

# Norfolk, Virginia: “The international eruption of these protests gives me hope”

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On the ninth day of the Occupy Norfolk protests against social inequality, protesters held a march through the downtown area with 75 participants.

There was a heavy police presence. Passersby were largely sympathetic, with some even joining the march.

This reporter distributed the WSWs statement “The Way Forward in the Fight Against Wall Street” and spoke with several demonstrators.

Hector, a student at Tidewater Community College who had previously purchased the Socialist Equality Party’s program, stated that he was demonstrating to build awareness of the fact that corporations own politics.

“I am a student at TCC and a cashier,” he said. “I might not stay in college if my father’s military benefits stop paying for it. I have friends who cannot find jobs. The jobs that teenagers used to take seem to be filled now by adults who can’t get any other job for themselves.”

Regarding the SEP program, he stated, “I think the SEP is a stepping stone to something better than the capitalist economy, which is only based on corporate interests.”

Seth McPherson, a senior at Norfolk State University, told this reporter, “I am here for this whole movement. I am here about student debts. I am here for fair wages. It seems that people are supposed to work 60 hours per week and even then they just barely scrape by. I am here for change.”

Asked about the “no politics” orientation of the protest organizers, he commented, “As far as I am

concerned, I think that if you want to come and have your sign, whether it’s libertarian or socialist or anarchist, that should be welcome. This movement is supposed to have a forum for politics.”

Seth added, “I want health care for all, really, especially for all kids and for the poor. I agree that we have inalienable social rights. The working class has been stomped on for long enough. It’s like a modern version of feudalism. Industrial action by the working class would be amazing; it is the way forward.”

Donna, who had also previously purchased an SEP program, explained why she had come to the march. “It’s part alarm, really close to panic,” she said. “Society needs help. It’s really everything. I find the current situation overwhelming. The issues of social inequality, health care, our schools and our environment, housing conditions; I don’t know where to begin! Society seems to be in a free-fall. Everybody really needs to do something.”

She went on, “I have noticed many times that the elite make efforts to divide and conquer Americans. Whether it’s North versus South, white-collar versus blue-collar, immigrant versus non-immigrant. But the fact is we are all in this together. I have not a single drop of hatred for others in my heart. The international eruption of these protests gives me hope.”

Organizers of the protest attempted to dissuade this reporter from distributing the statement “The way forward in the fight against Wall Street.” The leaflet, and the perspective it advances, were well received nonetheless.



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