

Britain: Youth Unemployment Reaching Crisis Level

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The true jobless total is over 5 million, and the young generations are hardest hit.

Britain's youth unemployment rate has just reached a record 19.8 percent, and the number of 16-to-24-year-olds claiming benefits is approaching the 1 million mark. The latest unemployment figures show that, while the rate of overall unemployment growth is slowing, the situation of the unemployed youth is [getting worse](#).

A sizable number of the unemployed young are university graduates, who the [Telegraph](#) call "products of Labor's misguided obsession with putting half of all young people through university." Many of these youths are not only jobless, but also encumbered with debt from student loans.

Labor market expert [David Blanchflower](#) projects that overall unemployment in the UK will climb to 3.4 million within two years. This would be a higher rate than that of the early 1980s, when unemployment spawned riots and protests. Today, however, the government is much less ambitious about providing a solution. While the pre-1980s policies were designed to foster near-full employment, the present focus on inflation relegates the unemployment issue to one of far less importance.

This growing army of idle young people is no small problem.

Many of these unemployed become a drain on society, not because of their impact on social welfare programs, but also by the way some pass their idle hours.

Great Britain leads the world in [teenage drunkenness](#). One third of teens ages 13 to 15 have been drunk at least twice—the highest proportion of any developed country. According to a separate survey, 42 percent of [Britons](#) see binge drinking as "part of Britain's culture." About a quarter say there is "nothing wrong with drinking to excess."

The riotous British youth also have the highest teenage pregnancy rate in all of Europe, with [4 of every 100](#) British girls under the age of 18 become pregnant each year. In response, the government has instituted a class on teenage motherhood for girls, sending the message to teenage girls that having a baby while still at school is acceptable, even an achievement. This model [encourages](#) those in severely underemployed communities to have children who will grow up with similar or worse prospects, seriously disadvantaged by the circumstances of their parent or parents.

The soaring youth unemployment rate contributes to serious social woes in Britain, but unemployment is itself only a symptom of a broader problem: faulty education.

For youth, the lack of education, whether they hold university credentials or not, often leaves them unemployable. The newer generations yield disengaged and disillusioned young people. The true ambition that was once the normal condition not so long ago is now a rare exception. In too many cases, it has been replaced by despondency.

For the politicians, lack of education prods them to [outsource](#) tens of thousands of jobs, gradually shifting manufacturing and service sector jobs from advanced industrial nations to the lower-cost developing nations. It has led to policies designed to bring 50 percent of secondary school graduates into [higher education](#). The result is unrealistic expectations, and a nation unwilling to fulfill many of its manual job needs. To increase the number of university graduates without increasing the number of grad-level jobs reflects a short-sighted strategy.

The paradox is that the [British peoples](#)—glutted with the false wealth that easy credit brought them before the economic downturn—remain largely ignorant of their educational destitution. That was the system that civilized the uncivilized, that brought discipline to the undisciplined within the nations that formed the once vast British Commonwealth and Empire. That system taught basic honesty in business dealings, civility in human relations, a sense of honor and respect for the heritage of the nation—basic virtues which have since been removed from the public education systems within the Anglo-Saxon nations of today.

Until the modern educational system is repaired, Britain's problems will multiply. For more, see our article [The Unseen Danger in Europe's Economic Crisis](#) from the January edition of the *Trumpet* magazine. For information about how to avoid the disasters of faulty education in your own life, read our booklet [The Seven Laws of Success](#).

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