

Workers must reject emergency manager's plan for Detroit

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Kevyn Orr has now submitted his initial economic plan for Detroit, and it is what we expected—a slash and burn program to force workers throughout the city to pay back bondholders, while “restructuring” the city in the interests of the rich.

With all the arrogance of a dictator, Orr, an unelected official, has declared there will be no vote by the people or negotiations on the terms of his plan. It is not a “plebiscite,” he said.

Workers of Detroit, we must reject this! The Socialist Equality Party election campaign is dedicated to mobilizing and organizing every section of the working class—auto workers, health care workers and service workers; teachers, firefighters and city workers; the employed and the unemployed; black and white, immigrant and native born, in the city and the suburbs—in opposition to the emergency manager and the plans of the corporate and financial elite.

We say that the program of Orr, accepted by the entire political and media establishment, is based on a lie. This is not about balancing the books or restoring the city to health by improving services and ending corruption. No, it is about impoverishing the working class in order to enrich the wealthy bondholders and multi-billionaires like Little Caesars Pizza CEO Mike Ilitch and Quicken Loans chief Dan Gilbert.

If Orr's plan is implemented, health insurance for 28,500 active and retired city workers will be cut or eliminated. Wages for firefighters and other city workers will be cut even further.

The Public Lighting Department will be sold off to private utility monopolies. Half of the streetlights shut off, leaving the poorest residents in the dark. Other public assets like the water and sewerage department and Belle Isle are also targeted for sale to

private investors.

Home foreclosures and demolitions will be accelerated sharply as part of an effort to “downsize” Detroit, while low-income workers and the elderly are evicted from downtown apartments so real estate developers can jack up the rents.

Orr has boasted that his model for Detroit is nearby Pontiac, where the emergency manager got rid of 90 percent of the city's public workers and privatized everything.

If these measures cannot be pushed through fast enough, Orr is threatening to drive the city into bankruptcy, where they will be imposed by a bankruptcy judge.

What is being done to Detroit is what is being done to the whole working class throughout the US and the world. From Greece, Spain and Cyprus to the United States, the corporate and political establishment is turning the clock backwards and stripping workers of our social and democratic rights. While workers and youth face a level of social misery not seen since the Great Depression, stock markets and corporate profits are hitting record levels. The corporate-backed politicians claim there is no money but they find trillions for criminal wars, Wall Street bailouts and tax cuts for the rich.

In the 1930s, in the face of mass struggles by the working class, the American ruling elite implemented a policy of limited social reforms to prevent revolution. In Detroit, more than 100,000 unemployed workers were put to work to repair streets, build bridges and sewerage systems, teach children and expand the museum, zoo, Belle Isle and other cultural treasures.

Today, every big business politician—from President Obama, to Governor Snyder, to Bing and the City Council—rejects spending a penny unless it guarantees a

huge return for the corporate and financial lords. Far from providing relief to those who have lost their jobs and homes, these politicians have exploited the capitalist crisis to destroy public education and other vital services, while lowering the wages of young auto workers to the level, taking inflation into account, of their great, great grandfathers in the 1930s.

Workers have demonstrated again and again their willingness to fight. But the United Auto Workers, AFSCME and other unions have betrayed our struggles because they are allied with Obama and the Democrats and serve the interests of the corporations, not workers. The same is true for the corrupt “civil rights” establishment, which is made up of millionaires like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton.

We can and must fight back. To do so, however, workers must organize independently of the trade unions, the Democrats and Republicans, and put forward a program that represents our interests.

My campaign calls for a rejection of the unconstitutional and anti-democratic emergency manager. Orr must be sent packing.

This does not mean support for the corrupt political operatives that have run Detroit for decades. The City Council should be replaced with a council of workers’ representatives to establish genuine democratic control.

To rebuild the city in the interests of the working class, our campaign calls for:

- The cancellation of the debt to the banks and bondholders, which currently costs \$250 million a year to service, or 20 percent of the General Fund budget.
- A 90 percent tax on all incomes over \$1 million to meet the immense social needs of the population.
- The nationalization of the banks, the auto industry and other major corporations under workers’ control.
- A \$10 billion program of public works to hire the unemployed—at good wages and benefits—to rebuild the city’s neighborhoods, construct high-quality, affordable housing, modern schools and recreation centers and a 21st century infrastructure.

I am running in order to build a new mass political movement of the working class from below to defend our social rights—for jobs, income, housing, education, health care and culture—and reorganize the economy to meet social need, not private profit. This is the fight for socialism.

I call on workers throughout the area to organize

emergency meetings in every neighborhood and workplace to discuss the situation in Detroit and plan opposition. Join our campaign! Take up the fight!



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