

Dear Friends,

You can make a difference by doing one of the below two steps or BOTH:

1- Send an e-mail to Jacoba Atlas, Senior Vice President of PBS programming, asking her to cancel the airing of the panel discussion.

Her e-mail address is: jatlas@pbs.org

2- Sign & Submit the Petition

I am sending you the enclosed page from PetitionOnline.com:
<http://www.PetitionOnline.com/pbspanel/petition.html>

Please petition PBS against airing of the so-called "Debate" Armenian Genocide Deniers.

Below is the text of the letter by r. Dickran Abrahamian, the initiator of this petition campaign:

Dear Friend,

If you are against the debating of the Armenian Genocide with Genocide deniers and giving deniers equal air time, please sign the petition below which is self explanatory. Could you please also send the petition to people you know to obtain their signatures?

In the section Name you may add your titles if you so wish, and in the section Country you may indicate the city and country and the server will accept.

Thank you,

Dikran J. Abrahamian BA, MD

The following articles were published in the February 10-17, 2006 issue of USA Armenian Life Magazine:

1) PBS Should Not Let Turkey Stifle Honest Free Speech in USA Through Dishonest, Fraudulent "free" Speech

By APPO K. JABARIAN
Executive Publisher & Managing Editor
USA Armenian Life Magazine
Hye Kiank Armenian Weekly

2) Boycott PBS Stations that Air "Balancing" Panel on Genocide

By Harut Sassounian
Publisher, The California Courier

1) PBS Should Not Let Turkey Stifle
Honest Free Speech in USA
Through Dishonest, Fraudulent “free” Speech

Friday February 10, 2006

By APPO K. JABARIAN
Executive Publisher & Managing Editor
USA Armenian Life Magazine
Hye Kiank Armenian Weekly

Recently, it was learned that on April 17, PBS will air “The Armenian Genocide”, a documentary produced by Andrew Goldberg’s Two Cat Productions.

In addition to broadcasting the documentary, PBS is said to be planning to air a 25-minute long panel discussion that includes two genocide deniers.

It is widely believed that PBS may have given in on Turkish denialist government’s pressures. Pro-truth and pro-justice activists in USA and around the world, were alarmed by a strongly-worded opinion column by world-renown political commentator Harut Sassounian (Please see page E7).

In this writer’s opinion the decision by PBS to air the panel discussion is ill-devised. PBS should not give in to the denialist Turkish government, and worst, should not let Turkey stifle honest free speech in USA through dishonest “free” speech. No speech is free, when it is saddled by fraudulent comments made by willful deniers who knowingly lie about the historic facts of the 1915 Armenian Genocide that continues to affect a whole nation.

As of Tuesday night, only a few hours after the worldwide web-casting of Sassounian’s column numerous reactions began to come in. One such response is a letter by Mr. Emil Sanamyan of Arlington, Virginia, USA.

In his remarks to Ms. Atlas of PBS, Mr. Sanamyan wrote: “I am an avid PBS viewer and supporter, living in Arlington, VA. I am writing in regard to the Armenian Genocide documentary which is due to air on PBS on April 17. While I commend you for the decision to carry this program, I object to the subsequent

panel discussion that includes unabashed deniers of the Genocide.”

He continued: “I hope you will drop this panel and let the documentary, which incorporates a number of diverse Turkish voices on this issue, to stand on its own.”

The political war between the righteous individuals, organizations, and governments acknowledging the 1915-23 Armenian Genocide at the hands of the Turks, on the one side, and the denialists, on the other, has been intensifying during the last decade.

Officialdom Turkey and its cronies have been waking up from one nightmare to face yet new and even more troubling nightmares in their desperate futile attempts to cover up and/or deny the historic facts of the Armenian Genocide.

The denialists seem to be especially troubled by rising new waves of home-grown Turkish righteous individuals like Halil Berktay, Orhan Pamuk, Taner Akcam, Fatima Muge Gocek, Yigit Bener, Ahmet Altan, Elif Shafak -to name a few- who have dared to cross the denialist “rubicon” in clear defiance of their Turkish denialist government.

Even more troubling for the Turkish denialists, is the growing ranks of activists -regardless of their race, color or religion- demanding the acknowledgment of a crime that occurred 91 years ago.

Obviously, Mr. Ali Birand was more than correct in his prediction that he had made nearly a year ago.

Mr. Birand, a Turkish commentator had predicted and warned his readers that in 2005, on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, that an Armenian Tsunami may be flooding the international arena, dealing the Turkish denialists a serious blow.

With the way pro-truth and pro-justice activism is progressing, Mr. Birand may surely predict unrelenting political Hurricane Armenia not only in the days to come in 2006, but in the years to follow, until such time as the denialist Turks come to their senses and acknowledge that, what is now called Turkey is “built” on the ashes of Western Armenia, and her 1.5 million martyrs.

Boycott PBS Stations that Air
"Balancing" Panel on Genocide

By Harut Sassounian
Publisher, The California Courier

PBS is planning to air immediately after the April 17 broadcast of Andrew Goldberg's "The Armenian Genocide" documentary, a 25-minute long panel discussion that includes two genocide deniers, Asbarez reported last week.

Goldberg told this writer that he did not agree with the PBS decision to hold a panel discussion on the Armenian Genocide. "I don't believe such a panel is necessary. I had absolutely nothing to do with it," he said.

Prof. Fatma Muge Gocek, a Turkish American scholar who opposes the Turkish government's denials of the Armenian Genocide, explained to this writer why she refused to be on the panel: "I felt that I had said what I wanted to say in the documentary and I did not understand what additional discussion was going to contribute to it, other than give Justin McCarthy and Omer Turan a chance to articulate the Turkish state view. I see this as PBS politicizing the issue and giving in to Turkish State pressure. It sets a bad precedent and it is bound to be hailed as a victory by the Turkish State and their nationalist Diaspora. I would rather not have the documentary aired at all under such conditions."

The panel discussion, pre-taped by PBS on Feb. 6, included Prof. Peter Balakian (Colgate Univ., NY), Prof. Taner Akcam (Univ. of Minnesota), Prof. Justin McCarthy (Univ. of Louisville), and Prof. Omer Turan (Middle East Technical Univ., Ankara). The moderator was Scott Simon of NPR (National Public Radio).

Balakian is the author of "The Burning Tigris" and "Black Dog of Fate." Akcam is a Turkish scholar who is a staunch defender of the facts of the Armenian Genocide. McCarthy and Turan are genocide deniers.

In a lengthy letter dated Nov. 28, 2005, Balakian wrote to David Davis, the Vice President of National TV Production at PBS, explaining why he strongly objected to the post-documentary panel discussion. Saying, "this would be a serious mistake for both intellectual and ethical reasons," Balakian made the following arguments:

"First, it seems to me that there is no need for it. My understanding is that post-show discussions are tagged on to documentaries that lack balance. The Armenian Genocide documentary is well-balanced, and is

ground-breaking because there are more than a half-dozen Turkish voices in the film -- both Turkish scholars discussing the Armenian Genocide and some Turkish voices denying it. If this were not the case, I could see that there might be a reason to follow it with a discussion about Turkish perspectives, but here, at last, we have an extraordinary number of Turkish voices already incorporated.

"Second, from a scholarly perspective, I think it's important for PBS to understand that the Armenian Genocide is not a controversial issue. What happened to the Armenians in the last days of the Ottoman Empire is genocide -- this is the mainstream consensus worldwide....

"Third, I believe it is ethically wrong to privilege deniers by giving their position equal weight. This is the conclusion the New York Times, Boston Globe, Chronicle of Higher Education and other media have come to....

"Fourth, with all due respect to the pressures on PBS, this is still the United States of America -- our country and culture -- and our own Public Broadcasting System. There is no reason why fear of protests by a foreign government should inform our culture's programming. In the struggle for truth in the face of coercion and cover-up, it is vitally important for distinguished institutions, particularly public ones, to hold their ground in the face of Turkish government intimidation. By giving Turkey additional airtime following a fair documentary on the Armenian Genocide, PBS in effect would be supporting Turkey's well-funded denialist campaign."

I agree with all of Prof. Balakian's well-reasoned arguments. Even though I am quite confident that Balakian and Akcam could easily demolish McCarthy's and Turan's baseless conjectures, I find it offensive that PBS is providing to genocide revisionists a platform from which they can spew their denialist venom. As Prof. Gocek suggested earlier, this panel discussion would create an unwelcome precedent for all future programs on the Armenian Genocide.

Furthermore, the holding of such a panel is an insult to both the victims as well as the survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Since PBS executives would never think of including neo-Nazis in a panel discussion following the airing of a Holocaust documentary, why would they do it in the case of an Armenian Genocide documentary?

As I had stated in an earlier review, Goldberg's documentary is already excessively fair and balanced.

It includes remarks by several Turkish revisionists. There is no need to further balance it by adding more denialists in a panel after the show.

I suggest that all those who disagree with the PBS decision to provide a platform to genocide revisionists take the following actions:

1. Send an e-mail to Jacoba Atlas, Senior Vice President of PBS programming, asking her to cancel the airing of the panel discussion. Her e-mail address is: jatlas@pbs.org;
2. Contact your local PBS station and urge the programming director not approve the airing of the panel discussion (each station, independently of PBS, decides whether or not to air this optional panel discussion);
3. Advise your station manager that if he goes ahead with the airing of the panel discussion, you would neither watch nor financially support the station. Furthermore, you would urge the station's corporate and foundation sponsors to cease their support;
4. If no satisfactory action is taken by PBS, then contact your Congressional representative, asking that Congress cut back the funding to PBS because of its insensitivity to viewers' concerns;
5. If the panel discussion is aired, whenever PBS broadcasts a Turkey-related documentary in the future, demand that a panel discussion be held after each show to balance the Turkish propaganda.

All those who care about upholding the truth should not allow PBS to question the veracity of the Armenian Genocide under pressure from the Turkish government and its hired guns.