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Mon dieu... Retreat, Retreat

by
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Well, it looks as if the French have turned tail and run away from the enemy again. The enemy this time is a stagnant economy, rising unemployment among those workers under age 25 and hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who have taken to the streets to protest a new law that would have bolstered the economy by encouraging businesses to hire competent workers under the age of 25. France's current youth unemployment, is 23%, jumping to 50% among the children of immigrants. Although unemployment nationwide for all ages is 9.2%, it is still almost double the rate in Britain and the United States. Reports show overall employment levels are very low in France with only 65% of the workforce employed, compared with a record high in Britain of 72%.

What would make the unemployment rate so high among young workers? An outdated, socialistic trend of job guarantees which takes away the right of employers to fire an employee for incompetence or any other reason within the first two years of employment tends to dissuade employers from hiring younger workers. The old law also states no employees can be made to work over a 35 hour work week.

A new law designed to make it more attractive for French employers to hire young workers would have given the employer more wiggle room to let a new employee go if he or she were not doing the job. Because France has gone over to the socialistic side of things guaranteed employment is the name of the game and, obviously, such conditions will not allow a country's economy to move upward as it should in free market and free economy. France has long derided the economic systems of Britain and the United States which they call the "Anglo-Saxon hire and fire," long working hours model of managing the job market. The protestors feel the law will contribute to job insecurity when, in reality, it will put the onus on individual workers to produce or get out. By caving in to these communistic wannabes French President Jacques Chirac has again shown he is not a leader whose main concern is the good of the country but for his own longevity in office.

Each year thousands of French citizens are heading across the English channel to seek work in the booming economy of Britain and they are being welcomed with open arms by the British employers. Most of those making the trip are young, talented, skilled workers who are not so much concerned about the wage being offered but having a job... period. And even though the French have sustained a myth that the British economy is made up of low paid, less quality jobs, facts will show the French are paying their workers less than the Brits. According to reports there are more than 350,000 French citizens residing and working in Britain and the majority of them are under age 35.

There are many people in the United States that look at European nations and their socialistic tendencies as a perfect model for the United States to adopt. However, the United States consistently has a more robust economy and lower unemployment rates than the majority of Western European countries. Currently United States unemployment is 4.7% which is half that of France and Germany and our job growth this past month was greater than economists had projected. For those of you who thought the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) deal would take away so many American jobs you would be interested to know that the American Unemployment rate has dropped a substantial 1.9% since NAFTA was signed into being.

“With continuing high unemployment rates in France and Germany, it is no surprise that workers in these countries are the most concerned in Europe about job security and believe their governments should do more about job creation,” said Frank Martell, President and CEO, A.C. Nielsen Europe. They are concerned about jobs but take to the streets to demonstrate by the thousands whenever a valid proposal is put into law to make some positive changes. Obviously they don’t have confidence in their own abilities to hold a job and prefer the status quo to progress.

Let’s all be thankful that we are living in a time and a country where our economy is the strongest it’s been for a long while, despite the tremendous financial burden of 9/11 and the war in Iraq. It’s sometimes hard to see where the nay-sayers come up with their logic that we are in a depression and things are so terrible. Guess it has to do with one’s willingness to dwell on the positive rather than the negative.

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