

Eric Adams wins New York City mayoral primary

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Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams has been declared the winner of the Democratic nomination for mayor of New York City, two weeks after the June 22 primary election. The delay was the result of the newly-adopted system of ranked-choice voting, in which voters were able to list five candidates in order of preference. About 120,000 absentee ballots also had to be counted.

Adams' victory was the culmination of a lengthy and wide-open race to succeed current Mayor Bill de Blasio, who is leaving after the mandated limit of two terms in office. The contest, in which eight major candidates participated in two of the pre-election debates, came down to the top three vote-getters in the primary.

These were, in addition to Adams, former Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia, who had been endorsed by the editorial boards of both the *New York Times* and the *Daily News*, and Maya Wiley, who had served as counsel to de Blasio for part of his mayoralty, and who was endorsed by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Elizabeth Warren and other leading "left" Democrats.

Adams led Wiley, his nearest competitor in the first round of voting, by about nine percentage points. After the redistribution of votes based on the successive elimination of candidates with the lowest votes, however, as well as the counting of about 118,000 absentee ballots, Garcia, who was heavily favored in the wealthy districts of Manhattan, passed Wiley and trailed Adams by 8,400 votes, or only one percentage point.

The small number of outstanding absentee ballots still to be tabulated led the Associated Press to declare Adams the winner, however, and Garcia followed with a concession speech on Wednesday morning.

The victor in the Democratic primary is virtually certain to be elected mayor next November, with Republicans heavily outnumbered among city voters and especially hated after the Donald Trump presidency. The candidate chosen in the Republican Party primary was Curtis Sliwa,

longtime right-wing radio personality and founder of the Guardian Angels vigilante group.

Adams promoted his candidacy by pointing to his own background as an African American who had confronted police abuse as a youth and then as a police captain who had campaigned against police misconduct from the inside. His emphasis on law and order included qualified endorsement of the stop-and-frisk tactic that was used against hundreds of thousands of people a year, primarily minority workers and youth, especially during the mayoralties of Rudolph Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg.

Several elements stand out in the aftermath of the heavily contested mayoral race. First and foremost is the way in which the media and the whole political establishment worked to change the subject from the pandemic, poverty and record inequality to an alleged epidemic of crime.

Amid a small uptick of shooting incidents in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and the conditions of poverty and misery it created and deepened, Adams was able to win a hearing from some voters in working class areas of Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens. At the same time, he won the enthusiastic support of the right-wing *New York Post*, as well as major sections of big business, the real estate industry, charter school advocates and some major unions, including the local of the Transport Workers Union that bargains for 35,000 bus and subway workers.

The media declared with one voice that the public considered crime to be the number one issue, despite the fact that there were mass protests throughout the summer of 2020 against police violence.

The focus of the Adams campaign on law and order also overlapped with similar rhetoric coming from Joe Biden in the White House and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. The governor announced a state of emergency over gun violence, on the same day as Adams' primary victory.

There is no doubt that gun violence takes a terrible toll, particularly among the young, but this pales by comparison to the catastrophic impact of coronavirus during the same period, with 600 deaths from gun violence compared to 35,000 deaths from coronavirus—a massive toll for which Cuomo, de Blasio and the ruling class they represent are entirely responsible.

The governor earmarked \$139 million, including some social service spending, but the language of the declaration underscored its main purpose—to shift the political agenda away from the social crisis, covering up the ruling class responsibility for the pandemic, both the lives it has claimed and the jobs it has destroyed.

The media also used the mayoral campaign to continue the build-up of identity politics. Voters were constantly reminded that the choice was coming down to the politician who would be the second black mayor of New York City, following David Dinkins between 1989 and 1993, or one of two women who would become the city's first female mayor. This was designed to avoid any serious discussion of the issues facing the working class.

Stressing this element of her campaign, Garcia chose to make her concession speech at the Women's Rights Pioneers Monument in Central Park. "For 400 years, no woman has held the top seat at City Hall," she said. "This campaign has come closer than any other moment in history to breaking that glass ceiling in selecting New York City's first female mayor. We cracked the hell out of it, and it's ready to be broken, but we have not cracked that glass ceiling."

Another conclusion that emerged from the campaign was the fact that the pseudo-left faction of the Democrats, after it coalesced around the candidacy of Maya Wiley, was unable to make a broader appeal to the working class, including the vast majority who do not vote. Wiley's support was concentrated in middle class and upper-middle class precincts of Brooklyn and Queens.

The entire mayoral campaign, for all of its many candidates and supposed choices, highlighted the inescapable fact that the working class is completely disenfranchised politically within the capitalist two-party framework, and the Democrats play the key role in this. Not a single candidate addressed the real issues facing the working class: the continuing loss of jobs, including low-wage service sector jobs that were described as "essential" during the pandemic; the continuing threat from COVID-19 and the callous indifference and irresponsibility of the political establishment; and the growth of homelessness and lack of affordable housing,

along with inadequate and decaying health care and education.

Even when the candidates paid occasional lip service to issues like housing and health care, they did not utter a single word on the urgent need to make the super-rich pay for the crisis of their system. All of them, from "left" to right, differed only on tactical measures to defend the capitalist system.

Above all, it is necessary to remember that 937,000 voters, barely 25 percent of registered Democrats and not much more than 15 percent of eligible voters, have chosen the next mayor of New York City. This testifies to the alienation of millions from the capitalist status quo.

Adams, for his part, used Twitter to once again point—demagogically and somewhat ludicrously—to his alleged working-class credentials. "It's extremely exciting right now that just an everyday blue-collar worker, I like to say, is going to potentially become the mayor of the City of New York," he said on CNN.

Whatever his earlier experiences, Adams' long career in the New York City Police Department, coupled with his law-and-order appeal and the generous corporate financing of his campaign, show that he represents Wall Street, not the working class. He is certain to confront interlocking crises of poverty, the pandemic and a looming collapse of the latest and biggest speculative bubble on Wall Street. This poses the urgent need for the political independence of the working class, which requires the building of a new revolutionary leadership.



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