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And in This Corner, Climate Contrarians

By [TOM ZELLER Jr.](#)

COPENHAGEN — Their numbers were small and former Vice President [Al Gore](#) was not among them.

But the climate skeptics who met inside a stuffy second-floor gallery near this city's Christianshavn neighborhood on Wednesday displayed at least as much passion for their cause as the environmental activists who have flocked to Copenhagen to push for action on [global warming](#).

"They've got us outnumbered," said Ian Plimer, an Australian geologist, who has interests in several mining operations. "But we've got them outgunned."

Sitting in tidy rows of chairs, the group's members — who included an atmospheric physicist, a gentleman farmer, a policy adviser and about 60 others — sipped coffee, shared PowerPoint presentations and discussed climate. Or rather, what they see as a world gone mad over global warming.

The scientific evidence for human-driven climate change may be widely accepted. But those who gathered in the tiny parlor offered a variety of alternative explanations. One presentation contended that volcanoes emitted far more carbon dioxide than human activities like the burning of fossil fuels. Another presentation disputed data suggesting that sea levels were rising. Still another asserted that solar activity caused climate shifts.

Speaking of the case made by scientists for global warming, S. Fred Singer, an atmospheric physicist, said: "They have no evidence. None."

The two-day event was organized in part to show that "climate realists," as they prefer to be called, are nothing if not diverse in their views.

But the contrarian spirit of the meeting was buoyed by the recent uproar over [a trove of e-mail messages and documents stolen](#) — or liberated, as the skeptics see it — from a renowned British climate research center. The material, which mentions adjustments to data, has been seized upon by global warming doubters as evidence of a conspiracy to promote the idea of human-driven climate change. Many scientists, however, have said that the contents of the messages and documents do not undercut decades of peer-reviewed science.

Among the skeptics who assembled in the parlor, the prevailing theory about the e-mail messages was that they had been leaked by a whistle-blower who would eventually be celebrated as a hero.

"In my view, not only will he not be prosecuted, but he should not be prosecuted," said [Christopher](#)

[Monckton](#), a policy adviser with the [Science and Public Policy Institute](#), a British group concerned chiefly with trying to debunk the notion of a climate crisis.

Lord Monckton, like many at the meeting, was concerned about the economic effects of putting limits on emissions of greenhouse gases.

Such restrictions, he said, would be devastating to the economies of all countries, particularly poor nations'.

He added, "That's why it's necessary to allow them to burn plenty of fossil fuels, because that's the cheapest way to get the electricity that will help to lift them from poverty."

The participants at the meeting agreed that their views — as scientists, economists and passionate lay people — were not taken seriously enough.

"We're unified in the idea that these theories have not received a fair shake," said Craig Rucker, the conference chairman.

Still, even at this meeting those theories did not go unchallenged.

John Vidal, environment editor for [The Guardian](#) in London, demanded that a panel's members explain why a variety of villages in India and Bangladesh were slowly being swallowed by the sea if, as the Swedish physicist and geologist Nils-Axel Morner had contended the day before, sea levels were not rising.

Mr. Morner, who has spent much time measuring sea levels in South Asia, said his most recent data pointed to plenty of erosion, but "zero rise in sea level."

Then, as debates over global warming often do, the discussion dissolved into incomprehensible shouting.

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