

Delegation - SRO Program – 26 August 2020

I am appearing in front of you today to discuss concepts that I think if all members of the Board take seriously, they will unanimously divest from all their relationship with oppressive racist institutions. I am of the opinion that if the Board seriously considers the words others who came here today and I put forward, the Board will only have one morally just choice to make: move forward with defunding all ties with the Ottawa Police Services and effectively remove the two student resource officers (SROs) from Ridgemont and Gloucester High Schools.

Policing in so-called Canada originated as a racist and violent practice deployed by colonial governments on Indigenous and Black peoples to enforce the Canadian colonial agenda. The settler state's goal was to steal Indigenous Land for resource and wealth extraction, control and exterminate Indigenous peoples, extract labour from Black peoples through slavery, servitude, and other forms of overt and covert anti-Black systems, and control Black peoples. I assert that policing still serves the same murderous and racist agendas.

One way in which so-called Canada reproduces colonialism is through the institutions it creates. The oppressions which the settler state uses as a technology to uphold power are imbedded in the Institutions of this settler nation-state. Not only that the school system is not immune to anti-Indigeneity, anti- Black racism, and other oppressive systems which predicate the existence of so-called Canada, but it also reproduces it.

Just how adult Indigenous and Black people are mass incarcerated, Indigenous and Black youth are also criminalized at a young age and at higher rates than non-Black and non-Indigenous individuals through the so-called child welfare system, which is considered to be the continuation of the residential school system—a tool used by so-called Canada to commit genocide against Indigenous peoples.

1. SROs collaborate with CAS;
2. SROs collaborate with CBSA;
3. SROs contribute to the school to prison pipeline;
4. SROs cannot be reformed because histories of reform show that policing cannot be reformed and that it just adapts to reproduce what it is designed to do: control, injure, kill.

Souheil Benslimane