

Poll shows DSA candidate Mamdani ahead of former governor in New York City Democratic mayoral primary

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As early voting ends and Election Day voting begins in the Democratic mayoral primary in New York City, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) candidate Zohran Mamdani, a state assemblyman from Queens, is running slightly ahead of former New York governor Andrew Cuomo.

The last major poll shows Mamdani leading Cuomo by as much as 4 percentage points once all other candidates in the ranked choice field are eliminated and their votes redistributed based on voters' preferences. In the first place voting, Cuomo led only narrowly, 36 percent to Mamdani's 34 percent, with City Comptroller Brad Lander, also a member of the DSA, in third place with 13 percent. Mamdani and Lander have cross-endorsed.

The surge in the Mamdani campaign over the past several months reflects broad hostility to the Trump administration and the enormous social anger that is building up in New York and throughout the country. Mamdani has proposed a series of social reforms, such as a freeze on rent raises for almost two million apartments, free bus service and universal daycare, which have won increasing support in a city that has become unaffordable for most of the population.

In the last week, Cuomo, who resigned from the governor's office in 2021 over a sex scandal, has received support from the Democratic establishment, including former President Bill Clinton. Cuomo was housing secretary in Clinton's second term, and Clinton alluded to the housing crisis in the city, but, in line with Cuomo's law-and-order campaign, noted in his endorsement that "public safety must be restored."

This is the real concern within the ruling class over the prospect of a Mamdani victory, not because of the

candidate himself, but because of the popular expectations that might accompany his victory. Not only are economic conditions deteriorating for the working class, but for 20 months the city has been roiled by protests against the Gaza genocide, particularly on college campuses.

Mass discontent with the Trump administration's assault on immigrants and democratic rights brings out hundreds of protesters daily against the kidnappings by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the city. Hundreds of thousands marched June 14 in Manhattan, along with millions across the rest of the country, against a Trump dictatorship.

Democrats like Clinton and others who have endorsed Cuomo—including the billionaire former Mayor Michael Bloomberg, former New York Governor David Paterson and a host of Democratic congressmen—understand very well that these conditions could bring about a social explosion in America's largest city.

On the other hand, relatively late in the election, Mamdani was endorsed by fellow DSA member and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, along with Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. Through the Mamdani campaign, this faction of the Democratic Party is seeking to channel mass social anger back behind the political establishment.

Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders, along with Brandon Johnson in Chicago—despite their rhetoric against the oligarchy—have served as critical instruments for the Democratic Party. Sanders and AOC were both among the chief promoters of "Genocide Joe" Biden, and both supported Biden's partner in genocide, Kamala Harris.

Mamdani has also been endorsed by the United Auto

Workers and its president, Shawn Fain. Fain, a prominent backer of Biden during the 2024 presidential elections, has turned to promoting Trump's economic nationalism. The UAW apparatus is confronting growing anger from rank-and-file workers, after a series of sellout contracts and the revelations of corruption and thuggishness in the recent report from a court-appointed Monitor.

One of their major concerns is the discrediting of the Democratic Party among broad sections of workers and youth. In New York, this has been augmented by the role of current Democratic Mayor Eric Adams, which used the New York Police Department (NYPD) to beat and arrest students.

Adams' alliance with Trump in persecuting immigrants, part of a quid pro quo with the administration to dismiss federal corruption charges, has made him too hated in the city to be a viable candidate for the Democratic nomination. He is running as an independent instead in the general election in November.

The ruling elite is concerned that a Mayor Mamdani may not be able to carry out aggressive action to suppress the deep and pervasive discontent that is growing in the working class in the city. His opponents, including the *New York Times*, have repeatedly raised the DSA's supposed support for "defunding" the police—which Mamdani has hastened to deny—in opposition to the Mamdani campaign.

Cuomo's forces have conducted a massive campaign on social media, in direct-mail fliers and in television and radio advertisements, in the last two weeks to smear and discredit Mamdani, particularly over his criticism of the Israeli genocide in Gaza. This, however, seems to have had the opposite effect, given the enormous popular hostility to the genocide.

The latest charge is that Mamdani has not condemned, or sufficiently condemned, the phrase "global intifada" (Arabic for uprising). The phrase, frequently used by pro-Palestine protesters to appeal for international support, is being falsely portrayed as a call for attacks on Jews.

Cuomo has supported Trump's unprovoked attack on Iran this week, only suggesting that Trump should have sought congressional authority before he began bombing. He has led the vilification of Mamdani by claiming that the words "global intifada ... fuel hate.

They fuel murder." Among young people, in particular, such tactics have backfired.

In addition to support from dominant sections of the ruling class, Cuomo has also been backed by the majority of the trade union apparatus. The union bureaucrats have lined up behind the candidate they view as best positioned to suppress any strike or any discontent among their members.

Mamdani, for his part, has focused his campaign on proposals for modest and, under capitalism, unrealizable, social reforms. Under conditions of massive social anger, he and the DSA serve as a lightning-rod to channel any movement from below back into the Democratic Party.

While Mamdani castigates Cuomo and appeals to popular hostility to Trump, he says nothing about the social system, capitalism, underlying the turn of the ruling class toward dictatorship. He has (accurately) accused Cuomo of defunding the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), which runs New York's transit system, the largest in the United States, but cannot address how the basic needs of the working class can be met without a massive redistribution of the wealth.

He has defended himself from the slanders of Cuomo advocates on the issue of antisemitism but nowhere attacks Cuomo for his open support of the Gaza genocide or the reasons for the Zionist campaign.

Cuomo and Mamdani, in the end, belong to the same ruling class party. They both function to support the authority of the party and the capitalist system that it defends, but by a different emphasis and with different tactics: Cuomo is the unabashed candidate of war and repression, while the DSA seeks to channel social opposition with talk about moderate reforms and a kinder, gentler American imperialism.



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