

D'Artagnan Collier speaks on Detroit radio

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D'Artagnan Collier, Socialist Equality Party candidate for Detroit mayor, was interviewed on WCHB-AM 1200, Detroit's Urban Newstalk radio station. The station requested the interview as part of an ongoing series with the mayoral candidates for this year's primary elections to be held on August 6. The interview was conducted by Angelo Henderson, host of "Your Voice." Several workers from Detroit called in to discuss Collier's program and policies.

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D'Artagnan Collier, the Socialist Equality Party's candidate for mayor of Detroit appeared July 25th on the "Your Voice" morning radio program aired on WCHB 1200 AM with host Angelo Henderson. The discussion gave Collier the opportunity to explain the policies of the Socialist Equality Party to a broader audience.

Henderson, in addition to being a former writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, is also a member of Detroit 300, an organization which promotes a "law and order" approach to confronting neighborhood crime, often by placing armed volunteers in areas racked by poverty.

When asked how he, as mayor of Detroit, would respond to the issue of crime, Collier stated that while he did sympathize with the victims of such incidents, the broader question was one of widespread social misery throughout the city.

"You can't separate one from the other," said the candidate, who cited the closures of dozens of auto factories across the Detroit area in the past several decades as being the main cause of poverty and the associated growth of crime. "There is a psychological devastation from the loss of a job, where people are now considered pariahs," Collier explained, reminding the audience that for many years during the post-war boom Detroit was home to the highest per-capita income in the United States.

When asked whether or not "arresting bad guys" was

also needed to help improve social conditions, Collier noted that "The media has been solely focusing on individuals carrying out crimes," but "the real criminals who have been carrying out crimes against humanity are the super-rich." "One of the things I'm proposing is that you have to go after those who are a barrier to the growth of society, who have made money off the misery and the degradation of living standards of millions of people," stated the mayoral candidate.

Collier compared policies adopted in the 1950s at the height of American capitalism's post-war boom to those taken today by the Democratic Party: "Under the Eisenhower administration in the 1950s, the rich were taxed as high as 90 percent. During the 1950s, you had an expansion of the freeway system in the US." In contrast, "Obama said that he was going to help Main Street out when Wall Street got back on its feet. Well, it's been five years. They are not bailing out Detroit. They are leaving it on its own," he said.

Detroit, one of the largest metropolitan regions in the United States, is currently presided over by an unelected financial emergency manager, Kevyn Orr of the Washington D.C. Jones Day law firm. This firm participated in the 2009 Obama Administration-led restructuring of the Big Three auto companies in the city, which led to massive layoffs and the destruction of pensions and wages for many veteran autoworkers. Currently, Orr is attempting to introduce a similar process for the city itself, sending it into bankruptcy court, where it is expected that the municipality will tear up thousands of pensions and other benefits owed to its thousands of city workers.

"The ruling class is trying to turn the clock of history backwards" by destroying the living conditions of millions of people, stated Collier, who drew attention to the fact that Detroit was a model for what would later happen in cities elsewhere. "They want to create poverty that will be the new normal across the United

States,” explained the candidate.

Afterwards, there was lively discussion amongst callers who had phoned into the program to speak with the candidate.

“It seems like you’ve got big ideals,” said Robert, a caller from Detroit. “They’ve gotten rid of our democratic rights with the emergency manager and they’ll do the same to you,” he stated, expressing hope that Collier would be “a fighter” for the working class.

“I have been a fighter for the working class for my entire adult life,” said the candidate. “Social need must take priority over the drive for profit,” he insisted. Instead of the austerity measures being foisted upon workers by representatives of the ruling elite, Collier advocated “a public works program where there are hundreds of thousands of workers put back to work, not only to help rebuild the city but also to expand city services and use Detroit as a model for what a modern day society can be.”

Collier called for citywide general strikes amongst workers, “union, non-union, [and] young people,” to defeat the assault on their basic democratic rights and living standards. The aim, Collier stated, “is not to try and convince the powers that be that capitalism can be reformed.” On the contrary, Collier called on workers to form a political movement independent of the trade unions and both parties of big business. “The Democratic Party and the trade unions are no longer social forces that are able to change people’s lives,” said the SEP candidate.



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