

Funding the Future

Article URL

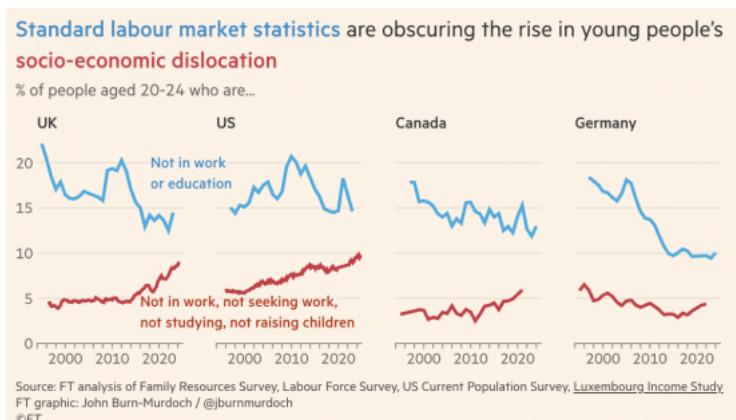
Published: January 12, 2026, 6:41 pm

As the FT notes today, [in another excellent article](#) by John Burns-Murdoch:

In the UK [the number of] ... young people who are increasingly disengaged from not only the economy but the rest of society has doubled in just over a decade from 4.5 to 9 per cent of the population aged 20-24.

Rates have also climbed several percentage points over recent years in the US, Canada and Germany, virtually doubling in the latter two cases. In almost all cases these are record highs stretching back over several decades.

The data looks like this:



The real question to ask is, why wouldn't this happen? Many young people know:

- * Their chance of living independently is low and declining.
- * Housing affordability for those without parental support is declining.
- * Even with increasing minimum wages, the chance of making ends meet in an economy that extracts 50% or more of wages through rents is low.
- * Hard work is no longer a way to escape any of these traps, nor are qualifications.
- * Children are unaffordable.
- * The planet is being destroyed around them, and with it, their future.

So, why wouldn't they despair?

Unless and until we stop extracting much of the wages of young people (and others) through rents —whether actual rents, excessive interest charges, or prices inflated by monopoly power bizarrely backed by state regulation in too many cases — none of this is going to change.

The alienation of young people can be blamed on Covid, phones and much else. But those are exacerbations. The real cause is much more systemic. The real issue is rent exploitation in all its forms. It is neoliberalism that is destroying the lives of young people. And that is why it has to go.