Mamdani hosts Trump at Gracie Mansion: The DSA's alliance with the fascist president

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On Monday afternoon, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, the most prominent elected member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), welcomed Donald Trump to Gracie Mansion, the mayor's official residence. After an hour behind closed doors, the two walked out together to a podium on the lawn.

What followed was a disgusting spectacle, with the "socialist" mayor playing host and prop to the fascist president.

This was Mamdani's third meeting with Trump in 10 months, following two at the White House. The regularity of these meetings, combined with what Mamdani himself acknowledges is an ongoing conversation with Trump "in person" and "over the phone," makes clear that one is dealing with a definite orientation and program. The DSA, in the person of its leading public official, has formed a political alliance with Trump.

The meeting took place under conditions of record low approval ratings for Trump—36 percent, according to the latest NBC News poll, the lowest of his second term. In few cities is Trump as hated as in New York, where he cannot attend public events without being booed. Mamdani responds not by denouncing Trump, let alone calling for opposition to him but by lending him legitimacy. In return, Trump throws him a few crumbs.

Mamdani is doing political dirty work for the ruling class. He is attempting to rebrand the fascist war criminal Trump, whose administration is dedicated to giving to the oligarchs what it takes from workers, as a champion of "affordability." In the process, he is seeking to drag the word "socialism" through the mud.

The mayor opened by declaring that each time he and the president speak, "It is about the same topics: how to improve the lives of New Yorkers, and how to use the power of government to take on the cost of living crisis…"

What a ridiculous absurdity. The man standing beside him has launched a criminal war against Iran that has driven gasoline prices up 27 percent in a year. Trump's budget law has thrown tens of thousands of city residents off SNAP benefits. The same law strips Medicaid coverage from an estimated 1.5 million people in New York state, just one front in the broader assault on social programs by a government of, by and for the oligarchy.

Asked what "tangible results" his relationship with Trump has produced, Mamdani could only point to an agreement to "set up a new level of that conversation" between City Hall and the White House on building over Sunnyside Yard in Queens. He commended Trump as "someone who has built quite a lot of housing here in our city," a polite reference to the real estate swindling and criminal operations that Trump specialized in before turning to politics.

The project, like Mamdani's "affordability agenda" as a whole, is subordinated to the interests of private developers (an *Economist* headline last week reads, "Developers are learning to love Zohran Mamdani"). On this, the DSA mayor and the real estate conman speak the same language.

More significant, however, was what Mamdani did not say. Mamdani's last meeting with Trump, on February 26, took place two days before the United States launched its war on Iran. Monday's meeting came on the eve of Trump's address to the UN General Assembly, which will be an occasion for threatening war on the world. On Sunday he told Fox News that he is choosing between "wiping Iran out," letting it "rot economically" and making a deal, and asked: "If and when do I blow the entire nation up?"

At the podium, Trump returned to the subject unprompted. Iran is "not going to have a nuclear weapon," he said. "They're doing very poorly. In fact, I have meetings on it today." That is, Trump announced from the mayor's lawn that he was planning the next stage of the war. He continued with a screed denouncing the media as "fake news" for articles on Iran and declaring that "the press also has an obligation" not to criticize him because he "won in a landslide."

Mamdani, standing a few feet away, dutifully kept his mouth shut.

Trump is also preparing this week to impose sanctions against the International Criminal Court, aimed at forcing it

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to drop its arrest warrant for Benjamin Netanyahu. This comes days after a UN fact-finding mission found "reasonable grounds to believe" that the United States itself committed a war crime on the first day of the Iran war. Neither the ICC nor Netanyahu was mentioned on the lawn of Gracie Mansion.

Netanyahu himself speaks at the UN on Thursday, and mass protests are planned. As a mayoral candidate, Mamdani pledged to have him arrested. Last week he told reporters: "I do not have any plans to attend any protest at the UN General Assembly." He added, "To New Yorkers, I have never encouraged them to protest."

What sniveling cowardice and subservience! Mamdani owes his election victory to the mass opposition to the Gaza genocide. He now assures the ruling class that he had nothing to do with it.

Mamdani made that statement flanked by his police commissioner, the billionaire heiress Jessica Tisch, and Deputy Commissioner Rebecca Weiner. Days earlier, at Mamdani's side, Weiner listed the "far left" among the terrorist threats facing the city.

On immigration, Mamdani said he had "shared my very strong opinions" on the importance of immigrant New Yorkers, "especially Haitian New Yorkers," and said he "appreciate[d] the conversation" with Trump on these issues.

Mamdani knows something about Haitian New Yorkers. On August 7, after the Trump administration stripped Temporary Protected Status (TPS) from some 350,000 Haitians, he announced that Haitian city employees, who had lost their work authorization, would be fired. He called no protest and mounted no challenge, declaring that the city was "forced by federal law" to act. By the city's own audit, moreover, ICE arrests in the New York area are up 71 percent.

After the first meeting, *Jacobin*, the house organ of the DSA, hailed Mamdani's "shrewd political instincts." After the second, it pronounced his flattery of Trump a savvy strategy and explained that "governing entails cooperation and compromise, even with a noxious authoritarian president."

No doubt the apologists at *Jacobin*, well wadded with stupidity and deceit, will have ample explanations for this latest meeting. Such people know exactly what they are doing. Every pragmatic justification of collaboration with Trump is itself an act of collaboration.

This is not merely a question of Mamdani's personal qualities or those of his apologists. He is the personification of what the DSA is: a faction of the Democratic Party, speaking for privileged layers of the upper middle class, brought forward to give a facelift to a political order detested by masses of people. Its real enemy is the working class and the left.

And these people have not reached the end of their journey. As the war expands and the crisis of the Trump administration deepens, the DSA and the Sanders wing of the Democratic Party will move further to the right.

The direction of travel was on display last week at the "Pro-Human Assembly" in Washington. There, Senator Bernie Sanders thanked the organizers for bringing together "different political perspectives," then yielded the stage to the fascist ideologue and former Trump adviser Steve Bannon, who praised Sanders and then called for the expulsion of all Chinese nationals. The WSWS wrote that the outlines of a new American "national socialism" were visible at that event. Gracie Mansion is the same process, in the person of the DSA's most prominent elected official.

Poll after poll records growing support for socialism. A CNBC survey last month found that 46 percent of Americans aged 18 to 34 view democratic socialism favorably, twice the share that views it unfavorably. The workers and young people moving to the left will collide with the right-wing politics of the DSA.

The development of political consciousness, however, is not automatic. Those who voted for Mamdani in the belief that he represented an alternative must draw conclusions. This requires a serious study of what the DSA is and where it comes from, why its evolution could be foreseen, and the central questions of the 20th century, above all the history of the Trotskyist movement.

The immense opposition to war, to the ICE raids and to the oligarchy cannot find expression through the DSA or any section of the Democratic Party. It requires the independent political mobilization of the working class, in the United States and internationally, on the basis of a socialist program. This is the perspective fought for by the Socialist Equality Party.

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