

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

ARUN GUPTA

14.03.2025

The Arrest of Mahmoud Khalil and the Struggle Ahead



Photograph Source: SWinxy – [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

We are in uncharted waters where Trump is criminalizing free speech even as he has ended Israel's genocidal war, for now.

1) First and foremost, we need to build as militant, strong, and broad a movement as possible to defend Mahmoud Khalil. I will leave the legal issues to others, but the terrain that “we,” meaning unwavering socialists and communists, fight on is social.

2) This is a galvanizing moment. Defending free speech and the right to dissent gives us the high ground. It's a chance to organize. This means bringing in new people, not merely mobilizing those who already agree with us. We need to win people to the left, such as those who are alienated by politics or liberals who are frustrated or disgusted by liberal elite capitulation to Trump.

A galvanizing moment is when we can unite people with a clear purpose. It is a precursor to a disruptive moment, like Occupy Wall Street, Standing Rock, the George Floyd movement, and the student encampments for Gaza. In all those cases, the left shifted politics in their direction. Of course, the results have been a mixed bag but that is not the fault of the disruptive moments. They are necessary for the left to achieve meaningful social change.

3) Speaking of liberals, liberal elites paved the way for Trump with the Democratic Party's full-metal backing of Israel's genocide. Harris dehumanized and demeaned Palestinians during her campaign. She promoted Israel's Jim Crow-style rape hoax that was one of the primary motivators for the genocide, she embraced the genocide, and that is why she lost.

4) But in the end Harris capitulated and said she would end the war in Gaza. It was too little, too late, two days before the election. But Palestinian- and Muslim-Americans and leftists who held firm are a model we should emulate in how to wield power from below.

5) Liberal media and liberal universities also paved the way, such as CNN's Dana Bash who in May 2024 likened peaceful student protesters at UCLA to Nazi Germany AFTER the students were attacked by a mob of violent Zionists. And Columbia University will never appease Trump, but it will continue cooperating with him to try to crush and criminalize students, faculty, and staff exercising 1A freedoms.

6) AOC shows why Democrats are The Enemy. Remember AOC's shocking primary victory in 2018? She quickly threw Palestinians under the bus. She likened creeping Zionist genocide in the West Bank to gentrification, saying, "settlements that are increasing in some of these areas and places where Palestinians are experiencing difficulty in access to their housing and homes."

At the 2024 DNC she covered for the genocide, spewing a lie that Harris was working "tirelessly" for a ceasefire. Notice how AOC did not sign the letter demanding the release of Khalil, and that only 14 out of 214 Democrats in the House did? (Apparently AOC did sign another letter calling for Khalil's immediate release with 41 other politicians from NY State, but that is the bare minimum.)

7) Let me talk strategy. Anyone talking about working within the Democratic Party is siding with the enemy. Few leftists realize that Dems don't need our votes. The left is far too weak, scattered, and disorganized to tilt elections. Dems need our silence. The left has a singular ability to analyze, historicize, and critique why and how Dems betray their base, do the dirty work of the right, and exist only to function as a graveyard for social movements. So Dems need us to shut up, especially right before elections, when we can potentially force Dems to

the left by influencing voters with our ideas and critiques. The answer is the more they try to shut us down, the louder we need to become.

8) We need a complete break from the Democratic Party. This doesn't mean third party. We need revolutionary parties of the left. Yeah, that is a huge order, but all the strategies of working within the Democratic Party, trying to take it over, or other parliamentary strategies have failed. Build power to pressure whoever is in office, but stop worrying about electoral politics and third parties.

If a third electoral party does form, it will evolve out of powerful working-class and social movements. Then, to be viable, a third party needs an existing party to break up. In this case, a wing of the Democrats will become a third party, which will then supplant the old Democratic Party as a new second party. This is extremely unlikely any time soon. I am just explaining the likeliest path to success.

9) The arrest of Mahmoud Khalil speaks to the failure of the left to unite to end the genocide. Many people warned in 2024, myself included, that support for the genocide was going to cost the Dems the election. Leftists who sided with Harris need to learn from this. They got the worst of all possible worlds: genocide and Trump.

10) If a critical mass of the left had thrown its energy into ending the genocide, damn the election, we would have a more powerful movement now to confront the fascist strategy behind arresting Khalil because we would have had a year of movement building under our belts. Just as important, we would have had the political high ground for taking the correct position that genocide was not a single issue. It was the ONLY issue.

11) Don't forget Occupied Palestine, which includes the Ziofascist regime. Trump has his own cynical, self-interested, and avaricious agenda, so he has no love of Israel. It's clear Trump and Netanyahu have an agreement that Israel can intensify its ethnic cleansing and murder in the West Bank in return for an end to the active genocide in Gaza. (The slow-motion genocide continues, as does Israel's illegal war in and occupation of Syria and Lebanon.

At the same time, Trump's White House is negotiating directly with Hamas. It has sidelined Netanyahu by having its operatives speak directly to Israeli media, and Trump's hostage envoy, Adam Bohler, said out loud that the US was "not an agent of Israel."

Trump is doing things that many leftists claimed Biden and Harris could never do.

12) Even as Trump criminalizes dissent and the Palestine Solidarity Movement at home, he has stopped Israel's active genocide of Gaza for nearly two months. It is more proof that the excuses by many leftists that Biden and Harris were powerless to end the genocide was

simply an unconscionable surrender to a rotten idea that the road to socialism runs through the Democratic Party.

13) No gods, no masters. No fear, no favor.

This piece first appeared on [Arun News](#).

Arun Gupta is an investigative reporter who has written for The Washington Post, The Daily Beast, The Intercept, The Nation, The Guardian, YES Magazine, and other publications. He is a graduate of the French Culinary Institute in New York and author of the forthcoming “Apocalypse Chow: A Junk-Food-Loving Chef’s Inquiry into Taste” (The New Press). [Subscribe on substack](#) to read all of Arun’s reports, essays, and criticism.

MARCH 13, 2025