

Former CEO and county sheriff winners of Detroit mayoral primary, boycotted by large majority of voters

Our reporter
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With 98 percent of the voting precincts reporting, former Detroit police chief and current Wayne County Sheriff Benny Napoleon and former Detroit Medical Center CEO Mike Duggan, a write-in candidate, were poised to emerge as the top vote-getters. They will likely face off against one another in the November 5 general election.

Whoever wins that election, however, will exercise no real power as long as the unelected emergency manager, bankruptcy lawyer Kevyn Orr, remains in his position as de facto financial dictator of the city. The primary election, taking place with the city having been thrown into bankruptcy by Orr and thousands of city workers facing the gutting of their pensions and health benefits, above all expressed the alienation and distrust of the mass of working people for the entire political system. An estimated 17 percent of registered voters cast ballots.

The mass abstention in the midst of an unprecedented economic and social crisis—Detroit is the poorest large city in the US—was a manifestation of the chasm that separates the wealthy and corrupt elite that rules the city and the overwhelmingly working class population. The latter have no reason to believe that any of the “mainstream” candidates offer any change for the better, and they are correct in this belief. Whichever candidate is elected in November will collaborate with Orr and the bankruptcy court in slashing workers’ pensions and health benefits, cutting social services, and selling off the city’s valuable assets, possibly including the Detroit Institute of Arts’ masterpieces, to speculators.

The only candidate who spoke for the working population of Detroit, opposing the bankruptcy

proceedings and Emergency Manager Orr, was D’Artagnan Collier, the candidate of the Socialist Equality Party. Collier devoted his campaign to the development of an independent movement of Detroit workers against any and all cuts and against the Democratic and Republican parties, which serve as the debt collectors for the banks and bondholders.

Calling for the formation of committees of action independent of both the Democrats and the trade unions to build support for a general strike against Orr and the bankruptcy, Collier advanced a socialist program, including the nationalization of the banks and corporations under workers’ control and a crash \$25 billion public works program to put people to work at decent wages to rebuild the city. His campaign was warmly received by workers and young people throughout Detroit.

He pledged that the SEP’s campaign to mobilize the working class in Detroit, throughout Michigan and nationally against the assault on living standards and democratic rights would continue and intensify in the aftermath of the primary election.

Fifty one percent of the votes cast, according to the unofficial tally as of this writing, were write-in votes, mostly going to Duggan, who had been removed from the ballot on a technicality. Napoleon had received 30 percent of the votes cast. Krystal Crittendon was next at 6 percent, Lisa Howze followed with 5 percent, and Tom Barrow came next with 4 percent.

Unofficially, as of this writing, SEP candidate Collier received 88 votes. The size of his vote was in large measure a reflection of the virtual blackout by the media of his campaign. Those who voted for Collier cast a class-conscious vote in opposition to the existing

political system and in support of the development of new organizations of working class struggle and socialist policies.



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