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# Black Lives Matter Rebellion Wins Chauvin Verdict: Time to Keep Fighting!

**T**he guilty verdict in the trial of Derek Chauvin, who murdered George Floyd, as a victory for the Black Lives Matter movement and for oppressed people all over the world.

This verdict cuts against the historical status-quo in the United States, where racist acts of violence by the police and vigilantes are treated with impunity. But, along with these acts of violence, Black people in the US have fought heroically to seek justice for crimes against Black lives—and though faced with extreme obstacles and resistance, have not fought alone.

The verdict is a taste of what justice is available through our court system, through massive struggle. But it does not bring George Floyd back, and while it may make some racist cops think twice, it does not stop racism or police repression in the street.

In summing up, the prosecution made the statement “this wasn’t policing, this was murder.” While we are glad that Chauvin, who killed George Floyd with cruelty and indiffer-

ence—and had a long history of similar racist encounters—was found guilty of all counts, we disagree. What Chauvin did, and what many officers have done, stretching back to the origins of the police force, was both policing *and* murder.

It was the re-explosion of the movement for Black lives in the streets after the murder of George Floyd that pushed the state to first suspend Chauvin, then kick him off the force, and finally indict him on second degree manslaughter, and second and third-degree murder. It is the echoes of that movement that pushed the court into this obvious, but still unusual, verdict of guilty on all three counts. This proves how ordinary working people can affect change in our society through mass struggle, but also what it takes to achieve victory.

The movement has already resulted in some police reforms across the country, and created momentum for further reforms and defunding that years of behind-the-scenes lobbying would not have accomplished. But we all know that is not enough. As socialists, we understand that the police in our society are here to enforce the capitalist status-quo, and part of that status-quo is racism. We are in favor of all reforms that redistribute resources and weaken the police. The full abolition of an oppressive policing function is impossible under the structure of the capitalist state, but it is still what we must aim to attain.

“This is not an anti-police prosecution,” said the prosecutor, Steve Schleicher, “It’s a pro-police prosecution.” That was,

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# Time to Keep Fighting BLM & Palestine: United in Struggle

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unfortunately, true. It is the movement in the streets that will continue with the larger fight against the police.

Each victory shows how we can move forward in the struggle for racial equality and socialism.

This struggle has made more and more people aware of the racist nature of our society. People are recognizing and acting on the unbreakable connections between forms of oppression and capitalist exploitation. We are seeing through our own experience whose side the state and ruling class are on.

We must work together to create the power that can dismantle the entire policing function, and with it the system it protects.

For more on the struggles against racism and police violence, see:

“Abolition Not Reform: The Origins of the Police”

“Police Shooting in Kenosha and Right-Wing Vigilante Terror”

“Atlanta and the Rise in Anti-Asian Racism”

And more at <https://marx21us.org/category/anti-racism>

One year ago the police murder of George Floyd sparked waves of anger and resistance around the world. Rage against a racist system spread internationally. Palestinians stood in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement linking the struggle to their own.

A mural of George Floyd was painted on the separation wall in the West Bank and protests in east Jerusalem held up placards with the slogan, “From the USA to Palestine, racism is a crime.”

Even back in 2014, Egyptian radicals shared images and stories from the protests in Ferguson on-line, and Mariam Barghouti and other Palestinian activists shared tips on dealing with tear gas to people on the ground in Ferguson.

For years, more and more American progressives have been including Palestine in their issues, and have grown clearer on the nature of Israel. But the re-explosion of Black Lives Matter and protests against racism and police brutality last year, involving whites as well as blacks, led directly to the increased involvement in recent protest over Palestine.

This was true not just in the United States, but around the world. The power and militancy of the movement significantly changed the international political landscape.

Many of the protesters that took to the streets after the killing of Floyd understood that racism was deeply rooted within our institutions—in this case mainly the police. As a result calls to defund and abolish the police have become increasingly popular.

More broadly there has been a growing understanding that racism is symptomatic of the system we live in. And that racism, colonialism and imperialism all flow from the same source—capitalism.

This understanding of racism means solidarity between oppressed groups becomes easier to win. In the present, this means many activists are linking BLM and the Palestinian struggle.

The official BLM Twitter account tweeted their solidarity with the Palestinians last week. “We are a movement committed to ending settler colonialism in all forms and will continue to advocate for Palestinian liberation,” it said.

The linking of different oppressed groups struggles is terrifying to the ruling class. It defies their tactic of using racism to divide working class people.

Seeing the connection of struggles in people’s minds, the ruling class will attempt to destroy the solidarity that threatens their dominance. The movement must be consistent in opposing all instances of Islamophobia or anti-Semitism, while strongly rejecting the lie that opposition to Zionism has anything to do with anti-Semitism.

Building and maintaining radical movements are essential to resist these attacks. Anti-racism is key to the continuing movements to defund the police, to organizing against the far-right, to the Palestine solidarity movement.

# The world is waking up to Israel's brutality

Adapted from article by Sid Lacombe originally published May 12, 2021, <http://www.socialist.ca/node/4318>.

The vicious attacks on Palestinians by Israeli police and military are just the latest injustice meted out by the apartheid regime.

Over the past week, police attacked people in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood for defying the forced eviction of hundreds of Palestinians from their homes by Israeli settlers. The forced relocations are considered illegal under international law and are based on racist laws which give Israelis the right to take Palestinian land and homes, yet they go ahead with the support of the main imperial powers.

Israeli police then stormed the Al-Aqsa mosque while people were in prayer. The fact that it was done during Ramadan is an added insult. And the Israelis have begun another bombing campaign against the people of Gaza, already besieged and denied basic rights.

Not surprisingly, Palestinians are fighting back.

But you would not know about that context when listening to the mainstream media in the west. Ignoring the continuing occupation at the root of it all, and the massive inequality between a militarized occupying state and the impoverished occupied people, President Joe Biden and his administration continue the traditional one-sided US imperialist blather about "Israel's legitimate right to defend itself and to defend its people and its territory." The US media tend to parrot this line, at best attributing the "violence" to both sides and portraying it as a centuries old religious conflict with no end.

But that misses the real cause of the violence - the push for ethnic cleansing by the Israeli state since its formation in 1948. This brutality is done with the full support of the main centers of power in Washington, London, and Ottawa. The Israeli state is seen as a security bulwark for the imperial ambitions of the Western powers.

But more and more people around the world are coming to realize that it is the apartheid regime of Israel that is the real root of the fighting.

## Human Rights reports

The latest condemnation comes from Human Rights Watch (HRW). In their report, *A Threshold Crossed, Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution* HRW describes the situation clearly:

"Israeli authorities methodically privilege Jewish Israelis and discriminate against Palestinians. Laws, policies, and statements by leading Israeli officials make plain that the objective of maintaining Jewish Israeli control over demographics, political power, and land has long guided government policy. In pursuit of this goal, authorities have dispossessed, confined, forcibly separated, and subjugated Palestinians by virtue of their identity to varying degrees of intensity. In certain areas, as described in this report, these deprivations are so severe that they amount to the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution."

The Israeli state is responsible for ongoing and daily attacks on the Palestinian people, and they are no longer able to hide their abuses as they did in the past. The bombing campaigns against Gaza in the past decade received a good deal of the attention but it is the daily grind of checkpoints, arbitrary arrests and home demolition that is the backdrop of the apartheid system that has been put in place.

In an attempt to cover their abuses, the Israelis and their supporters have developed new and far-ranging rules that attack anyone who criticizes the state as anti-Semitic. The IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of anti-Semitism includes any critique of the state of Israel. The definition describes critiques of Israel as an attack on Jewish collectivity and is therefore anti-Semitic.

This provides a cover for the state to engage in any form of oppression against the Palestinians with impunity. This serves the interests of the US led imperial order so it is, therefore, used by western governments as a cudgel to beat any who oppose the Israeli state policies.

But they are losing the argument. Another recent report from B'Tselem, one of the most respected Israeli human rights groups, labeled the policies as apartheid.

The executive director of B'Tselem, Hagai El-Ad stated, "One government rules everyone and everything between the river and the sea, following the same organizing principle everywhere under its control, working to advance and perpetuate the supremacy of one group of people – Jews – over another – Palestinians. This is apartheid. There is not a single square inch in the territory Israel controls where a Palestinian and a Jew are equal. The only first-class people here are Jewish citizens such as myself, and we enjoy this status both inside the 1967 lines and beyond them, in the West Bank."

The list of international organizations who are now joining the chorus of condemnation of Israel is growing. Amnesty International wrote about the evictions in Sheikh Jarrah, “We have been on the ground and witnessed Israeli forces use of excessive force against protesters and bystanders. Israel must end use of unlawful force and forced evictions of Palestinians. International community must hold Israel accountable.” In neighboring Canada, The New Democratic Party passed a resolution at its convention calling for a boycott of products from settlements and a ban on military sales to Israel.

### **Shifting Mood**

President Joe Biden is fond of saying he has “always been a stalwart supporter of Israel—a vital partner.” Even the present actions have not led him to reverse Trump’s provocative decision to move the US’s embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, much less alter the \$3.8 billion of military aid the US gives Israel yearly. But resistance to these policies are growing.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations on Saturday said it will boycott the traditional White House Eid celebration in protest at the Biden administration’s actions amid escalating violence in occupied Palestine.

Black Lives Matter retweeted US representative Ilhan Omar’s post on Twitter: “It is long past time we stop paying lip service to Palestinian human rights and finally take action to protect them.” The local BLM chapter in Patterson, New Jersey released a statement in support of Palestinians saying, “Our deep roots of solidarity are part of a rich tradition of mutual support and exchange between Palestine and US-based liberation movements, from the Black Panthers to the most recent communication between activists in Gaza and Ferguson, MO. Our struggles are connected in many ways, not least because the same Israeli forces forcibly expelling the original inhabitants of Sheikh Jarrah train repressive police forces around the world, including the US.”

During the bombing of Gaza in 2014, millions took to the streets denouncing the slaughter. In the US, Jewish Voice for Peace gained 50,000 new members during the attack and showed the US and Israeli ruling class that there is a new generation of Jewish people who are opposed to the policies of the apartheid state.

In 2017 the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) changed their position, and officially supported BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against the Israeli state). Recently that organization, now over 90,000 members, with the help of the new BDS & Palestine Solidarity working group, published a good statement standing with the Palestinians, and members are mobilizing for a new wave of larger demonstrations, significantly larger than what we saw in 2014.

The mood is shifting. It is crucial for the left to use this moment to go on the offensive on the questions of Palestinian rights.

### **“From the River to the Sea: Palestine Resists Israeli Apartheid”**

introduced by Marie Dahan. Marx21 national branch meeting:

Sunday May 23<sup>rd</sup> 11 am Pacific / 2 pm Atlantic

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9132004856>

**Marx21 is an organization of revolutionary socialists across the United States.**

**We stand in the tradition of socialism from below: the idea that workers can only emancipate themselves through their own struggles. Marx21 is connected to other like-minded socialist groups around the world in the International Socialist Tendency.**

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