

OPEN LETTER TO "FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES"

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By David Boyajian, 24 October 2011



**Readers are urged to contact "Facing History" at
<http://www.facinghistory.org/contact?openform>;**

The below letter by journalist and human rights activist David Boyajian of Belmont, Massachusetts is addressed to Facing History and Ourselves Executive Director Margot Strom, Associate Executive Director Martin Sleeper and Board Chairwoman Tracy Palandjian.

I am deeply offended and disappointed to learn that one of our nation's foremost genocide education organizations—Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO)—has elected to “partner” with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to sponsor a panel discussion on “The New Anti-Semitism: A Contemporary Discussion in Historic Faneuil Hall” in Boston on November 7, 2011.

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Abraham H. Foxman, ADL National Director, will be one of the panelists. I respectfully urge you to withdraw FHAO from its partnership with the ADL for this event. Mr. Foxman and the national ADL have denied the factuality of the Armenian genocide of 1915–1923 committed by Turkey. And they have used their considerable influence to actively assist the government of Turkey to defeat Armenian genocide resolutions in the U.S. Congress. A political agreement two decades ago among Turkey, certain organizations such as the ADL, and Israel [brought this about](#).

Since the summer of 2007, due specifically to their disapproval of the ADL's genocide denial and lobbying efforts against the Armenian-American resolution, more than a dozen major Massachusetts cities and towns have ceased their affiliation with the ADL's so-called “[No Place for Hate](#)” program.

In April of 2008, for precisely the same reasons, the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA), which represents every city and town in the state, also severed ties with "No Place for Hate." The national ADL drew widespread condemnation from principled Jews, human rights advocates, editorialists, and others. These events made [national and international news](#). To deflect growing criticism, on August 21, 2007 Mr. Foxman issued a statement which masqueraded as an acknowledgment of the Armenian genocide. The statement not only used deceptive and dishonest language, such as "tantamount to genocide," but also implied that the Armenian killings were not intentional but rather merely the "consequence" of Turkish "actions." FHAO is aware that Article II of the United Nations Genocide Convention specifically requires "intent" for killings to be considered genocide. "Consequences" is, however, the opposite of "intent." Cities, towns, and the MMA weren't buying Mr. Foxman's act. They severed ties with the ADL's "No Place for Hate" even after the ADL statement.

The ADL has yet to unambiguously recognize the Armenian genocide. And Mr. Foxman continues to oppose passage of the Armenian genocide resolution, contemptuously calling it a "counterproductive diversion."

Neither Mr. Foxman nor the ADL has ever apologized to the Armenian people for their actions. The ADL has stated that any diminishment of the Holocaust is anti-Semitic and constitutes hate speech. Yet the ADL has diminished the Armenian genocide. By its own definition, therefore, the ADL is guilty of hate speech. Would FHAO partner with an organization and man that diminished the Holocaust and opposed the many Congressional resolutions on the Holocaust? Why, then, would you partner with the ADL? This is incomprehensible, especially as [FHAO](#) has long had an educational program on the Armenian genocide

We know that the ADL and similar groups' appeasement of Turkey—for example, Mr. Foxman presented Prime Minister Erdogan with a "Courage to Care Award" a few years ago—has failed dismally on an international level as well.

I am at a loss to understand why or how your partnership with Mr. Foxman has come about. One hopes that ADL members among FHAO's donors and its treasurer, Elizabeth Jick, who is an ADL Executive Committee member, did not unduly influence your decision.

I respectfully call upon you to withdraw FHAO's partnership with the ADL in the November 7 event. I hope that when FHAO considers the facts and the long-term credibility of its programs and dedicated staff, it will do the right thing.

Sincerely,

David Boyajian

Belmont, MA

cc: Media; genocide scholars.

Note: To ask Facing History and Ourselves to not partner with the ADL on November 7, contact FHAO by

