



Susan Austin <slaustin1972@gmail.com>

**Fwd: On the Durham CC demilitarization policy (Nov 13 mtg)**

1 message

Diane Standaert <diane1009@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 16, 2018 at 8:14 AM

To: Susan Austin <slaustin1972@gmail.com>, Commissioner Rooks <CommissionerRooks@gmail.com>, Andrea Hudson <commissionerandreamuffinudson@gmail.com>, Ricardo Correa <revcorrea@gmail.com>, Mikel Barton <mikelbarton@gmail.com>

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From: Elyse Crystal <ecryst@mindspring.com>

Date: Fri, Nov 16, 2018, 7:22 AM

Subject: On the Durham CC demilitarization policy (Nov 13 mtg)

To: <revcorrea@gmail.com>, <diane1009@gmail.com>

Cc: <CommissionerRooks@gmail.com>

November 13, 2018

Thank you, members of the Human Relations Commission of Durham, for allowing me to address you. I am always pleased when people talk about feeling like they belong (as the speakers from Voice of Israel just did). However that sense of belonging and “feeling heard” does not come without a cost -- and in this case it’s the marginalization of others in our community as we heard (from Burhan Ghanayem and Saif Mehyar). There are many points I want to address, could address, but I’ll stick to one — about tension. Your draft report notes that the policy voted on at the April 16th City Council meeting created tension in the community. It is my belief that the policy and the City Council process did not create tension but rather, like the Silent Sam statue on UNC-CH’s campus, brought tensions that already exist to the surface, it exposed them. And no changes in the policy or the wording will remove that tension.

I don’t know if and to what extent this notion of “creating tension” was taken into consideration when the sub-committee made its decisions about bringing recommendations to the City Council to change the language of the policy, but if it is part of the calculus then I am disappointed in this aspect of the committee’s work and the misunderstanding it represents.

This policy is the kind of policy — like an anti apartheid policy, like policies that support justice and dignity — that links the struggles of black and brown people in Durham and the people of Palestine whose bodies serve as the vehicle for the fine-tuning of Israel’s weapons. Experimenting on the captive population under military occupation provides the expertise that Israel sells to cities and counties, agencies and universities, across the US and beyond – including Durham. It allows them to market weapons that are “combat ready” because they have been tested on Palestinians -- many of whom have family living in Durham.

Israeli training is explicitly what this policy rejects. And in doing so the policy supports the solidarity between black and brown people of our city who suffer disproportionately from a militarized police force and the Palestinians fighting for recognition of their “personhood.” If you connect the dots, as many Jews like myself are doing, you will understand that supporting this policy and explicitly naming Israel places us on the right side of history, in keeping with the progressive vision of a Durham For All laid out by our recently elected City Council and Mayor Schewel.

When our law enforcement officers are invited to train with other militaries in other countries, we can amend the policy to include the names of those nation-states.

It is those whose lives are threatened daily from tensions in our communities – in Durham and in Palestine – that deserve our support.

Thank you,

Dr. Elyse Crystall

Member, Demilitarize! Durham2Palestine


Member, Jewish Voice for Peace

Board Chair, Researching the American-Israeli Alliance

Faculty Advisor, UNC-CH Students for Justice in Palestine

*If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together -- Lilla Watson, Murri visual artist & activist*

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