

Silence of the lambs: DSA, pseudo-left cover up Mamdani's meeting with Trump and Sanders' AI summit with Bannon

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In the space of one week this month, two of the most prominent figures of American “democratic socialism” have appeared alongside prominent fascists in the United States.

On September 15, Senator Bernie Sanders spoke at the “Pro-Human Assembly” in Washington, an event on AI organized by the Future of Life Institute, which has relations with the far-right. Sanders spoke just prior to Steve Bannon, the fascist advisor to Donald Trump, who used the occasion to launch into a vicious anti-Chinese rant.

Six days after the assembly, on September 21, New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a member of the DSA, invited Donald Trump to Gracie Mansion, their third meeting since November. The two held a joint press conference on the lawn of the mayor's residence, where Trump patted Mamdani, and the mayor presented Trump as a political ally in improving the conditions of New Yorkers.

Both events were reported prominently in the corporate media, which treated them as expressions of a supposedly “unlikely” coming together of political opposites. The various publications associated with the DSA and the organizations in and around it, however, have said nothing.

Jacobin's picture without the caption

Jacobin, the most prominent magazine associated with the DSA, published three articles on AI in the week of the assembly but none on the assembly itself. The centerpiece, by Leigh Phillips on September 17, two days after, endorsed a bill presented by Sanders and what Phillips described as “the pro-human, carefully paced, AI development that Bernie Sanders and others have described.”

The article does not mention the Pro-Human Assembly, at which Sanders spoke, nor that the “others” with whom Sanders is aligning include Bannon, the fascist strategist of “America First”; Rep. Chip Roy of the Freedom Caucus; Sen. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee and January 6 coup conspirator Amy Kremer. The “pro-human” coalition *Jacobin* endorses is, in its actual composition, a bloc between the Sanders-DSA wing of the Democratic Party and the far right, united on a program of national-security control over technology and hostility to China.

The photograph accompanying Phillips' piece, credited to Getty Images, shows Sanders speaking at the Pro-Human Assembly on September 15—that is, at the very event the article does not name, on the stage that Bannon would take minutes later. *Jacobin* ran the picture but did not publish the original caption, which notes that Sanders “joined former White House Chief Strategist Steve Bannon” at the event.

On the Trump-Mamdani meeting, *Jacobin* published a September 23 piece by Liza Featherstone praising the mayor's “Commission on Government Efficiency” and his remarks that week to a summit of mayors. Trump's visit to Gracie Mansion two days earlier does not appear. This is the same magazine that, after the first Oval Office meeting in November, ran a series of articles hailing Mamdani's handling of Trump as a political masterstroke.

Sunkara's *The Nation* crops Trump

Jacobin withheld a caption. *The Nation*, whose president since 2022 is Bhaskar Sunkara, the founder and publisher of *Jacobin*, went one step further. On September 23, *The Nation* published “Zohran Mamdani Hosts the World,” by Prajwal Bhat, an account of the mayor's meetings during the week of the UN General Assembly.

Bhat records Mamdani's meetings with the mayors of Helsinki, Barcelona, Rome and Mexico City, with Brazil's Lula, with the prime minister of Norway and with a delegation from Germany's Die Linke, and concludes that these exchanges “have placed Mamdani at the center of the international left.”

Every meeting of the week is recorded except one: The meeting with Trump.

Trump does not appear in the photograph either, though he was in it. The image *The Nation* ran is credited to Chip Somodevilla of Getty Images. Getty's caption for the frame describes Trump and Mamdani holding a joint news conference after their meeting. In the original, Trump stands at Mamdani's shoulder as the mayor speaks at the podium.

The Nation cropped the frame to Mamdani alone and captioned it as a news conference “after a meeting with Donald Trump.” The original caption from Getty reads as follows:

U.S. President Donald Trump (L) and New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani hold a joint news conference after a meeting at Gracie Mansion on September 21, 2026, in New York City. The discussions appeared to have been warm, with the two chatting informally before approaching the lectern for the conference, according to observations from published reports.

Getty's license permits cropping of photographs "provided that the editorial integrity of the content is not compromised." Readers may judge whether removing the president from a picture of a joint press conference meets that standard.

In 1938, when *The Nation* was defending the Moscow Trials and its Moscow correspondent Louis Fischer was serving as a literary agent of Stalin and Vyshinsky, Trotsky wrote of its editors: "Thus, these people, living by half-truths, that is to say, the worst form of falsehood, have become a genuine brake upon truly progressive, i.e., revolutionary thought." Two years later, writing somewhat more sharply, he referred to "infamous reptile breed of *The Nation*."

The Stalinist regime, *The Nation* was then excusing, perfected the practice of cutting inconvenient men out of photographs. Eighty-eight years later, the magazine has taken up the scissors itself, producing its "half-truths" in the form of half-photographs.

The DSA and its periphery

The rest of the pseudo-left milieu has also remained silent.

The DSA's official publication, *Democratic Left*, posts several times a week. In the period under review it published "Out of the Bunker" (September 15), "Hold Your Nose And Vote" (September 18) and an article on the Berlin elections. It published nothing on Sanders and Bannon and nothing on Mamdani and Trump. The organization whose most famous member is the mayor of New York has no comment on the mayor of New York hosting the president.

Left Voice, the American publication of the Morenoite tendency, published an article on September 16 on the resignation of an Anthropoc researcher and the danger of AI-driven extinction. Written the day after the assembly, it does not mention Sanders, Bannon or the event. In November 2025, on the eve of the first Trump-Mamdani meeting, *Left Voice* published "DSA Must Break with the Democratic Party," arguing that the DSA must be pushed to the left. Ten months on, with the DSA mayor hosting Trump for the third time, it has not returned to the subject.

International Viewpoint, the English-language magazine of the Pabloites, covers the United States through the regular column of Dan La Botz, a DSA member and co-editor of *New Politics*. His most recent column, dated September 13 and posted September 21, the day of the Gracie Mansion meeting, warns that AI "could kill us all within a decade" and that Congress "has taken no action." It does not mention that Sanders had just appeared with Bannon, nor that the DSA mayor was that day receiving the president.

International Viewpoint's previous articles have promoted

Mamdani, carrying the titles "How Can Socialists Run Cities—Will Mamdani Show Us the Way?" (January) and "Mamdani Advances His Agenda, Helps Elect DSA Candidates to Congress" (June).

Socialist Alternative, which responded to the first Trump-Mamdani meeting within a day and which in July was demanding that Mamdani "kick out" Netanyahu, has published nothing on the third meeting and nothing on Sanders and Bannon. *Tempest*, the publication of former members of the International Socialist Organization, which greeted the November meeting with "Mamdani's fight is our fight," has not published since September 10.

Likewise silent on both meetings are the various internal DSA caucus organs—*The Call* (Bread & Roses), *Cosmonaut* (Marxist Unity Group), *Reform & Revolution*—as well as *Solidarity* and *Against the Current*; *Spectre*; the Party for Socialism and Liberation's *Liberation News*; and *Workers World. In These Times* published the full text of Sanders' speech to the "pro-human" event without publishing on the event itself, or who was there.

These organizations differ in their histories and their self-descriptions, but they share a political orientation. All of them, whether as members of the DSA, as factions within it, or as "critical" tendencies operating in its periphery, have defined their politics for a decade by the effort to build the DSA and, through it, the Democratic Party.

For a decade the DSA and the publications around it have justified their work inside the Democratic Party as the building of an opposition to the right. What this month has shown is that the Sanders wing of the party has entered a bloc with Bannon, while the DSA's most celebrated official is in a political partnership with Donald Trump.

The alignment with the far right is not a deviation from the DSA's politics but their result, and the pseudo-left cannot report it because it cannot explain it without exposing itself.

Qui tacet consentire videtur: Silence implies consent.



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