



Zohran Mamdani: A Hard-Line Socialist with a Smile

“If you are not a liberal when you are young, you have no heart, and if you are not a conservative when you are old, you have no brain,” a quotation often falsely attributed to Winston Churchill, misses an important political fact of life in a democracy: Young people vote. Waiting for them to grow up to develop a brain that knows socialism does not work, and never has worked, is a wait too long.

This is the case with Zohran Mamdani, the self-declared “democratic socialist” who won the Democratic Party nomination for New York City mayor largely through the youth vote and affluent Manhattan voters. Mamdani, a New York state assemblyman, easily beat former governor Andrew Cuomo for the nomination.

Residents of New York City should be deeply worried that Mamdani could win the mayor’s race this November. He is ahead in every poll in a four-way race with Cuomo and the current NYC mayor Eric Adams running as Independents, and Republican Party activist and founder of the Guardian Angels Curtis Sliwa. Polls in August had Mamdani easily securing election with 50 percent of the voters, up more than 20 points over his nearest rival, Cuomo.¹

Conservative pundits and Republicans gleefully paint Mamdani as the new socialist face of the Democratic Party. Yet they should be concerned that Mamdani is the *actual* face of the Democratic Party. Already, two Mamdani-style socialist candidates have advanced to the general election ballot for mayor in Minneapolis and Seattle.² Barack Obama has reportedly phoned Mamdani to offer advice.

Mamdani is extremely well funded, which reveals how eager the socialist, progressive funders are to elect socialists/Marxists and seize control of the Democratic

Party. Furthermore, as leaders of the Democratic Party flounder, the Democratic Socialists of America party, even with its cockeyed platform, is well organized across the country and just waiting to take control of local and state Democratic parties.

Mamdani presents to the voters the image of an intelligent, charming and caring young man who wants meaningful change in the city. Although Democratic leadership in the state and in Congress have mostly shied away from endorsing him, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) showed up in the city and joined Mamdani in attacking his rivals Cuomo and Adams as “flawed candidates.”³ Mamdani has also won the endorsements of congressional Democrats Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY), Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY), Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) and Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA).

A Snake Charmer

Mamdani puts a smiley face on a socialist agenda that calls for defunding the police, raising taxes on the rich in Manhattan, free bus rides, freezing housing rentals, establishing city-owned grocery stores, universal free child care, ending charter schools, and arresting Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu if he ever comes to town.

The incessantly grinning 33-year-old Mamdani comes across as photogenic, articulate and likable. He smoothly navigated around charges that he supported Islamic terrorism by not denouncing a jihadist slogan, “From the river to the sea.” This refers to the extinction of Israel from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

At first Mamdani tried to deflect the jihadism issue by asserting that it was not the job of the mayor’s office to police political speech. When this did not end the

accusation, he adroitly said that he would not use the slogan, but that it has a different meaning to those who use it. Charges that Mamdani is antisemitic were heightened when it was revealed that his father, the Columbia University professor Mahmood Mamdani, has a long record of anti-Israel comments and praise for Hamas, the terrorist organization that controls Gaza. Professor Mamdani, an immigrant from Uganda with Indian heritage, serves on the 29-member independent Gaza Tribunal and once declared that suicide bombers should be considered “soldiers.”⁴

In spite of Professor Mamdani’s and his son’s open support for Hamas and anti-Israel opinions, Jewish voters appear to be supporting Mamdani for mayor. Indeed, many agree with him on Gaza and also oppose deportation of illegal immigrants.⁵

Past Calls for Defunding Police

His political skills came to the forefront following the killing of four people in midtown Manhattan in late July by a crazed gunman. One of the victims was a young NYC police officer, Didarul Islam, who left behind a pregnant wife and children. In the public outpouring of support for NYC’s men and women in blue, Mamdani’s earlier remarks calling for “defunding of the police” came once again to light. Returning from his lavish wedding celebration in a family-owned compound in Uganda, Mamdani went directly from John F. Kennedy Airport to the Bronx home of the slain policeman. He arrived holding flowers, while journalists took photos of him hugging crying family members.

Mamdani was peppered with questions about his past positions in support of the “defund the police” movement. He tried to justify his past statements. “The vision that we’ve put forward in this campaign, despite what others may say, is not to ‘defund the police.’ It is in fact to allow these officers to respond to the serious crimes that many of them signed up to address,” Mamdani said.⁶

He explained that his calls for defunding the police came during the 2020 George Floyd riots, but he now wants to keep police staffed at their current level and to limit police involvement on “mental illness” calls by deploying a specially trained city unit on such calls. Mamdani fails to mention that NYC police suffer from a severe staffing shortage. He refuses to commit to keeping the tough-on-

crime New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch, who stepped in after a series of sex scandals by high-ranking officers.

Few people predicted that Zohran Mamdani would win the Democratic nomination for mayor when he announced his candidacy. Born in Kampala, Uganda, he and his family moved to New York’s Upper West Side when he was 7 years old after his father joined the faculty at Columbia University as a “post-colonial” scholar in anthropology.⁷ Mamdani attended the Bank Street School for Children, where a year of kindergarten now costs over \$66,000.

He attended the Bronx High School of Science, a public school with high standards for admission, and then went to the elite and expensive Bowdoin College in Maine, where he majored in Africana Studies and co-founded the college’s chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine. After college, Mamdani joined progressive campaigns and took activist jobs, including as a housing consultant for poor New Yorkers facing eviction. He dabbled in a career as a rapper, “Mr. Cardamon.” His videos are cringeworthy by any standard.

Mamdani became a naturalized citizen in 2018, the same year that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a 29-year-old bartender and democratic socialist, shocked the political establishment by winning a congressional seat, beating a ten-year incumbent representing the Bronx. Two years later, Mamdani won a seat representing Astoria, Queens in the New York Assembly (the state legislature).

He announced on X, “It’s official: we won. I’m going to Albany to fight to tax the rich, heal the sick, house the poor, and build a socialist New York.”⁸ He accomplished little legislatively except helping to secure \$450 million in debt relief for taxi drivers devastated by Uber and other companies.

Billionaire Funding

Few expected he had much of a chance to win the Democratic Party nomination for mayor against two experienced politicians, Cuomo and Adams. He declared, “I am Donald Trump’s worst nightmare as a progressive Muslim immigrant who actually fights for things that I believe in.”⁹ His campaign made many promises for free things, all to be paid for by taxing city billionaires and profitable companies.

For all his talk about taxing billionaires and his belief that billionaires should not exist, Mamdani attracted a startling amount of money to his campaign. On NBC News' *Meet the Press*, he said, "I don't think that we should have billionaires, frankly."¹⁰ This did not stop him from securing billionaire funding.

As his campaign gained steam he began to rake in the money. In July, the New York Finance Board announced that Mamdani had raised \$8,178,780.¹¹ More than 5,000 donors were out of state, with no ties to New York City.¹²

Billionaire George Soros and his Open Society Foundations back Mamdani's campaign by providing funds and an experienced campaign consultant, Patrick Gaspard, the former aide to Barack Obama and former president of Open Society.¹³

Since 2016 Open Society has indirectly channeled a combined \$37 million to the Working Families Party and at least nine other left-wing groups which have endorsed Mamdani and helped get out the vote. Another \$13 million went to the nine other nonprofits and their offshoot fundraising entities. These include Make the Road Action, Community Voices Heard and the anti-Zionist group Jewish Voice for Peace Action.¹⁴

The False Promise of Socialism

Gaspard plays a critical role in the Mamdani campaign. In June the *New York Times* reported that Gaspard was neutral in the mayor's race, but a month later the *Times* reversed itself by reporting that Gaspard "quietly helped guide Mr. Mamdani."¹⁵ Gaspard's bio on X says Forever@OpenSociety. In 2021, Soros's Open Society paid Gaspard \$2.2 million as its president.

Mamdani's campaign is reminiscent of the 2008 Obama campaign and the 1988 Jesse Jackson campaign in which Jackson described New York as "hymie town." Mamdani presents himself much like Obama when he ran for president—fresh and inexperienced, but magnetic with an African father and an exotic name.

No matter how many socialist and communist countries have failed, how many people have warned against socialism and the suffering it causes, and all the data that confirm market economies outperform socialist economies—socialism continues to lure the young.

The United States constitutes 4 percent of the world's population, yet produces 25 percent of the world's gross domestic product.¹⁶ The 420 Americans who have won Nobel prizes constitute about 71 percent of all the Nobel prizes ever awarded. Yet, anti-American, anti-capitalist opinion remains high in the U.S. A Cato Institute/YouGov survey in March found that 62 percent of Americans ages 18-29 hold a favorable view of socialism, and 34 percent view communism favorably.

In contrast to Mamdani's youthful voters, we at the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation have a long memory of the evils perpetrated by communism and socialism. This organization was founded in 1958 specifically to educate people about the terrible human cost of those ideologies. Evidently, judging by the ongoing appeal of communist politicians even in the U.S., there is still a pressing need for our mission.

"Tax the Rich" might sound good at a rally, but the share of federal income taxes paid by the top 1 percent of U.S. household incomes increased from 33.2 percent in 2001 to 40.4 percent in 2022. The top 1 percent also pay nearly 50 percent of tax revenues for New York State and City.

Mamdani attracts young voters with his promise to tax the rich, freeze rents, subsidize city-operated grocery stores and provide free buses. These young voters appear unaware that NYC offers a stark example of problems created by rent control.

Soviet-Style Grocery Stores, Anyone?

Economists agree overwhelmingly that rent control is destructive. When St. Paul, Minnesota implemented strict rent control, housing starts plummeted 48 percent. The biggest losers in rent-control cities are newcomers, immigrants and the younger generation—who generally do not live in rent-controlled apartments.¹⁷ Mamdani, however, pledges to extend rent control. This misguided policy appeals to many of the city's young who are locked out of finding apartments they can afford. But the policy will hurt rather than help them.

Mamdani and his followers seem similarly unaware that experiments in subsidized municipal grocery stores have been tried and have failed. Profits for grocery stores are only about 1 to 2 percent of sales. Government-run

grocery stores in New York City would be granted unfair advantages over private businesses.

Mamdani says he will place city-run grocery stores in “food store deserts”—economically distressed and crime-ridden areas where grocery stores are limited. This assumes that Mamdani political appointees could even manage these stores. Kansas City, Missouri tried running a city-owned supermarket, Sun Fresh. Despite being located in a city-owned building and receiving \$18 million of public money since opening in 2018, as of late July the shelves in the store were nearly empty and a rancid smell of rotting food hung in the air.¹⁸ The store closed in mid-August after the city finally pulled the plug on this failed experiment.

The Soviet Communist premier Nikita Khrushchev, while visiting the U.S. in 1959, was reportedly stunned by the abundance and variety of foods in a typical American supermarket. And now the likely next mayor of the largest U.S. city wants to take a page from the Soviet playbook and institute government-operated grocery stores.

A Socialist Takeover of Dems?

We know from history that socialism does not work. As the great British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher observed, the problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people’s money.

If Mamdani is elected, the residents of NYC—those without the means to flee—will have to pay the consequences. A Mamdani win, however, would present a real challenge for the Democratic Party establishment and elected incumbents elsewhere. Mamdani-like candidates backed by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) are springing up across the country.

Mindszenty Report Reprints

1 copy	\$1.50	20 copies	\$15.00
10 copies	\$8.00	50 copies	\$25.00
		100 copies	\$35.00

HIGHER EDUCATION AT A CROSSROADS. Winds of change are blowing as public confidence has fallen to an all-time low.

Ask for 8/25

THE HISPANIC CATHOLIC VOTE MATTERS. Not only did Trump win a solid majority of the Catholic vote in 2024; he benefited from shifts in the Hispanic vote and the Hispanic Catholic vote, which present a GOP opportunity for the future.

Ask for 7/25

Anyone who doubts the radicalism of the DSA needs to look at its platform.¹⁹ The party calls for the destruction of the nuclear family and an end to capitalist subjugation of women, the working class and minorities through collectivization of childrearing, educational institutions and the economy. The DSA is pro-abortion, pro-trans, anti-Christian and anti-Jewish. The DSA website lists 210 chapters across the country.

Let’s hope New Yorkers wake up before it is too late.

CMF Now on Substack

In addition to Facebook, the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation is now on Substack. You may follow us by visiting: [Cardinalmindszentyfoundation.substack.com](https://cardinalmindszentyfoundation.substack.com).

¹ <https://www.newsweek.com/zohran-mamdani-andrew-cuomo-eric-adams-nyc-mayor-2105971>.

² <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/mamdani-style-activist-liberal-incumbent-advance-seattle-mayoral-runoff>.

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/04/nyregion/mamdani-elizabeth-warren-cuomo.html>.

⁴ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/uneearthed-social-media-posts-expose-radical-anti-israel-views-mamdani-dad>; <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-860928>.

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/04/nyregion/zohran-mamdani-jewish-voters-gaza.html>.

⁶ <https://www.capitolconfidential.com/p/mamdani-distances-himself-from-out>;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/29/nyregion/mamdani-uganda-shooting-park-avenue.html>.

⁷ His biography and mayoral campaign are described in “The Improbable Rise of Zohran Mamdani,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 28, 2025.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ <https://nypost.com/2025/07/12/us-news/soros-funneled-37-million-to-lefty-groups-backing-mamdani-mayoral-run/>.

¹¹ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/07/15/mamdani-cuomo-adams-matching-funds/>.

¹² <https://nypost.com/2025/07/16/us-news/out-of-state-donors-flocking-to-zohran-mamdani-nyc-campaign-to-tune-of-more-than-350k-since-mayoral-primary-win/>.

¹³ <https://www.theeditors.com/p/behind-zohran-mamdani-an-experienced-obama-soros-operative-gaspard>.

¹⁴ <https://nypost.com/2025/07/12/us-news/soros-funneled-37-million-to-lefty-groups-backing-mamdani-mayoral-run/>.

¹⁵ Rich Carter, “George Soros Funneled \$37 million to Working Families,” *New York Post*, July 12, 2025.

¹⁶ Star Parker, “Here Come the Socialists,” *Townhall*, July 31, 2025.

¹⁷ <https://www.city-journal.org/article/new-york-city-rent-control-apartments-landlords>.

¹⁸ <https://news.northeastern.edu/2025/07/02/government-grocery-stores-nyc/>;

<https://nypost.com/2025/07/24/us-news/zohran-mamdani-nyc-grocery-stores-scheme-draws-fresh-scrutiny-as-video-of-empty-city-owned-missouri-market-goes-viral/>.

¹⁹ <https://www.dsusa.org/dsa-political-platform-from-2021-convention/>.

The Mindszenty Report is published monthly by

Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation

7800 Bonhomme Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63105

Phone 314-727-6279

Subscription rate: \$25 per year

Outside the U.S.A. \$35

We accept credit card payments.

The Mindszenty Report is not copyrighted, and subscribers are invited to have it printed in their local newspapers.

Contributions to the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Website: www.mindszenty.org

Email to orders.inquiries@mindszenty.org