

# The political lessons of Mamdani's first 100 days

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New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani spent this past weekend celebrating his first 100 days (or thereabouts) in office, holding two rallies on Sunday together with his mentor, Bernie Sanders. “102 days ago, we stood together at the dawn of a new era. The world watched, wondering if change could really come,” Mamdani told the crowd of supporters in Queens at the second of the two rallies. “With what we’ve accomplished in 14 weeks, imagine what we can do in four years.”

The weekend’s campaign-style events were supplemented with a new city-run website touting Mamdani’s accomplishments in his first 100 days: \$1.2 billion secured for universal childcare, \$9.3 million secured in worker and small business restitution and 100,000 potholes fixed.

While Mamdani was busy patting himself on the back for initiatives like “fixing a bump on the Williamsburg Bridge,” a critical analysis of the last three-and-a-half months of the standard bearer for the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) sheds a different light on the content of the supposed “new era” ushered in on January 1.

Speaking on his accomplishments before an audience of supporters on Sunday, Mamdani did not dare to highlight the most important political initiative of his term thus far: his alliance with President Donald Trump. Mamdani has continued what he calls a productive relationship with the man he correctly characterizes as a fascist, meeting with Trump at the White House for a second time on the eve of the criminal war in Iran.

In two addresses Sunday, speaking well over 5,000 words, Mamdani not once uttered the name “Trump.” He made zero references to the war in Iran, and managed just one fleeting mention of ICE. The omissions are not an accident. Mamdani, playing up his “democratic socialism” before an audience overwhelmingly hostile to Trump, would rather avoid dwelling on the blossoming partnership with the leading advocate of world war and dictatorship.

Despite his reticence on the subject, Mamdani’s collaboration with Trump is extremely significant. Mamdani and the Democratic Socialists of America are put forward as the “left” alternative to the pro-business and pro-war politics of the Democratic Party establishment and the fascist politics of the Republicans. Mamdani himself was elected on the basis of left-wing appeals to address the affordability crisis and take on a system dominated by an oligarchy.

In the first months of the Mamdani administration, the strain on

the working class is not abating; on the contrary, it’s reaching a breaking point. Trump’s criminal war in Iran is the latest catalyst. The administration is determined to make the working class pay for the unfolding disaster. Trump has requested \$200 billion in supplemental war funds specifically for Iran, and roughly \$1.5 trillion in military spending next year—a World War III budget. Beyond the inevitable cuts to social services to pay for war, the shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz has already led to major increases in energy prices and will reverberate into all aspects of the economy. And an expansion of the war would have catastrophic consequences for the working class everywhere.

Alongside the war crimes in Iran, Trump is continuing to eviscerate democratic rights within the United States. Trump’s immigration Gestapo operates without constraints. ICE agents in New York City have arrested three times as many people in the first month and a half of 2026 as they did in the same period a year ago. Meanwhile, Trump is preparing the narrative that midterm elections—if they happen at all—are illegitimate and can be overturned.

Reflecting on his first hundred days in an interview with *POLITICO*, Mamdani made clear that none of the crimes of the Trump administration are impediments to deepening their alliance. “The president and I disagree on many things in public and in private,” Mamdani said in the interview. “We do, however, agree on one thing, which is a love for New York City. And that love, it is one that allows for our relationship to be a productive one, and allows for the city to know that it will not simply be affected by threats.”

David North, the chairperson of the *World Socialist Web Site* and of the Socialist Equality Party, responded on X, “If Mamdani were transported back to the 1930s as mayor of Berlin, he would say: ‘Hitler is the leader of the Nazis, but he loves sauerkraut and so do I.’”

The main political function of Mamdani’s alliance with Trump is to disorient those who are becoming radicalized and looking to (democratic) socialism for an alternative. Mamdani offers the poison that productive relationships can be forged with fascists, cutting workers and youth off from an orientation to the independent mobilization of the working class and a genuine struggle for socialism.

Instead, Mamdani and the DSA present a watered-down version of “sewer socialism,” offering minor reforms and managerial efficiency palatable to business interests and the political

establishment. Even then, under conditions of a deepening crisis of American capitalism, with a ruling class turning towards dictatorship and war, Mamdani's appeals to the ruling class and their political servants are able to yield very little.

One of the early "victories" for Mamdani was an agreement with Governor Kathy Hochul to fund a modest expansion of childcare. The one-time injection of \$1.2 billion to expand care for 3-year-olds and create a pilot for a few thousand 2-year-olds is a far cry from establishing a permanent universal childcare program for children aged 6 months and up, as he pledged during the campaign.

The deal on childcare announced on January 8 cemented the alliance between the "democratic socialist" mayor and the pro-business Democratic governor. Shortly thereafter, Mamdani endorsed Hochul for reelection and effectively abandoned any serious effort to tax the rich. Mamdani went so far as to boycott events organized by the DSA-led "Tax the Rich" campaign, founded by Mamdani staffers to engage the tens of thousands of volunteers from his election campaign. Far from taking on the hated Democratic establishment represented by Hochul, Mamdani has thrown them a political lifeline.

The funding from Albany for the modest childcare expansion is dwarfed by the city's \$5.4 billion budget gap. While that sum could easily be paid out of the profits from the city's finance industry, or by any number of the city's 123 billionaires, Mamdani has pledged to reclaim "government efficiency" from the right as a political slogan, appointing "Chief Savings Officers" at every city department. With the budget due at the end of June, Mamdani is setting the stage for major cuts to education, housing and homeless programs.

Many of the other accomplishments touted by Mamdani amount to nothing more than a progressive gloss on conventional ruling class politics. On policing, Mamdani created an Office of Community Safety, a drastically scaled-down version of a campaign promise to dispatch social workers rather than the NYPD on mental health calls. Meanwhile, Mamdani reappointed billionaire heiress Jessica Tisch as the police commissioner, meeting a core demand of the city's corporate and financial elite. Under Mamdani, the NYPD has been dispatched to protect ICE agents, attack protesters and arrest striking nurses.

Mamdani also touted his visit to the picket line of 15,000 striking nurses in January and February. Mamdani's posturing as a friend of workers is belied by his simultaneous endorsement of the chief strikebreaker, Governor Hochul, who authored no less than six emergency orders authorizing travel nurses to work as scabs despite not having licenses to practice in New York. After the strike, Mamdani went bowling with NYSNA union president Nancy Hagans, underscoring their collaboration throughout the strike. Hagans provoked a rebellion among striking nurses at New York Presbyterian after she overrode elected local negotiators and forced a vote on a tentative agreement pushed by the hospitals.

Mamdani cynically claimed he "protected vulnerable New Yorkers from dangerous cold snaps." The assertion turns reality on its head. In January and February, the winter weather left 26 residents dead, 19 of whom froze to death. The fact that it wasn't a major scandal is a testament to the far-reaching decay of the

political and media establishment, who have normalized mass death, especially among the downtrodden, and accept no responsibility to prevent it.

A new report from the Mayor's Office put some numbers to the economic impossibility facing the bulk of the working class in New York. The true cost of living, factoring in the cost of housing, food, health care, and other necessities, is a staggering \$106,000 a year for a median family with no children, rising to nearly \$160,000 a year with children. More than 5 million residents of New York, 62 percent of the population, lack the resources to make ends meet.

Meanwhile, Wall Street bonuses reached a record \$49.2 billion last year, up 9 percent year over year, according to a report from the City Comptroller. The bonuses reflect an increase in Wall Street profits by more than 30 percent last year, to over \$65 billion.

This staggering social inequality is coinciding with the beginning of an upsurge among workers and a political radicalization accelerated by the Trump administration. Already this year, nurses in New York City struck at three major hospital systems for 41 days. Next week may see the 34,000 building service workers walk off the job. A similar number of transit workers are nearing a contract deadline in May. And Mamdani will come into direct conflict with city workers later this year when DC37 and other union contracts expire.

For the working class to make real gains in improving living conditions, in defending democratic rights and resisting imperialist war, sharp lessons must be drawn from the Mamdani administration's first 100 days. Mamdani and DSA represent the interests of an upper-middle-class layer dissatisfied with the status quo, not seeking to put an end to the horrors of capitalism, but a more comfortable life within it for those already living in privileged circumstances (the upper middle class). Mamdani's fraudulent "socialism" must be rejected. The decisive question is building a movement that doesn't seek to pressure the Democratic Party but politically breaks from it; one that aims not to more effectively organize oligarchic rule but fights for workers' control; and one that rejects collaboration with the would-be dictator in the White House, instead mobilizing the strength of the working class internationally to fight fascism, dictatorship and war.



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