

New York City Mayor Eric Adams to run for reelection as independent

Fred Mazelis
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As widely expected, New York City mayor Eric Adams announced on Thursday that he would pass up the Democratic Party primary in June and instead file petitions to run as an independent in November as he pursues a second term.

The incumbent released a video announcing his decision. “Though I am still a Democrat, I am announcing that I will forgo the Democratic primary for mayor and appeal directly to all New Yorkers as an Independent candidate in the general election,” Adams said in his announcement. He told *Politico* he would “mount a real independent campaign,” focusing on the boroughs outside of Manhattan, and running an “uninhibited” campaign now that corruption charges have been dropped.

Adams’ decision came only one day after US District Judge Dale Ho reluctantly agreed to drop the federal charges Adams faced, including bribery, wire fraud and violation of campaign finance laws, which were announced last fall.

In recent months, the mayor’s approval rating has dropped to 20 percent. He responded, even before Donald Trump’s election victory last November, by cozying up to the fascist would-be dictator.

Adams was not subtle. He first paid court to Trump at his Mar-a-Lago estate, and then made a last-minute dash to attend Trump’s inauguration. He was interviewed by the fascist television commentator Tucker Carlson, and also met with Trump border czar Tom Homan. Adams announced that he would not criticize the president and would cooperate with the administration in deporting immigrants.

Trump obliged by announcing in February that he would drop the federal charges against Adams. In an obvious quid pro quo, however, the administration proposed to drop the charges “without prejudice,” meaning they could be brought again. This was an evident attempt to hold Adams on a short leash, ensuring his cooperation with the White House in exchange for his freedom.

Dismissal of the charges had to be formally accepted in federal court. This was the subject of Judge Ho’s 78-page opinion issued last Wednesday. Ho said he had little choice

but to accept the proposal, in light of the refusal of federal attorneys to proceed with the case. He ruled that the charges must be dismissed “with prejudice,” however, meaning they cannot be brought again. The judge sharply criticized the Justice Department, which in the Trump administration is synonymous with Trump himself.

“Everything here smacks of a bargain: dismissal of the indictment in exchange for immigration policy concessions,” Ho wrote. He added that the actions of the Justice Department implied that elected officials could receive special consideration if they played along with those in power. “That suggestion is fundamentally incompatible with the basic promise of equal justice under the law,” the judge wrote.

Within the narrow framework of capitalist electoral arithmetic, Adams may see a limited but plausible chance of success as an independent candidate later this year. He obviously calculated that his chances in the Democratic primary on June 24 were slim to none. But Trump received 30 percent of the citywide vote, up from 23 percent in 2020 and 18 percent running against Hillary Clinton in 2016. Adams may think that an appeal to those voters, together with a dwindling base of his own supporters, can put him within striking distance of an electoral upset.

In this regard, Adams’ continued appeals to the extreme right are significant. On the day before he announced his independent candidacy, he went on a podcast to hold up *Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth, and the Battle for Our Democracy*, the book by Trump’s newly installed director of the FBI, Kash Patel. Adams claimed the fascist screed by Patel had helped him understand the “rationale” behind the corruption charges he faced. Referring to Patel’s book, he added, “I am going to encourage every New Yorker to read it. Read it and understand how we are never going to allow this to happen to another innocent American.”

Adams may even seek, as he has done in the past, to use the fact that he is the city’s second black mayor to portray all or many of the criticisms he has faced as racially

motivated. The idea of trying to combine a black nationalist appeal with the votes of Trump supporters calls to mind the demagoguery of Trump himself, who appeals to racists, antisemites and white supremacists, while simultaneously utilizing blatant lies and demagoguery to win the votes of angry and confused sections of minority workers. All of this has only been possible because the Democratic Party and all of its factions are completely incapable of offering anything to the working class.

The field for the Democratic primary at this point consists of nine candidates. Most prominent is Andrew Cuomo, the former three-term New York governor, previously state attorney general and the head of the federal department of Housing and Urban Development under Bill Clinton. Cuomo enjoys a comfortable lead in the polls, but the outcome is less predictable because of the use of ranked-choice voting in New York primaries, which enables voters to list three candidates in order of preference. Cuomo will also inevitably face attacks based on the #MeToo-style charges of sexual harassment that forced his resignation as governor in 2021.

Among the other candidates, who mostly call themselves “progressives,” are City Council President Adrienne Adams (no relation of the mayor), City Comptroller Brad Lander and, most significantly, State Assemblyman and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member Zoran Mamdani.

Mamdani is the most “ambitious” of the candidates. He has put forward a platform that highlights free child care, fare-free buses and a rent freeze for many tenants. His role is to advance radical-sounding phrases in order to spread the illusion that the needs of the working class can be met without breaking with the Democratic Party and fighting the capitalist system. His promises are just words. He says nothing about how they can be achieved, and is simply following in the reactionary and bankrupt footsteps of Bill de Blasio and other “left” fakers.

Mamdani is currently running second in the primary polls, behind Cuomo. There are significant sections of the ruling elite that see him as a sound insurance policy, especially if Cuomo, a known quantity and a reactionary pro-war mouthpiece of Wall Street, should falter in the coming months.

Adams’ political trajectory illustrates the character of the Democratic Party. While the Republicans have been taken over by Trump and his fascist cabal, the Democrats have no fundamental differences. This will not prevent such outfits as the DSA and the Working Families Party (WFP) from attempting to drag workers back into the deadly embrace of this imperialist party.

The Working Families Party, formed about 25 years ago on the basis that it was possible to push the Democrats to the

left, has endorsed four of the Democratic aspirants so far, including Mamdani, Adrienne Adams and Lander. It plans to announce a single endorsement as the date of the primary draws closer.

The current election circus in New York reflects the steadily deepening social and political crisis in this capital of Wall Street. This is much bigger than Eric Adams or Donald Trump.

Even before the savage and sadistic attacks of the Trump administration, New York was plagued by deepening poverty and social decay. Many jobs lost at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic have not returned; the transit, health, and education systems are crisis-ridden and unable to meet the needs of the working class; homelessness was at record levels even before the addition of thousands of migrants bused to the city by the governors of Texas and Florida.

Alongside these conditions, the city’s 110 billionaires have continued to amass untold wealth. The social polarization of New York, at record levels even before the 2020 crisis and before the 2008 financial crash, has continued to grow. None of the Democrats, reading from right to “left,” have any answers at all to this objective crisis of capitalism.

None of the issues facing workers in New York over the next few months can be tackled in isolation. They are all bound up with fighting and defeating the government of, by and for the oligarchy that is attempting to establish a dictatorship under Trump.

They arise in the context of an approaching economic catastrophe and the expansion of a global war that has already begun. As the city heads to the polls to pick its next mayor later this year, not a single issue can find a progressive solution apart from a final break with the Democratic Party and the mobilization of the working class behind a socialist program.



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