

Jacobin magazine on Mamdani's primary victory: "Compromise! Compromise! Compromise!"

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Following Zohran Mamdani's victory in the New York City Democratic mayoral primary, *Jacobin* magazine has published a series of articles along the same theme: Reinforcing the political domination of the Democratic Party while tamping down any expectations among those who voted for Mamdani.

Perhaps the most explicit of these appeared on Monday, under the headline, "How Zohran Mamdani Can Succeed as Mayor," by Peter Dreier.

Dreier is a professor at Occidental College and a former chief advisor to longtime Democratic mayor of Boston Ray Flynn, who later served as US ambassador to the Vatican under Bill Clinton. A longtime member of the Democratic Socialists of America, Dreier quit the organization in November 2023, denouncing it for failing to sufficiently condemn Hamas after October 7. This is the figure *Jacobin* selects to set the political line after a major mayoral primary in which the winning candidate opposed the genocide in Gaza.

Dreier lays out a plan for Mamdani, a member of the DSA, to "deal with opposition from Wall Street" by hiring "experienced" advisors to help him gauge when business "threats are real," persuading sections of the corporate elite that inequality is "unsustainable," and "redefining a healthy business climate." In other words, Mamdani must work with Wall Street, assure them their interests won't be threatened, and ask politely if they might consider "sharing the prosperity," while making sure not to threaten their interests.

Mamdani's "most important task," Dreier writes, "will be to make sure that he takes care of the 'civic housekeeping' functions of local government." This includes making sure "police...response times are fast" and "develop[ing] a working relationship with the

police and their union."

Getting to the heart of the matter, Dreier works overtime to lower expectations and prepare Mamdani's supporters for retreat: They must have "patience" and the "strategic understanding that significant policy changes take time... and often require compromise." He insists that compromise "is not the same thing as 'selling out,'" and is in fact "good" when it leads to "stepping-stone reforms."

This entirely pathetic statement, which encapsulates the politics of the DSA, is more an admission than an argument. What, after all, are these supposed "stepping-stone reforms" the ruling class has offered for half a century, engaged in dismantling every past reform and producing staggering levels of inequality? As evidenced by the hysterical response to Mamdani's election, the ruling class is not granting reforms, but engaged in violent counter-revolution.

The *Jacobin* piece speaks directly to the DSA at large: "This is particularly important for Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), a small but active part of Mamdani's base," Dreier writes. "DSA's national leadership, and some of its chapters, have been justifiably criticized for their occasional ultraleftism and indifference to practical politics."

It instructs DSA members to show "discipline and strategic smarts to avoid publicly criticizing [Mamdani] every time he has to make compromises (including with the city council or state legislature) in order to get things accomplished to improve daily life in New York City."

By "compromise," Dreier means capitulation to Wall Street and its political agents in the city council and state legislature. His message to new DSA members

who have joined while supporting the Mamdani campaign is unmistakable: Stay in your lane, support massive concessions, and keep quiet.

The claim that the DSA suffers from “ultraleftism” is equally absurd. Its history is defined by unrelenting efforts to keep social opposition chained to the Democratic Party. A good indication of what Dreier considers “ultraleft” is that he quit the DSA not over its right-wing record, but because it failed to sufficiently denounce Hamas amid the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza—something he does not even mention in his article.

The article concludes by underscoring the essential political function of the DSA: to channel the growing radicalization of workers and youth, emerging under conditions of dictatorship and war, back into the stifling embrace of the pro-war, pro-capitalist Democratic Party.

Dreier declares that one of Mamdani’s greatest accomplishments could be to “restore the faith of young voters in the potential of electoral politics” and help “move the Democratic Party away from the corporate wing...toward a progressive party that puts people first.”

Taken as a whole, *Jacobin*’s argument is that the principal task of a Mamdani administration must be to reassure Wall Street and administer the capitalist state.

Mamdani himself has already responded to the ferocious attack on this primary victory by Trump and layers of big business by shifting rapidly to the right. He stressed in an interview last weekend that his “vision for this city is for every single New Yorker, including business leaders.”

A separate article in *Jacobin* last week—“What Mamdani’s Win Can (and Can’t) Teach Us”—develops a similar line. It warns, “Mamdani’s victory in no way suggests that progressives everywhere can campaign as far left as possible on divisive social issues and still break through to working-class voters.” This statement betrays a deeper fear: that Mamdani’s victory could encourage a broad, left-wing rebellion from below. It is precisely this possibility that the DSA and Democratic Party apparatus are determined to prevent.

That this campaign of compromise is being promoted even as Trump threatens to deport Mamdani and names him a “Communist lunatic” underscores the bankrupt politics of the DSA and *Jacobin*.

As the president is erecting a dictatorship, unleashing the state against immigrants and political opponents, and openly declaring that he alone will decide who governs New York, the DSA insists that workers and young people must submit to Wall Street and the Democratic Party.

This is a recipe for disaster. Trump’s fascism is not an aberration but the outcome of a capitalist system in deep and insoluble crisis. The only viable alternative is for the working class to intervene in this crisis with its own revolutionary solution. That is what *Jacobin* and the DSA exist to prevent.



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