

Zohran Mamdani schmoozes with executives and landlords, praises Trump's phony Gaza "ceasefire"

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"Socialist dreams turned into the socialist struggle of the millions only when Marx's scientific socialism had linked up the urge for change with the struggle of a definite class. Outside the class struggle, socialism is either a hollow phrase or a naïve dream." -V.I. Lenin

On Monday, the *New York Times* published a highly revealing article laying bare the class character of the Democrat Zohran Mamdani's campaign for New York City mayor. The article, headlined "Mamdani Seeks to Charm New York's Most Powerful Capitalists," revealed that since winning the primary earlier this year, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member has been relentlessly reaching out to New York's wealthiest, including landlords and pharmaceutical executives, to assure them his election poses no threat to their wealth or political monopoly.

The *Times* article reported that during the summer Mamdani "cold-called" James Whelan, president of the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY), to set up an "intimate meeting," which was held in August. For nearly 130 years, since 1896, RENBY has functioned as the political arm of New York's real estate bourgeoisie. As president of RENBY, Whelan serves as the chief lobbyist for the billionaire landlords and developers he represents, which include Kushner Companies (run by Donald Trump's son-in-law), TF Cornerstone, The Durst Organization, Fisher Brothers, Cushman & Wakefield and the Glenwood Management Corporation.

The August meeting with Whelan was held at the "sunny penthouse offices of Jed Walentas," the *Times* reported, "the board's chairman and arguably the borough's most prominent developer." According to "two people familiar with the meeting," Mamdani was "polite, earnest-seeming and quick on his feet," and by "the end, he had seeded a relationship with some of his

most skeptical critics."

Even though a company affiliated with Walentas gave \$100,000 to a political action committee supporting Mayor Eric Adams' now-suspended campaign, following the meeting, the paper reported that "Walentas and Mamdani met again weeks later."

Jeffrey Gural, former chairman of Newmark & Company and current chairman of GFP Real Estate also met privately with Mamdani. While he did not support his campaign at this time, he told the paper he did not "want [Mamdani] to fail" and that he was "personable" and "smart."

Nothing could more thoroughly expose the falsity of Trump's fascist diatribes that Mamdani is a "communist" than this reporting. Mamdani is not "seeding" relationships with broad sections of workers to launch mass action to reverse rent hikes and expropriate the property of billionaire landlords. He is instead seeking the approval of New York's developers and landlords—some of the most parasitic gangster elements of the ruling class, denizens of the underworld out of which the current occupant of the White House crawled.

Mamdani's meeting with New York City's wealthy landlords and developers is part of an ongoing "charm" offensive Mamdani has embarked on since winning the primary. In addition to landlords, the *Times* quoted Sally Susman, a senior Pfizer executive, on her experiences with Mamdani. "When I met him the first time, I shared with him a quote by Aristotle," she told the paper. Susman said in the first of two "sessions with business executives," Mamdani "repeated the quote back to her."

Mamdani, the *Times* reported, has also spoken with Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorganChase, the largest bank in the United States; Robert Wolf, former UBS Americas chairman and Obama adviser; and Kenny Burgos, head of

a powerful landlord association representing rent-stabilized buildings.

Commenting on the story for the *Times*, Mamdani spokesperson Dora Pekec confirmed that Mamdani is “willing to meet with anyone—including those who disagree with him—to advance his affordability agenda.”

Mamdani’s “affordability agenda” is not socialism in any genuine sense, but warmed-over Bernie Sanders reformism. In a recent interview with the *New Yorker*, Mamdani explained:

My journey into calling myself a Democratic Socialist begins with Bernie’s run in 2016. And his campaign was a formative one for me and for many across this country, both in giving us that language, but also in explaining the core tenet of it, which to me continues to be a belief in dignity as the cornerstone of politics.

Like Sanders before him, Mamdani exists not to wage a “political revolution” but to channel mass anger over inequality and war back into the Democratic Party and the dead-end of electoral politics. Asked whether there was any real difference between a social democrat, a democratic socialist, or a liberal Democrat, Mamdani replied: “It often comes back to whether you’re willing to fight for these ideals that you hold.”

In other words, his “socialism” is merely a question of *attitude*—not of property relations, not of history, not of class struggle, not of political clarification, not of revolution. And even by this hollow standard, Mamdani has already abandoned many of his previous “ideals”: he has dropped his call to defund the police, pledged to keep billionaire heiress Jessica Tisch, an ardent supporter of Israel, as police commissioner, and assured business leaders that he would discourage the use of the phrase “globalize the intifada.”

Mamdani’s pragmatism seemingly has no limits. In an interview with CNN’s Kaitlan Collins last week, Mamdani was asked if Trump, who, like Biden before him provided Israel all the weapons and diplomatic cover it needed to kill and maim hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, “deserves credit for brokering the ceasefire?”

Mamdani replied, “You know, I will say that the news of a ceasefire leaves me with hope.” He then proceeded to draw an equals sign between the violent uprising against

Israeli occupation on October 7, 2023 and the US-backed mass murder and starvation of an enclave that once was home to 2.3 million people. He deplored all violence, “Whether it be Hamas’s horrific war crime of October 7th or the Israeli government’s genocide of Palestinians since...”

Pressed again by Collins at “what point” would Trump “deserve credit for” the phony ceasefire, Mamdani replied, “If the genocide ends then I think that’s something worthy to be praised and if the hostages are returned. Those things have to be done together in tandem.”

Collins asked if after a “week ... if the hostages have been returned” and if the “fighting” had “ceased” if “maybe at that point you would give him credit for this?”

Mamdani affirmatively replied, “If it sustains, yes.”

Mamdani’s remarks to CNN—expressing “hope” and even offering that Trump might “deserve credit”—are not just politically bankrupt but obscenely false. As Palestinians continue to document, Israeli tanks are still firing on civilians, drones continue to strike refugee camps and residential neighborhoods, and the siege remains intact. Nothing about this situation constitutes a genuine ceasefire. It is a temporary pause, cynically branded as “peace” while the machinery of genocide and ethnic cleansing continues to operate, in both Gaza and the West Bank.

Mamdani is not just reassuring real estate barons like James Whelan and Jed Walentas—he is also reassuring the imperialist state and its allies that his “socialism” poses no barrier to US foreign policy or to the continued destruction of Gaza. It’s the same fundamental function he and the Democratic Socialists of America serve domestically: to disorient, demobilize and divert popular anger into harmless parliamentary channels.

Early voting in the mayoral race begins on October 25, with November 4 being the last day to cast an in-person ballot. The latest polling from Quinnipiac University found Mamdani with a sizable lead over fellow Democrat and establishment favorite Andrew Cuomo, 46 percent to 33 percent. Republican Curtis Sliwa registered a distant third with 15 percent.



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