

Say No to Bloomberg

By [Margaret Kimberley](#)

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Bloomberg says he wants to stop Donald Trump but he's really running to stop Bernie Sanders.

"Bloomberg targeted black people for political gain with whites and he created great suffering in the process."

In 2002 Michael Bloomberg was sworn in as mayor of New York City. In that same year the men known as the Central Park Five had their sentences vacated. They all served between 6 and 13 years in prison for a rape they did not commit. They sued New York City for the wrongful convictions but the Bloomberg administration refused to pay. They had to wait until he left office in 2014 to receive their \$40 million settlement.

Michael Bloomberg recently announced that he will seek the Democratic Party nomination for president in 2020. Unlike late comers such as Deval Patrick he actually has a chance to win the nomination or to play a role in choosing someone else. His weapon is not in any of his policy provisions but in his bank account. Bloomberg has an estimated net worth of \$55 billion, a figure which makes him among the richest people on the planet. Like the old joke about the 900 pound gorilla he can do whatever he wants, including prevent a progressive from getting the nomination.

Bloomberg says he is "Running for president to stop Donald Trump and rebuild America." In reality he is running to stop Bernie Sanders because he knows that given a level playing field Sanders would emerge triumphant. Bloomberg's strategy is to skip the early states and focus on Super Tuesday in March. This plan is a sign that he is more interested in being a spoiler than in actually being president himself.

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Bloomberg's impact on New York will be felt for years to come. He described New York as "a luxury product" and he acted accordingly by accelerating the displacement of black people through gentrification. In order to make sure that black New Yorkers got the memo and quickly left town he instituted the notorious stop and frisk police program.

At the height of stop and frisk terrorism nearly 700,000 people, nearly all of them black and Latino, were stopped without probable cause. Men, women and even children were stopped, and sometimes arrested. Arrest records can have a lasting negative impact, especially on the lives of black people. Any interaction with police, no matter how minor the cause, carries a risk of harm or even death.

Most police departments have quotas for parking tickets, but the NYPD had quotas for

arrests during the Bloomberg era. Individual cops risked being reprimanded or penalized themselves if they didn't make arrests as often as possible. This legacy of unleashing the modern day slave patrol is enough reason to make Bloomberg unacceptable as a presidential candidate.

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Bloomberg never backed down from his position while in office. He even said that white people were stopped too often and black people not enough. He has changed his tune of late and now offers a disingenuous apology for the policy he defended as mayor.

There are many reasons to oppose a Bloomberg presidential campaign. Billionaire rule has damaged New York, the nation and the entire world. The word "oligarch" is an insult when applied to other nations like Russia, but an American oligarch has announced his intention to buy the presidency for himself or someone else and opposition has been quite muted.

Michael Bloomberg was the worst mayor for black New Yorkers. While Rudy Giuliani and his overt appeals to racism drew ire, Bloomberg's approach of buying off opposition allowed him to get away with doing far worse. Al Sharpton was among those who took Bloomberg's hush money. The National Action Network was a recipient of Bloomberg's philanthropy and Rev. Sharpton was silent while every black person in town was a potential target for police abuse.

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Donald Trump's role in inflaming white public opinion in the Central Park case is well known. He paid for newspaper ads calling for the death penalty. Even when his targets were exonerated he stood by his original statement. It is important to remember the role he played in inciting a judicial lynch mob.

But Bloomberg's equally disgraceful behavior is largely unknown. No one in New York City media then or now wants to anger the rich guy. The fact that financial compensation was withheld received little or no attention. He may have better manners, but he targeted black people for political gain with whites and he created great suffering in the process.

The corporate media always follow orders from the ruling elites. They were instructed to promote Joe Biden as being more electable but his campaign has been a gigantic embarrassment. Other "centrist" Democrats wring their hands because they can't agree on a candidate while Bloomberg has decided that if he wants this thing done right he had better do it himself.

No one knows if Bloomberg is more electable than Trump. Everyone knows that his wealth gives him a huge advantage and he can decide who will or won't be the Democratic Party nominee. His presence in the race is decidedly undemocratic and should be denounced.

If Bloomberg is true to form he will have black staffers to provide a friendly public face. He will find respected people to endorse him and explain away his offenses. But his candidacy should be a line in the sand and anyone who supports him should be deemed equally unacceptable.

Black Bloomberg supporters will be outing themselves as traitors and Uncle Toms. It is important to know one's enemy. That is a silver lining in this cloud.

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Margaret Kimberley's Freedom Rider column appears weekly in BAR, and is widely reprinted elsewhere. She maintains a frequently updated blog as well at <http://freedomrider.blogspot.com> . Ms. Kimberley lives in New York City, and can be reached via e-Mail at [Margaret.Kimberley\(at\)BlackAgendaReport.com](mailto:Margaret.Kimberley(at)BlackAgendaReport.com).

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