

Vote for D'Artagnan Collier, SEP candidate for Detroit mayor!

Statement of the Socialist Equality Party

6 August 2013

The Socialist Equality Party calls on all workers in Detroit to cast a vote for SEP candidate D'Artagnan Collier in today's mayoral election. A vote for Collier is a class-conscious statement of opposition to the emergency manager and the bankruptcy of Detroit.

Collier is advancing a socialist, working class alternative to the two parties of big business, the Democrats and Republicans, both of which support the slashing of pensions, health care and city services.

As Collier made clear when he announced his candidacy in April, the purpose of the campaign is to initiate the mobilization of opposition "among working people, students and youth in Detroit to cuts in education, social services, jobs, wages and pensions."

With Michigan Governor Rick Snyder's appointment of Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr as financial dictator of the city, the ruling class is implementing a conscious strategy to destroy wages, pensions and benefits. Everything is on the chopping block, as the ruling class seeks to return conditions to what they were 100 years ago.

The absolute contempt of the financial aristocracy for the working class was expressed in comments made by Orr in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* on Saturday. "For a long time the city was dumb, lazy, happy and rich," Orr complained. The bankers' bagman denounced those with "an eighth grade education" who feel they have a right to "30 years of a good job and a pension and great health care."

Detroit is seen as a model for ripping up contracts, slashing benefits and pensions and selling city assets. The anti-democratic and dictatorial measures are to be employed on a far broader scale against workers across the country and internationally.

There is no solution to the capitalist crisis within the

confines of Detroit alone. Detroit must be made a model for the fight-back by millions of workers in the US and across the globe!

Along with the removal of Orr, Collier calls for the replacement of the corrupt City Council with a Workers Council to place control of the city in the hands of working people. A workers' government will organize economic life to serve the interests of working people, including an emergency public works program to rehire the unemployed and rebuild the city.

Collier rejects the position of the unions and all those who counterpose pensions and health care to the defense of the Detroit Institute of Arts. His is the only campaign to connect the defense of art and culture to the defense of the social rights of the working class.

The SEP calls for the formation of democratic action committees in all workplaces, neighborhoods and schools, to organize demonstrations and strike action.

The defense of the rights of the working class is above all a political struggle. The rejection by the Obama administration of any federal aid to the city makes clear its support and active role in the attacks on Detroit workers. Obama has funneled trillions of dollars to the banks to bail out Wall Street. He handed over billions more to bail out General Motors and Chrysler in 2009, conditioned on a 50 percent pay cut for newly hired auto workers.

The trade unions—including the AFL-CIO, UAW and AFSCME in particular—fully endorse the cuts being carried out and the bankruptcy as a whole. Their only real complaint is that they are not being consulted as to how the concessions, and the inevitable payout, will be implemented.

Collier also rejects the claim that the issue facing the working class is one of race—of "White Lansing"

against “Black Detroit.” Such claims are aimed at dividing the working class and subordinating it to the Democratic Party and the corrupt African American political establishment that has run Detroit for decades. The essential question is not race, but class.

The SEP calls on all workers—black, white and immigrant, unemployed and employed, in Detroit and the suburbs—to unite in a common struggle to throw out the emergency manager and end the bankruptcy.

The SEP launched this campaign as a means of fighting to build a new leadership in the working class. The campaign has won a wide hearing—intersecting with the struggles of auto workers, sewerage workers, firefighters, tenants and other sections of the working class throughout the city.

A vote for Collier is just the beginning. It is a declaration of support for the fight to build a genuine political alternative. The alternative is socialism—the creation of a globally integrated economic system based on social equality, in which the productive forces are controlled democratically in the interests of social need.

We call on workers to take up an active fight for socialism—to join and build the Socialist Equality Party and its youth organization, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality .



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