. Campaigners are calling for an end to the 'PRU-to-prison' pipeline. This report, in helping us understand how the pipeline came about, reinforces the transformative demands of abolitionists.

Liz Fekete
Director Institute of Race Relations, August 2020

RECENT ANALYSIS BY the *Guardian* reveals that, although UK schools are permitted to teach 'black history' as well as the history of people outside the global North, very few actually do.[1] In fact, in 2019, just 11 per cent of GCSE students studied modules that referred to the presence of black people in British history and just 9 per cent of GCSE students, over a two-year period, opted for modules that make specific reference to the British Empire. Part of the answer as to how this has come about lies in a decision made in 2014 by the former secretary for education, Michael Gove, to make the teaching of black history optional. On the other hand, the government has made the teaching of the national curriculum in local authority schools, a legal requirement. But there are variations. Academies, free schools, learning centres providing Alternative Provision, and other private institutions, are legally entitled to teach what they like. (Alternative Provision is a confusing term used to cover a mixed public and private education sector comprised of local authority PRUs, privately run Alternative Provision academies and Alternative Provision free schools.)

How Black Working-Class Youth are Criminalised and Excluded in the English School System is concerned with what happens to black students who may never get the chance of learning about the post-war history of BAME settlement in the UK and the struggles for social and racial justice that followed. Its special focus is on the most marginalised young people in society; those excluded from mainstream school and caught up in youth violence. It sets out to explore the race and class aspects of school exclusions, providing a historical overview of the legislation, policy and practices that have forced so many young people, stigmatised as 'disruptive' out of the mainstream state educational sector. This is already a huge issue in inner London, where according to conservative estimates, the proportion of students in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Provision (AP) is almost double the national rate. As, in London, it is young boys of black Caribbean heritage that are significantly overrepresented in this sector, I have largely focussed on their experience. This is not to say that other communities are not affected. We know for instance that, nationally, Gypsy and Traveller children experience many of the same issues. We are also beginning to see evidence that girls, too are affected, but often by informal exclusions (particularly via 'early exits'), with recent research by the not-for-profit Social Finance drawing attention to higher rates of exclusion amongst girls in social care, with mental health issues or special educational needs.[2]

Those working with excluded young people are rightly concerned about what has been described as the 'PRU-to-prison' pipeline. In what follows, I argue that this concept provides a useful way of describing an alarming trajectory of the criminalisation of young black students. But I also register concern about the way in which policy-makers have taken up the concept to expand and monetarise PRUs. By arguing that PRUs need to be opened up to the market, and professionalised, they are normalising permanent exclusion from mainstream education. Those being educated in what is now frequently called Alternative Provision, are used as pawns in a new education market – I call this 'marketing the marginalised'.

Another way of challenging the PRU-to-prison pipeline descriptor is by looking behind the scenes. By providing a synopsis of the recent history of systematic educational enclosure – a policy enacted by the state at various points to blunt

the political aspirations for racial and social justice of multiracial working-class communities – this research report aims to support important ongoing campaigns. This historical context draws attention to the specific political conditions which have ushered in regressive reforms. Starting with the urban rebellions in 1981, the paper shows how, by the end of that decade, the government had almost abolished all forms of multiracial education and replaced it with a national curriculum. Since then, the neoliberal turn has given rise to more racialised policies targeted once again at rebellious and alienated inner-city youth, particularly after the 'riots' in the northern towns in 2001 and across England in 2011. Rather than the state examining carefully the causes of alienation and discontent, and forging a meaningful take on race and class specificities, it has resorted time and time again to the securitisation of schooling.

By educational enclosure I mean the mechanisms through which multiracial working-class youth living in the inner-city are:

> denied the right to realise their academic potential through exclusion from mainstream education and enclosure in Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision, linked to the increasingly economistic thrust of education to serve only the needs of the labour market;
> deracinated as students both from their collective histories of pre- and post-colonial societies and struggles, migration and settlement. As well as, their anti-racist and radical traditions of resistance here in England;
> assimilated into nationalist ethnocentric educational culture due to a heightened focus on Fundamental British Values, which is closely aligned to the nature of the National Curriculum;
> surveilled and secured by various initiatives, including the Troops to Teachers programme and the Safer Schools Partnerships, as well as technologies of control, such as CCTV and biometrics making schools the laboratory in which the securitisation of society is trialled.

Finally, I relate my research on schooling to our previous concerns highlighted in *The London Clearances: Race, Housing and Policing*, particularly issues of gentrification and housing. In the same way working-class families are severed from community networks through regeneration projects that displace them and price them out of upmarket local amenities, so too are young people excluded from mainstream schools, now a part of the emerging London 'education market' for gentrifiers. In fact, we ask whether processes of regeneration, which demand better educational provision for middle-class gentrifiers, leads to a concomitant cleansing of multiracial working class schools, whereby young people from poorer families, seen as 'disruptive' and/or 'involved in gangs', are blamed for lowering standards and hence decanted from state education into PRUs and Alternative Provision.

My hope is that what follows will assist a new generation of advocates, as well as the Black Lives Matter movement, with its demand to 'decolonise education', in campaigns that centre on the most marginalised and vulnerable young Londoners. Paulo Freire once said 'no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates'. Too often we treat young

people in Alternative Provision as 'unfortunates', that is to say they have suffered such a bad fortune in life, in circumstances so dire and overwhelming that not one of us is capable of preventing their predetermined journey to unemployment and, eventually, criminality. But, to tacitly accept this, means legitimising the fact that there are 'unfortunates' in life who are inevitably to be excluded. Instead, we need to act now to stop the ever-expanding exclusionary education system.

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Section 1 which examines statistics surrounding serious youth violence and knife crime in London and the overrepresentation of young black boys, as both victims and perpetrators, goes on to look at how the media racialises knife crime, while ignoring the growing body of evidence of the strong correlative relationship between school exclusions and youth violence.

Section 2 explores the history of the concept of the 'PRU-to-prison' pipeline in the UK and its earlier US incarnation, to suggest that the criminalisation of young black boys increased as neoliberal economic policies gained ascendancy, with the now extensive privatisation of the state education system coinciding with particular policies towards potentially challenging multiracial working-class communities – along the lines of 'educational enclosure' conceived by Damien M. Sojoyner.

Section 3 charts the English history of neoliberal enclosure of education from the 1979 Thatcher government and its response to the 1981 uprisings and attacks on radical local educational initiatives, to the present, moving through the New Labour era, where the 2001 rebellions in northern towns initiated the Fundamental British Values programme in schools. It details educational enclosures initiated by more recent Conservative governments, including academies and the PRU system, both linked to gentrifying London; and the rebranding of the PRU system as Alternative Provision, a process driven by think-tanks as much as by government.

Section 4 examines the way that educational enclosure has been enacted via the increasing securitisation of education: police officers in schools as a response to 'at risk' populations; Troops to Teachers programmes; the crackdown on 'disruptive behaviour' in classrooms, zero-tolerance policies, isolation booths; the appointment of an education behaviour tsar; technical fixes like CCTV, automated fingerprint identification systems, facial recognition software, palm vein and iris scanners. It considers whether schools not only prepare children for prison but also become the laboratory where securitisation of society is trialled and how zero-tolerance policies work in conjunction with gentrification and the gangs discourse.

1. Serious youth violence and knife crime in London

IN 2019, WHEN the then home secretary Sajid Javid announced a new legal duty on public bodies to prevent and tackle serious youth violence (SYV), including knife crime, he argued that SYV ought to be viewed and treated like a 'disease'.[3] Fast forward to the new reality of Covid 19, a deadly pandemic that at the time of writing has claimed over 45,000 lives, and Javid's argument appears over-dramatic and absurd. At the same time, no one should underestimate the extent and impact of SYV. The latest data from the Office for National Statistics shows a record increase in the overall number of knife offences committed in England and Wales in the 12 months ending in March 2020, with 34 per cent of them in London, and a 28 per cent increase on the previous year in the number of fatal stabbings.[4] Prior to this, figures published by the Metropolitan Police in December 2019 revealed the number of homicides in London had hit a ten-year high and this has been accompanied, since 2014, with a surge in knife and (alleged) gang-related murders.[5] To put it starkly, in the five years between 2014 and 2019 London's homicide rate increased by more than fifty per cent. While it is important to emphasise that these statistics relate to an overall homicide rate, and are therefore not disaggregated in terms of SYV, crime analysis[6] conducted by the Greater London Authority (GLA) paints a picture of the most likely victims of serious youth violence (SYV):

BETWEEN 2014 AND 2019 LONDON'S HOMICIDE RATE INCREASED BY MORE THAN FIFTY PER CENT.

> Three quarters of SYV victims are **male** (75 per cent);
> Eighty-five per cent are **young** – aged between **15-24** years old;
> Under two in five are from a **white** background (**39 per cent**);
> Over one in four are from a **black** background (**26 per cent**);
> Over one in six are from an **Asian** background (**16 per cent**)

The most likely offenders for serious youth violence are similar:

> Over three quarters of SYV offenders are **male (77 per cent)**
> Three fifths are **young** – aged between **13-28 (60 per cent)**
> Over two in five are from a **white** background (**41 per cent**)
> Over one third are from a **black** background (**35 per cent**)

Overall, this indicates that **young white boys and men are more likely to become victims and perpetrators of SYV in London compared to young boys and men from a black or other ethnic minority background.** However, owing to the fact that young black people comprise 17 per cent of the youth population of London, **young black boys and men are over-represented as both victims and offenders;** they are 1.5 times more likely to become victims and are just under twice as likely to become offenders. But, if we break down these figures even further, as the GLA has done, a somewhat different picture presents itself. It emerges that **less than 1 per cent of the total young black London population is involved in SYV. The fact is that a very small cohort of young black Londoners have been drawn into SYV,** compared to their overall number.

In part, statistics like this do confirm that young black boys and men are over-represented in SYV figures in London. However, they do *not* explain the national

picture, which is different, or provide insights as to why SYV or knife crime is more likely to be accompanied by tabloid-front page images of 'menacing' black youth. It almost feels as though a political-commentator class is making a deliberate attempt to racialise the issue of 'knife crime' and link it to a stereotypical view of *all* young black boys mired in gang culture and prone to violence. Take for example, comments made by Piers Morgan when host of ITV's 'Good Morning Britain'.[7] At the height of media reporting on knife crime in March 2019, Morgan, in conversation with prominent author and rapper Akala, stated:

A POLITICAL-COMMENTATOR CLASS IS MAKING A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO RACIALISE THE ISSUE OF 'KNIFE CRIME'.

> *Statistically it looks like in London, this is predominantly a problem of young black teenage boys who are members, almost exclusively, of gangs attacking each other, so that the perpetrators and the victims appear to be almost exclusively young black boys.*

Given the statistics cited above, Morgan's observation seemed both dangerously misleading and sensationalist. As Akala retorted at the time, while there might be a specific demographic of young working-class black boys in London that are particularly affected by SYV, 'knife crime' cannot be entirely explained by 'race'. Sensationalist coverage such as this has led other journalists such as Gary Younge, to call on the media to think more carefully about its reporting on 'knife crime'. In his influential Beyond the Blade[8] series which examined the life of each child and teenager killed by knives in 2017, Younge argued that the profile of young people killed in London is very different from those who die elsewhere across Britain. For Younge, knife crime is not exclusively a black London problem, 'even if it is a problem in which London is disproportionately affected and black kids in London appear particularly vulnerable'.[9]

This more nuanced view does seem to be reflected in official statistics and policy documents, with the government's nationwide Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2018 clearly stating that 'once other factors are controlled for… the evidence on links between serious violence and ethnicity is limited'.[10] Moreover, in the latest Office of National Statistics (ONS) report on homicides in England and Wales: year ending March 2019, the ONS has also indicated that 'there are likely to be important socio-economic factors in homicides… [and] evidence from other studies suggests that ethnicity is just one of many factors in homicides and violence incidents in general'.[11] Finally, if we look at the capital-specific research conducted by the Youth Justice Board in 2003, we can see that across thirty-two London boroughs 'when other relevant social and economic factors were taken into account, race and ethnicity had no significance at all' in young people's involvement in street crime.[12]

If youth violence is not about race, is *class* a common denominator in all affected communities?

In recent years, various publications produced by both the government and third sector organisations have sought to highlight the damaging effects of austerity on

young people's lives. The most recent and comprehensive research by the Institute of Health Equity – *The Marmot Review 10 years on* – demonstrates that the systematic dismantling of vital services (previously the 'welfare state') over the past decade has exacerbated levels of youth violence.[13]

The Children's Service Funding Alliance has found that local authority funding for children and young people's services across the country has decreased by 29 per cent in less than a decade, between 2010/11 and 2017/18 – totalling £3 billion.[14] If we zoom in and look at cuts to adolescent services specifically, recent funding analysis by the YMCA shows that across England and Wales, local authority expenditure on youth services, which typically serve young people aged between 12 and 25, has been slashed by 70 per cent in real terms, amounting to a total loss of almost a billion pounds between 2010/11 and 2018/19, including 750 youth centre closures.[15] While the report says young people in inner London have fared the best, even in these areas the annual spend on youth services has been reduced by 63 per cent since 2010/11. And, it is important to remember that London has the highest rate of child poverty of any English region.[16] There are now 800,000 children living in poverty in the capital, with one in three growing up in persistent poverty.[17] Emphasising the scale of the problem, Child Poverty Action Group has said there are as many poor children in London as in all of Scotland and Wales combined. Despite a national illusion that life in the capital is more materially rewarding, young people in London are not faring the best, particularly in terms of day-to-day subsistence, but also employment, and education opportunities (discussed further in Section 2).

LONDON HAS THE HIGHEST RATE OF CHILD POVERTY OF ANY ENGLISH REGION. THERE ARE NOW 800,000 CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY IN THE CAPITAL.

While the research quoted here is not exhaustive, the findings would suggest that class – under the guise of 'austerity' – has played a key role in rising levels of youth violence. However, it does not solely explain why young black boys are overrepresented as victims and perpetrators. As Gary Younge concluded in his final *Beyond the Blade* commentary in 2018:

> *while class is an important factor everywhere, race is undeniably a key factor in London. There is a large population of working-class white and Asian youth in London, and they are not dying in stabbings at anything like the rate of their black peers. In London, there is something particularly deadly about being a young black man.*[18]

What makes London especially deadly for young black boys, and men? There are many ways that researchers are attempting to provide answers, including investigating budget cuts to youth services, and the phenomenon of school exclusions.

Several reports and countless newspaper articles over the past few years have drawn a direct connection between school exclusions, knife crime and youth imprisonment. Prominent publications covering exclusions include:

> Making the Difference: Breaking the Link between School Exclusion and Social Exclusion (2017) by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) which in its

conclusion states 'excluded pupils are likely to be repeatedly involved in crime'[19]
> The Youth Violence Commission: Interim Report (2018)[20]
> The London Assembly Education Panel (2018)[21]
> The Timpson Review of School Exclusions (2018)[22]
> Examining the Educational Background of Young Knife Possession Offenders by the Ministry of Justice (2018)[23]
> Serious Youth Violence (2018) by The Home Affairs Committee[24]
> Back to School: Breaking the Link Between School Exclusions and Knife Crime (2018) by All Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime[25]
> Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years on (2020) by Institute of Health Equity[26]

To a greater or lesser extent, all the above publications provide **evidence that suggests a strong correlative relationship between school exclusion and youth violence** (though it is generally agreed it is not necessarily causative). And the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales found in its annual report for 2017-2018 that a staggering 89 per cent of detained (or 'imprisoned') children and young people aged 12-18 have reported being excluded from school.[27] Why its most recent annual report fails to update this figure or provide further comment given its importance, is a subject of concern. Significantly, **more than half (53 per cent) of all children and young people held in secure training centres and youth offender institutions are from a black and minority ethnic background**, according to another HM Inspectorate of Prisons report which looked at Children in Custody 2018-19.[28] It is worth pointing out that the proportion of 'imprisoned' BAME children and young people is almost four times the proportion of BAME people in the UK population, 14 per cent. How have these young people entered the penal estate at such a tender age?

A STAGGERING 89 PER CENT OF DETAINED (OR 'IMPRISONED') CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 12–18 HAVE REPORTED BEING EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL.

Professor Feyisa Demie, an educational advisor for schools and local authorities, has shown that **young black boys are nearly four times more likely to receive a permanent school exclusion and twice as likely to receive a fixed-period exclusion**, than the school population as a whole; representing the most excluded group in English schools, apart from Gypsy and Traveller children.[29] In the capital, between 2013/14 and 2017/18 there has been a 40 per cent and 27 per cent increase in permanent and fixed-period exclusions respectively, according to the Mayor of London.[30] The timescale cited in this research also corresponds with the rising murder rate discussed at the beginning of this section. Research from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) linked-charity, The Difference, found that the majority of excluded young people are sent to PRUs, or what is increasingly called Alternative Provision (AP), so that now, the proportion of students in PRUs and AP in inner London is almost double the national rate.[31] And this figure is likely to be an under-estimation, given that exploratory investigations have revealed glaring discrepancies between official records held by PRUs and AP where just 10 per cent of registered students are recognised as 'permanently excluded', compared to 90 per cent which had a so-called 'managed move'.[32] A managed move involves a voluntary agreement between schools, parents/carers and allows for pupils to change schools

or educational programmes under controlled circumstances. As they are often an alternative to permanent exclusion, managed moves are neither formally recorded on school records as a permanent exclusion nor tracked by the Department for Education (DfE) or recorded in its statistics. As such, they are increasingly being used as a way to 'off-roll' students without being branded high-excluding schools. Demie shows that, overall, young people with a black Caribbean heritage are 'significantly overrepresented in pupil referral units' across England, and this is also true for London, according to research from the Centre for Education and Youth which found that **'black Caribbean boys eligible for free-school meals are over-represented in PRUs and AP'**.[33]

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A BLACK CARIBBEAN HERITAGE ARE 'SIGNIFICANTLY OVERREPRESENTED IN PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS'.

Not surprisingly then, such evidence has led teachers, education specialists, community campaigners, advocates for young people and even policy makers to voice concern about the 'PRU-to-prison' pipeline (PPP), using this metaphor to convey the trajectory whereby some students move from mainstream education to PRU (or Alternative Provision) and then on to prison. Below we interrogate the PPP concept further, while also suggesting additional ways to make sense of the interlocking factors leading to the criminalisation of young people.

THE CONCEPT OF the PRU-to-prison pipeline (PPP) is a UK-specific adaptation of the Schools to Prison Pipeline (SPP), a concept widely used by community activists in the US before being taken up by the US academy in the early 2000s. The original purpose behind the concept's use was twofold: to provide a concise description of the nexus between schools and prison, and provide an easy accessible narrative that explained the disproportionate punishment meted out to black and brown youth (compared to white youth) through detentions, suspensions and exclusions. It also drew attention to the deployment of practices in schools, such as the 'zero tolerance' policies, that treated the behaviours of young people as if they were criminal and required some 'rule of law'.

> **THE PRU-TO-PRISON PIPELINE (PPP) IS A UK-SPECIFIC ADAPTATION OF THE SCHOOLS TO PRISON PIPELINE (SPP), A CONCEPT WIDELY USED BY COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS IN THE US.**

The history of how the concept travelled to the UK is hard to come by, but anecdotally we know that parents and community campaigners have been using the pipeline metaphor for years. By 2018, the concept had become more widely known. On GCSE 'results day' in August that year a group of south London students – known as Education Not Exclusion – brought the pipeline metaphor to London Transport in an 'ad-hack' displayed on the London underground.[34] Using the template of the well-known schematic transport map, the group captured 'the line' (route) some young people take from being sent out of class to the end destination: prison. A statement accompanying the poster highlighted that 'results day' was not an event enjoyed by all young people.

> *While most pupils across the country are excitedly awaiting news about their future, thousands remain left behind. Every day, 35 students (a full classroom) are permanently excluded from school. Only one per cent of them will go on to get the five good GCSEs they need to succeed. It is the most disadvantaged children who are disproportionately punished by the system. We deserve better.*

The captivating ad-hack was recorded in both London and nationwide newspapers and seems to mark the point the metaphor of a pipeline entered public discourse. Following this, an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) report published in October that year looked at the link between school exclusion and knife crime, and argued that the government must 'act now to stop the flow' in the 'pupil referral unit to prison pipeline'.[35] While it is reasonable to assume the ad-hack propelled the metaphor's passage from community to government, it is important to note that it was already in quiet ascension within officialdom, at least a year prior. For example, an influential centre-left think tank (the Institute for Public Policy Research) reported in 2017 that excluded and 'marginalised young people are often in the pipeline to prison'.[36]

And, as we will see in Section 4, momentum around issues of education and SYV had been building in government since 2010, though it was some time before it was discussed in pipeline terms and in ways in which the pipeline metaphor was never intended. After the 2011 'riots' across England, inner-city schools including the local authority PRU sector, were stigmatised as breeding grounds for 'recalcitrant'

behaviours. Eventually, recurring racialised moral panics about 'knife crime' were to become the more dominant features of this narrative. Nevertheless, the two narratives, about an almost pathological tendency amongst black youth towards knife crime and PRUs acting as breeding grounds for violent behaviour, have worked in tandem to create a space for the government to justify 'taking back control' of the PRU sector. What started out as a community demand to abolish PRUs and keep black youth in mainstream education, was repackaged by policy makers who promised professionalisation and reform. Currently, the government and think-tanks (centre-right and centre-left) are in the business of redesigning a separate education system for excluded young people, more accessible to 'the market'. These intimations do not signify a move to abolish the 'education sector for the excluded' a perspective upheld by the vast majority of concerned students, parents and educators. Rather, they bespeak a new venture of marketing the marginalised. And to this end, they have co-opted the community's concept of the 'PRU-to-prison pipeline' for their own, often privatising purposes.

In fact, the same trajectory occurred in the US, where attempts have similarly been made to divert the schools-to-prison pipeline concept away from its original intent to keep young African-Americans in mainstream education. Activist and radical anthropologist Damien M. Sojoyner, who has written extensively on the schools-to-prison pipeline, has cautioned about the dangers when state officials adopt the rallying cries of community campaigners, while divorcing such calls from their radical intent:

> Philanthropic organisations and national and state government offices have highlighted the pipeline as a reformist attempt to assuage the demands of community and neighbourhood organising. The STPP ['school-to-prison' pipeline] discourse has not only been used by government officials to describe the relationship between schools and prisons, it has also been repackaged as a non-threatening, ubiquitous, rhetorical device for community organisers.[37]

How the British state will attempt to influence pipeline discourse over the coming years and whether it will divert community action away from the fight against school exclusions and Alternative Provision in favour of an approach that reforms PRUs while keeping the system of school exclusions in situ, remains to be seen. Sojoyner implicitly warns against strategies that can be co-opted by powerful interests. He concedes that a metaphor which conceptualises and communicates complex social phenomena is important, but warns that its use comes with the risk of getting caught up in pipeline thinking at the expense of wider anti-racist education and criminal justice goals.

In the UK, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has thrown a spotlight on the need to de-colonise the curriculum and end institutional racism in the criminal justice system. In terms of the issues BLM highlights, the PPP is certainly useful. It provides a visual representation of the ways in which education and criminal justice policies interact with each other to exclude, marginalise and ultimately criminalise young black people. But it is also important to recognise that the PPP concept, in itself, does not make visible the wider processes that brought the pipeline about, namely the way that politicians, in

both the US and in England, moved to erase the gains in education, particularly around the curriculum, made by black self-help groups, civil rights projects, anti-racist teachers and others. In England, this erasure of radical challenges to a curriculum that excluded the experiences of second and third generation multiracial youth, though originating in the 1980s before the introduction of PRUs, has since coincided and compounded the spike in school exclusions and the subsequent creation of Alternative Provision, now viewed as a viable alternative for disaffected youth.

As we revisit the historical record in England, Sojoyner's arguments are once again instructive. In the US, the SPP phenomenon was foregrounded in an earlier period, when gains made by Civil Rights and Black Power movements were being erased. And, eventually community demands for social and racial justice were met with what Sojoyner defines as 'educational enclosures'. Drawing on the work of radical scholar Clyde Woods,[38] Sojoyner argues:

> enclosures are processes enacted by regional blocs during particular historic moments in an attempt to 'gain control over resources and over the ideological and distributive institutions governing their allocation'. Enacted through various strategies such as forced removal, benign neglect, abandonment, and incapacitation, the goal of enclosures is to blur the social vision of Black communities.[39]

But Sojoyner goes further, citing public education not as a passive partner but as the driver of prison expansion. 'Rather than a school to prison pipeline, the structure of public education is just as and maybe even more so culpable in the enclosure of black freedom, which in turn has informed the development of prisons.'

Sojoyner's concept of *educational enclosure* provides a new framework to analyse the central role education plays in criminalisation processes. We can begin to see how the right to mainstream schooling and academic development is withdrawn from specific groups over a particular period. It is also useful in helping us understand how the growing levels of SYV in London came about, principally because it contextualises the government's expansion of the PRU system vis-à-vis rising numbers of school exclusions.
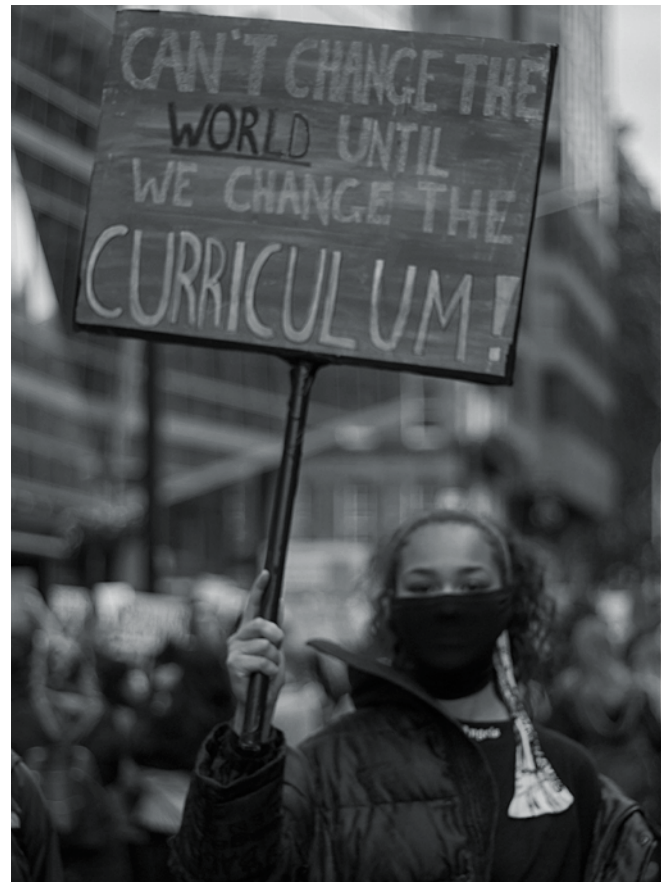
For Sojoyner, modes of school discipline, punishment and expulsion in the US have been developed to suppress politically

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IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNISE THAT POLITICIANS MOVED TO ERASE THE GAINS IN EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY AROUND THE CURRICULUM, MADE BY BLACK SELF-HELP GROUPS, CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECTS, ANTI-RACIST TEACHERS AND OTHERS.

volatile black struggles, since they can spill out of schools and into communities, leading to rebellions *en masse*. Using discourse analysis, he argues that the pipeline metaphor fails to account for the possibility that public education is often restructured in response to political agitation undertaken by radical communities perceived as threatening the status quo. To illustrate this, Sojoyner looked at activist organising among the black community in Los Angeles (LA) between 1940 and 1970 and found that public education was a key site used to develop anti-racist and social justice campaigns. However, he reveals how 'city officials, planners and private capital lobbied for and responded with brute force and policy tactics to undermine liberation movements of Black Angelinos'. Amid fears of more frequent and influential uprisings, police officers were introduced into LA schools after the 1965 Watts rebellion and associated student strikes. This partnership between the LA Police Department and the city's public schools was used to actively circumvent and supress community demands, and help the city to develop an obedient black citizenry. While it is often claimed, particularly in the US literature, that the prison-industrial complex maps onto the SPP, Sojoyner shows that a planned education malaise, which involved suppressing the organising potential of black educators in the 1960s, preceded the expansion of the US prison by at least half a decade. Schooling, as it pertains to potentially radicalised black youth, therefore, needs to be viewed through a new lens. Not as a straightforward training ground for prison, but as a site where technologies of control are deployed to demoralise and therefore depoliticise disaffected youth.

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SOJOYNER ARGUES THAT THE PIPELINE METAPHOR FAILS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT PUBLIC EDUCATION IS OFTEN RESTRUCTURED IN RESPONSE TO POLITICAL AGITATION UNDERTAKEN BY RADICAL COMMUNITIES PERCEIVED AS THREATENING THE STATUS QUO.

Indeed, in ways remarkably similar to those described by Sojoyner, the 1981 English uprisings also led to the restructuring of public education, a process described in Section 3. Suffice it to say this restructuring occurred after a period of industrial decline, with the UK's manufacturing base shrinking in the 1970s. During this period of growing unemployment, working-class multiracial communities came to be seen as a potential source of disruption, as inner cities were reimagined to cater to the incoming professional classes. Working-class communities, cast adrift in the labour market, were no longer anchored by stable employment and a steady wage. Discontent was growing. The communities most affected by this were the

black 'second generation' (but also the increasingly dispossessed white working-class, see e.g. the Miners' Strike) previously employed in the manufacturing, transport and public utilities industries, which, from 1979 onwards were being systematically dismantled and deregulated. To make matters worse, police forces around the country, but particularly in London, were well known for antagonising black youth and stoking their frustration. This would not occur without consequence – with street confrontations with the police and vocal defence campaigns increasing. By the late 1970s, self-defence campaigns and police monitoring groups were being established by black and Asian community groups and other affected communities all over London. The threat from such 'communities of resistance' that led up to the 1981 uprisings cannot be over emphasised. They forced the Conservative government into some serious thinking.

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SUCH 'COMMUNITIES OF RESISTANCE' THAT LED UP TO THE 1981 UPRISINGS FORCED THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT INTO SOME SERIOUS THINKING.

Thatcher encapsulated the state's anxieties at the time by announcing: 'we must do something about those inner cities'.[40] Not least because the plans of the Conservative government had already been set back by the fallout of the 1973 oil crisis, the threat of more instability undermined the new economic and social foundations being laid in London. Most notably in the business district of Canary Wharf, in the east of The City. Indeed, the project to deracinate multiracial working-class communities through intensive regeneration (and state-led gentrification) projects started in the Thatcher era. The field of 'urban policy' was introduced as the means by which central government could oversee its strategy of disinvestment and renewal of inner cities.[41] Or, to put it another way, disinvestment would come to delineate the retrenchment of state capital distributed to the working classes in the form of social security, public housing and education, which, since this period, has made multiple forms of managed decline a lived reality. And renewal would come to delineate, full or partial privatisation of public assets, for example 'right to buy' legislation and academisation[42] of public schools, as well as the state's paternalistic attitude toward 'improving' the cultural mores of the working classes, especially through education. The state's project to reform the city's inhabitants occurred primarily through education, but also housing as it relates to the issue of schools.

IN ORDER TO chart a forty-year period of educational enclosure in neoliberal London, starting with Thatcher and moving on to the governments of Tony Blair, David Cameron and Boris Johnson, this section describes the key provisions of education legislation, and their specific relevance to the capital's young working-class multiracial communities.

3.1 Thatcher era: 'People must be educated once more to know their place'

The field of education has always been regarded as fertile for the Right to sow common sense conservatism in the working classes and, at the same time, weed out people and policies with progressive leanings. The 1944 Education Act, which extended educational opportunity to all by introducing the principle of 'free secondary education', was anathema to the intellectual current around Margaret Thatcher known as the New Right. Already, in the 1960s, as Paul Gordon has shown, the burgeoning New Right launched a campaign to retain a schooling system in defence of privilege.[43] The Black Papers (a play on government White Papers that precede legislation) were a series of articles on British education, published from 1969 to 1977 in *Critical Quarterly*, attempting to reverse what it described as the excesses of progressive education and to undermine the 1944 Act which was viewed with suspicion.

> **THE FIELD OF EDUCATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN FERTILE FOR THE RIGHT TO SOW COMMON SENSE CONSERVATISM IN THE WORKING CLASSES AND, AT THE SAME TIME, WEED OUT PEOPLE AND POLICIES WITH PROGRESSIVE LEANINGS.**

Though such thinking was in ascendancy from the 1960s onwards, it was not until the 1980s and the election of the Thatcher government, followed shortly after by the 1981 English rebellions, that a systematic restructuring of education began. 'Who taught the rioters?' a so-called intellectual of the New Right exclaimed according to Gordon, not rhetorically but as a question needing consideration in an article after the rebellions. The Conservatives were already fearful that an over-educated discontented workforce in a shrinking economy and contracted labour market would make demands for changes on the streets. Thatcher's favourite conservative philosopher and Black Papers contributor Roger Scruton, lambasted earlier education reforms for offering false hope to workers who he asserted would not need a sociology or philosophy degree to work in manual employment.

As Clyde Chitty has shown, government departments were 'quite open about the need to restrict educational opportunities'. He quotes a paper published by the Department for Education and Science (DES) in 1984 and after the rebellions that stated:

> offer[ing] young people advanced education, but not thereafter the work opportunities to match their career aspirations… [could] create frustration with perhaps disturbing social consequences. There may be social unrest, but we can cope with the Toxteths. But if we have a highly educated and idle population, we may possibly anticipate more serious social conflict. People must be educated once more to know their place.[44]

The uprisings of 1981 ushered in a period of significant change to education legislation. And, as Peter Figueroa has argued, commitments to improving equal opportunities made during the previous decades, were to be abandoned.[45] Though the Swann Committee was set up by the government to investigate the education of ethnic minority children after the uprisings, the New Right mounted a major assault on the very concept of 'multiracial education' which made provision for young people from different backgrounds, going some way to remedy their erasure from national cultural expression. Part of the problem when discussing types of multiracial education implemented in schools during this period, Paul Gordon has shown, was that the New Right conflated multiculturalism and anti-racism. For our purposes, we will borrow Gordon's term 'multiracial education' which elides the two separate strands, but for definitional clarity it is worth pointing out the differences. To paraphrase Gordon's take on the New Right, the threat of multicultural education is that it is culturally pluralist, and takes the position that schools have a duty to ensure the teaching of different cultures, languages and religious backgrounds present in modern society. Such cultural relativism denies and calls into question what the Right regards as the superiority of British culture. As for anti-racism, the threat lies in educating working-class multiracial communities about unequal power relations according to one's race, class and gender, for example. Such an approach is implicitly critical of the current social, economic and political hierarchies and seeks ways to intervene and make society more equal in every way.

> **THE UPRISINGS OF 1981 USHERED IN A PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TO EDUCATION LEGISLATION.**

Anti-racism, of course, was and remains more threatening for those Conservatives fixated with maintaining the order of people, and retaining their power and wealth.

From 1977, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) was leading the way on multiracial education. It was the first public body to issue a policy document outlining its aims in relation to educating ethnic minority children. It covered the most deprived areas of the city and provided support to teachers, allowing them to collaborate on the design of the curriculum. Those associated with the New Right, such as the Centre for Policy Studies, contributors to the Black Papers and others, regarded ILEA as left-dominated, over-critical of central government, the producer of 'educational propaganda' that was anti-white, 'politically indoctrinating pupils' and offering a 'wayward curriculum', according to Gordon. The fear was that a substantive multiracial education, especially the anti-racist kind, had the potential of political revolution. (Hence, the Conservatives officially abolished the ILEA in 1990 a move that significantly weakened local authority control and influence over schools.)

After the publication of the Swann Report[46] in 1985, it became *de rigueur* for left-leaning councils to establish programmes of multicultural education across England's secondary schools. In the main, this consisted of using 'culture' as a key explorative site of social and race relations, though a number of more radical schools argued this was 'tokenistic' and ineffectual. Other local authorities, like ILEA, adopted race equality policies and embraced a more powerful and proactive 'anti-racism' which could move beyond school gates and into communities. But, as multiracial education became a pressing issue for more local authorities, schools and some teachers

after the uprisings, this shift in educational priorities prompted the government to begin the process of decimating local democracy via the dismantling of councils, argues Gordon.[47] The fomentation of discontent among communities of resistance was Thatcher's preoccupation, and the political education that ILEA had introduced among London's large young ethnic minority population was seen as potentially disastrous for the new neoliberal city that was undergoing early stages of capital investment. The ILEA was not without fault as Sivanandan has shown.[48] There were factions within the organisation that may have thought of themselves as radical anti-racists, yet the use of Race Awareness Training – the precursor to today's Unconscious Bias Training[49] – tells a different story. Still, ILEA might not have got every aspect of its anti-racist education policies right, it is important to remember that the idea of equipping young people with a toolkit (albeit rusty!) to build-up a community of young organised activists, ready to be mobilised into action, was emerging. The threat this posed to the establishment was real. The New Right's assault, however, was successful. And, by the late 1980s, Thatcher was ready to publish the state's rebuttal.

The Education Reform Act 1988 is widely recognised as dismantling the more egalitarian 1944 Act, and marks the beginning of the neoliberal enclosure of education. Its focus was to restore the transmission of British culture and traditional Victorian values in schools. Local authority powers to determine policies of equal opportunity, multiracial education including active anti-racism, were considerably weakened by the enactment of a compulsory National Curriculum that focused on rote learning and testing of new 'core subjects' (maths, English and science). Indeed, at a 1987 Conservative Party Conference, Thatcher proclaimed establishing a National Curriculum was necessary because

> *Children who need to be able to count and multiply are being taught anti-racist mathematics, whatever that may be. Children who need to be able to express themselves in clear English are being taught political slogans. Children who need to be taught to respect traditional moral values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay.*[50]

One might argue that the National Curriculum was a strategic intervention to supress radical communities by reducing their thinking to official state-sanctioned knowledge. At its core was a fundamentalist pedagogy that was monocultural, ethnocentric and a reincarnation of the Victorian secondary schools' regulations of 1904.[51] The effect this would have on the large multiracial communities of the inner cities like London would be profound. Not only do the specific conditions of inner-city life, of stark poverty and ethnic diversity, demand a tailored curriculum, but an ethnocentric approach is damaging to all youngsters, but particularly damaging for the identity formation of black children and other ethnic minorities leading inevitably to alienation from education.

AN ETHNOCENTRIC APPROACH IS DAMAGING TO ALL YOUNGSTERS, BUT PARTICULARLY DAMAGING FOR THE IDENTITY FORMATION OF BLACK CHILDREN AND OTHER ETHNIC MINORITIES LEADING INEVITABLY TO ALIENATION FROM EDUCATION.

3.2 Blair era: 'No child has the right to disrupt the education of other children'

In 1997, Tony Blair came to power with the mantra 'education, education, education'. But, despite New Labour's tone that suggested a transformation would take place, the party did *not* reverse the educational chasm created by Thatcher. On the contrary, New Labour conserved and expanded many of the ideas, policies and legislation that have contributed to the neoliberal enclosure of education. While it is true that the widespread social unrest witnessed during the preceding era did not occur on the same scale under the New Labour government, even the smaller less dispersed rebellions in the inner cities of northern England during the summer of 2001, were enough to prompt a significant change in education legislation. As Christine Winter and China Mills identified, the 'riots' triggered a broad discussion on 'British values' that was to permeate education policy.[52]

> **DISPERSED REBELLIONS IN THE INNER CITIES OF NORTHERN ENGLAND DURING THE SUMMER OF 2001, WERE ENOUGH TO PROMPT A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN EDUCATION LEGISLATION.**

In the report commissioned by government examining the conditions which led to the 'riots', it was found that the absence of 'community cohesion' between mainly south Asian Muslims and non-Muslim communities had created a 'parallel society'.[53] Among many recommendations made in the report was that community cohesion would be best developed through an education syllabus that stressed what home secretary David Blunkett described as a 'common and collective citizenship'. 'Too many of our towns lack any sense of civic identity or shared values. Young people, in particular, are alienated and disengaged from much of the society around them', he announced in response to the report.[54] The idea that poor inner-city multiracial communities were not a part of a collective citizenry that shared the same 'British values' forms the foundation of the Fundamental British Values (FBV) discourse. In the Education Act (2002), a legal duty was placed on schools to promote 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at school and in society'. By 2014, when the government published further guidance on this based on its 2011 Prevent strategy, the duty had evolved to 'actively promote' FBV of 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs'.[55] While ostensibly New Labour was seen to be using the rebellions and the subsequent war on terror counter-radicalisation programme as a vehicle to rework the National Curriculum and create community cohesion, mainly through the introduction of 'citizenship studies', as Sally Tomlinson has pointed out, this did not serve the educational needs of multicultural communities.[56] Instead, New Labour fostered 'continuing ignorance and xenophobia between communities'. The failure to provide an anti-racist education that could arrest the development of moral panics over Muslims, many specialists have argued, has contributed to strong feelings of alienation.

While considering how to promote cultural assimilation up north, at the same time, New Labour was also assessing how to remake large working-class multiracial communities down south, in London. Described as a strategy of 'urban renaissance', state-led gentrification and an attendant crackdown on anti-social behaviour were used in poor neighbourhoods and justified on the grounds that, closer spatial proximity between the middle and working classes would allow the former to

impart their social and cultural capitals, constructed as white, liberal and moral – the epitome of real British values – on the latter. Combined, these subtle, yet insidious cultural strategies would replace Thatcher's more overt project to politically disarm communities of resistance, though both served the purpose of dealing with actual or perceived 'risky' populations.

Education changes under New Labour reflect the wider cultural transformation taking place in society at that time. The extensive expansion of the academy project and the simultaneous development of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) system being prime examples. Though historically urban schools were never intended to prepare working-class youth for further learning at university, the New Labour project promoted culture and education as the vehicles to achieve social mobility. The state, however, would not oversee this. Instead, New Labour would build on previous political commitments made by the Conservatives and continue encouraging the private sector to steer the direction of deprived communities. Of course, public-private partnerships are now a pervasive part of the education system, but, in the late 1990s, they were only just getting started.

EDUCATION CHANGES UNDER NEW LABOUR MEANT THE EXTENSIVE EXPANSION OF THE ACADEMY PROJECT AND THE SIMULTANEOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT (PRU) SYSTEM.

The Education Action Zone (EAZ) scheme, initiated under the School Standards and Framework Act (1998), which was eventually amalgamated into the Excellence in Cities[57] (EiC) programme, was an early indication of New Labour's plan to raise urban working-class aspirations through privatisation. One noteworthy aim of the EiC programme was to reassure inner-city parents that the government would prioritise identifying 'gifted and talented' working-class students. And, according to Sally Tomlinson, 'in a further attempt to create city schools that would be attractive to middle class and aspirant parents' the government would rebrand Thatcher's City Technology Colleges (introduced under the 1988 Education Reform Act) as City Academies.[58] However, the gifted and talented scheme, which tended to operate predominately in City Academies, was not the promised panacea. The very act of selecting gifted and talented students, by nature, also encourages schools to single out and stigmatise those that are perceived to threaten the education of more compliant students. Understanding this dichotomy between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' working-class students is important, because it has formed the foundation of our current two-tier state education system: academies for the aspirational and Pupil Referral Units for the defiant and apathetic.

The brainchild of City Academies was Tony Blair's adviser Andrew Adonis[59] – a key New Labour strategist in remaking the inner-city a more desirable place for the middle classes. (Just five years ago he co-edited an IPPR report[60] that supported the idea of further state-led gentrification in the midst of the worst working-class housing crisis since the end of the second world war.) The academies scheme was modelled on US Charter schools, encouraging businesses, churches, entrepreneurs and other groups to acquire new assets, but without the interference of local democracy. State schools were increasingly put under 'special measures'[61] for 'failing' to provide an acceptable standard of education to communities in deprived multiracial urban areas; these schools would be eventually converted into a 'level playing field' of

private academies for New Labour's children, according to its fantasy of colour-/
class-blind meritocracy. The legislation that made this possible was the Education Act
(2002) which included provisions for not only expanding the academies programme,
but also, exempting them from the financial penalties for excluding young people
(unlike local authority schools which incurred fines).

New Labour did not invent the Pupil Referral Unit system; it
was first introduced by John Major's government in the 1996
Education Act, and official exclusions were first permitted
a decade earlier under the 1986 Education (No.2) Act.
But it was New Labour that fired up the exclusion engine
and firmly established it as an essential cog in the state's
neoliberal education machinery. Hence, it is really neither
here nor there that New Labour set up the first Social
Exclusion Unit in 1997.[62] For all the countless papers the
unit produced examining the exclusion of young people from schools (among other
topics), the academy programme and PRU system have continued to work hand in
glove, producing *de facto* race and class segregation between schools.

> **THE ACADEMY PROGRAMME AND PRU SYSTEM HAVE CONTINUED TO WORK HAND IN GLOVE, PRODUCING *DE FACTO* RACE AND CLASS SEGREGATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS.**

Indeed, New Labour's final term manifesto, which stated 'we send a clear message -
every child has a right to a good education, but no child has the right to disrupt the
education of other children', would be prophetic. The legacy of the academy project
has been profound. In 2016, research found that academies were three times more
likely than local authority schools to exclude students.[63] And, in 2019 the Education
Policy Institute[64] found that multi-academy trusts (MATs) have above-average rates
of permanent school exclusions and slighter higher rates of unexplained exits (off-
rolled) compared to local authority schools.[65]

3.3 The Cameron/Clegg era: 'We need an education system which reinforces the message that if you do the wrong thing you'll be disciplined'

Multiracial urban working-class young people continued to be targeted by successive
governments. And as the academy-PRU divide[66] became entrenched in the inner-city
educational landscape, it became ever more difficult to break from such a bifurcated
system. After the more recent youth rebellions in 2011, further changes were made to
education legislation, with successive Conservative-led governments strengthening
school disciplinary measures to deal with so-called 'undeserving', 'disruptive'
students, once again seen as potential 'rioters'.

New research reveals that an increasing percentage of schools converted to
academies, especially in the secondary mainstream sector, and PRUs between 2011
and 2017, as a result of the Conservative-Liberal coalition government's passing
of the Academies Act (2010).[67] This mass privatisation of local-authority maintained
(and therefore democratically controlled) schools is marked by the abolition of
democratically-accountable local authority scrutiny (read deregulation); an emphasis
on league table results (read competition); overturning the national curriculum (read
'market-choice'); an increase in both private and state capital accumulation (read

profit) and a rise in the amount of children removed from mainstream school (read surplus population). It is indisputable that the academisation of schools affects all children. However, it is particularly pertinent in London, as there is a growing surplus population of young people who have been excluded, expelled and off-rolled from mainstream education. The vast majority of whom have been targeted by the on-going Conservative crackdown on 'bad behaviour' in schools in the wake of the most recent revolts in 2011.

As I argued in *The London Clearances: Race, Housing and Policing*,[68] the 2011 uprisings catalysed the Conservative-led government to regenerate the city's multiracial working-class areas. But, as well as council estates being portrayed as 'ghettos' where marauding gangs of youths and rioters live, sell drugs, thieve and kill one another, inner-city schools and especially local-authority PRUs, have, too, been depicted as disorderly and where an 'educational underclass' has been allowed to literally run riot. Indeed, Thatcher's fear of working-class revolt was reignited after 2011 and thrust to the top of the Conservative educational enclosure agenda. A speech delivered by David Cameron in the immediate aftermath of the youth rebellions confirms this. Cameron stated that

> the next part of the social fight-back is what happens in schools. We need an education system which reinforces the message that if you do the wrong thing you'll be disciplined [69]

Overseeing Cameron's vision was the education secretary Michael Gove, who, in one of many speeches and interviews delivered at the time, argued that an 'absence of discipline in school' had significantly contributed to the causes of the 'riots' and that his Department for Education would ensure that tougher disciplinary measures would be introduced into schools, as 'the balance had shifted too far in favour of… young people who say "I know my rights"'.[70] As a matter of fact, knowing your rights indicates a level of knowledge and critical thinking that any democratic civilised society should encourage. This type of deftness, however, was not something to be looked upon favourably. Instead, 'the violent young' were condemned as 'ignorant' and 'insolent', as they had transgressed an unwritten social law that working-class consciousness, by definition, threatens the status quo and therefore must be suppressed. Gove revealed this class anxiety when he proclaimed in a speech that young people were too 'ready to rebel'.[71] Enabling this readiness was an education law that was regarded as too lenient on discipline, since it had failed to curtail the organising capabilities of young people. The use of 'mobile technology to co-ordinate widespread disruption and violence' during the 'riots' was indicative, according to Gove, of young people getting away with mayhem. As a result, one of the key legislative changes made in the aftermath of the 2011 rebellions was to afford teachers new powers to search students thought to be armed with mobile phones and other 'subversive items'.

INNER-CITY SCHOOLS AND ESPECIALLY LOCAL-AUTHORITY PRUS, ARE DEPICTED AS DISORDERLY AND WHERE AN 'EDUCATIONAL UNDERCLASS' HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO LITERALLY RUN RIOT.

Just three months after some of the biggest disturbances in English history, which had turned British cities upside down, the Conservatives responded by introducing

the Education Act (2011) with specific clauses addressing behaviour, discipline and exclusions, as well as new ministerial powers to order local authorities to close PRUs that were deemed inadequate or failing to address student behavioural issues. Even before it received Royal Assent, the Education bill was criticised as a mandate bringing law and order into schools. 'The most important thing in schools is discipline and behaviour', argued Gove and his legacy was to involve the creation of a network of military-style state schools that recruited ex-army veterans to teach those 'at risk of disengagement', including PRUs that were 'not up to snuff'.[72]

Much of what was contained in the final version of the legislation had actually already been published in Gove's first White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* in 2010.[73] Among many revealing paragraphs in this wide-ranging and highly influential document, was one that identified 'both black boys and pupils receiving free school meals' as the most likely groups to be excluded and, inadvertently, stigmatised as 'disruptive'. For these young people, the paper indicated the government would reform and rebrand the PRU sector by

> Open[ing] up the Alternative Provision market to new providers and diversify existing provision by legislating to allow PRUs to become Academies, encouraging Free Schools that offer Alternative Provision, and supporting more voluntary sector providers alongside Free Schools. Alternative Provision Free Schools in particular will be a route for new voluntary and private sector organisations to offer high-quality education for disruptive and excluded children and others without a mainstream school place. Local authorities will be expected to choose the best provision and replace any that is unsatisfactory. We will, if necessary, use the Secretary of State's powers to close inadequate PRUs and specify what sort of provision will replace it. In doing so, we will use competitions to open the way for high quality new providers to enter the market.

The idea of private investors profiting from vulnerable young people deemed 'disruptive' in a competitive market was no problem for the education secretary. After all, he had already stated some months before that he had no 'ideological objection' to businesses making profits from academies and free schools.[74] And, any objections the public may have had would be ignored after the 'riots', as the government quickly translated the crisis into a racialised moral panic about an undisciplined educational underclass that had no respect for the rule of law. To get a sense of the contempt that politicians had for marginalised youth, Boris Johnson, at the time London Mayor, wrote a letter to Gove urging him to deprive 'rioters' of mainstream education and send them to PRUs where prison was not an option.[75] It is on these grounds that consent was won for marketing the marginalised, though it was initially concealed as a project to 'manage behaviour' that local authorities were, allegedly, unable to deal with.

3.4 Johnson era: 'We will expand "alternative provision" schools for those who have been excluded'

I turn now to consider arguments developing outside of government for privatising the PRU sector. Policy-oriented think-tanks such as the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) are currently engaged in an ideological campaign to legitimate reforming and rebranding the PRU sector. Both have written papers endorsing the government's expansion plans, though for slightly different reasons than Gove first outlined a decade ago. To start with, the IPPR published a report in 2017 claiming that redesigning the Alternative Provision sector would address 'Britain's social mobility failure'.[76] On the back of the report, a new charity The Difference was launched in 2018, to 'improve the outcomes of vulnerable children by raising the status and expertise of those who educate them', among other things. And then, in early 2020, the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) published a similar report[77] imploring Boris Johnson's Conservative government to fulfil its 2019 manifesto pledge[78] and 'expand "alternative provision" schools for those who have been excluded'. The centre-right think tank, which has a vested interest in 'recommending practical, workable policy interventions… [and] transforming government thinking', had one key proposal for the government, to 'act on its pledge to invest in an AP workforce programme, to encourage experienced, qualified teachers'.

> **THINK-TANKS CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH THE GOVERNMENT ARE ENGAGED IN AN IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN TO LEGITIMATE REFORMING AND REBRANDING THE PRU SECTOR.**

The think-tanks in question, have each argued that the PRU sector in its current form, is inadequate; in fact, the CSJ highlighted that a staggering ninety-six per cent of students fail their GCSEs in the sector.[79] And, yet, neither one has called for abolition nor an increase in social spending in mainstream schools as a realistic strategy to assist vulnerable young people. Instead, both organisations are lobbying the government and pushing for an expansion of AP that they claim will be better served by a Teach First-style programme, where privileged graduates are 'fast-tracked' into teaching young people from low-income backgrounds in deprived areas. This is astonishing given the already well-known failings of the original graduate scheme. It is paternalistic and has a very high turnover rate of teachers that leave the teaching profession after just a couple of years; many come unstuck after finding themselves unable and underprepared to confront the complex lives of marginalised young people. And this has not occurred without calls from young people who decry the recruitment of 'specialists' who, frankly, they find cannot comprehend their lived experience, favouring community elders that understand exactly how poverty and racism, for example, shapes their lives.

But, support for 'academising' the PRU sector, (which the Centre for Social Justice studies[80] explicitly calls for), is even more astonishing given that recent research by the Education Policy Institute in 2017 found there is *no* evidence to suggest that academies perform better than local authority schools, as both types feature at the very top and bottom of league tables. This really does call into question *why* these types of schools continue to be regarded as superior inside and outside government. And, indeed, *why* it is believed subcontracting the teaching (and disciplining) of excluded young people to a new network of academy-style Alternative Provision

will help raise the education standards of society's most
marginalised. Academies of all kinds have not created more
education opportunities for the working classes, they have
merely normalised exclusion. For the government and
investors, there is big money in the academy sector. Despite
academy status as 'not-for profit', the consolidated annual
report[81] and accounts for the academy schools sector in
England shows that for the year ending 2018 total combined
assets near £60bn, a figure that continues to rise the more schools are converted
according to a group of investigative journalists.[82] Furthermore, an investigation
in 2014 exposed the millions of pounds being paid to private business directors,
consultants, trustees and their relatives.[83] We must ask ourselves, how much will the
market for the marginalised be worth?

At first glance, it may seem that conversations, both inside and outside government,
about how best to shape Alternative Provision to supposedly serve the needs of
society's most vulnerable, are held with honest intent. But we must not forget that
the catalyst for such conversations was the punitive educational redesign put in
place after the youth rebellions of 2011, with the then Mayor of London, Boris
Johnson, declaring that a stint in a PRU was a viable alternative punishment to
imprisonment. In the neoliberal era, 'disruptive' pupils turn private profits, but their
containment in Alternative Provision may be indicative of something else. There is a
connection between exclusions, containment in PRUs and the education market in
the gentrified city.

**ACADEMIES OF ALL KINDS
HAVE NOT CREATED MORE
EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES
FOR THE WORKING CLASSES,
THEY HAVE MERELY
NORMALISED EXCLUSION.**

IN THIS SECTION we drill down into the more specific ways that 'educational enclosure' is enacted within a securitised school system in the gentrified city.

When the first police officer was introduced into a school in Liverpool in 1949, it was within a neighbourhood model, and on paper at least to build better police-youth relations, with welfare of the child and community arguments used to justify a small police presence throughout the 1960s. But in the 1980s, as Amanda Henshall has shown, government and policy-makers, determined to normalise a larger

> **THE NORMALISATION OF THE POLICE PRESENCE CAME FROM THE 1990S ONWARDS, DURING A PERIOD WHERE SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS ALSO BEGAN TO GROW.**

police presence in schools, adopted a different justification, and one linked to fighting crime.[84] Initially, the expansion of the police presence in schools pandered to moral panics about youth crime and violence, but it was later legitimated by the urban uprisings of 1981. Citing a 1983 report by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, Henshall shows that one of the key aims behind normalising the police presence in schools, was 'to contribute in helping young people to understand and accept principles of good citizenship and social responsibility'.

But the normalisation of the police presence came from the 1990s onwards, during a period where school exclusions also began to grow, and there was also increased surveillance on school grounds. In 2002, New Labour introduced Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) under the Police Reform Act. PCSOs could be assigned to work either in school or as a School Liaison Officer. Shortly after this, in line with Blair's broader Street Crime Initiative, the Safer Schools Partnerships (SSP) was created. The SSP programme, a multi-agency approach initially developed by the Youth Justice Board, the Department for Education and the Association of Chief Police Officers before being mainstreamed, is one of a number of current interventions and initiatives to tackle key behavioural issues in schools – policies that rely for their seeming success on educational exclusion. In 2005, the Youth Justice Board reported that excluded young people are more likely to commit offences than children in mainstream education.[85]

When SSPs were initially piloted, the argument was that they would reduce disruptive behaviour in schools by 'identifying young people at risk of crime and disorder' at an early age and provide 'tailored interventions' in partnership with local authorities, health services, schools and the voluntary sector.[86] SSPs were then placed in so-called crime 'hot-spots' identified by the government-sponsored Street Crime Action Group. Later, 'the Department for Education and Skills was tasked with identifying those local education authorities facing the most difficult challenges with school exclusions and truancy.' Of the thirty-four LEAs it identified, nine were in the ten hot spots identified by the Street Crime Action Group. Police had also been asked to select schools in 'crime ridden' areas that would 'benefit' from seeing and being in close contact with the police. The way in which police officers were now deployed to assuage moral panics around youth crime, apparently connected to schools with truancy and exclusions issues, was to evolve, by the mid-2000s, into a broader plan to manage pupil behaviour. Crucially, as Henshall has shown, the grounds upon which the presence of police in schools is justified, has made a paradigm shift over the last forty years. When comparing the aims of school liaison officers to SSPs, the former

'included the promotion of citizenship, public relations, prevention of crime, and protection of pupils', whereas the latter have focused more on overseeing student behaviour, enforcing punishment and identifying youth 'at risk'. Indeed, following the intensification of neoliberal economic policies, researchers have uncovered an increased usage of the term 'at risk' – begging the question 'at risk' of what?

Data collected from freedom of information requests submitted by Henshall show that police officers stationed in London secondary schools are more likely to be found where there are higher levels of young people eligible for 'free school meals'. It is no coincidence that the percentage of schools with police officers increases as the percentage of poor pupils receiving free food increases. Henshall's data suggests that the urban poor are perceived to pose a threat, with this largely understood in terms of interpersonal violence and vulnerability, which then leads schools to adopt a technical fix through apparatus that surveil, profile, monitor, control and attempt to reform the violence-prone student.

While this is undoubtedly an accurate reflection of what is going on and goes some way of answering the 'at risk' question, I would also argue that, the management of risk also needs to be understood as a response to *real* threats of resistance and rebellion waged by the multiracial urban poor periodically during the neoliberal turn. Indeed, these crises are preempted by the state. The enclosure of education (alongside the decimation of labour rights and stable wages) has occurred at exactly the same time schools have become sites for developing and applying heightened technologies of control on multiracial working-class communities. Such apparatus extends beyond police officers in schools. At the same time, young black people subjected to school exclusions are precisely those who are most alienated from schooling and whose identity formation is most impacted by the exclusion of anti-racism and black working-class history from the curriculum. Educational policy approaches that continue not to address their needs should be considered for what they are – institutional racism that dehumanises and devalues the lives of these young people and treats them as part of a surplus population educational underclass.

THE ENCLOSURE OF EDUCATION HAS OCCURRED AT EXACTLY THE SAME TIME SCHOOLS HAVE BECOME SITES FOR DEVELOPING AND APPLYING HEIGHTENED TECHNOLOGIES OF CONTROL ON MULTIRACIAL WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITIES.

Just twenty-one days after the last day of the 2011 English urban rebellions, Education Secretary Michael Gove delivered a speech on 'the making of an educational underclass' at the Durand Academy in Stockwell/Lambeth, south London.[87] In his opening gambit he described how after 'one year on from its conversion to an academy' the school was 'doing a wonderful job for children in one of London's most challenging neighbourhoods' – (eventually, this would be revealed as overly optimistic as Ofsted rated the academy 'inadequate' some years later).[88] Rising to the challenge, Gove announced the government's plans to launch the controversial Troops to Teachers (TtT) programme, which would introduce 'many more male role models' that could use their military training to 'benefit young people with a history of poor behaviour' by providing 'structure and discipline'. The subtext of this, of course, was the enduring myth that young black boys run riot when they

are detached from their fathers – which, in a racist patriarchy, view fathers as the sole disciplinarians. If looking for greater clarity on this, an ex-military recruitment agency called Gemini Forces stated on its website in 2011 that TtT had been introduced 'in response to the recent riots in England', according to Charlotte Chadderton. Indeed, the drive toward deploying ex-military men as teachers, in 'rough' inner-city schools indicates a remarkable level of state paranoia around young multiracial 'risky' populations.

Though it is true that the Troops to Teachers programme, like other Conservative school initiatives, had already been thought up by Gove in 2010 and published in his *Importance of Teaching* White Paper, Chadderton's research shows the scheme actually has a longer history in the UK.[89] In 2008, the Centre for Policy Studies produced a paper endorsing TtT after it learned of similar successful schemes in the US. 'Whether we like it or not, children from more deprived neighbourhoods often respond to raw physical power', the think-tank asserted. How such an overtly racist and classist notion was allowed to appear un-edited is hard to fathom. As Chadderton points out, the TtT programme is paradoxical; though touted as a means of reducing violence, crime and exclusion, it embraces an aggressive teaching-style.

Even in 2008, TtT was not aimed at *all* young people. On the contrary, Chadderton notes that the Centre for Policy Studies, like the government later, intended it for inner-city schools, that working-class multiracial youth, depicted in generalised stereotypical terms as members of gangs that cause mayhem, maim and murder, attended.

As concerning as the uncritical acceptance of police officers and undeclared ex-military men in inner-city schools is, there are other, more insidious, aspects to the securitisation of schools' apparatus that further enable the enclosure of education. Working-class multiracial youth that reside in the condemned and benighted estates of London are regarded as 'suspects'. These allegedly 'at risk' populations are racially stereotyped, stigmatised according to their class and cultures and framed as feckless. In this way, schools are required not only to recruit 'teachers' to act as intelligencers (often under the guise of safeguarding), but to install sophisticated surveillance software that monitors the behaviours and characters of certain children. These are predominantly black and Muslim Asian youth – seen to be a part of 'parallel' cultures and/or youth cultures that do not adhere to British values – though we must acknowledge that white working-class youth as well as other ethnic minorities, including especially Gypsy and Traveller children, are also subjected to such school surveillance.

> WORKING-CLASS MULTIRACIAL YOUTH IN THE BENIGHTED ESTATES OF LONDON ARE 'AT RISK' POPULATIONS, RACIALLY STEREOTYPED, STIGMATISED ACCORDING TO THEIR CLASS AND CULTURES AND FRAMED AS FECKLESS.

In 2012, Emmeline Taylor found that 85 per cent of UK secondary schools have some form of CCTV system in operation.[90] In the eight years since, it would not be farfetched to assume this figure is now closer to 100 per cent. School surveillance technologies, she argues, have superseded those in prisons, and students in the

UK are some of the most heavily surveilled populations. 'Upcoming generations will emerge from surveillance schools desensitized to, and expectant of, intense scrutiny and objectification', she believes. Among other surveillance apparatus, schools use biometric technologies such as automated fingerprint identification systems, facial recognition software, palm vein and iris scanners, as well as, radio-frequency identification microchips in school uniforms.

The concurrent wars on terror and knives are undoubtedly viewed by the state as intersecting. Precisely because London's young communities are extremely culturally diverse, they are over-surveilled and over-identified by the state with knife crime and terrorism. This cauldron of repressed young people continues to be at the frontline of what Stuart Hall described as the 'registers of racism'. However, as Christy Kulz has argued, the historical demarcation between the biologically dangerous black boy and culturally deviant Asian boy has, to some extent, collapsed, in London at least.[91] Now, both black and brown boys are viewed as having the potential for physical violence, whether it be by stabbings or suicide bombs. Though this conjoinment creates a flattening effect that many would argue against, since not all ethnic minorities are subjected to the exact same monitoring procedures, reading between the lines you can see the state is starting to develop a more sophisticated understanding of inner-city life, particularly with regard to the fluidity, temporality and transitional nature of youth identities, cultures and activities. Or, to put it another way, cultural identities attached to London youth are not monolithic. For example, black boys can be both Muslim and associated with gangsterism, and similarly Asian boys can be seen as gang members and also Muslim. Hence, when we talk about menaces to society or folk devils today, it is now more difficult to disentangle and identify exactly *who* is capable of what. Prevailing moral panics though appearing one-dimensional are, in fact, multifaceted.

> **BECAUSE LONDON'S YOUNG COMMUNITIES ARE EXTREMELY CULTURALLY DIVERSE, THEY ARE OVER-SURVEILLED AND OVER-IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE WITH KNIFE CRIME AND TERRORISM.**

But this hybridity also lends itself to solidarity. For young Londoners, educated in inner-city comprehensives, there is a real sense of 'we are all in this together'. Though the class strata in which they belong does suggest a lumpen-precariat, their potential for resistance and rebellion lurks in the city's cracks. In a gentrified city, those with even a smidgen of class consciousness may, eventually, seek to shift the political terrain. Thus, every effort will be made by the state to surveil and curtail that.

The main reason young people are excluded from schools is for 'persistent disruptive behaviour' – loosely defined and tightly enforced. One of the key behavioural measures that catch children in the persistent disruptive behaviour net is the 'zero tolerance' policy. While initially introduced by New Labour into (mainly) inner-city areas where schools were identified as inadequate or underperforming, zero tolerance, Pam Sammons has argued, was seen as a more holistic approach to ending low standards in urban education.[92] However, from 2010 onwards, the Conservatives repurposed 'zero tolerance' policies, making them more hostile and punitive. The appointment of so-called behaviour Tsar, Tom Bennett, in 2015, was indicative of the government's move toward tackling minimal disruption and

misdemeanours in classrooms in accordance with the US zero tolerance policing strategy used for minor crimes and public order offences in poor multiracial neighbourhoods in New York. While police officers in the US look for 'broken windows' to criminalise, teachers here look for broken chairs or torn uniforms or 'chipped shoulders' to discipline. Veteran educator Gus John has described the policy in schools as 'senseless, oppressive and destructive', arguing that:

> *Part of the purpose of schooling children of any age is to assist them in unlearning inappropriate behaviours … it is incomprehensible, therefore, that more and more schools are operating 'zero tolerance' policies that result in children being excluded rather than being given assistance to change their behaviour.*[93]

Despite countless warnings from students, parents, teachers and activists that zero tolerance policies are penal, in 2019, the government announced that Bennett would be given £10m to lead a project in 500 schools across England to enhance detention systems and sanctions.[94] Indeed, the net used to catch disruptive students is widening, with more being fished out and marketed. For Bennett, any link between UK zero tolerance policies and school exclusions is not evidence-based and mere hearsay.[95] When questioned by a headteacher on Twitter as to whether behaviour had actually improved under the Conservative government – a claim made in its 2019 manifesto – he admitted 'I don't have the data to answer that. Measuring behavioural improvement across a system, over time, is a tricky business'.[96] Though without having any hard evidence, Bennett has been tasked with designing a behaviour 'checklist' for schools when they reopen after the coronavirus outbreak.[97] It is yet to be seen as to whether, given his record, he will have the necessary sensitivity to provide the amount of support needed to resettle pupils into school after what will have been for many a traumatic period of lockdown and family and community hardship.

Even after a damning report[98] by the BBC in 2018 exposing the extent to which isolation booths were used on young people in secondary schools with special educational needs, and/or 'behaviour disorders', Bennett has continued to defend the practice saying isolation is an effective way to tackle disruption in classrooms, and is

IN 2018 MORE THAN 200 SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND WERE USING ISOLATION BOOTHS, THOUGH THE FULL SCALE OF USE IS STILL UNKNOWN.

a 'perfectly normal, useful and compassionate strategy'.[99] Freedom of Information requests submitted by the BBC found that more than 200 schools in England were using isolation booths, though the full scale of use is still unknown (requests were sent to more than 1,000 secondary schools and only 600 replied). Comparing young people's moral rights as they relate to internal (and external) exclusion in UK schools, John Tillson and Laura Oxley argue that Bennett's 'view is at odds with evidence' that proves internal isolation booths, often used to manage students long-term 'is detrimental to their mental health and education'.[100] Still, hundreds of young people continue to be shunted into booths precisely because the 'guidance' for using isolation as a sanction is so permissive. At least two legal cases have been brought by parents against a school and the Department for Education over this practice. In January 2020, the Children's Commissioner described 'horror stories' of children being sequestered in converted toilet cubicles, now isolation booths.[101]

It is not farfetched to argue that this would seem like preparation for the solitary confinement many teenagers aged 15 to 18 will experience across England's Youth Offender Institutions, according to a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.[102] For Karen Graham's research shows how schools and the education system prepare some students for the role of prisoner.[103] She identified four dominant converging themes – violence, labelling, masculinities and physical isolation – in her interviews with prisoners, which reveal the extent to which an 'educational underclass' is actively made in school and goes on to form a specific prison population. Out of all the themes, physical separation dominated the men's accounts as the 'dark isolated side of schooling' was said to 'mark them out as unique and deserving of punishment/undeserving of education'. And, ultimately, 'they were denied the basic right to be educated'.

Clearly, some inner-city schools, above all other social institutions, are sites which normalise the preparation for future exploitation, dispossession, enclosure and imprisonment. That is to say that state-sanctioned ideology and/or techniques of control are legitimated for the purpose of socialising a specific demographic of young people into their prospective roles in society – in this case, an excluded underclass readymade for prison. Indeed, arguments of a PRU-to-prison pipeline come sharply into focus here.

The state has been able to justify this socialisation because it actively criminalises young working-class men from certain ethnic minority communities. By appealing to two conflated moral panics of maiming and murdering ('knife crime' or terrorism) on the one hand, and causing mayhem ('rioting') on the other, politicians and practitioners link the disparate sites of schools (or PRUs) and society at large. Hence the expansion of the PRU sector (or Alternative Provision) could be viewed as a strategy of containment, whereby this dangerous class is secured and sequestered away from mainstream 'law-abiding' citizens. For politicians and policy-makers and, increasingly, some middle-class gentrifiers, schools constitute an essential part of the city; the 'education market', as it is widely understood by estate agents and property developers is, by extension, connected to the 'housing market'. While previous research[104] indicated that the affluent classes have not historically sent their children to state schools, opting instead for private schooling, it is important to keep in mind that new areas of London have been gentrified over the past decade and the new middle-class coterie is being encouraged through urban policy not only to take-up housing and employment, but also to utilise the city's 'improved' schools, namely academies and free schools. (Gentrification happens as a result of redesigned urban policies that subsequently influences the choices individuals make, which then alters the organisation of existing communities and the use of schools.)

> **THE EXPANSION OF THE PRU SECTOR (OR ALTERNATIVE PROVISION) COULD BE VIEWED AS A STRATEGY OF CONTAINMENT, WHEREBY THIS DANGEROUS CLASS IS SECURED AND SEQUESTERED AWAY FROM MAINSTREAM 'LAW-ABIDING' CITIZENS.**

This is not to say that middle-class children now dominate the comprehensive city schoolscape – the state is yet to succeed in that respect. However, (education) policy is political and the creation of academies and the perceived 'improvement'

of schools does inspire the enrolment of more affluent young people, who may well, in turn, raise school standards. But it is worth considering the consequential effects this has on poor, vulnerable young people, often black and/or ethnic minority and sometimes with specialist educational needs. Those that are seen as 'disruptive' and/or 'dangerous' are at higher risk of being excluded for unsettling the education of those who sit quietly with fingers on lips. Therefore, we must ask ourselves whether rising school exclusions and the subsequent expansion of Alternative Provision are primarily about providing a better education for those not 'suited' to mainstream schools (either academically or behaviourally), or about removing a section of the urban multiracial working class which poses a threat to incoming gentrifying students? And is the biggest threat that young multiracial, but mainly black, boys pose to the white middle classes, their perceived all-pervasive 'gang involvement'?

Students associated with 'gangs' or gang 'activity' or gang 'behaviour' or gang 'identity' and 'knife crime' – (as well as those that are seen as 'persistently disruptive') – are on the receiving end of punitive zero-tolerance and exclusion policies. A 2019 report by Ofsted on *Safeguarding children and young people in education from knife crime: lessons from London* reveals, that despite the fact that knife incidents in schools 'occur infrequently', school leaders are said to 'keep pupils safe on premises through policies and practice, their zero-tolerance approach to bladed objects, their expectations of pupils behaviour'.[105] Schools 'prioritise the welfare or safety of the majority of children … and tend to immediately permanently exclude or encourage the parent and child to consider a managed move to another setting' – another setting is usually a PRU or Alternative Provision.

In Damien M. Sojoyner's work on educational enclosure in black Los Angeles, he found that zero-tolerance policies were used in schools to address the 'problem of gangs' and the threat of the black criminal. He argues that 'early intervention' and 'prevention' programmes, though seemingly benign, actually do the work of profiling and monitoring black youth in schools.

In the UK context anthropologist and geographer Neil Smith has added that, in terms of policing 'zero tolerance is now seen as a complementary strategy to "urban regeneration", the wholesale gentrification of central urban landscapes'.[106] I argue we should visualise within this analysis the place that   inner-city schools occupy, for they too form an essential part of the gentrified city. Indeed, targeted gang strategies for inner-city schools exist on this side of the Atlantic too. In 2015, the Home Office published the report *Preventing youth violence and gang involvement: practical advice for schools and colleges*.[107] Again, although the report has a veneer of benevolence, it is important to note that throughout this short document of forty-nine pages the issue of 'behaviour' was discussed a staggering fifty-nine times; on average 1.2 times per page. In fact, it is clear that the purpose of the paper is to equip schools and teachers with the knowledge to identify, profile and monitor and refer or correct 'behaviours' correlated with 'gangs'. There is no mention of race or ethnicity, nor poverty or class, but it is clear which section of society this paper is intended for given the well-known moral panics surrounding inner-city youth violence and the discourse on gangs. This document is not an exception; many more like this exist, and are being used, almost as manuals, to forensically monitor mainly black

working-class youth, but also other ethnic minority young people. One revealing section of the report titled 'what works in preventing violence and aggressive behaviour' has a strong 'correction' focus, with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) recommended, as it 'has been shown to be effective in addressing aggression and conduct disorders in pre-adolescents'. Tarek Younis has warned in his critique of the counter-radicalisation policy Prevent, that 'psychology' is being increasingly used on young Muslims in order to present them as disturbed and mentally unwell, thereby allowing the state to evade charges of racial profiling and racism. Anti-gangs initiatives employ similar strategies it would seem.[108] But as Younis argues, teachers and other staff in schools are not trained mental health professionals, therefore it is highly inappropriate to ask teachers to psychologise specific racialised groups. This approach can lead to further criminalisation, as school staff are encouraged to report everyday ubiquitous, and often, innocuous behaviours.

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This paper has examined the cohort of young people involved in serious youth violence in London by building upon existing data on school exclusions and emerging research into expanding the Alternative Provision sector. The aim was to contribute and strengthen the discourse surrounding the PRU-to-prison pipeline, and has gone some way, I hope, in expanding our current understanding of the phenomenon. It has done this by showing how multiracial working-class youth rebellions during the neoliberal turn have catalysed the state over the past forty years to:

> Remove forms of progressive multiracial education (multicultural and anti-racist) from school curriculums;
> Implement a monocultural and ethnocentric National Curriculum, underpinned by Fundamental British Values;
> Develop a two-tier, bifurcated educated system: academies for the deserving and aspirational and PRUs and Alternative Provision for the undeserving and apathetic;
> Legitimate the expansion of the Alternative Provision sector by building on fears of an 'educational underclass' running riot;
> Secure 'risky' populations through various technologies of control and containment that are linked to gentrified London.

A final point about SYV and knife crime – and this does not need to be a long point because working-class multiracial communities are frankly exhausted by the sheer number of 'reviews' and documents produced to analyse particular issues. If young people are engaged in youth violence and/or gang activity they are probably because there are no other viable options available to them. Hence, schools need to be properly resourced in order to implement initiatives that centre on young people's social, economic and political development. Not so they can become mere 'obedient citizens', but so they actually can have a shot at a chance in life.

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