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Workers World

By Editor

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Editorial: Working-class youth want socialism! Socialism needs working-class youth!

According to a poll by YouGov in September 2019, 70 percent of millennials — people between 23 and 38 — would vote for a socialist. One-third view communism favorably compared to capitalism. What this poll implies is that young people in the U.S. increasingly believe in a socialist future for humanity and the planet.

Trust in the basic institutions and the founding mythology of the United States is crumbling. Only 57 percent of millennials favored the U.S. Declaration of Independence over the Communist Manifesto as a document that would “guarantee freedom.” That’s compared to 94 percent of people over 74 choosing the Declaration over the Manifesto.

Communism’s popularity among millennials is growing quickly, with their support increasing by 8 percent in the last year. Meanwhile, 35 percent of millennials view Marxism favorably. One in five believe the world would be better off if private property were abolished. When it comes to reforms, totally free college has 45 percent support, and 50 percent believe the government should guarantee everyone a job.

What are the conditions and experiences that created all these “red millennials”?

This is the generation that occupied Wall Street, that led Black Lives Matter, that goes on strike for climate justice, that votes for Bernie Sanders and candidates further to the left, and that continues to fight every racist, fascist attack by Trump.

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This is a generation that is pro-union, pro-im/migrant, pro-LGBTQ2+ and pro-gender equality, as well as anti-war.

This is also a generation that is underemployed, faces trillions in student debt and can't pay down their credit cards or medical bills. Children of millennials, those born today, face a lower life expectancy than their parents. This crushing statistic is an indictment of the criminal capitalist system that caused the decline — an indictment of capitalism at a dead end.

Despite the annihilation of living standards by capitalism, the impact of anti-communist propaganda over the past century — a response by capital to the victorious Bolshevik Revolution — is still a reality. For example, 61 percent of people polled deemed the word “communist” to be an insult. Significantly, though, only 37 percent of all people found the word “socialist” insulting.

A majority of those polled viewed Donald Trump as the greatest single threat to world peace. He continues the classic anti-communist crusade, calling Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other progressive elected officials “Communists” and “anti-American.”

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party leadership faces a challenge from “democratic socialists” within their party, creating a divide over whether they continue to be the unapologetic party of neoliberal imperialism or cede ground to those pushing a more progressive agenda. Old Guard Democratic Party leaders such as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi continue to defend market-oriented, capitalist perspectives.

While the Democrats flounder, socialist and communist parties in the U.S. are growing as the entire world grapples with the demise of capitalism.

Capitalists celebrate fall of Berlin Wall, but socialism advances

When the Berlin Wall came down 30 years ago, it ushered in a global counterrevolution and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Capitalist apologists proclaimed the end of history, declaring capitalism to be the world's permanent economic system.

Yet after three decades of capitalism in the former German Democratic Republic, Eastern Europe and the former USSR, polls show a majority in those countries prefer the life they

had under socialism. They have experienced the contrast between a system which guaranteed jobs, inexpensive housing, universal child care, free quality health care, versus the ills of capitalism: unemployment, homelessness, wage theft, low pay, illiteracy, right-wing nationalism, lack of mental health support, to name a few.

In China today, hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty and serious steps are being taken to address the climate emergency. The people of Cuba live longer than people in the U.S.

Reality runs counter to all the capitalist propaganda that “socialism is a good idea, but it can’t work” or that the U.S. “saved the world” from communist “slavery” and “dictatorship.”

Pro-socialist governments in countries like Venezuela and Bolivia, currently under siege by U.S.-backed, right-wing forces, have made tremendous gains for the people and built grassroots movements after winning bourgeois elections.

However, the primary question remains: Which class will control the banks, major industries, the media and civil society — along with the state apparatus? This question will be decisive for the survival of humanity and all life on the planet.

Socialist revolution is, in fact, the only real alternative to the capitalist system of exploitation and the growing danger of fascism.

Since our founding 60 years ago, Workers World Party has steadfastly defended the socialist camp and its endeavors to transform the world. We look forward to many young millennial communists joining our ranks and fighting in the streets to build a workers’ world!

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