

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors, SSSP

FROM: Glenn Muschert, Chair of the Justice 21 Committee

RE: Annual Report of the 2019-20 Justice 21 Committee Chair

Date: July 22, 2020

Committee Composition: Kristen Budd; Michelle Christian; David C. Lane, Glenn Muschert (chair), Robert Perrucci and, Jason A. Smith.

The 2019-20 year has been a very active one for the Justice 21 Committee, as the Committee has:

- 1) produced and submitted the 2020 US-focused *Agenda for Social Justice*, (published by Policy Press in e-book and paperback formats) which will launch concurrent with the August 2020 SSSP virtual meetings,
- 2) produced and submitted a rapid-response volume *Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19: Volume 1 – US Perspectives* (published with Policy Press), which will launch in e-book format concurrent with the August 2020 SSSP virtual meetings,
- 3) reached midstream in production of a second rapid-response volume *Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19: Volume 2 - Global Perspectives* (published with Policy Press), which will launch in e-book format in early October 2020.
- 4) maintained its partnership with Policy Press for publication, and
- 5) recruited 2 Committee members, David C. Lane and Jason A. Smith

The 2020 volume is the second US-focused version of the *Agenda for Social Justice* to be published with Policy Press, and it includes 19 chapters on pressing social problems of national concern. It will appear in both electronic and print versions prior to the August 2020 SSSP virtual meetings, and all SSSP members will have complimentary access to the e-book version. The 2020 volume will also be distributed as widely as possible, and is available for Open Access download at the Society web page and in both softcover and electronic versions via the Policy Press/University of Chicago Press web sites (<https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/agenda-for-social-justice-1>) and via various online book sellers, e.g., Amazon (<https://www.amazon.com/Agenda-Social-Justice-2020-Solutions/dp/1447354281>). The core audience for the volume is the SSSP membership, and including gratis copies for all members puts volume in the hands of many who are most engaged with social problems scholarship, teaching, and action. In an effort to distribute the volume as widely as possible, the will also post an electronic (PDF) copy of the 2020 volume to the Society's web site, openly accessible by anyone with internet access worldwide.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee conceived a rapid-response project to produce a volume titled *Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19*. Policy Press agreed to publish the volume in e-book format as the first of their newly conceived rapid-response type of volumes. In all, the Committee requires about 2 months from planning to submission of the volume, and Policy Press requires 6 weeks for the volume to launch. A call for papers was distributed via the SSSP listserv and social media channels, which in the space of 1-week generated an overwhelming 95 proposals. The initial 12-chapter volume was expanded to 16 chapters, and then Policy Press requested that the volume be split into 2 volumes, one on US perspectives and a second on global

perspectives, each with approximately 12 chapters. *Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19: Volume 1 – US Perspectives* is forthcoming and will launch in e-book format concurrent with the August 2020 SSSP virtual meetings. *Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19: Volume 2 - Global Perspectives* is in process with the Committee, and is scheduled to launch in e-book format in early October 2020.

In 2019-20, the Committee continued its partnership with Policy Press, a UK academic publisher based at the University of Bristol, which has built a close relationship with the SSSP. Policy Press is providing gratis e-book copies of the 2020 volume to all SSSP members, and a PDF copy for posting Open Access on the Society's website. Similarly, Policy Press has agreed to provide gratis e-book copies to all SSSP members of the forthcoming volumes of *Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19: Volume 1 – US Perspectives* (launching August 2020) and *Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19: Volume 2 – Global Perspectives* (launching October 2020). The rapid-response volumes on the COVID-19 pandemic are considered a one-off item, although Policy Press and the J-21 Committee anticipate an on-going relationship for publication of future iterations of the *Agenda for Social Justice*, in major U.S. election years (i.e., 2024, 2028, and so on), and publication of the *Global Agenda for Social Justice* international focused volumes at mid-point years (i.e., 2022, 2026, and so on). The J-21 Committee continues to operate on a zero budget, while providing the volumes to SSSP members and Open Access worldwide.

In the past year, the Committee circulated a call for membership applications via the SSSP listserv. The response was tepid, and by consensus upon reviewing the applications the Committee members selected two new members, David C. Lane and Jason A. Smith. We thank our Committee members past and present for their service.

The biggest issues facing the Justice 21 Committee are that it has operated for nearly 2 decades in the ad hoc status, and in addition, the Committee operates largely without the benefit of advice and oversight from the Editorial and Publications Committee. The J-21 Committee's genesis was the vision of SSSP Past-President Robert Perrucci to engage in public sociology by getting rigorous sociological knowledge out to non-academic and generalist audiences. (Please see pp. viii-xi in the following for a primer on the Committee's vision and role: [https://www.sssp1.org/file/2018/Global\\_Agenda\\_for\\_Social\\_Justice.pdf](https://www.sssp1.org/file/2018/Global_Agenda_for_Social_Justice.pdf).) Since its establishment nearly 20 years ago, the J-21 Committee has grown from an informal group of pamphleteers distributing photocopied, self-published documents, and by now has become a group responsible for an official SSSP publication, though operating somewhat autonomously. Please let it be clear that the members of the Justice 21 Committee have provided outstanding service to the Society's mission and members, and at all times have sought approval via appropriate channels, such as suitable Editorial and Publications Committee approvals, Board approval for continued ad hoc status, and agreement and support of both the Executive Office and Administrative Office. However, things have changed as the Society has grown, the Committee's role as evolved, and the publications produced by the committee have achieved a higher level of legitimacy. Given the successful establishment of the relationship with Policy Press since 2016, the Committee's role has evolved and closer cooperation between the J-21 Committee and other entities in the SSSP may be warranted, namely from the Board and the Editorial and Publications Committee. In addition, the continued existence of the J-21 Committee in ad hoc status may no longer be suitable.

**ACTION ITEM 1: The Justice 21 Committee requests that the Board consider whether it is suitable to continue in ad hoc status or whether a transition to a more permanent status is due.**

**ACTION ITEM 2: The Justice 21 Committee requests increased advisement and cooperation from SSSP entities such as the Editorial and Publications Committee.**

Finally, a word of thanks. The Committee acknowledges the SSSP Administrative Office and the Executive Office for continued support including administrative backing, logistical assistance, support with project's Internet presence, and for being willing to provide assistance when requested. The J-21 group thanks Victoria Pitman at Policy Press for cooperation and vision. Finally, the J-21 Committee expresses thanks to the SSSP Board and Society membership for its continuing support of this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn W. Muschert, Justice 21 Committee Chair