

New poll shows growing political discontent and anger among young people in the US

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A large majority of young people in the United States feel pessimistic about the future, and furthermore, that the US state and its political institutions do not represent their vital interests, according to a new poll.

The survey, conducted online between January 2 and January 6 by the Alliance for Youth Organizing in collaboration with Civiqs, polled 1,936 registered voters ages 17-39 on questions pertaining to their feelings about the direction of the United States, as well as their thoughts about national political figures and parties. The results were weighted by race, sex, age, education and party identification.

The poll found a growing mood of discontent with the current trajectory of the US, with 66 percent describing themselves as “pessimistic” about the future of the country. This mood was especially pronounced among the younger Gen Z’ers (those aged 17-25) with 69 percent reporting a pessimistic attitude about the future.

Over half, 56 percent, of those polled reported feeling “frustrated” with politicians in Washington, while 37 percent described themselves as “angry.”

Both of the capitalist parties are viewed negatively, with 55 percent reporting a negative view of Democrats in Congress and an even higher number, 69 percent, viewing the Republicans negatively. Just 36 percent of respondents said they had a “favorable” view of President Joe Biden. Just over 30 percent of respondents said they viewed Donald Trump positively—on the flip side, 61 percent of young people had a “very unfavorable” opinion of the ex-president.

The overwhelming majority, 75 percent, of respondents said that they felt politicians in Washington prioritized the interests of the wealthy, and this included 52 percent of those who identified themselves as Republicans.

The results of the poll are an indication of the enormous anger and opposition that is brewing against the US capitalist state and its institutions. It is a damning indictment of the Biden administration and the Democratic Party, which was brought to power largely because of popular anger over the policies of the fascistic Trump.

Significantly, 53 percent of those polled believe that Congress should more vigorously investigate the attempted fascist coup of January 6, 2021. Among young African Americans, this number was even higher, at 69 percent.

Workers and youth who voted for Biden, with expectations that he would repudiate the policies of Trump, have been given a hard lesson in what “democracy” truly entails in modern capitalist society. The Biden administration has in many respects continued and escalated Trump’s assault on the working class.

The homicidal “herd immunity” policies of Trump—allowing for the uncontrolled spread of COVID-19 among the population in order to safeguard corporate profits—have reached a new level under Biden. Confronted by the collapse of its “mitigation” strategy due to the exponential spread of the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, the Biden administration has shifted to a policy of “living with COVID-19.”

In practice this means that the US state has surrendered the population to the pandemic, which is now as a matter of policy set to continue indefinitely. The results have been an unmitigated catastrophe: over half a million new infections per day on average, with the seven-day average of deaths standing at over 2,500 per day. Faced with this mass death, the response of the US government has been to move towards the ending of daily case and death counting.

When asked about which COVID-19 impacts most worried them, the majority of respondents, 55 percent, said they were most concerned about the ongoing threats to their health and the health of their loved ones. This would indicate that the claims made by the corporate press, that the population and especially the youth are eager to throw caution to the wind and “live with” the deadly virus, are patent nonsense.

A sense of the true feelings of the youth can be seen by observing the remarkable wave of protests and walkouts conducted by high school students nationwide.

The growing outrage of the youth is rooted deeply in the experiences through which the population has passed over the past decades. Young people are responding to the enormous objective crisis of American capitalism, which has been brought to a fever pitch by the destabilizing effect of the pandemic. The youth are coming of age in a society of staggering social inequality, many of them saddled with debt, many others with no prospects for improving their economic position.

They have grown up under conditions marked by wanton despair expressed in the epidemic of drug overdoses and suicide and inundated in violence and brutality meted out by the police. Even the schools have become potential killing fields; the phenomenon of school shootings, which the ruling class has always met with indifference, has been a staple of American life for decades.

And how could it be otherwise, in a nation that has been involved in a permanent series of criminal wars for the past 20 years, that so many young people are growing hostile to the political order? The pandemic has accelerated and intensified each of these degenerate tendencies. Beset by an intractable social and political crisis and threatened by growing domestic unrest, the US ruling class is now seeking a way out of its predicament by intensifying its war drive against Russia, with potentially incalculable consequences for all of humanity.

One year of the Biden administration has made it abundantly clear that not a single step forward can be taken under the wing of the Democratic Party, the party of the imperialist bourgeoisie. It will be necessary to dispel illusions in the two-party system among young people and to reject the lies of charlatans such as Bernie

Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez, whose purpose is to channel the progressive aspirations of young people and redirect it behind the Democratic Party.

Young people who want to fight against social inequality, war and the threat of fascism must make a clean break with all of the existing institutions of bourgeois society and turn towards the only social force that has in its vital interests the addressing of the ills facing humanity: the international working class and its revolutionary vanguard.



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