

Mamdani's counterterrorism chief denounces "far-left terrorism"

John Conrad, Tim Avery
30 September 2026

At a September 9 press conference on security preparations for the 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, New York City Police Department (NYPD) Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence and Counterterrorism Rebecca Weiner declared "far-left terrorism" a serious threat. Standing beside her as she spoke was New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, the most prominent elected member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). The "socialist" mayor raised no objection.

Weiner claimed that the terrorist threat had geographically decentralized and diversified ideologically since 2001. She cited "a proliferation of threats coming from conspiracy theories, grievances, nihilistic violence, far-left, far-right, antigovernment, all of those things." The designation of the "far left" as an object of surveillance was a political statement by the most powerful intelligence officer in the NYPD.

Weiner, an adjunct assistant professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, was personally responsible for coordinating police intelligence activities during the brutal police assault on Columbia's Gaza Solidarity Encampment protest in April 2024. Following the line of Democratic Mayor Eric Adams and the Biden administration, she justified the crackdown by claiming that the protests were the work of "outside agitators"—the same McCarthyite slander deployed against every anti-war student movement since the 1960s.

Weiner is right at home in Mamdani's NYPD, run by billionaire heiress and arch-Zionist Jessica Tisch. The mayor's silence on Weiner's comments leaves no doubt as to his endorsement of the program she laid out. The ruling class is alarmed by the growth of left-wing and anti-war sentiment among workers and youth, and the Mamdani administration is taking up the task of

policing the growth of this left-wing radicalization to defend the capitalist state.

The DSA mayor was elected last year by over a million people driven by anger over soaring rents, record Wall Street bonuses, the threat of fascist dictatorship, war and genocide. Mamdani's first acts as mayor were directed not against the corporate-financial oligarchy but at reassuring the capitalist elite of his loyalty to the profit system.

Mamdani retained Jessica Tisch as police commissioner, meeting a central demand of Wall Street. He kept the hated NYPD Strategic Response Group, the unaccountable unit used to assault and arrest anti-genocide protesters, which he had pledged to disband. The Mamdani administration continues the policy of "broken windows" policing in all but name—the harassment, profiling, and criminalization of the poor that has defined the department since the Giuliani era—and rushes to defend officers who gun down the city's most vulnerable.

Last month, Mamdani established a Business Advisory Council composed of corporate executives from finance, real estate, healthcare and retail: billionaires and multi-millionaires assembled to advise the mayor on the management of the city. The appointments underscored that whatever left rhetoric Mamdani deployed, his administration represented a fundamental continuity with his predecessors, not a break.

This class orientation is most blatantly expressed in Mamdani's "partnership" with the fascist would-be dictator Donald Trump. Mamdani and Trump have met in person three times in the last 10 months. The third meeting took place last week, when Mamdani welcomed Trump to Gracie Mansion, the mayor's official residence. After an hour behind closed doors,

the two emerged at a podium on the lawn, where the “socialist” mayor played host and prop to the president. Trump used the occasion to announce the next stage of the war on Iran and to denounce the press as “fake news.” Mamdani, standing a few feet away, kept his mouth shut, just as he had when his NYPD official issued her attack on the “far left.”

The next day, Trump delivered a genocidal tirade to the United Nations General Assembly. As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered his own rant from the same rostrum—calling the victims of Israel’s campaign “barbarians,” “monsters” and “butchers”—Mamdani’s NYPD arrested more than 100 anti-genocide protesters outside, deploying the very same Strategic Response Group he had pledged to disband. Netanyahu—wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza—was allowed to travel the streets of New York City under NYPD protection while those demanding his arrest were themselves arrested. In July, Mamdani, who had pledged to arrest Netanyahu, claimed “we do not have the independent legal authority to enforce this warrant.”

This experience exposes the bankruptcy of the entire reformist perspective of the DSA. A critical political lesson must be absorbed by all those who seek to oppose inequality, exploitation, fascism, genocide and war: the state is not a neutral body that an elected official can bend to humane purposes. It is an instrument of class rule.

This lesson is especially important after three years of the pro-Palestinian student movement. Since 2023, students and young people have defied police charges, mass arrests, state prosecution and university expulsion to oppose the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza. But courage without a correct political perspective is not enough.

Over the past two and a half years, the ethnic cleansing of Gaza has intensified, spread to the West Bank, and metastasized into a broader imperialist war across the Middle East, including a criminal war of aggression against Iran. Trump has declared that the United States and Israel will “clean out” the Palestinian population. The protest movement’s existing leadership, rooted in the middle class, has offered no way forward. Its strategy of appeals to the conscience of the ruling class and its political representatives was, and remains, a dead end.

Genocide, fascism and imperialist war cannot be opposed by pressuring the ruling class and its representatives in university administrations, the Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracy. That perspective leads, with iron logic, to Mamdani: a mayor who falsely claims to be a socialist, but who designates left-wing protesters as a threat. Students and young people looking for a way to fight must instead turn to the developing struggles of the working class.

Most critical is the building of a political leadership in the working class to lead the emerging movement to the seizure of power. The protest politics of the past two and a half years failed because it was not anchored in the social force capable of victory. What is posed is a turn toward the working class, and with it a serious theoretical orientation to the study of the history of the class struggle and the Marxist movement.

For this it is critical to build clubs of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) on every campus and in schools. It is through the struggle to unify and politically educate and organize workers and young people in opposition to capitalism on the basis of a socialist political program, fought for today only by the Trotskyist movement, that the threat of dictatorship and world war can be opposed and defeated.



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