

Millions March against Climate Change, Capitalism and War

By [Bryan Dyne](#) and [Will Morrow](#)

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Four million people participated in the global climate strike across every continent on Friday, many of them students who skipped school on that day. Demonstrations at more than 5,800 locations in 161 countries began in Australia and the Pacific, moved to Asia, Antarctica, Africa and Europe, and then to North and South America. This is the third such climate strike this year, following similar mass global demonstrations this past March and May, and the largest to date.

The protests were directed against the inaction and inability of world governments to take any significant measures to resolve the crisis, despite increasingly dire warnings from the United Nations and other agencies that if greenhouse gas emissions are not immediately halted, at least half the world's population will likely face one or more climate-related catastrophe in the next decade. Similar outrage was directed against international climate summits such as the 2015 Paris Agreement, which have proven worthless in the face of the crisis.



Tens of thousands protest at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate

Some of the largest demonstrations occurred in Germany, where over 100,000 protested in front of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, according to news reports, and up to 270,000 according to the protest organizers, for a total of 1.4 million people across the country. More than 330,000 demonstrated across Australia, 100,000 in Britain and up to 300,000 in the United States. Thousands more took to the streets in Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana and across North Africa. Thousands more demonstrated in Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan and New Zealand.

Significant protests were also held across the South Pacific, including in the Solomon Islands and Fiji. Countries in that region are among the hardest hit by the deepening climate crisis as a result of rapidly rising sea levels.

The political views of those who attended were very varied. Capitalism, however, was a dirty word for the overwhelming majority of the protesters. Many expressed their outrage over the refusal of governments to take any action over years to address the issue, and spoke about the subordination of life to the interests of the rich under capitalism.



The protest in Sydney

“The problem is that the big companies aren’t being held accountable,” said Ondina, a Salvadorean worker IT worker living in Stuttgart, Germany. “They shouldn’t be allowed to be so powerful. They want to get the most out of everything—from the markets, from their workers, and from the environment. Everyone who is aware of this exploitation should begin to take action. Governments won’t change that—that’s why we have to do something.”

Many protesters, including many born after 2001 who have lived their entire lives amidst US-led wars, connected the environmental crisis to social inequality and the danger of war. Sarah, a Canadian student in Paris, noted that “there’s so many causes today, so much you can fight for... I’m also concerned about war. It’s because they spend so much money on the military and have these guns and tanks and they want an excuse to use them.”

Members of the Socialist Equality Party and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) and other supporters of the *World Socialist Web Site* attended demonstrations in several countries, where they distributed copies of the WSWS statement “[The only solution to climate change is world socialism](#),” explaining the SEP’s fight to mobilize the working class against capitalism.

Kourosh, a law student in San Diego, agreed that capitalism is the source of the climate crisis. “Any talk about climate change must include socialism and the economic system,” he said. “Also, the military is a huge polluter as well that doesn’t get talked about in liberal circles. I’m definitely for socialism.” Kourosh also mentioned that he is studying law to

defend democratic rights, including the protection of whistleblowers like Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning.

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Articles by: [Bryan Dyne](#) and
[Will Morrow](#)

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