One hundred years after the October Revolution

Majority of young Americans prefer socialism or communism to capitalism

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The second annual report on Americans' attitudes toward socialism released last week by the anti-communist Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation worryingly reports that, in the centenary year of the Russian Revolution, most young people prefer socialism over capitalism.

According to the poll, which was carried out by the international polling firm YouGov between September and October, 51 percent of those Americans currently between the ages of 21 and 29, defined in the report as "Millennials," would prefer to live in a socialist or communist country over a capitalist country.

A majority of Millennials (56 percent) also reported that they would not be offended if someone accused them of being a communist. Significantly, a similar percentage of this age group (53 percent) reported that they feel that America's economic system is working against them.

Many of those defined as Millennials are part of a generation that has experienced the failure of the capitalist system first-hand. They graduated high school or college and entered the workforce just around the time of the 2008 economic crisis. Many are without access to decent employment opportunities, are mired in student loan debt that they are incapable of paying off, and find themselves unable to afford to leave their parents' homes.

A decade after the 2008 crisis, young workers and students in the US continue to confront unsustainable levels of poverty, unemployment or underemployment, unending and ever-expanding wars and a raging opioid crisis that is taking the lives of their friends and family members.

While confusion remains over the meaning of socialism and communism, there is a general sense that socialism means greater social equality, the guarantee of a job at a decent wage, free high-quality education and the right to universal health care—things which capitalism has proven itself incapable of providing.

Growing interest in socialism is not limited to young people. The report found that among Americans overall, more than one-third (37 percent) would prefer to live in a socialist or communist country.

The poll also found that nearly 70 percent of Americans do not believe that the rich pay their fair share in taxes, and nearly 90 percent of this group think it would require either higher taxes (49 percent) or a complete change of the economic system (37 percent) to ensure that they do so. Additionally, 80 percent of Americans think that income inequality between the rich and the poor is a serious issue.

Disregarding public opinion, the Trump administration and the Republican Congress, with the complicity or support of the Democratic Party, are rushing to push through historic tax cuts that will provide a massive windfall for the ruling class and fuel opposition to capitalism.

The data on attitudes toward socialism, which confirms other surveys with similar findings, is all the more extraordinary given that opposition to capitalism is excluded from the mass media.

The anti-capitalist and pro-socialist sentiments of workers and students found distorted expression last year in the success of the campaign of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who won 13 million votes in the Democratic primaries. Presenting himself as a democratic socialist who was going to fight the "billionaire class," Sanders garnered widespread

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support, particularly among young people.

Sanders' role from the outset was to channel oppositional sentiments back into the Democratic Party and prevent widespread opposition to the capitalist system from finding any independent political expression.

Support for Sanders, however, was only a partial reflection of the opposition to the capitalist system that has built up beneath the surface of official politics in the United States and extends well beyond what is revealed in the YouGov poll.

On the centenary of the Russian Revolution there is great nervousness in the United States, the center of world imperialism, that the growing popular opposition to capitalism will produce an independent socialist movement based in the working class, taking as its example the October Revolution of 1917.

While concern is being aired by anti-communist groups like the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, which has close ties to the Heritage Foundation, the Democratic Party is waging a vicious campaign to crack down on all oppositional sentiment by blaming Russia for sowing divisions on social media.

The ferocious anti-Russian McCarthyite campaign, which echoes the anti-Communist witch-hunts of the 1950s, is targeted ultimately at left-wing, anti-war and progressive web sites, foremost the *World Socialist Web Site*. The WSWS is being censored by Google because it gives expression to the sentiments of the ever growing segment of the population that is fundamentally opposed to the interests of the ruling class and favors the establishment of socialism.

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