

There's No Going Back If NYC Elects Zohran Mamdani

By Victor Davis Hanson

Everybody in New York City is on edge because it looks like, for the first time in the modern era at least, [Zohran Mamdani](#) is going to be the mayor in our November election.



Now, what's disturbing about it is he is an unapologetic [socialist](#). He says he is a democratic socialist, but on occasions in the past, he has said things like, to be a real socialist, "you must acquire or take possessions of the means of production." That's right out of the communist playbook of Friedrich Engels. It's essential to communism.

And he said things that make sense only in a communist context. He wants to get rid of elite schools that are meritocratic. He wants to go into areas that are affluent and white and tax them more inordinately. He wants to give free transportation to people and make a particular group pay for it, the so-called wealthy. So, he wants to turn the financial

capital of the world upside down.

Normally, even in New York City, which is a liberal city, this would be impossible, to see somebody like Mamdani elected. But there have been massive demographic changes. Almost a million Jewish, middle-class, and affluent voters have left over the last 20 years, for a variety of reasons. We've had open borders policy where hundreds of thousands of new immigrants have come into New York. And it's no longer just a Democratic city, it's a radically Democratic city.

So, Mr. Mamdani thinks that in an off year—this is an off year. There is no great presidential election. There is no midterm election. There's not a lot of reasons for the normal voter to come out. And he can appeal to these hard-left constituencies in a way that would make his election possible with very low turnout. And of course, this is a municipal election to begin with.

So, he counts on very few people coming out. And the people who do turn out are minorities, but more importantly, upscale, middle-class, mostly white affluent and Asian younger people, who feel they have letters after their names, they have titles, they went to good schools—New York University, Columbia—and they should be deserving of a brownstone, of a car, of good schools for their kid. And they can't afford it. Not in [New York](#). They're not like Mr. Mamdani, who has subsidized housing. They can't get housing like he has. So, he appeals to their socialist sensitivities.

Can he be stopped? The only way that he could be stopped, if the right part of the Left and the Center and the Right were to combine and say: "We don't like each other. We have very little in common. But this man represents the destruction of our way of life. He's anti-Israel. He is antisemitic. He is pro-Hamas. He is anti-capitalist. He's anti-free enterprise. He's socialistic. And he's gonna bankrupt the state and drive out our entire source of wealth that is the financial class

itself.”

But to do that, you'd have to have a strong opposition. But there is no Mike Bloomberg. There is no Rudy Giuliani. So, you have two choices, other than Mamdani.

You have Curtis Sliwa. He is a conservative. But he's been around New York for, you know, 30 or 40 years. He is a known quantity. He is a French candidate. And he's not going to win the election. He is now enunciating conservative positions and he may draw off 10% or 15% of the total vote. But he is not gonna win the election.

Then you have Andrew Cuomo from the famed Cuomo family. Chris Cuomo was a CNN anchor. You had Mario Cuomo, his father, was the former governor of New York. But there's some problems there.

He was responsible for redirecting from hospitals, so the hospitals would not be overwhelmed by [COVID-19](#) indigent patients and go broke, they thought. He put them in rest homes where, among vulnerable elderly people, they infected them. And thousands, maybe 12,000 or 13,000 people, in the greater New York area died from that decision to redirect people from hospitals to rest homes.

And No. 2, he had a long record of alleged sexual harassment and was forced to resign from his governorship.

But more importantly, when you see him on stage, he is not the vital, robust, quick-witted, facts-at-his-fingertips candidate that we associate. Whether you liked Andrew Cuomo or not, no one wanted to get in an argument with him. He knew his stuff. He was energetic. He looks lethargic. He looks anemic. He took 10 days off of the campaign.

So, what am I getting at is that if you put the percentage of Cuomo and you put the percentage of Sliwa together, they could beat Mamdani. But [conservatives](#) and centrists do not wanna

vote for Cuomo, given the record I just talked about. And independents that are on the left-hand side do not wanna vote for a fringe conservative. And neither one is gonna drop out.

Mr. Cuomo doesn't say, "I've lost a step. I'm sorry. I'm more conservative than liberal. Please, everybody, vote for Sliwa." That probably wouldn't work anyway. And Mr. Sliwa's not gonna say, "You know, this man told everybody to get out of New York if you were for abortion once. He's a hard leftist. I know he is running as independent. He is not really. He's a hardcore Democrat. I'm not getting out of the race."

So, what they're going to do is split this tiny vote and give the election to Mr. Mamdani.

And most people think—as all of the aristocrats in white Russia did during the Bolshevik Revolution, as business people thought in Cuba in 1959, as people in Venezuela thought—"We can handle him. We can finesse him. We can massage Mamdani. He'll give me an exemption. My investment firm will be OK."

No, no, no. You can't deal with Mamdani. You cannot deal with him. If he wins, he's going to target all of you. And New York is not going to be New York as we knew it.

First published in the [Daily Signal](#)