

Young people left behind are going to get angry

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As [was noted by Guardian](#) columnist, Gaby Hinsliff, this week:

Two decades ago, the median recent graduate starting out in a genuine graduate career could expect to earn two and a half times the minimum wage. Now the premium is only 1.6 times minimum wage for median earners, according to the [Resolution Foundation](#), and the lowest earning graduates are fast approaching parity.

This is unsurprising.

The minimum wage for a forty-hour working week is more than £25,000 this coming April (making a mockery of the old age pension in the process). Many graduate training schemes have started on less than that over the last year or two. In my old profession of accountancy, there will be many graduates now looking for a job (and they will be lucky to find one) that will pay little more than the minimum wage despite their being more than £50,000 in debt to be in a position to secure it.

It has been recognised for some time that the hollowing out of the middle class has been a long-term phenomenon in the USA, with a big impact on the electoral prospects of the Democrats, who left behind those graduates who saw no benefit from what that party was doing. We now face something very similar here, as Gaby Hinsliff points out.

Faced with low pay, the continual threat of AI displacing their work, low prospects of buying a house and zero prospect of saving for old age if they ever manage to secure both employment and the chance to ever reach the goal of retirement, having taken the unaddressed issue of climate change into account, many young people quite reasonably look at what UK business is willing to offer them by way of wages, and ask whether the effort of trying to work in the grinding, soulless fashion demanded by employers of new graduates is worthwhile. Is it surprising that some say it is not?

The question is whether this is deliberate on the part of employers? Do they really want to make work unattractive because they really believe they will not need people in the future? Or is it simple exploitation on their part? I think a mix of both is possible.

What I also think likely is that many employers feel indifferent to those facing these dilemmas. The children of the best connected are immune to these threats. For them, there are internships, prospects, and pathways that are pre-mapped to success. I really doubt they do care about those without that privilege. Nothing else can explain why so many young people are so badly treated.

And right now, none of our three largest parties seems to care. And maybe that is the biggest crisis of all because young people left behind are going to get angry.