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Zoran Mamdani and the ‘redemocratising’ of America.

When Zohran Mamdani delivered his victory speech on winning election to the mayoralty of New York, it was Tuesday evening, 4 November, at 23.19. While the polls had closed but two hours 19 minutes earlier, this charismatic 34-year-old had won by a decisive margin. “The sun may have set over our city this evening,” Mamdani began, “but as Eugene Debs once said, ‘I can see the dawn of a better day for humanity.’ The future is in our hands. My friends, we have toppled a political dynasty.”

While I heartily applaud Mamdani’s triumph, I wonder how much of this is true. Is the future so situated now that he has won at the polls? Hope is the cruelest of the cardinal virtues, I have long found—so treacherous does it so often prove. Will it betray this charismatic rising star and those who gave him this success? The question has implications far beyond New York’s five boroughs and, indeed, America’s shores.

Mamdani’s reference to the famous Gene Debs bore an unmistakable subtext. Debs, the lifelong activist (1855–1926), began as a member of the Democratic Party but left midway in his career to co-found Social Democracy in America and subsequently the militant Industrial Workers of the World, known familiarly among Americans as “the Wobblies.” He ran for president four times—in 1904, 1908, 1912, and 1920. Mamdani, as a member of Democratic Socialists of America, D.S.A., is in many ways Debs’s political descendant; it may be his sights are set as high.

Mamdani is a gifted political orator, as Debs was. And he, Mamdani, is similarly understood as an agent of fundamental change not only in New York's politics but in America's, too. But there is one thing we must note as we consider what Debs had to say in a speech delivered, on being convicted of sedition, in 1918. Debs completed his thought of a better day for humanity with, "The people are awakening. In due time they will and must come to their own." Did a better day dawn 107 years ago? If "the people" awakened, did they stay awake? Does the record show they have "come to their own"?

Zohran Mamdani's political platform is what one would expect from a D.S.A. candidate. In the cause of making New York more livable for its majority, he proposes free bus lines and child care, ambitious investments in affordable housing, city-run grocery stores, and other such programs. In a recent interview he described himself as "kind of like a Scandinavian politician, only browner." And in his victory speech: "New York, tonight you have delivered. A mandate for change. A mandate for a new kind of politics. A mandate for a city we can afford. And a mandate for a government that delivers exactly that."

Beyond these local social and economic issues, Mamdani holds strong views on international affairs. Offspring of Mahmoud Mamdani, a renowned scholar noted for his work in anticolonial and anti-imperialist studies, the mayor-elect is vigorously supportive of the Palestinian cause and equally vehement in his denunciations of apartheid Israel's campaign of terror in Gaza and the West Bank. "Genocide" is a term he does not hesitate to use.

And so to more immediate questions: Does Mamdani's victory put "the future" in the hands of his supporters—young, idealistic, ferociously committed to a new political direction as they may be?

Mamdani defeated his nearest competitor, the divisive, serially corrupt Andrew Cuomo, a machine politician backed by Zionists and billionaires, by the widest margin recorded in New York politics in 60 years, slightly more than 50 per cent to Cuomo's 41.6 per cent; voter turnout, at 69 per cent, was the highest in New York in nearly as long. But it is already evident that the "political dynasty" Mamdani assured his supporters they had toppled intends to destroy his social-democratic programs as thoroughly as it can—and along with them Mamdani's future as a political force. Communist, Islamic jihadist (the Mamdanis are Muslim), anti-Semite: the smear campaigns have been running for months and are very unlikely to stop.

We are confronted, then, with a yet larger question: Is fundamental change any longer possible in America, or is the system so decayed, so poisoned with money and—let us not omit this—the influence of the Zionist lobbies that this troubled republic's power elites have made any kind change impossible other than at the margins?

I address these questions to *Global Bridge's* readers because Zohran Mamdani's victory at the polls this past Tuesday, evidence of a powerful wave of popular sentiment not only in New York but across the country, will prove significant well beyond New York's city limits. Mamdani's political fate will be a measure of what Americans can expect of their country in years to come and what the world can expect of America.

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The other week a German commentator remarked on the exceptionally low ratings of Friedrich Merz in the opinion polls. At the time they had fallen to 21 per cent—this a matter of month after he assumed office. But the German public's view

matters not at all to the chancellor, this commentator astutely remarked, because he is a modern politician in the West.

I read this remark with some amusement, and soon reflected on how much the thought applied to Americans and those who purport to lead them. There is no advancing a precise comparison, and I will not attempt one. But the distance between the American public and the power elites that control the country seems to me at least as great, and very possibly greater, than the distance between Merz and the German electorate.

You find in the United States the same indifference of the governing toward the governed—or the ruling toward the ruled, better put. And this is very key in determining the nation's direction, at home and abroad alike. As I have noted previously in this space, Mark Twain remarked more than a century ago, when America was just emerging as a global power, that the nation had a choice between empire abroad and democracy at home. America made this choice, wrongly, long ago. One way to read Zohran Mamdani's victory is as a challenge to this choice.

You can read the transcript of Mamdani's victory speech [here](#), or you can watch the 23 and one half minutes of it [here](#). It is especially instructive to see it, in my view. There is no distance between the victorious candidate and his constituents. "When politics speaks to you without condescension, we can usher in a new era of leadership," he told them. "We will fight for you, because we are you."

To finish this point, the world ought to watch Mamdani as he assumes office: If he begins by example to force America's political elites to listen to their voters, The United States would in time assume another direction—choosing, this is to say, democracy over empire. The wars of adventure, support for the Israelis' terror regime against Palestinians, the incessant provocations of the Russian Federation

to the point of nuclear brinksmanship, “regime change” operations, the incessant animosity of our relations with China: A majority of Americans oppose these policies. A re-democratising of America, if can coin a term, should require they change.

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The Zionist lobbies, chiefly the American–Israel Public Affairs Committee, the now-infamous AIPAC, have been active in U.S. politics since Israel’s founding in 1948. But until the savage brutalities we witness in Gaza and the West Bank, few Americans were aware of the lobbies’ insidious presence and the wall-to-wall power they exert over the nation’s political elites. This is no longer so. The Biden regime’s, and now Trump’s, unqualified support for Israel’s barbarism—military, political, diplomatic—has revealed to many Americans the extent of their political impotence in the face of what is now visibly the most pernicious force at work in the American polity. Mamdani’s political ascent stands as a challenge to this, too.

We, on both sides of both oceans, must watch as he charts his course. The choice remains: It still lies between democracy or empire. The question is whether the generation Zoran Mamdani represents can correct America’s century-old error.

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