

No to Orr and the bankers' dictatorship! For a working class and socialist alternative to the looting of Detroit!

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

12 June 2013

Tonight's meeting with Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr is a sham designed to give a "democratic" appearance to the ruthless dictatorship Orr and the Wall Street banks have imposed on Detroit.

To the financial and corporate elite, the concerns of ordinary workers—for their jobs, neighborhoods and children—account for nothing. Orr's paymasters have already decided to slash pensions, cut essential services and sell off the city's assets to pay off the banks.

On Friday Orr will hold a closed door meeting with city's bondholders and bond insurers, pension trust funds and unions on the eve of another \$40 million payment to the banks. Orr has threatened to throw the city into Chapter 9 bankruptcy unless the unions and pension funds accept as little as 10 cents on dollar—a recipe for the impoverishment of tens of thousands of workers, retirees and their families.

There will be no "equal sacrifice" for the biggest bondholders and banks—whose investments are insured. Moreover, the rich will directly benefit from the looting of the pension funds and selloff of Belle Isle, artwork at the DIA and the lighting, transportation and water systems.

Absolutely excluded are any proposals that impinge on the profits of big corporations, Wall Street banks and billionaires like Mike Ilitch and Dan Gilbert. Every proposal made by Orr insists that the working class must pay for the crisis created by the decades-long deindustrialization of Detroit and financial criminality of the capitalist class.

As the Socialist Equality Party candidate for Detroit

mayor, I reject this economic blackmail. The working class did not create this crisis and must not pay for it. I insist that the social rights of the working class—for good-paying jobs, health care, education, housing and access to culture—take priority over the further enrichment of the super-rich.

It is a lie to say there is no money. The banks—which were bailed out with public funds—reaped \$40 billion in first-quarter profits this year. Ilitch, Gilbert and Michigan's richest 12 residents have a net worth of another \$30 billion. The Detroit-based auto companies made \$15 billion last year by exploiting increasingly low-paid autoworkers.

I call for a cancellation of the debt to the biggest Wall Street banks and for a 90 percent tax on all incomes over \$1 million. Through a sharp redistribution of wealth more than enough resources would be found to rebuild the city to meet the interests of its citizens, not the wealthy few.

Many who have come to tonight's meeting are trying to find a way to oppose the dictates of Orr. However, the interests of the working class cannot find any expression through the current political set up. The Democrats and Republicans, from the Obama administration and Governor Snyder, to Mayor Bing, the City Council and Kevyn Orr, are bought-and-paid representatives of the banks and big business. The same is true for the unions and corrupt "civil rights" leaders—who have long sold out the working class and are only looking for their own cut in the carve up of Detroit.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for workers and young people to hold meetings in every workplace, school and neighborhood to elect genuine representatives of the people throughout the city and metropolitan area. New organizations of the working class must be created to mobilize opposition to the bankers' dictatorship and advance a solution to the crisis in Detroit that meet the needs of working people, not the rich.

The banks and big business want to use Detroit as a model for imposing Greek-style attacks on pensions, social programs and jobs throughout the US. Instead, Detroit must be the model for a fight back by the working class and the development of a socialist alternative to the bankrupt capitalist system.

The Socialist Equality Party and my mayoral campaign are organizing opposition throughout the city and Metropolitan Area. We urge everyone looking for a way to fight back to contact our campaign and get involved today.

Public Meeting, "Hands off the DIA!"

Thursday, June 13 at 7 p.m.

First Unitarian-Universalist Church

4605 Cass Avenue (corner of Cass and Forest)

Speakers: Detroit Mayoral candidate D'Artagnan Collier and WSWS Arts Editor David Walsh



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