

American workers and youth are turning towards socialism

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Several new opinion polls published in the last few days have provided indications of the remarkable shift to the left taking place among American workers and young people. In a country where anti-communism is virtually a state religion, and socialist views have been largely excluded from official politics for nearly a century, nearly 40 percent of registered voters said they would consider voting for a socialist candidate for president.

According to the *Washington Post*-Ipsos poll published Thursday, this figure rose to 46 percent among voters under 30, and to 64 percent among Democratic Party voters.

Despite this rapid growth of support for socialism—or rather because of it—the poll result was initially published under the headline, “Most Americans say they would not back a democratic socialist for president.” *Post* editors, working for a newspaper owned by centi-billionaire Jeff Bezos, know which side their bread is buttered on.

Even more significantly, according to a CNN poll conducted by SSRS, also published Thursday, about a third of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents identify as “democratic socialists.” Of these, 59 percent are younger than 45, compared to 46 percent of those Democrats who do not identify as democratic socialists. Two-thirds described themselves as very likely to vote in the 2026 midterm elections, 99 percent of them for Democrats.

The CNN poll found that those identifying themselves as democratic socialists “are less likely to have a college degree (66% to 54%) and more likely to earn less than \$100,000 a year (76% to 65%),” compared to Democrats who do not identify as democratic socialists. Black voters were more open to supporting a democratic socialist than white voters.

This debunks the claim, made incessantly in the media, that support for socialism is a white upper middle class sentiment, related to lifestyle not economics. Support for

socialism is driven by the experience of the new generation of the working class, who clearly have begun to understand that capitalism offers them only a grim future of war, poverty and attacks on democratic rights.

This is a vindication of a basic principle of Marxism: that social being determines consciousness. The Socialist Equality Party anticipated precisely this development. Its 2010 founding program stated that “the change in objective conditions”—the deepening crisis of American and world capitalism—“will lead American workers to change their minds” about socialism. What was then a scientific projection has become a broad phenomenon.

Both polls show a strong correlation between support for socialism and opposition to Trump’s war on Iran and the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza. Nearly half of democratic socialists, 48 percent, said they would be enthusiastic about a candidate who supports cutting US support to Israel.

Self-identified democratic socialists overwhelmingly oppose the war against Iran, a sentiment shared by the American public as a whole. A separate poll conducted by Quinnipiac College and published Wednesday found that 66 percent opposed Trump’s handling of the war, while 60 percent opposed the war itself. Both figures were the highest since Trump launched the war of aggression on February 28.

The polls confirm that the results of Democratic primaries in New York and Colorado last month, in which candidates linked to or supported by the Democratic Socialists of America won nominations in four congressional districts, defeating three long-serving Democratic incumbents in the process, are not an aberration.

Key primaries in the industrial Midwest could give further expression to this shift to the left over the next two weeks. In Michigan, former public health official Abdul El-Sayed is tied in the polls with Representative Haley

Stevens in the August 4 contest for the Democratic nomination for Senate. El-Sayed has the support of Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, while Stevens has the backing of the Democratic Party establishment, Governor Gretchen Whitmer and the pro-Israel lobby.

In the Wisconsin primary contest for the Democratic nomination for governor, DSA member Francesca Hong, a state representative, has a substantial lead in polls against two better-known candidates with much greater support in the party establishment, Milwaukee Mayor David Crowley and former lieutenant governor Mandela Barnes. That vote will take place on August 11.

It is noteworthy that the growing support for socialism comes under conditions where both capitalist parties, the Democrats as much as the Republicans, are despised by a majority of voters. Asked by CNN which party was the party of change, which cared about people like them, which fought corruption, and which got things done, more voters answered “neither” to each question than backed either party. A majority told CNN that most members of Congress should be ousted in November.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted last weekend found exactly the same level of support for democratic socialist ideas and for the ideas of MAGA Republicans, at 27 percent each—a remarkable figure, given that fewer than half of respondents said they understood democratic socialist policies, while MAGA policies are given non-stop publicity by the corporate media, the Republican Party and the Trump administration.

Opinion polls, it must be said, offer only a distorted expression of popular sentiment, affected by media propaganda, how the questions are phrased, and how respondents are selected and their views “weighted” demographically. Moreover, they are conducted within the framework of a corporate-controlled two-party system which presents capitalism as the only possible economic basis of society.

The initial leftward movement of millions of working people, under the impact of the mounting dangers of war, dictatorship and economic dislocation, has taken the initial form of electoral victories of the DSA. But the DSA is not the vehicle of the movement developing in the working class. It is an obstacle to it—a faction of the Democratic Party, one of the two parties of Wall Street and the military, whose function is to channel the growing opposition of workers and youth back into the framework of capitalist politics.

The essential content of this radicalization, however, is not reformist, and it will not be contained within that

framework. The same crisis turning workers and youth against capitalism will bring them into conflict with the Democratic Party. As the WSWs declared in its New Year statement of January 4, 2025: “The past five years have been dominated by the response of the ruling class to the capitalist crisis. The next five years will be dominated by an explosive eruption of the class struggle, which is already under way.”

The growth of support for socialism recorded in these polls does not resolve the essential political problem but poses it more sharply. Mass sentiment is not yet a conscious political movement. What is required is the building of a revolutionary leadership in the working class, capable of clarifying what socialism actually is and how it can be achieved.

Workers and young people must seriously examine the fundamental historical issues of the 20th century, above all, the struggle waged by Leon Trotsky against Stalinism. Workers and young people today must heed the admonition of Trotsky, “Young people, study politics!”

Socialism can and will be achieved only through the independent political mobilization of the working class in struggle against the capitalist system, in the United States and throughout the world.

This requires a genuine socialist program: the political independence of the working class from both parties of the ruling class; the expropriation of the financial oligarchy and the transformation of the banks and corporations into public utilities under democratic control; and the reorganization of economic life to meet human need rather than private profit. The polls record a beginning. The essential question is its conscious political direction—the building of a revolutionary leadership in the working class, in the United States and internationally.

This means building the Socialist Equality Party in the United States and the International Committee of the Fourth International. We urge workers and youth to join us.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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