

Cynthia Nixon vs Andrew Cuomo: Sex or No Sex in the City”

Jerry Krase (September 24, 2018)



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Well the tallies are in for the Democratic Party primary race for New York State Governor, and unfortunately for most of us self-identified libidinous “Progressives” the answer is “NO.” Although allegedly “left-leaning” candidates, especially those of the female-kind, knocked off some “right-leaning” lower level, nominally Democratic Party incumbents, Governor Andrew Cuomo was the last man standing at the top. A few pandering pundits have offered that this “trouncing” of Sex in the Citycelebrity Cynthia Nixon well-positions him for a run at the U.S. Presidency, but speculation about Multi-Billionaire Michael Bloomberg’s entrance in the race might make him one New Yorker too many.



One of my favorite New York Times writers on the city, Ginia Bellafante, for the most part, agrees with my own assessment as to why the fast start slowed to a halt when she ran up against the real politik practiced by the current tenant of the Governor's mansion. For example, Andy & Company's tag-along Attorney General candidate Letitia James easily defeated Cynthia & Company's tag-along Zephyr Teachout. In the campaign Andy outspent Cynthia by about 10 to 1; not counting all the campaign favors done for incumbents such as he. The challengers had many more individual donors, but as noted by Bellafante "Big races need big dollars." Although she lost, Nixon gathered a great deal of attention in the mass media, helping other more local "progressive" challengers. Her notoriety was especially valuable in defeating some members of the Independent Democratic Caucus (IDC) in the New York State Senate who have prevented loyal Democrats from taking over that chamber and passing legislation on reproductive rights and single-payer health care. As an aside, the proudly right of center, DINOish (Democrat In Name Only) Governor Cuomo has also been obstructive as to the most progressive, i.e. left-leaning Democratic Party agenda.

Six of the eight I.D.C. members lost. It could be said that the leftish electoral tsunami started with a June special Democratic Party Congressional primary election in which under-funded Democratic Socialist newcomer Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez won the contest with the support of the Working Families Party. Incredibly, her incumbent opponent, Joe Crowley was the Chair of the Democratic Party Congressional Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The most impressive anti-I.D.C. victory was 32-year-old Alessandra Biaggi's victory over IDC Leader Senator Jeffrey D. Klein. As noted by Bellafante she had several things going (and against) her: "Ms. Biaggi, a lawyer who is backed by the Working Families Party and activists on the left, had worked for the Cuomo administration, which had enabled the I.D.C. in the first place. Beyond that, she is the scion of a Democratic machine family — the granddaughter of the former 10-term Bronx congressman Mario Biaggi, who went to prison in the late 1980s on federal bribery charges."

Another strange victory for the "left" was that of 27 year-old Democratic Socialist Julia Salazar who defeated another long-time incumbent Martin Dilan. At the end of the race, Benjamin Robson reported: In an interview with the New York Times, Salazar admitted that she did not graduate from Columbia University as she previously said, but that she completed coursework there. Her campaign also asserted that she was a working-class immigrant, born in Columbia while she was actually born in the United States and, as The Jewish publication Tablet revealed, lived in a wealthy neighborhood." Robson went on to say that while in Columbia she was president of a conservative, pro-life group and, as you might already suspect registered as a Republican in Florida.

The only former I.D.C. senator in New York City to win (by 45 percent points!) was Diane Savino, whose right-leaning district includes parts of Staten Island and southern Brooklyn. Another odd-person-in is Simcha Felder, a Big Apple Democrat State Senator who often votes with Republicans, but without IDC membership. His votes are not ideological but atuned to the best interests of his predominantly conservative to ultra conservative Jewish constituents.

There are many ways to interpret Andrew Cuomo's massive (66%) victory over Cynthia Nixon in the Democratic Party gubernatorial primary election. One indicator of his "absence makes the heart grow fonder" popularity is that although he won the State, in the counties surrounding Albany, where he lives, he lost by a ten-point margin (55% vs 45%). He did the best in right-leaning more and less Republican dominated Counties such as Richmond (Staten Island), Nassau, and Suffolk as well as small town and rural areas upstate.

Then there were those mysterious anti-Semitism accusations against Nixon coming from Andrew Cuomo's campaign. Seven thousand mailers, shamelessly paid for by the New York State Democratic Party, were sent to residents in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods. While Andy vehemently denied any role in the smear campaign, The New York Post reported that one of his longtime confidants ("henchmen," or "enforcers"), was deeply involved. "Schwartz was very involved with the mailer and signed off on it," The source added: "It obviously blew up." Cuomo campaign spokeswoman Lis Smith sheepishly confirmed the revelations with the lame excuse: "Larry Schwartz who serves on our campaign in a volunteer capacity was reviewing mail pieces in an ad hoc fashion, but he only saw



the positive section of the mailer and never saw the negative section”...

The incident reminds me of the 1977 NYC mayoral primary battle between Edward I. Koch and Andy’s dad. During that bruising campaign, a disgusting poster appeared on the streets of many neighborhoods extorting voters to “Vote for Cuomo, not the homo.” Andy was highly involved in the campaign, but, as might be expected, denied responsibility. However, as Gothamist reporter Jen Chung had reported in 2013 “...Mario Cuomo worked to patch things up between his son and so Koch would endorse Andrew when he was running for Attorney General.” I wonder whether Larry Schwartz also worked in Mario’s 1977 mayoral campaign.

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