

The impact of climate change—“This is a great injustice”

Our reporters
22 September 2014

Supporters of the Socialist Equality Party and *World Socialist Web Site* distributed thousands of copies of the WSWS statement “Climate change and the capitalist system” at Sunday’s climate change march in New York City. Participants from across the country discussed the political issues behind the climate crisis with WSWS reporters.

Laurie, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin in Madison studying plasma physics, told WSWS reporters, “I feel really strongly that it’s becoming almost too late to act and we have to do everything we can. I think it’s especially frustrating as a scientist to watch highly educated people who have spent their lives studying something come out and say, here are the facts, and then to be told that they are lying or that they have an agenda. The science is there and it’s really important that we believe in it and that we start doing something.”

Her friend Cynthia, who works in the financial sector in New York City, added, “There are a lot of financial corporations who make a lot of money on oil and the distribution of energy wealth and traditional forms of industry. They resist the development of alternative forms of energy because there is such a huge market still for fossil fuels.”

“And there is so much profit to be made,” she continued. “We’re actually in an oil boom right now and people are making more and more money than they have made before. As long as energy continues to be a huge profitable market for many banks and corporations and those people are in bed with the people who are making those decisions.

“The top one percent are not going to be sharing their submarines when the rest of us are underwater. It’s going to be the rest of the 99 percent that is affected by climate changes.”

Samira, a mechanical engineer working on fluid dynamics, said, “This is something that should have happened 20 years ago. Global warming is getting to levels that are just too threatening. Scientists have the tools to do something about global warming, but unfortunately they’re colonized by the funding agencies. Most of these agencies have a militaristic agenda. That’s why we don’t have any solutions. Most of the solutions out there are neoliberal, capitalistic, like the carbon emissions market.”

When WSWS reporters asked her about the relation between war and the environment, Samira added, “Most of the wars around the world are about energy. I really believe that we need to demilitarize the funding agencies for the sciences.”

Jose, a hospital administrator from Brooklyn, remarked, “This is an issue that my wife and I are both very concerned about, especially coming on the heels of Hurricane Sandy. The changes across the country, the extreme weather forest fires, the extreme summer heat, none of this is by accident. What worries me is the connection between money and climate change, lobbyists in Washington pushing for fossil fuels and how difficult it is to fight against that. We need to do things outside of the Democratic and Republican parties.”

Ben Delahunty, who came with a group of students from Burlington, Vermont, told the WSWS, “We get all our power from coal, oil and gas when we should be getting all our energy from renewable sources like wind power, solar power, thermal energy or hemp. This hasn’t been done because of the big businesses that make profits off of coal, oil and gas.”

In discussing with the WSWS reporter what is necessary to change this state of affairs, Ben replied, “I don’t think we can change it because the system we

have has been in place for so long. I don't have any faith in Obama or the Democrats doing anything. But I agree with you. I'm not a socialist, but we have to change the system drastically."

Sara Lunden, a student at the Columbia School of Public Health in New York City, explained, "I'm here because this is a serious problem that hasn't been addressed enough. Essentially, I think people are looking to make a profit now instead of looking at what they are doing to the environment."

Evan Wiley, studying at Mt. Sinai Medical School, said, "Changing the climate is making life more difficult for many. The people who will be most affected by the actual climate changes are people who won't reap any rewards from these profits. This is a great injustice. The people who are doing this and reaping the profits most immediately are the investors and owners of fossil fuel industries.

"But there are more," he added. "The next in line are the politicians whose power is maintained by the money flowing from these corporations. It is easy to think it is just the Republicans, but there is inaction in the Democratic Party as well. If there is collective action like this today, that is the only thing that they will bow to and take action against climate change. I don't know if it can work. I don't know if it will work, but I don't know any other way to make this change happen."

David Rouche, an audiovisual technician in New York City, explained, "The underlying issue is the financial situation. The idea of an unrestricted capitalistic market is almost insane, where profit is more valued than anything else. The march brings more awareness, so that is good. I hope the media provides an accurate number for how large the march really is.

"I hope the government will do something, but I don't really like the two-party system. In the past 200 years it might have represented people but now there are so many issues. Technology is advancing so fast. Politics isn't advancing fast enough. With the two-party system, I am not optimistic about overcoming that."

Zach Cramer came to the march with 27 other students from Allegheny College in northwestern Pennsylvania. He explained, "There are giant organizations like 350.org and the Sierra Club telling us to recycle and not to cut down trees, that if we think

green, change is going to happen. They are ignoring the reasons why we can't go green. We have a political, economic system where elected officials don't speak for the people and they speak for the rich.

"There is another march on Monday at Wall Street. That march is going to the center of the problems, the US Stock Exchange, where hundreds of trillions of dollars are thrown around every day. The corporations are only focused on the profit margins. It doesn't matter if you have to recall cars or kill people. They couldn't care less about climate change. Protesting is about raising the general awareness. In 2008 I stood for Obama, but I changed. People need to find an alternative."



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact