

Support D'Artagnan Collier, Socialist Equality Party candidate for mayor of Detroit!

Throw out the emergency manager! End the bankers' dictatorship in Detroit!

Socialist Equality Party (US)
19 April 2013

The Socialist Equality Party (US) announces today it is running D'Artagnan Collier as its candidate for mayor of Detroit, Michigan in the August 6 primary elections. Collier is currently collecting signatures to get on the ballot. To participate or find out more about the campaign, click here

Collier, 44, is a city worker and life-long resident of Detroit. The son of a Chrysler worker, he joined the Workers League, the predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party, in 1984, when he was 16, and has spent his entire adult life as a leading member of the socialist movement. The following is his statement announcing the campaign.

As the Socialist Equality Party's candidate for Detroit mayor, I call on workers and young people to support my campaign as part of the fight to mobilize the entire working class against the emergency manager and bankers' dictatorship in Detroit.

My campaign will be dedicated to organizing the massive opposition among working people and youth in Detroit to cuts in education, social services, jobs, wages and pensions into a movement directed against the bankers and the politicians of both big business parties.

Republican Governor Rick Snyder and Democratic Treasurer Andy Dillon ignored Michigan voters and handed control of Detroit to an unelected representative of the Wall Street banks. Under the emergency manager law, Kevyn Orr has been given the power to slash pensions, tear up wage and benefit agreements, and sell off public assets like the water department and Belle Isle to private businessmen.

The needs of the city's residents for decent neighborhoods, schools, fire protection and other essential services count for nothing in the eyes of the corporate and financial elite. The emergency manager has one purpose: to

extract every penny possible from workers and poor people to pay off the municipal bonds and meet the interest payments and credit default swap profits owed to the banks and wealthy bondholders.

While large sections of the city are shut down, multi-billionaires like Quicken Loan CEO Dan Gilbert plan to turn downtown Detroit into a playground for the wealthy.

It is time to take a stand! The working class must fight back! But to do so, we need our own organizations and a political program that defends the interests of workers, the unemployed and the youth—not the wealthy few.

Detroit is a symbol of the failure of capitalism. After extracting trillions of dollars from the labor of generations of workers, the corporations and banks have left the city in a shambles. The biggest portion of corporate profits today comes not through manufacturing and production, but through financial swindling, including loading up cities like Detroit with crushing levels of debt.

Nearly five years since the Wall Street crash, the rich are doing better than ever, while the working class faces the worst conditions since the Great Depression. From the US to Greece and Cyprus, the working class is being forced to pay for a crisis we did not create, while those responsible have been rewarded with bank bailouts, tax cuts and multi-million-dollar payoffs.

The alternative to capitalism is socialism—the reorganization of economic life on the basis of social need, not private profit.

I am raising the following demands in my campaign:

*** Throw the emergency manager out! Replace the City Council with a Council of Workers!** If elected, my first action as Detroit mayor will be to fire the emergency manager and declare the unconstitutional and anti-

democratic law under which he was appointed null and void.

To implement this, it is necessary to organize a united offensive of the working class against the existing political set-up. The SEP calls for the formation of democratic action committees in all workplaces, neighborhoods and schools to give genuine expression to the will of the people. A Council of Workers should replace the City Council to place control of the city in the hands of working people—the vast majority of the population—and devote social and financial resources not to paying off the banks, but to providing jobs and essential services for the citizens of Detroit.

*** For the rights of the working class, not the profits of the rich!** The claim that there is no money for public education, health care, decent wages and economic security for retirees is a lie. The combined wealth of a handful of billionaires in the state is nearly 75 times the budget deficit of Detroit. Trillions have been handed to the banks by the Obama administration, and trillions more have been spent on criminal wars abroad.

I call for the repudiation of the debt owed to the banks and bondholders! To obtain the resources necessary to meet the needs and secure the basic rights of working people, social and economic life must be radically restructured. The vast wealth accumulated by the rich, which has been stolen from society, must be reclaimed, and the giant banks and corporations, including the auto companies, must be placed under public ownership and the democratic control of working people.

I call for a crash program of public works to hire the unemployed at decent wages to rebuild the neighborhoods, modernize the schools, expand recreational and cultural facilities, and rebuild the city's manufacturing base and social infrastructure. All laid off firefighters, transit workers and other city workers must be rehired with full pay and benefits immediately.

*** Break with the two big business parties and the unions!** I call for a break with both parties, the Democrats and Republicans. They are the twin parties of the rich. The Democratic Party and its corrupt allies have run Detroit for decades, overseeing the transformation of the city from one of the wealthiest in the country to what it is today.

At the national level, Obama, the candidate of "change," is spearheading an attack on Social Security and Medicare, calling for hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to these core federal programs. Obama's "restructuring" of the auto industry was based on imposing poverty-level wages on new-hires, eliminating tens of thousands of jobs, and slashing benefits. As a result, newly hired auto workers today are making less, in real terms, than auto workers made in 1914.

The trade unions, politically tied to the Democratic Party, are not workers' organizations. They are corporatist

syndicates that suppress the workers and guarantee a supply of cheap labor to the corporations. The United Auto Workers, AFSCME, Detroit Federation of Teachers and other unions have collaborated in the attack on working people. As wages have been destroyed, the salaries of top union executives have soared.

Exploited workers cannot be in the same political party as their exploiters. The SEP is fighting for the building of a mass political party of the working class, based on a socialist program.

*** Class not race! For the unity of all workers!** All workers throughout the Detroit metropolitan area, across the country and internationally face the same conditions and the same struggle. The claim that the appointment of Orr is an attempt by "White Lansing" to take over "Black Detroit"—made by city officials and Democratic Party charlatans like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton—is aimed at dividing the working class and subordinating it to the Democratic Party and the corrupt political establishment that has run Detroit for decades.

The essential question is not race, but class.

I call on all workers and young people—black, white and immigrant, unemployed and employed, in Detroit and the suburbs—to unite in a common struggle to defend the social rights of all working people.

Join the campaign! Take up the fight for socialism! For the ruling class, the devastation of Detroit is seen as an example to be followed in cities all over the country and internationally.

We must make Detroit the model for a counter-offensive by the working class all over the world. The great traditions of class struggle in Detroit must be revived on the basis of a new political program and the fight for a new form of social and economic organization—socialism.

Workers of Detroit, make this campaign your campaign! If you agree with the need to fight against the emergency manager and the financial dictatorship in Detroit, contact us today. Support the campaign! Organize meetings in your area! Distribute our statements to your coworkers and neighbors!

To participate or find out more about the campaign, click here .



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact