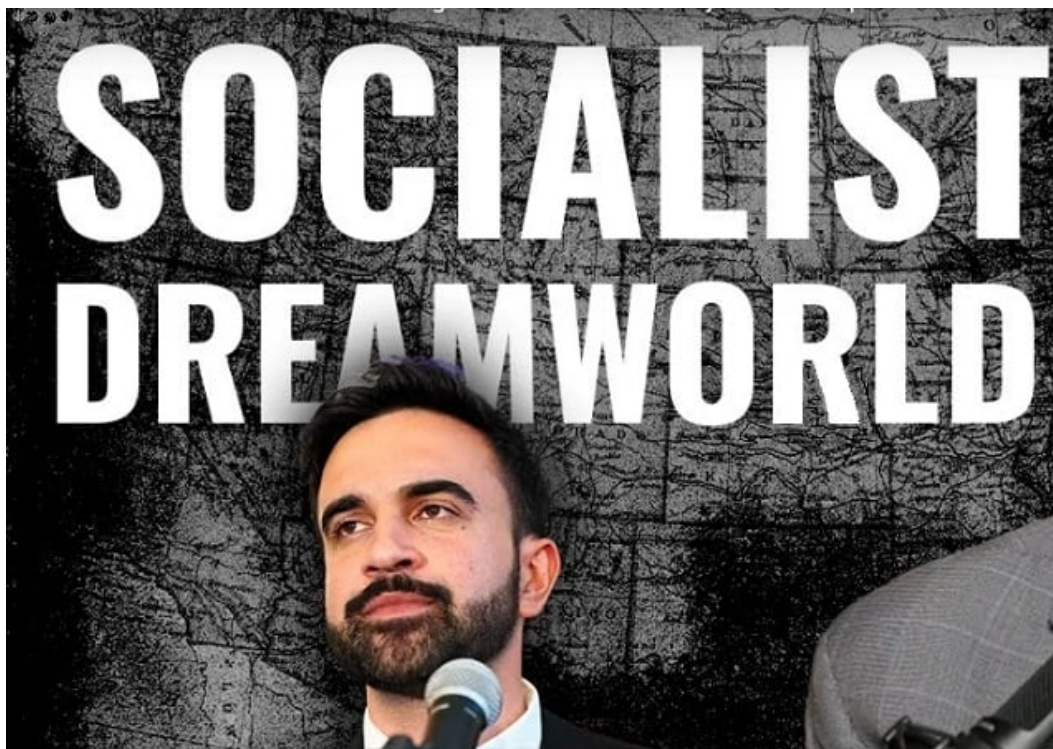


Zohran Mamdani Is Dusting Off the Old Socialist Playbook. He Hopes No One Will Notice

By Victor Davis Hanson

I'd like to talk about the dream house of [Zohran Mamdani](#).

He was [a successful](#) Democratic Socialist candidate in the first round of the recent New York mayoral elections. He was a beneficiary of two phenomena that might suggest he has a 50/50 chance—more or less—to win the general election.



Number one:
In the
primaries,
it's ranked
voting and
people can
vote for
various
candidates.
And
traditional
ly, that
means, in
that
cumbersome

process, that outliers are minority candidates. Minority, in the sense that they're not a member of either of the major parties, they have an advantage.

And number two: While he was a very preeminent, as the hard-left favorite, the conservative side split the vote between former Gov. [Andrew] Cuomo, Mr. [Curtis] Sliwa, who's a perennial candidate, and of course, the incumbent mayor, Eric

Adams

So we're looking at the general election. But what's funny about Mamdani is almost everything he says is a contradiction or not true. Now that he is the frontrunner, everybody is going back over his record and asking him questions. Did you say you want to defund the police? Once the police were refunded, under Adams, the crime rate has gone down. And he said, "No, I didn't say that." And then it's become an internet phenomenon, listing all the times he did say that.

He said that he wished that billionaires didn't exist. Does that mean that he wouldn't want [George Soros](#) to fund the get out the vote groups and the activists who are actively supporting him? Will he come out and say, "George Soros, I wish you didn't exist"? He says he is not a communist. OK. He's a Democratic Socialist. But he says that the key to any "socialist revolution" is to seize or get the means of production. That's right out of Karl Marx's "Das Kapital." So, he's quoting communist dogma as a mechanism to gain political power.

He says he has a new agenda. A new initiative. A new policy. Turn the page in New York. But when you actually look at what he's advocating, his ideas very old. He says he wants to have government-owned food markets, grocery stores. I think any of us who went to college in the 1970s knew that in every major university town—whether it was Berkeley or Palo Alto, in California or Santa Cruz—there was a co-op. And the co-op's advertisement was, "We don't make a profit." But my remembrance of those co-ops is they didn't last very long. They eventually went broke. The produce was no better than Safeway or Raley's or Food 4 Less or Save Mart or any of the competitors. So, that is not new.

Giving free ticketing on buses and mass transit—the problem we have right now is that people have free access to the subway. They jump the turnstiles. But imagine how with his plan

everybody, de facto, or de jure, would jump the turnstiles. So how is that going to be funded?

He wants to have rent control. We know [what rent control does](#). Once a landlord knows that he cannot raise his rent, in accordance with what he thinks maintenance, insurance, tax expenses rise commiserately, then he cuts back. He doesn't improve the property. Or he forces people to get out, et cetera, et cetera. And you don't build new units.

I could go on with that list of things that he thinks are quite new—but he said something very, I think, shocking. He said he was going to go after affluent and whiter areas of New York. As if they were synonymous. But if you look at per capita income in the United States, based on ethnic affiliation, so-called whites are 17. The top 10 are Asian. But number one are Indian Americans—Mamdani's people.

What he should say, if he was intellectually honest, is that “we're gonna go after affluent people and, especially, the most affluent people. My people, Indian Americans.” And he didn't say that. And he didn't say that because he is trying to win minority votes that he thinks he's going to lose to Eric Adams.

A final note: He talks about arresting Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#). The pariah state of Israel is a colonial settler state. His family were colonists. Or they were settlers. Or they were immigrants into black Africa, Uganda. And the Indian community represented in Uganda the top 1%. And they were the shopkeepers, the bankers, the merchants, that ran Uganda, until many of them were expelled by Idi Amin. They went to South Africa, where the Indian African community was very prominent. And then they faced harassment for their success. And then he came to the United States.

What am I getting at? He should not call Israel a colonial settler presence because that's exactly what his own family

was. And he should be very sensitive to the powers of envy and popular discontent against the very wealthy, because, after all, his father is a professor, a very well-compensated Columbia University professor. His mother is a multimillion-dollar successful filmmaker. And they represented the elite. And the powers of jealousy and envy pushed them out of their presence in Africa. And he came to the United States. So, in this fantasy world of Mamdani, he's criticizing the very thing, the very issues, the very policy that made him.

Whether it's his parents coming here or what they did in Africa. Or his private school. Or his prestigious prep school. He has been a child of privilege. And so, to finish, most of his message is incoherent.

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