

UNMASKING MAMDANI'S ANTI-ICE "VOLUNTEERS"

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When we think of volunteers, we think about men and women who give of themselves for the benefit of those in need. Neighborhood volunteer firefighters, those who work for free in hospitals, many of those who give blood—there is a long list of noble causes served by volunteers. Some of those causes were later institutionalized—the March of Dimes started as a voluntary organization.

That is why New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani's idea of "volunteers" is bogus: he is assembling a well-organized band of left-wing activists to impede law enforcement, under the false pretense of recruiting volunteers.

On January 15, members of the New York City Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (NYC-DSA) met at the New York headquarters of the Communist-tied The People's Forum to discuss mobilizing a "rapid response" team—an army of 4,000 activists to stop the presence of ICE in the city. The members discussed plans to train 2,000 DSA members, and 2,000 non-DSA members. The meeting was run by the Immigrant Justice Working Group of the NYC-DSA.

NYC-DSA regularly holds what they call "Know Your Rights" training sessions, the purpose of which is to teach activists how they can defend themselves in interactions with ICE. In a "Know Your Rights Training & Rally" held in December, it sought to provide more information on its "Rapid Response Priority Organizing Project," and to teach DSA members how they "can plug into citywide networks supporting our communities through coordination, resource sharing, trainings, reporting, and relationship-building."

One of those running these training sessions is Leemah Nasrati. She is a member of the Immigrant Justice Working Group and serves as a pro-bono attorney for Catholic Charities in New York.

In terms of vetting and recruitment of non-members, the “rapid response” team will need to be cleared through a DSA encrypted messaging service. DSA members are recruiting in neighborhoods with high immigrant populations, such as Bushwick and Jackson Heights.

Regarding funding, little has been said about who exactly is funding the cost of this “rapid response” project. NYC-DSA relies almost exclusively on member dues for its funding; the dues range from \$15/month to \$50/month. In addition, the national level of DSA has a program in which members can donate up to three percent of their income. Dues from all chapters are given to the national headquarters; the funds are then allocated back to the local chapters based on the size of the chapter and the average percentage contributed.

As mentioned, NYC-DSA hosted their meeting at The People’s Forum, a group with ties to Communist China. It describes itself as “a political education and cultural center” that “aims to support and provide space for movements and organizations to build unity across historic lines of division here and abroad.” Its meeting rooms are adorned with photos of known terrorists, such as Che Guevara and Fidel Castro.

According to the Capital Research Center, the People’s Forum is a “self-described Marxist socialist group” that “plays a central role in pro-terrorism networks linked to the Chinese Communist Party.” It was involved in organizing several pro-Palestinian protests, most notably protests at Columbia University and the City University of New York. It is heavily funded by Neville Roy Singham, an extreme left-wing billionaire who has ties to Communist China. He is referred to as a “Marxist comrade” by The People’s Forum.

In other words, Mamdani is falsely claiming to organize volunteers. He is doing nothing of the sort: he is assembling hard-core activists, with ties to Communist-affiliated groups so they can disable ICE. It is naïve to think otherwise.

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