

Zohran Mamdani’s “Strategy to Combat Antisemitism”: A capitulation to Zionism and the capitalist oligarchy

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5 October 2026

On September 29, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), released what his office calls “the nation’s first-ever municipal Strategy to Combat Antisemitism.” The 33-page report, accompanied by a video announcement, is a capitulation to the most reactionary political forces.

The strategy was unveiled by Mamdani and the Mayor’s Office to Combat Antisemitism (MOCA). It includes \$6.4 million for Partners Against the Hate (PATH) grants—doubling last year’s funding to organizations such as the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC).

The JCRC is a leading Zionist organization that for decades has organized “study tours” of Israel for New York politicians and community leaders. According to its own website, these include visits, “in coordination with the Israel Defense Forces,” to the Golan Heights, Sderot and the “Security Barrier.”

The strategy further allocates \$1 million to secure synagogues and other houses of worship and commits \$2 million to complete a Queens Holocaust memorial and \$2.5 million to a Center for New Jewish Culture in Brooklyn. It relaunches a disbanded “Security Infrastructure Working Group” and organizes the work around seven objectives, including preventing hate violence, educating New Yorkers about Jewish history, supporting victims of antisemitic incidents and “celebrating” Jewish life.

“Antisemitism has no place in New York City,” Mamdani declared. “Jewish New Yorkers have helped build this city... and they deserve to be safe, celebrated and protected by a city government that stands with them.”

Socialists oppose antisemitism, along with every other

form of bigotry used to divide the working class. But the report is not a neutral response to hate crimes. It adopts the political narrative that has been used, since the start of the genocide in Gaza, to slander and criminalize its opponents.

That narrative is spelled out in the report itself. “Antisemitic crimes, which have risen since October 7, 2023, have become frighteningly commonplace,” MOCA’s executive director writes in her opening letter. By dating the danger to Jews from October 7, the report links it to the genocide and, implicitly, to the mass movement against it.

This is the identification of opposition to the genocide with hatred of Jews, and it has served as the pretext for a sweeping assault on democratic rights by the entire political establishment. Fittingly, the announcement was greeted with a parade of endorsements from Democratic Party figures—Attorney General Letitia James, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, former Comptroller Brad Lander and a string of city council members—all praising the mayor for taking antisemitism seriously.

The report’s opening letters list assaults and vandalism alongside “stares and casual comments” to fraudulently conjure up a climate of rampant antisemitism. But it is not the “Jewish community” that hurls accusations of rampant “antisemitism.” It is certainly not the tens of thousands of Jewish workers and youth who have protested the Gaza genocide for three years—many of them arrested by Mamdani’s own police.

The report adds a footnote assuring readers that the administration “supports all New Yorkers’ right to protest.” But it accepts the premise on which that right is being destroyed.

The report is also notable for what it leaves out. Its statement of “core values” declares that antisemitism

“can, and must, be addressed hand in hand with all other forms of hatred.” Yet it says nothing about Islamophobia, or about the other campaigns to divide the population along racial, ethnic and national lines—above all, the Trump administration’s persecution of immigrants.

Every one of Mamdani’s ruling class critics accuses him of not doing enough to defend Jews in the face of “increasing” antisemitic sentiment. The report concedes the charge. The same evening it was released, a group led by the former head of the far-right Betar US disrupted the New York book launch of Mahmoud Khalil and renewed the call for his deportation. The report says nothing about such attacks on opponents of the genocide.

The report is a further step in Mamdani’s campaign to appease his Zionist and Wall Street, pro-imperialist critics. It follows a sequence the *World Socialist Web Site* has documented over the past year: the reappointment of billionaire heiress and Zionist Jessica Tisch as New York City Police Department (NYPD) commissioner; Mamdani’s abandonment of his pledge to arrest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; and three meetings with Donald Trump, including the groveling press conference at Gracie Mansion.

There was also the September 9 press conference at which Mamdani stood silent while his counterterrorism chief, Rebecca Weiner, listed the “far-left” among the sources of “a proliferation of threats,” and the NYPD’s mass arrests of more than 100 anti-genocide protesters outside the United Nations while Netanyahu delivered a genocidal rant.

Last week *Politico* revealed that since the early days of his administration, Mamdani has required the NYPD to obtain City Hall’s approval before deploying the NYPD’s Strategic Response Group (SRG)—the very unit he pledged to disband—and that he did not use that authority to stop its deployment against the protesters outside the UN, among them several of his own political allies.

The report is designed to reassure the financial oligarchy, including the billionaire Zionists who poured money into the campaign to defeat Mamdani.

Antisemitism is promoted above all by the fascist right that Trump has cultivated. It is fueled by Netanyahu and his far-right government, including its openly fascist ministers, whose fanatical insistence on equating Judaism with Zionism—a reactionary ethnonationalist political ideology dating from the late nineteenth century—plays directly into the hands of antisemites. Zionism shares with antisemitism and fascism the “blood and soil”

ultranationalism to which the ruling classes are increasingly turning to wage imperialist war abroad and austerity at home.

Mamdani is attacked by the Zionists because the administration’s strategy document does not explicitly defend Zionism and the Zionist state. That would be a step too far even for the DSA mayor. But the report’s silence on Gaza is itself a capitulation to Zionism and American imperialism.

Mamdani’s apologists have responded in character. Bhaskar Sunkara, founding editor of *Jacobin*, the magazine aligned with the DSA, published a lengthy piece on October 2, “Against the Politics of Communal Fear.” Sunkara concedes that a real social problem “can also acquire the dimensions of a moral panic, and that panic can be weaponized against the Left.” Yet he praises the report for defending “New Yorkers’ right to protest” and calls it only “a (very small) step in the wrong direction.”

His objection is to the report’s “delivery mechanisms”: that it channels money through nonprofits such as the JCRC rather than “staffed public institutions with transparent budgets and clear performance indicators.” The political content of the report, its adoption of the narrative used to slander and criminalize opponents of the genocide, goes unmentioned. So does Gaza. The DSA itself has said nothing.

The “Strategy to Combat Antisemitism” expresses the class orientation of the DSA and the political tendency it represents. Faced with a choice between the mass opposition to the genocide that elected him and the demands of the ruling class, Mamdani has chosen the ruling class, as he has on the NYPD, on Netanyahu and on Trump.



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