

A letter from Charlotte, North Carolina on the anti-Wall Street protest

11 October 2011

The *World Socialist Web Site* publishes here a letter from a reader on the demonstration in Charlotte, North Carolina. We encourage readers to write in to the WSWs about the protests, send reports, photos and videos, and discuss the policies being advanced by the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party.

Yesterday, October 8, I took public transportation—a novelty for most white Americans—downtown to protest Wall Street's crimes and abuses. Some 600 people gathered for a rally and march on Bank of America. We of Occupy Charlotte did what protesters do: carried signs, chanted slogans, and got to know each other. A diverse group of the 99 percent protesting the concentrated wealth and power of the 1 percent.

A friend asked if it reminded me of the anti-war and pro-civil rights demonstrations of the 60s. While it brought back some memories, these young people represent the future, not the past. They are the new Populists, focused, dedicated and angry. They sense that what they are doing will shape the country in the months and years ahead.

It was bound to happen. For more than 30 years, the wealth in this country has been flowing up. Now 1 percent of the population controls more than 90 percent of that wealth. The rest of us are forced to make do with the leftovers. Economists used to call it trickle down. Now even the trickle has dried up. Jobs eliminated or out-sourced, libraries closed, children's health programs abolished, cuts in higher education, and the list goes on. Austerity for the 99 percent; obscene profits, bonuses and salaries for the 1 percent. One would have to be brain dead not to see the crime in

that.

Class warfare? Let's hope so. The boot of Wall Street is on the neck of the American people. Instead of doing its job and removing the boot, Washington simply polishes it, and asks if there is anything else it can do to make the plutocrats happy. It used to be said that we have the best Congress money can buy. Today we have one of the worst, still bought and paid for of course, but highly contemptuous of democracy and the people. None of the signs at Occupy Charlotte, or anywhere else that I saw, said Write Your Congressman. That game is over. We are moving to the higher level of direct democracy.

There were many original protests signs at the rally. My personal favorite was The System is Not Broken: It Was Made That Way. We cannot and should not return to the bad old days of rampant consumption and maxed-out personal debt. A more rational domestic economy could emerge from the current recession/depression. But not unless and until Wall Street is put on a very tight leash and brought to heel. Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Charlotte, and all the others are leading the way.

Wayne C

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