

# The sordid effort to oust New York Governor Andrew Cuomo

David Walsh  
4 August 2021

The 165-page report issued by New York Attorney General Letitia James concerning sexual harassment allegations against New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (Democrat) deserves to be treated with contempt.

Our political opposition to Cuomo and the Democrats hardly needs mentioning. However, the process currently under way, aimed at removing the thrice-elected governor from one of the most powerful offices in the US (which has been held by four future presidents and six future vice presidents) through a manufactured sex scandal, will only further degrade and move American politics to the right. The working class has no interest in endorsing either the forces seeking to square accounts with Cuomo or the sordid means they're using.

What, after all, is the context of the latest #MeToo campaign?

- Officially, some 2.2 million New York state residents have contracted COVID-19, more than 10 percent of the total population, and 55,000 have died from the virus. New York City was one of the first centers of the pandemic, with horrifying images emerging in April 2020, as the media reported, of “ambulances constantly blaring down eerily deserted streets, body bags being forklifted into refrigerated trucks outside hospitals and now new trenches being dug on Hart Island [site of a public cemetery] for possible mass burials.”

- The pandemic has deepened the social misery of millions in the city and state for whom getting through a single day was already a struggle, against low wages, precarious employment, poverty, evictions, homelessness.

- In January, fascist forces attempted to overthrow the US government and install a presidential dictatorship, a coup directed from the White House. Emboldened by the spinelessness of the Democrats, leading figures in the Republican Party openly defend right-wing violence and insurrection.

How is it possible that under these unprecedented conditions the political and media establishment can be fixated on whether Gov. Cuomo bestowed unwanted kisses

on certain staff members or even touched them inappropriately?

No doubt there are immediate political considerations. No outsider could possibly begin to fathom the personal and political scores being settled within the notoriously corrupt Democratic Party apparatus and broader circles in the state, some of which may arise from petty ambition, with others perhaps involving billions of dollars. The abrasive Cuomo has clearly made more than his share of enemies during his political career.

The governor hinted at some of this in his initial reaction to the James report: “Politics and bias are woven throughout all of this,” he said. “One would be naive to think otherwise, and New Yorkers are not naive.”

However, the key to grasping the media-establishment response lies more fundamentally in the very social conditions previously referred to. The near-frenzy, above all, derives from the need to deflect attention from the catastrophic virus, the fascist threat and the generally wretched state of life in the US.

In part, there may also be a specific attempt to forestall any examination of the New York Democrats' response to the pandemic. Last year Cuomo and the state government ordered COVID-19-positive elderly and mentally disabled people into nursing homes, and then concealed the number of people who died. Some 9,000 elderly and 552 mentally disabled people perished as a result of the murderous policy. With Cuomo gone, the hope might be, the disaster can be pinned on him alone and buried.

These reactionary motives help account for the dishonest, empty and even farcical character of James' report. Making up for its flimsy content, the authors—badly in need of an editor among other things—tediously-bureaucratically repeat many of the same allegations over and over, always in the same trite, stilted phrases.

“We found the level of detail and consistency in X's account, her demeanor, and the circumstances of her allegations to be credible. ... We find the Governor's statements about his own knowledge of X's complaints are

not credible.” No convincing evidence is provided, everything here is based on unsubstantiated claims and hearsay.

“We find,” the report solemnly intones, “that the Governor sexually harassed a number of current and former New York State employees by, among other things, engaging in unwelcome and nonconsensual touching, as well as making numerous offensive comments of a suggestive and sexual nature that created a hostile work environment for women.”

The complaints hardly rise to the level of being judged on the basis of their truth or non-truth. Did Cuomo comment on the looks of Executive Assistant #1, ask Trooper #1 why she didn’t wear a dress or “grab the butt” of State Entity Employee #1? We have no idea and couldn’t care less.

At this moment, the governors of Florida and Texas, among others, are actively killing people through the policy of “opening up” their states.

What does the American media focus on?

The *New York Times*, which helped initiate the filthy sex scandal, now piously insists that if “Mr. Cuomo cares for the well-being of the state and its citizens as much as he has said he does over the years, he needs to do the right thing and step down.” President Joe Biden, who faced similar charges in 2020, has called on Cuomo to resign, along with Rep. Nancy Pelosi and “nearly every other major Democratic lawmaker in both Albany and Washington.”

Biden has never demanded the resignation of Marjorie Taylor Greene, the fascist congresswoman from Georgia, or Senators Ted Cruz (Texas) and Josh Hawley (Missouri), part of the January 6 plot. Anti-democratic criminals stroll about Washington with impunity. Essentially, the Democrats have taken no action whatsoever.

It is likely that more money and resources have been devoted to the Cuomo investigation than in looking into the effort to overthrow the US Constitution seven months ago. The matter has certainly been pursued with more zeal and enthusiasm.

The James report authors boast that during the course of the inquiry into Cuomo’s sexual conduct, “we issued over 70 subpoenas for documents and other information, and received over 74,000 documents. We also interviewed 179 individuals and took testimony under oath from 41 of them.” Again, dear reader, this involves allegations of unwanted kissing, flirtation and groping.

Moreover, the sexual misconduct crusaders continue, they “received communications from the general public through a tip line consisting of an email address, voice mailbox, and text message line created for the investigation. In total, we received approximately 280 potential tips from members of the public.” The investigators “reviewed and tracked each potentially relevant communication and took appropriate

action, including following up on individuals who had provided potentially relevant information.”

Naively, one reads all this and the numerous headlines about a “bombshell” report with a certain degree of disbelief. This cannot be possible! This cannot be what fixates these people at this moment in history. But, in its own way, the episode speaks to the current state of social relations in America and the orientation of various classes and layers.

The identity politics beast must be fed. Its appetite is insatiable. The affluent upper middle class in New York, one of the most socially unequal cities in the world, is indifferent to the conditions of the impoverished and suffering, but utterly obsessed with sex, gender and race. It views the entire contents of the world through that rather low-angle prism. To this selfish, short-sighted crowd, the anti-Cuomo effort is legitimized in advance by the fact that Attorney General James is black and female and that Cuomo’s successor should he be removed, Kathy Hochul, is a woman.

We have witnessed in recent years, to mention only a few of the disgraceful incidents, the expulsion of Sen. Al Franken from political life, the hounding to death of conductor James Levine, the destruction of actor Kevin Spacey’s career, the banning of opera singer Placido Domingo from New York stages, the virtual disappearance of a biography of Philip Roth. In 1998–99, Bill Clinton was the target of a phony sex scandal engineered by the extreme right. The Democratic Party and its various constituencies have now adopted those methods as their own and become the leading practitioners of sexual witch-hunts, much to the glee of Fox News, the *New York Post* and company.

More and more, the American ruling elite acts to preempt the political process through sex scandals, impeachment and extra-parliamentary means. The drive to oust Cuomo has no progressive content whatsoever. It is another indication of the death agony of American democracy. Working class opposition to the Democratic and Republican Party set-up will have to emerge on the basis of its own alternative, socialist strategy.



To contact the WSWWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**