

HUNDREDS OF CLIMATE STRIKERS RALLY IN SUNSET PARK, MARCH INTO INDUSTRY CITY AND CALL FOR ANTI-CAPITALIST GENERAL STRIKE

The “Communities Strike,” organized by EarthStrike NYC, supported UPROSE in its campaign for local community-led climate justice in Sunset Park.

New York, NY — On Friday, September 27, a radical coalition of workers, students, schoolchildren and frontline New York City residents gathered in Sunset Park in a “Communities Strike for Climate over Colonialism.” This formed part of a global strike day organized by the Earth Strike, marking the last major event of this year’s climate week.

The strike, with its accompanying rally and march, was organized by Earth Strike NYC, an autonomous member of the global Earth Strike collective, and by UPROSE, a longtime community-led organization in Sunset Park, in collaboration with a coalition of New York community organizations and unions.

The coalition chose to draw attention to Sunset Park as “an epicenter of the fight for climate liberation.” A waterfront community that was devastated by Superstorm Sandy in 2012, Sunset Park faces gentrification, disinvestment, and displacement. Its residents are organized as [UPROSE](#), fighting to reject city rezoning plans requested by the real estate firm Jamestown Properties and advancing their own vision for Sunset Park and its waterfront complex, Industry City. Industry City hopes to build multiple high-rise hotels for business travelers.

The strike day began with workshops, community activities and teach-ins in the park, and ended with a march into the Industry City commercial complex. Led by Puerto Rican musicians and Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, the protesters filled the complex with the sound of chants, pots and pans, and other noise instruments, bearing anticapitalist and anticolonialist signs. UPROSE demanded that local elected leaders retain the maritime and industrial manufacturing character of Sunset Park, support public investments to create climate jobs and local, community business, and support a Just Transition for climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience.

“Our communities live and struggle at the intersection of racial injustice and climate change,” said Elizabeth Yeampierre, director of [UPROSE](#). “The fight for climate justice is local and nowhere is it more evident than in Sunset Park. As an old guard developer, Jamestown has turned Industry City into a high-end retail and commercial space instead of a modern industrial waterfront that builds for local and regional climate adaptation, mitigation and resiliency needs and missing the opportunity to develop good-paying jobs. The consequence of this dated vision is the displacement of small businesses and residents and the disruption of social cohesion, making our frontline community even more vulnerable to recurrent extreme weather events.”

Guest speakers from coalition organizations presented capitalism, racism and colonialism as the root causes of the crises afflicting their communities, from deforestation and violations against Maya people in Nicaragua, to mass incarceration and anti-immigrant policies in the U.S.

Speaker Imani Henry, an organizer with Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network, described how Industry City's plans would reinforce racial and class oppression: "This is real for us. [Industry City] wants to pretend they are offering jobs to black and brown people and it's a lie," Henry said. "They want black and brown people to serve rich white people, that's the point of Industry City." Elizabeth Yeampierre also described Industry City as a "capitalist power" and "the descendants of extraction," responding to the developers' promise of service jobs with a demand for industrial climate jobs.

The organizers worked to model a form of climate activism that is overcomes the injustices of "climate activism as usual." The strikers are calling on climate activists to pursue "a genuinely intersectional politics," in line with the event's [demands](#). "This is an all hands on deck moment. This is a political moment that is going to require that we build just relationships, that we collaborate instead of compete...that we challenge everything that put us here." said Elizabeth Yeampierre to the marchers.

Earth Strike NYC is launching a drive to organize a citywide general strike as a tool to combat the climate crisis. Strikes have recently proved uniquely effective: militant teacher strikes and worker walkouts against ICE succeeded in winning concessions, and early in 2019, murmurings of a general strike were enough to end the U.S. government shutdown.

"Organizing a general strike will be a difficult, long-term process, but given the scale of the climate crisis, I believe that a massive, radical, intersectional response by frontline communities against the structures that created the climate crisis is desperately needed," said Jacob Friedman, an organizer with Earth Strike NYC.

Earth Strike NYC's coalition united behind the following radical demands: *End Climate Imperialism | Reject Eco-Fascism | End Gentrification | Prison Abolition | Community Ownership | Intergenerational Leadership | Animal Liberation | Climate Reparations*

Endorsing organizations include Outlive Them, the NYC Democratic Socialists of America Ecosocialists working group, Rise and Resist, Sane Energy Project, Bronx Climate Justice North, MACC (Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council), Af3rim, AFT chapter 2375, Jewish Voice for Peace NYC, Code Pink, People's Climate Movement, FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere), and Science for the People.

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