

Fight the bankers' dictatorship over Detroit!

The Socialist Equality Party
2 March 2013

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the widest possible mobilization of workers, the unemployed and young people against the plans by Governor Rick Snyder, Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, and the City Council to impose a new round of savage budget cuts.

The working class did not create the economic crisis and must not pay for it. We call for the formation of committees of action, independent of the unions and the Democratic Party, in schools, neighborhoods and workplaces throughout the Detroit Metro area to defend basic social rights, including the right to a secure and decent paying job, high quality health care, housing and public education for all.

Such a struggle will inspire workers throughout Michigan and the rest of the country, under conditions of growing social discontent. In the aftermath of the financial crash of 2008 and the bailout of the Wall Street banks, the American ruling class utilized the crisis as an opportunity to destroy the jobs, living standards and social programs of workers all around the country. In Washington, the Obama administration and the Congressional Republicans are using the pretext of a “sequester” crisis to take the axe to Medicare, Social Security and other essential programs.

In 2009, the forced bankruptcy of General Motors and Chrysler was used to cut the pay of new workers in half, freeze the wages of the rest of the workforce, eliminate the eight-hour day and return conditions in the factories to the days of sweatshop exploitation not seen in three-quarters of a century.

Now Governor Snyder, himself a multimillionaire, has declared a financial emergency in Detroit, paving the way for the appointment of an emergency financial manager to rip up labor agreements, slash social programs and sell off public assets. Whatever their differences over who should benefit from the carve-up of the city, Snyder, Mayor Bing and the City Council, along with the city's unions and corrupt civil rights

establishment, agree that the working class must pay.

There is a crisis in Detroit. But it is the product of the failure of the capitalist system. Generations of workers have produced untold trillions of dollars in profits for the auto companies and big business, only to be left in destitution, surrounded by the rusting shells of factories, as corporations shifted production in search of cheaper labor. In the meantime, the Democratic Party—which has had a political monopoly in Detroit for more than half a century—handed over tax break after tax break to GM, Ford and Chrysler and billions in interest payments to the Wall Street banks.

Now, like in Greece, Spain and other countries, the working class in Detroit is being told to accept poverty and starvation to pay the banks! The city is being torn apart piece by piece. Under conditions of mass poverty and unemployment, social services are being ripped up, public education shut down, workers' wages, health care and pensions wiped out.

The new cuts will lead to the premature deaths of hundreds, if not thousands. Child poverty already stands at 57 percent. Firefighting units are overstretched and undermanned, and people have died as a result of closed or “browned out” fire stations. There are as few as 10-14 emergency medical service ambulances to cover an area of 139 square miles.

Under a plan developed by the financial elite in Detroit, the so-called Detroit Works Project, whole areas of the city are being depopulated, with services deliberately cut off to drive residents out. Behind this project are some of the largest corporations, including DTE Energy, the Detroit Three automakers, Fifth Third Bank, JPMorgan Chase and American International Group (AIG).

This is a social crime that only the combined resistance of the working class can stop. It is a lie to claim there is no money for the basic necessities of life. Having slashed the jobs and wages of workers, the auto

companies are raking in record profits—\$11 billion in 2012 alone—while corporate executives and wealthy investors stuff themselves with multi-million-dollar salaries and bonuses. After being bailed out by Bush and then Obama, the banks and stock markets are doing better than ever, and the corporations are sitting on an estimated cash hoard of \$1.7 trillion.

The problem is not the lack of resources, but the monopolization of society's wealth by the rich, which control both big business parties and every level of the government. They claim the US is a "democracy," but the working class—the vast majority of the population—has absolutely no voice in the political establishment. It is not a democracy but a plutocracy, a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich.

The democratic pretenses have been shattered by the process of establishing an emergency manager. Republican Governor Snyder and Democratic State Treasurer Andy Dillon are trampling over the will of voters who repealed Public Act 4, the previous Emergency Manager law. Following the repeal last November, the legislature rushed to enact a replacement law that was just as draconian and undemocratic.

These attacks must be stopped! But a successful fight back against the assault on Detroit must be based on a clear understanding of what we are fighting.

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Various Democratic Party officials and preachers are attempting to present the struggle in Detroit as one of race, with black Detroiters pitted against white suburbanites. This is a fraud! The dividing line in society is not color but class. Bing, whose personal wealth stands at about \$5 million, and other black elected officials are just as hostile to working people and devoted to the interests of the corporate elite as Snyder.

As for the unions, far from opposing the decimation of Detroit, they have actively participated in it. The United Auto Workers has been transformed into a business, working closely with the Big Three and the Democratic Party to defend the income of wealthy union executives as the wages of workers are slashed in half and benefits cut. The same is true of AFSCME, the Detroit Federation of Teachers, and other unions in the city.

The working class needs its own organizations based on a political program that represents its interests. The working class in Detroit has rich traditions of struggle, from the Ford hunger march and the great sit-down strikes in the 1930s and the mass struggles for civil rights and militant industrial struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. These traditions must be revived and enriched with a political program that unconditionally defends the interests of the working class.

The Socialist Equality Party will assist in the formation of independent committees of action across the city by all those working people looking for a way to fight against the big business assault. These committees should be formed in every factory, workplace and neighborhood.

Above all the working class needs a political party of its own to wrest control of the levers of power from the bankers and billionaires. Society must be organized on the basis of a new social principle—production for human needs, not corporate profit. All of the cuts must be reversed and a vast expansion of jobs and social services carried out. To provide the resources for this the banks and big industry must be nationalized and placed under the democratic ownership and control of the working class.

We encourage all workers and young people interested in taking up this struggle to contact the Socialist Equality Party .



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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