

Build Detroit area workers committees to oppose bankruptcy

5 August 2013

The following resolution was passed unanimously at the Socialist Equality Party election campaign meeting for its Detroit mayoral candidate D'Artagnan Collier. The meeting, held under the slogan "No to bankruptcy! End the bankers dictatorship in Detroit!", was held at Wayne State University on Sunday.

The working class in the Detroit area faces a frontal assault on jobs, living standards and social benefits. The bankers have established a dictatorship over the city, first through the installation of an emergency manager, now with the bankruptcy filing. Detroit has become a test case for ripping up wages, pensions and health benefits for workers all over the United States.

It is the capitalists, not the workers, who are to blame for the financial crisis of Detroit. Over more than a century, the working class in Detroit has produced hundreds of billions in profits for some of the most powerful American corporations, including the major auto companies—General Motors, Ford and Chrysler.

But for nearly four decades, the corporate-financial elite has carried out a policy of plunder. It has shut factories, wiped out hundreds of thousands of jobs, and plunged the people of Detroit and other cities into poverty. Wages have been slashed while the auto companies and banks have been handed tax breaks and taxpayer subsidies. The financial oligarchs have gorged themselves by starving the cities, dismantling industry and turning the entire economy into a gigantic gambling casino for the rich.

Workers cannot defend themselves through organizations of big business, like the Democratic Party, or through organizations that have sold themselves to big business, like the AFL-CIO and the United Auto Workers. The attack on Detroit workers has the support of the entire political establishment, beginning with Obama, who bailed out the banks and the auto bosses to the tune of trillions of dollars, but

rejects any aid to Detroit. As for the unions, they have collaborated in every attack on Detroit workers and workers across the country. They are begging the bankers' bagman, Kevyn Orr, to let them help slash pensions and health benefits, asking only that their fat salaries from union dues be protected.

A new road is necessary, and that means the creation of new organizations that will wage an independent mass social and political struggle against the profit system.

This meeting resolves to turn out and fight to build independent committees, open to all working people and youth who want to fight the bankers' dictatorship over Detroit and defend the basic social rights to a job, decent pay, pensions, health care, education and a future for young people.

We reject the claim that there is no money for infrastructure, education, health care, pensions or jobs. Unlimited funds are made available to the banks and corporations. In Detroit, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are being handed over to billionaire Mike Ilitch for a new hockey arena even as already meager pensions of city workers are being gutted. Ilitch, real estate speculator Dan Gilbert, and Wall Street law firms like Orr's law firm Jones Day will make a fortune from the devastation of working class Detroit and the revamping of the downtown area in the interests of the rich.

The same attacks are being prepared against workers all over the country and around the world. Nothing will be spared: Medicare, Social Security, child labor laws, public education—all of the gains won by workers in over a century of struggle are to be wiped out to satisfy the insatiable greed of the ruling elite and make the working class pay for the failure of the capitalist system.

Detroit workers must take a stand. Enough is enough!

We must initiate the Battle of Detroit in behalf of working people everywhere. The ruling classes of the world have made Detroit the model for a social counterrevolution. We, the working people of Detroit, must make it the model for the fight-back.

We say:

¥ Down with the bankruptcy court and the emergency manager!

¥ Reject all demands for cuts, sacrifices or concessions from working people!

¥ Rebuild Detroit in the interests of the people, not the bankers!

¥ Elect committees of action in every workplace, neighborhood and school!

¥ Organize demonstrations and protests to prepare the way for a general strike of all workers in the Detroit area!

¥ Repudiate the city's debts to the bankers, hedge funds and billionaire bondholders!

¥ Nationalize the banks and auto companies under the democratic control of workers, to serve the needs of the people, not private profit!

¥ Launch an emergency public works program to rehire the unemployed and rebuild the city!



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