



**THE MEANING OF MAMDANI FOR US ALL:
TOWARDS A PEOPLE-FOCUSED AND PRINCIPLED POLITICS**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 11-27-25, p. B-1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

IT IS A GENERALLY CONCEDED FACT of history and realized hope that Mayor-elect Zohran Mandani's victory in New York City, November 4th is a momentous and highly meaningful achievement for several varied and interrelated reasons. But none is more important than what it means and can mean for all of us as a hard won way opened for a people-focused, principled and most promising politics in which all of us play a central role. And this is to be seen and done not only as a New York achievement, but also as an urgently needed model of a new kind of politics for the country as a whole.

Indeed, Mamdani has repeatedly said that he believed in and was working for a new kind of politics. And in his victory speech, he declared that his victory was indeed "A mandate for change. A mandate for a new kind of politics". And key to developing and practicing a new kind of politics which is people-focused, principled and effective is to understand the source of the success of Mamdani's campaign and then apply the lessons according to the particular context in which we live, work and struggle.

Clearly, the first lesson is that Mamdani's campaign was people-focused and we should praise the people who worked hard to achieve this victory against overwhelming odds, attacks and naysaying; his staff and the 104,000 volunteers; and the 1,036,051 who voted for a new and vastly improved way forward.

Mamdani's victory and his commitment to a new kind of politics is and must be seen and built upon, then, as a victory by and for the people, everyday people, the native and immigrant, the different and the defiant, a diversity we urge that his administration reflect in going forward. For this will be making concrete and convincing his declaration that "this is our time", a new era and opportunity opened to formerly caged and crushed hopes, peoples and possibilities. Here we are to leave behind the practice of embracing and involving the people to win and then inviting and allowing the elite to reign, rule and ruin the lives of those who won the struggle and deserve their rightful share of *place* and *power*.

This is also a victory for the progressive forces, an uplifted light and sign of possibilities rooted in collaboration, collective work and struggle, regardless of the jaded pundits, pathetic pessimists, and the mean spirited and self-medicating naysayers. And, of course, it is a victory for Zohran Mamdani, himself, who brought to bear his personal charisma, inspiring allegiance, admiration and commitment; his competence as an activist, intellectual, organizer, writer and leader; and his compassion, his feeling with and for the people, whom he called together to reimagine and remake politics and the political system. And it is a victory gained by an excellent organizational initiative, going to the people, inspiring, instructing and learning from

**THE MEANING OF MAMDANI FOR US ALL:
TOWARDS A PEOPLE-FOCUSED AND PRINCIPLED POLITICS**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 11-27-25, p. B-1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

them and building a structure that did not waiver, wander and weaken under vicious and repeated attack, heavy stress and constant strain. It is an instruction taken from Mamdani's middle name namesake, Nana Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah who taught us to "Go to the people; start with what they know; build on what they have".

Mamdani's campaign was also a principled one. A man of principle and courage, he asserted himself in dignity-affirming, defiant and self-determined ways. He refused to ask for approval or apologize for being Muslim, immigrant, democratic socialist or an ardent and unwavering supporter of the Palestinian people, their liberation struggle, and their right to life and to be free, self-determining and sovereign in their own land and state. He did not take the traditional AIPAC trip to Israel physically or psychologically to pledge allegiance and accept its immoral demand of immunity from criticism. And he rejected racism, apartheid, Islamophobia, antisemitism, anti-immigrant hatred, and attacks and phobias and hatreds of all kinds.

The central lesson here is that you can be principled and win too, and that you don't have to submit to the triple weapons of politics as usual: funds, favors and fear in order to win, hold office and serve the people. Indeed, in an era of bent backs, broken spirits and unbelievably weak wills, the moral and social courage to defiantly speak truth to the people and to power, and to be principled and progressive is a clear asset, inspiration and incentive to others..

Moving forward it is important to understand that the ruling billionaire corporate class will, as usual, continue to use their wealth to control, buy, rent and lease politicians, puppets and crime partners of all kinds and to turn their will and wishes into law, political policy and socially sanctioned practices. They will use corporate and social media to mislead, disrupt, deceive and destroy, and force and foster efforts of universities and colleges to punish and suppress academic freedom, free speech and assembly and activist initiatives of students. And they will pack and entice the courts to concede, consent and co-sign whatever they wish and want, and encourage police forces to surveil, raid, brutalize, capture and cut short the lives of the defiant, different and vulnerable under the color and camouflage of law. And Mamdani will have to deal with them given their power, as the White House visit demonstrates. But how he deals with them will depend on the support and power of the people to define and determine what he does and does not do, and how he and we achieve our shared goals and good.

| AND HERE WE, MAMDANI AND ALL others, who want to extend this victory and other victories beyond elections to truly transformative policy and practice, must build an overarching powerful movement of the people who together build the politics, political system and world they want and deserve. Indeed, we must convince the people that *there is no substitute for an aware, organized and engaged people, constantly involved in a multiplicity of actions to*

**THE MEANING OF MAMDANI FOR US ALL:
TOWARDS A PEOPLE-FOCUSED AND PRINCIPLED POLITICS**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 11-27-25, p. B-1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

define, defend and advance their interests. For whatever we want and hope and work for in this new initiative, we must realize that an election is a beginning step forward at best, and that the new world and way forward lies in the hands, hearts and minds of people. A people

who have made an irreversible commitment to bring into being a new world and powerful movement forward in essential ways already explored and embraced and in radically transformative ways still to be imagined and achieved.▲

DR. MAULANA KARENGA, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of *Kwanzaa*; and author of *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture* and *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis*, www.MaulanaKarenga.org; www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.Us-Organization.org.