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# Opinion: Why Mamdani frightens Jews like me

October 22, 2025 by Bret Stephens / The New York Times



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A recent Fox News poll found that 38% of Jewish New Yorkers intend to vote for Zohran Mamdani for mayor, setting aside whatever reservations they might have about the candidate's views on Israel. At least a few of those voters will support the 34-year-old state Assembly member not despite those views, but

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Readers of this column, particularly those inclined to vote for Mamdani, should at least pause to consider the reasons.

A good place to start is to concede that nothing in the public record suggests Mamdani is antisemitic — taking the narrowest view of what the word implies. He has spoken of the "crisis of antisemitism" in New York as "something that we have to tackle." He has condemned the hate crimes this year in Washington and in Boulder, Colorado. And he's reached out to Jewish communities of various stripes, promising that Zionists would be welcome in his administration.

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which supports Palestinian statehood, opposes Israeli settlements and is roundly critical of the Israeli government.

Why? Because J Street supports Israel as "a democratic homeland for the Jewish people." This was too much for Mamdani and his comrades in SJP, for whom working with J Street was a form of normalization. Mamdani, who to this day does not support Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, also called for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions.

The second was a rap song Mamdani wrote in 2017, called "Salaam." "My love to the Holy Land Five, you better look 'em up," he crooned.

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Finally, a few months before the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas, Mamdani introduced a bill in the state Assembly that could have jeopardized the tax-exempt status of virtually every pro-Israel charity.

What stands out about this list is the affinity for extremists, the double standards and the monomania.

One of the ways anti-Zionists tend to give themselves away as something darker is that the only human-rights abuses they seem to notice are Israel's; the only state among dozens of religious states whose legitimacy they challenge is Israel; the only group whose suffering they are prepared to turn into their personal crusade is that of the Palestinians. What gives? Has Mamdani sponsored bills to oppose, say, the persecution of Uyghurs in China or Kurds in Turkey? Did he ever rap his "love" for the people of Iran fighting their regime?

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after Oct. 7, could he do no better than to issue a mealy-mouthed acknowledgment that Jews had died the day before? Why couldn't he even denounce the perpetrators of the most murderous antisemitic rampage in the past 80 years?

In the long, sorry tale of anti-Jewish politics, it hasn't just been the prejudice of a few that's led Jews to grief. It's been the supine indifference of the many. That's what frightens Jews like me.

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