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ASIAN PACIFIC POLICY & PLANNING COUNCIL

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there "is" such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action."
 — Martin Luther King Jr.

George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Ahmaud Arbery.

Amidst a global pandemic caused by a virus known as COVID-19, we continue to fight against another disease, one that has been with us since the nation's founding: white supremacy. With masks and physical distancing, we have mandated state ordinances in place to prevent and control COVID-19's transmission. We are rigorously monitoring and studying the disease to learn the ways it functions, in hopes of curtailing its deadly impact. As Americans, what comparable efforts have we made to prevent the spread of contagion of racism across our country?

Those of us who have studied American history – truly studied American history – are aware that the country was built on racist ideology. In just over our first century of existence, the Genocide of Native Americans, Slavery, Reconstruction, and the Chinese Exclusion Act solidified the white supremacist ideas about personhood that would dictate not only the direction of our country but of our racial understandings of each other. This system was created by design and we have allowed it to continue - white people's opinions, their priorities, their lives to be valued over all others. That is the legacy with which we live today.

George Floyd was murdered because his life was deemed less valuable than a \$20 payment to a convenience store. Breonna Taylor was murdered because no one made the effort to confirm if she was the person in question when Louisville police entered her home. Ahmaud Arbery was murdered because two white men were on a joyride that included hunting a black man.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders do not experience the same challenges or violence that white supremacy enacts on African American and Latinx communities. With the emergence of COVID-19, the escalating anti-Asian violence has pushed many of us out of our own communities to take a harder look at the nature of white supremacy and our complicities in it.

In mid-March, A3PCON, alongside Chinese for Affirmative Action and San Francisco State University's Asian American Studies Program created [Stop AAPI Hate](#) to help document some of that hate and address animus against AAPI's. In eight weeks since it's inception, over 2000 individuals have reported hate incidents to us ranging from verbal harassment to physical assaults. What our communities have realized, especially those of us who believed we were protected by educational privilege and economic capital – is that we are not exempt from white supremacy. No number of degrees or amount of money will make us white or prevent us from being told to go back to our countries of origin – and this is because America has not treated nor ever sought to prevent the spread of the contagion of racism.

As we are sheltering in our homes, maintaining distance between ourselves and others - let us be vigilant about what has been and is going on in our country. This is a moment that we must speak out – against repeated police violence against African American men, against the lack of accountability of perpetrators of hate violence, against those who foment hate against our communities and put us – African Americans, Latinos, AAPI's and other Communities of Color – in harm's way.

This is the time to stand up to ethno-nationalist policymakers and their policies of detention and deportation, racial profiling and surveillance against immigrants and communities of color. 2020 is one of the most consequential year of our lives -- not simply because we may live or die as a result of a virus, but because our democracy and the values we hold dear may live or may very well die because of the widespread contagion of racism and because our silence was deafening and our inertia caused American institutions to crumble. Stand up, speak out, demand justice.

#BlackLivesMatter



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