# Mamdani: Two Views: First View

written by Eric Blanc | July 8, 2025

[*New Politics* is re-posting two views of the victory of Zohran Mamdani in the New York City Democratic primary. In addition to the article below by Eric Blanc, see here for another view by B.C. Hamilton.]

## Zohran's Historic Win: 16 Takeaways

The oligarchy is not invincible.

*After decades of defeats for working people and the Left, it almost felt like a dream to witness Zohran Mamdani make history last night. Sometimes the good guys win. As David Hogg wrote last night, "BREAKING: Not everything has to suck."*

*Absorbing the key lessons of this campaign is essential for the fights ahead, not just in New York City, but across the United States. Here's an initial list of the biggest takeaways.*

1) Zohran's victory is a *nationwide* political earthquake. Huge numbers of voters are sick of the Democratic establishment, and there's no good reason why his playbook can't be widely repeated elsewhere. The party's decrepit old guard is vulnerable, its unpopularity delivered us Trumpism, and it deserves to be displaced everywhere.

2) By stubbornly hammering on proposals to make the city affordable, Zohran was able to break beyond the Left's college-educated base. He won all across the city, including in neighborhoods like Sunset Park and Woodhaven that swung rightwards towards Trump in 2024. Economic populism is our best weapon to win back working people and to overcome Trumpism. Blame the billionaires, not immigrants or transgender people.

3) We should always ignore the pundits and political hacks who try to convince us that transformative change is impossible — or that the best we can do is chase after a mythical political center, rather than winning the battle of ideas and ambitiously raising voters' expectations.

4) Billionaires tried to buy this election and they lost badly. It turns out that the oligarchy is not invincible.

5) Pundits will try to spin this as purely the result of Cuomo's unpopularity or Zohran's charisma. That's part of the story, but only part. In addition to the resonance of his policies and crystal-clear message on affordability, there's no way he could have won without the tireless ground game of 50,000 volunteers and the New York City Democratic Socialists of America and other allied organizations. Knocking 1.5 million doors is an astounding feat.

6) Young people were the heart of this campaign. Last night, tens of thousands of them got to experience the ecstatic feeling of making history through collective organizing. Feeling that even once is enough to make you an organizer for life. This youthful social movement has the energy and ambition to make New York social democratic again.

7) Social media *is* extremely important for capturing the attention of wide layers of voters, and Zohran's media team was amazing. But the secret sauce for good comms is not primarily technical — it's *political*: you need an authentic messenger armed with a compelling platform. Hack Democrats can't post themselves back into relevance.

8) It's a very big deal — with nationwide and international implications — that Cuomo's cynical smears about anti-Semitism fell flat. It turns out that opposing genocide and acknowledging the humanity of Palestinians is not necessarily an electoral dealbreaker. AIPAC should be very worried.

9) Despite what his opponents claim, Zohran is not a dogmatic extremist, but a radical *pragmatist*. He could not have gotten this far had he not focused on bread-and-butter economic issues, spoken in a commonsense language, ran as a Democrat, dropped his support for defunding the police, and endorsed Brad Lander. Zohran refused to drop his support for democratic socialism or his opposition to Zionist apartheid, but performative ultra-leftism was anathema to this campaign.

10) It took a liberal-Left alliance to defeat Cuomo. A huge amount of credit is due to Brad Lander for being a man of principle who refused to punch Left. At the same time, Zohran smartly rejected a widespread leftist tendency to treat liberals and liberalism only as ideological competitors to be fought. Look at how he adopted the best parts of the "abundance agenda," how he cross-endorsed Lander, and how he framed his criticisms of Israel in the language of liberal equal rights. Leftists can't defeat the old establishment — let alone overcome the Right — on their own. And mutuality cuts both ways: we can't ally with liberals *only* when we're in the lead.

11) Zohran's inroads within organized labor were crucial steps towards legitimizing his campaign. The unions who took a risk and stood by working people by endorsing Zohran include AFSCME DC 37, UAW Region 9a, Doctors Council SEIU, CIR/SEIU, UNITE HERE Local 100, IATSE Local 161, PSC-CUNY, OPEIU Local 153, and Teamsters Local 804.

Every union that endorsed Cuomo should be embarrassed by their narrow-mindedness. The good news is now they have a chance to make things right by endorsing Zohran in the general election.

12) The fight has really just begun. Establishment Democrats, Trump, and their billionaire funders are going to do everything possible to prevent Zohran from taking office in November or, if that fails, from implementing his agenda. Expect an unprecedented, billionaire-funded scaremongering onslaught to convince New Yorkers that a Mamdani City Hall will bankrupt the city, unleash crime sprees, and persecute Jews.

13) Faced with claims that his project will lead to urban ruin and chaos, Zohran can lean on the progressive, technocratic competence of Lander's crew and point to thriving social-democratic cities across Europe as well as strong historical precedents of success in the US. Before they named an airport after him, as Waleed Shahid notes, New York City's wildly successful socialist mayor Fiorello

La Guardia was also first denounced as an impractical radical.

14) The experience of La Guardia, like Milwaukee's "sewer socialists," shows that winning office is not enough. When you're up against such powerful opponents, you need lots of organized grassroots power outside the state to actually implement your agenda. The most challenging obstacle on the road ahead is that Zohran's electoral success has significantly outpaced the scale of working-class and socialist organization in New York City. Building widespread organization in workplaces and neighborhoods is hard, essential, and urgently needed. So join DSA. Unionize your workplace through EWOC. Reform your union. Salt a strategic company. Or build a tenant union in your building.

15) DSA's membership is about to surge. And the organization is going to come under intense scrutiny from Fox News, Trump, and the Democratic establishment. It's time to tighten our ship and to make a concerted nationwide turn away from self-marginalizing leftism. Members should study and emulate NYC DSA's mass politics orientation. If this campaign didn't fit all of your ideological priors, maybe those priors are wrong.

16) There are going to be all sorts of major setbacks in the months and years ahead. But after yesterday, it's so much easier to see — and so much easier to feel — that a better world actually *is* possible if we fight like hell for it. The future is unwritten. Let's write it together.

*This article first appeared here.*