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Ford Hall Forum, 1910-2013 (MS113)

November 2023

Ford Hall Forum membership brochure, undated

Ford Hall Forum

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"Let There Be Light"

The Ford Hall Forum

The Ford Hall Forum

WHAT IS THE FORUM?

Since 1908 the Ford Hall Forum has served as one of the leading adult education activities in the greater Boston area. Over the years its services and its reputation have grown to the point where the Forum, now the oldest continuously operated open public forum in the United States, extends its influence nationally by broadcast to more than 90 cities throughout the country over the Public Broadcasting network, reaching an estimated half a million people weekly.

The Ford Hall Forum seeks to educate the public by illuminating the basic issues of our times.

Its operating concept is simple: To bring to the Forum platform leading authorities in diverse areas, permit them to address the audience in their area of speciality and then insist upon the right of the individual members of the audience to be recognized and to pose questions directly to the speaker.

NO VIEWPOINT UNCHALLENGED

Audiences have been admiring, friendly, and critical. No point of view expressed has the opportunity to go unchallenged; every viewpoint is subject to the scrutiny of a lively and involved audience. Among the areas covered have been politics, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, science, education, international relations, medical ethics, law, morality and other burning issues. The entire spectrum of attitudes and opinions from ultra-liberal to arch-conservative have had the opportunity to be presented. Indeed, it is a source of constant gratification to the Forum over these many years to be the target of criticism from forces of the Left and Right for presenting unpopular points of view. And yet, this is precisely what the Forum is all about.

WHO LISTENS?

The Ford Hall Forum serves a diverse constituency. Generations of college students attending Greater Boston area institutions of higher learning have found the Forum to be a vital adjunct to their education, and a source of intellectual ferment. The audience is comprised of the elderly, the middle-aged and the young of all races, religions, ethnic backgrounds and economic levels. The Forum has members of its audience who have attended its sessions for as much as 40 years, and sons and grandsons of early Forum members are now regular attendees of the programs.

DOES THE FORUM SERVE A NEED?

It serves a great need and a need which in these troubled times grows more viable with each passing year. Conventional forms of communication . . . the printed word, radio and television, are one-dimensional in that they can address an audience which has no means of responding or questioning. The Forum supplies this added dimension to the satisfaction of an ever-increasing constituency.

Another unique aspect of the Forum operation is its use of audience participation in the selection of speakers by the regular distribution of program request cards. These plus letters which come into the office unsolicited, keep the Forum in touch with the general public and their deep concerns on current issues.

As we enter our 68th consecutive year of programming, the Ford Hall Forum has its largest membership roster and largest audience in its history, attending its Sunday night sessions in Alumni Hall at Northeastern University. This at a time when open forums nationwide have been losing membership, and in many cases have been forced to cease operations. There is no greater proof possible of the strength and vitality of democracy at work.

AMONG RECENT SPEAKERS AT THE FORD HALL FORUM:

Tom Wicker · Sir Bernard Lovell · Reverend Jesse Jackson · Gore Vidal · Dr. Thomas A. Harris · Judith Crist · Herman Kahn · Marvin Kalb · Bill Moyers · Ralph Nader · Germaine Greer · William Loeb · Dr. Harvey G. Cox · Dr. Rollo May · Florynce Kennedy · Ramsey Clark · R. Buckminster Fuller · Dr. Margaret Mead · Dr. Isaac Asimov · Dr. Max Lerner · Dr. John R. Silber · Elma Lewis · Roy Wilkins · J. Kenneth Galbraith · Pete Seeger · Dick Gregory · Gloria Steinem · William A. Rusher · Norman Cousins · Abba Eban · Linus Pauling · Ayn Rand

AND OVER THE YEARS:

Mortimer J. Adler · Roger Baldwin · Chester Bowles · Justice Louis D. Brandeis · Heywood Broun · Ralph J. Bunche · Stuart Chase · Leo Cherne · Henry Steele Commager · Clarence Darrow · Major Alexander P. de Seversky · John Dewey · Helen Gahagen Douglas · Theodore Dreiser · W. E. Burghardt DuBois · Will Durant · Howard Fast · Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick · Justice Felix Frankfurter · Robert Frost · John Gunther · Judge William H. Hastie · Sidney Hillman · Morris Hillquit · Maurice Hindus · Rev. John Haynes Holmes · Julian Huxley · Alexander Kerensky · Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. · Robert M. LaFollette · Harold J. Laski · Archibald MacLeish · Thomas Mann · Thurgood Marshall · Jan Masaryk · V. K. Krishna Menon · Senator Wayne L. Morse · Reinhold Niebuhr · Dean Roscoe Pound · Walter P. Reuther · Eleanor Roosevelt · Bertrand Russell · Carl Sandburg · Margaret Sanger · Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. · Moshe Sharett · William Shirer · Upton Sinclair · Lillian Smith · Lincoln Steffens · John Strachey · Norman Thomas · Burton K. Wheeler · Roy Wilkins · John G. Winant · Stefan Zweig · William F. Buckley, Jr. · Dr. Henry Kissinger

the ford hall forum

SUNDAY EVENINGS
AT 8:00 O'CLOCK

Doors Open to Members at 7:00 p.m.

Doors Open to Public at 7:45 p.m.

ALUMNI AUDITORIUM

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360 Huntington Avenue

BOSTON, MASS.

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this year*

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