

Statement of John Bach before the City Council Committee on Ways and Means #0840, Order for a Hearing Regarding Police Contracts as Policy Documents

I'm grateful for the opportunity to submit this comment and I thank you for your kind attention.

I write as a member of the Board of Directors of the Material Aid and Advocacy Program (Cambridge), as an engaged member of my faith community, as an ex-con (3 years in the federal prison system as a draft resister during the American War in Vietnam), and as the Quaker Chaplain at Harvard.

I honor and commend the material put out by the Families for Justice As Healing and The People's City Budget. Their blueprint for a thriving community is inspirational and exemplary in force, clarity, and purity. Boston would be lucky to have these dedicated citizens making policy, and I urge the committee to follow their propositions.

We all know to what extent policing (and indeed all social structures) is based on institutional racism and white supremacy, inequality and domination, where poverty is a death sentence with many cruel faces. I want to enlarge the discussion a bit by setting the context within a society that is based on a perpetual war economy, culture and mentality.

Dr. King was clear in his linking of racism and militarism (for which he was brutally criticized at the time), and I honor and invoke his memory and analysis by making the same connection now. A society that spends over \$730 billion annually for over 800 military installation all over the globe and weapons of unimaginable lethality will ultimately turn the same forces against its own vulnerable citizens. Resources and enormous wealth are diverted from all the social programs that would change the face of policing. What the police do to our communities of color our military does to much of the rest of the world. It is a perpetual occupation in varying forms. Both soldiers and police, in uniforms and machinery, look like malignant aliens and rely on stark violence.

Both racism and militarism corrupt life and consign us all to unfulfilled futures on the local, national, and global levels. We will never live in a world where children are not bombed or consigned to poverty and discrimination, but we should at least acknowledge that, and do our best to choke off and reallocate resources that fund these monsters.

Thank you.