More voices of the March for Science

Our reporters
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Dozens of scientists, students, workers and other supporters of science spoke with Socialist Equality Party supporters during marches on April 22, in protests which took place in hundreds of cities and towns. Yesterday and today, the *World Socialist Web Site*is publishing a selection of their comments.

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Diane, a molecular biologist from Ann Arbor, decided to come "because science matters, speaks the truth, and everyone needs to understand it." Describing herself as "very disappointed in the political situation," she cited cuts expected at the National Institute of Health, "which will have a huge impact on medical research. Cuts to science funding here will be felt around the world because many come here for training."

Nuclear energy, which has considerable potential in her view, is seen by the government as useful only for war. In that regard, Diane described herself as "very worried about the prospect of war with North Korea."

Jan from Ann Arbor described her travels around the world that had shown her firsthand the effects of climate change, "from glaciers melting to rivers dried up." Jan described herself as a socialist and wanted to know how propaganda against socialism could be combated, in order to provide an alternative road for the many now discontented.

Chicago

Minjun Son is postdoctoral researcher in the Biophysical Sciences Department at the University of Chicago. He said, "I came because Trump is against science. He is cutting government support for very important projects, some of which are really promising, and could change life and humanity as such."

Originally from South Korea, where he spent time in the military, Son expressed opposition to the US war threats against North Korea. "In my opinion, North Korea is not really interested in starting a war or threatening the US. It's all about maintaining their regime. So I think Trump is trying to use the situation to his political benefit. He wants to deter attention towards them, since his own political support is low, and perhaps start a war there or somewhere else. I don't know if that's his true intention or not, but I think it's a really dangerous situation."

"War doesn't benefit most people," he continued, "only the ones who wouldn't be affected by it. Just like previous presidents and politicians, Trump wouldn't send his sons, daughters and relatives to fight in a war."

"I think science is fundamental to the way we live our lives," said Sue Law, who runs a business out of her home. "I think the attacks on science are an opportunity for corporations to have their feast on the American people. It's the final devouring of every resource they can."

Sue said she was strongly opposed to the US war drive, and characterized the dropping of the MOAB in Afghanistan—the largest bomb since Hiroshima—as a destructive waste of resources. The US government "is just fanning the flames," she said, "because the military-industrial complex wants to get fed.

"Even the way the media just rolled over after the Syrian attack was disgusting. When MSNBC's Brian Williams waxed lyrical over "the beauty of our weapons," referring to the US missile strike on a Syrian airbase, "It made me want to vomit," Sue said.

Sue said she was sympathetic to socialism, but was unsure how it could be achieved. She added, however, "We need to think long-term about what our world wants to look like."

David, a recent graduate in creative writing and coffee-shop barista, said, "I think Trump's attacks on science are dangerous and he must be appealing to his corporate right-wing base. It's extremely shortsighted, and our long-term interests are going to be undermined. This is a system that doesn't care about the planet or its people or the health of the population. His attack on science is an attack on factual evidence and on truth. It's a violent and destructive administration that he leads based on greed and profit."

Speaking on the danger of war, he connected the policies of the Trump administration with those of Obama, saying, "Unfortunately, that's not a new direction that we're going in. The last administration was carrying out drone murders. There's really misguided attempts that seem to come out of the Kissinger era. The US is creating a military empire, destabilizing many regions in the world, and I think drone violence is also super-unethical. America today is the biggest military empire that has ever existed and it's messed up. Signs of military conflict, missiles being launched in Syria, or what's happening with Trump and North Korea is quite messed up and freaky.

"I think we should stop the war drive but I'm not sure how. I know that capitalism has not been working for us and it's broken. I agree that we should try to reach out to the working class because capitalism isn't permanent and we need an alternative."

Kerry, a health care worker from Chicago's south suburbs, said, "I'm very concerned about the control of science for destruction and not human good. Science is under attack because science is truth and people fear truth if it doesn't support their agenda. Politicians feed on people's fears and ignorance and make up facts to sway them. Politicians pander to the lowest common denominator and the money."

The attacks on science are troubling," said Charles, a professor of chemistry. "I'm so glad to see how much support there is for us, and it's not just scientists. I see plenty of people here who support science who are not themselves scientists. This climate change denial or even people who question evolution—it's just startling.

"Students and young people need to address how we can combat climate change. We need to change to solar, wind, hydroelectric or biomass sources of energy. We also need government funding for science programs at large, but they are cutting funding left and right. The reason so much of the innovation we saw in technology was because the federal government funded many important public programs—including the

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Internet, lasers, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). These days, if it's not profitable, there is no support for public funding of science."

On the danger of war, Charles added, "It's scary. All the recent wars America has been fighting have been completely illegitimate. It's endless wars supported by both parties, and it's like 1984 by George Orwell. I agree that we need to build a mass antiwar movement, but it's going to be an uphill battle, I think. The situation is very serious."

Jenna, Megan, Logan and Brad are students at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where Trump spoke last week to promote his reactionary "Buy American, Hire American" nationalism.

Logan said she came to march because "I was really frustrated with the cuts to the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] and the NIH [National Institutes of Health]. In the past, I've worked on projects researching Alzheimer's or stroke recovery, and that was all NIH-funded. The projects were doing things which were going to save lives, and I wanted to make people aware of the importance of that funding." Megan added, "All of us love research, so it's super frustrating."

On the growth of US militarism, Jenna said, "War is terrible, I hate war, and I do not want us to get into Syria. I want the civil war there to end, but I don't see how sending thousands and thousands of US troops, or any troops in general, is going to solve it.

"Our government is just very gung-ho on overthrowing governments, or CIA-backed coups, and it never works, and we get brutal dictators in power, who are US-backed because they won't nationalize things. But the people there are the ones who really lose out.

"I'm like the token socialist of our friend group," Jenna continued. "I love it. I think it's a very good system. I think it's ridiculous that our system focuses on profits, because at the end of the day, people are people, and that's what matters most. And I think it's ridiculous that we don't let people in our country when they're fleeing war because 'they're going to steal our jobs.' And I think it's really, really obscene that anyone would value profit over human life."

Nashville, Tennessee

In Nashville, Tennessee, some 4,000 people turned out in the pouring rain. Damian Maseda, a researcher at Vanderbilt University health system, attended the Nashville march with other doctors.

"If you think about it, science is a socialist act. It is the product of society as a whole," he said. "It isn't abstract, it is in your everyday life. It is clean water, electricity. It is also important to teach, to build critical thinking that is applicable to anything in your life."

Willi Honegger, 81, is a retired biologist originally from Germany. He felt that the dangers posed by nuclear war and climate change must be urgently addressed. "I was nine years old in World War II. My best friend died, and I was almost killed. My home was destroyed by US bombs. I'm strongly against war. I have protested against US missiles stationed in Germany, aimed at Russia. Now there are American planes over the Baltic Sea and anything can trigger a nuclear war. We must demonstrate to show that people like Trump and Bannon cannot do whatever they want.

"Working people have different worries than those who are well off. Some people believed Trump during the election campaign because he spoke to their worries. They have existential worries, about how to live and take care of their children. There is a big difference between the rich and poor that must be resolved through socialism."

"I hope your generation will do it," he told WSWS reporters. "The system becomes so unbalanced and it breaks down. This time around it will be worse than in my lifetime."

San Diego, California

Marco, a high school student who would like to study science when he goes to college, spoke with WSWS reporters. He explained what brought him to the rally, saying, "I believe it is important for the government to actually listen to scientists instead of sticking its head in the sand. The government is essentially acting like the Catholic Church did back in Galileo's time. The church told him to shut up. And he didn't. The American government today is doing the same thing and I am here to protest against that."

Omar, a scientist with a PhD in physics and biophysics, said of the attacks on science, "Our EPA's been slashed by over 30 percent under the Trump administration's proposal. He's going to take away most of our climate change research and this is important for industries like Exxon-Mobil to disable the scientific apparatus that's been accumulating evidence about the actual environmental challenges we face as a species."

He added, "I'm here to support scientists. They need to come out and speak to people. People are now confused. Exxon, the Koch Brothers, they've channeled millions of dollars into organizations online that will deny all kinds of scientific evidence, and scientists don't really have a budget for this."

Berkeley, California

Sydney a biotech researcher, said, "A real turning point for me was Trump's use of 'alternative facts.' The facts need people to defend them. The evidence for vaccines is overwhelming, the evidence for evolution, the evidence for climate change. It's absurd that these are being publicly criticized.

"The way Trump has defunded public agencies is going to have a huge effect on research by reducing grants. A lot of major pharmaceutical companies don't innovate. As far as the market is concerned, what matters is short-term profit. How many currently successful products do you have the intellectual rights to? Where I work there were two separate corporate takeovers in a period of 14 months and both times they made cuts to both the research and development as well as the production side of the company."

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