

MAHG and Migration Studies Minor Joint Statement of Solidarity and Action

10 June 2020

As we watch so many around the country and the world share outrage, sadness, and anger at the consequences of state violence in our communities in the United States – in particular the brutal murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and George Floyd – the faculty of the Masters of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies (MAHG) and the Migration Studies Minor wish to extend our support and solidarity. As academic programs representing our General Studies curriculum at Stockton University, our fields merge in that we – in teaching our students, in conducting our scholarly activities, and in serving community constituencies each day – confront the mechanisms and consequences of state violence in the United States and around the world.

Historical and current patterns of state violence in the United States – including police brutality and mass incarceration, segregation, creating and maintaining xenophobic immigration policy, citizenship restrictions and border enforcement, mass deportations and other forms of genocidal violence, and systematic disenfranchisement of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color in American society – are ones that are not merely topics of academic investigation, but lived experiences each and every day on the streets of the United States. Those of us who examine migration stress that human movement in this country (as elsewhere) is inexorably linked with historical and current patterns of social, economic, religious, and political violence, which are impacted by internal colonialism and deeply embedded in the governing and social institutions of American society. We are at a time of reckoning, and protesters, advocates, activists, and concerned community members today continue to demand change, solidarity, and justice.

Holocaust and genocide scholars and institutes of Holocaust memory in the United States and around the world should, we believe, confront how, in too many cases, the field has blurred the genocidal nature of state violence against Black people in the United States, from slavery to the present. We have not yet, as a field, responded in a serious way to the Black scholars and activists who in 1951 submitted to the United Nations their petition, *We Charge Genocide*, where they demonstrated, with hundreds of examples, that “the oppressed Negro citizens of the United States, segregated, discriminated against and long the target of violence, suffer from genocide as the result of the consistent, conscious, unified policies of every branch of government.”

We are therefore committed to continue and deepen programs and teaching in the last few years in both the MAHG program and the Migration Studies Minor that address state violence (including forced displacement) in the United States against Black people. Furthermore, we will initiate a discussion on campus and through our programs on reparations for the victims of state violence in the United States past and present. For we know, through the case of the Holocaust and its aftermath, the importance of compensation, restitution, and reparations for the victims and survivors. We also know that, in view of the enormous dimensions of genocidal violence, displacement, and dispossession against Black people in United States history, there could be no justice, no equality, and no reconciliation without reparations. Finally, we also know the significance of listening to victims and survivors of state violence, and we are committed therefore to continuing our work with Black students, faculty, and staff at Stockton, so that they could shape the vision, the goals, and the work of the MAHG program and Migration Studies Minor at Stockton in the coming years.

We understand the enormity of confronting the mechanisms of state violence in our society, including its universities, and working to dismantle the structural racism that pervades our country and provides the framework for state violence. We are prepared to help in our roles as faculty in higher education to meet

the demands of those voices in our society demanding justice. Education is but one brick to add to building a new framework in American society – one of justice and true equality – and we commit to engaging in the work necessary to lay this foundation. We call upon Stockton University to continue to support *in concrete ways* students, staff, faculty, and community members as we work to confront the history and contemporary manifestations of state violence in our community and across the country.

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