

1991

Iannone, Carol: Letters Opposing Nomination of (1991): Correspondence 03

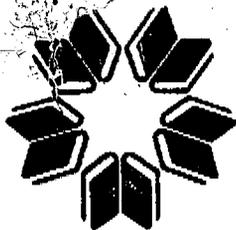
Stanley N. Katz

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ACLS

July 25, 1991

Stanley N. Katz
President

The Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
464 SROB
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510-3201

Dear Senator Moynihan:

I had heard indirectly that you were supporting the nomination of Dr. Carol Iannone to the NEH Council, but until I read this morning's Wall Street Journal, I had no idea that you were accusing Iannone's opponents of religious, class and ethnic prejudice.

I am outraged by your statement. Perhaps the nine Senators who voted against her hate Italians, Catholics and working class people (women, too?), but I doubt it.

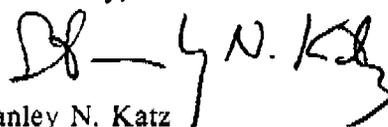
The organization of which I am President opposed Iannone's nomination in a letter to Senator Kennedy's committee. We are concerned with the steady decline in the overall quality of the NEH Council, given the fact that NEH is increasingly the dominant funder in the humanities in this country.

Something like 300,000 post-doctoral scholars belong to the 51 organizations we represent, and you have attacked the integrity of each and every one of them. You have certainly insulted me personally, as a public opponent of the nomination. ACLS is the largest humanities organization in the world, and it resides in New York state -- might it not have been a good idea for someone on your staff to inquire into our reasons for opposing Iannone? Or don't you care what we think? Or why we think it? I am simply appalled that a fellow Democrat, intellectual and academic should resort to such scandalous and irresponsible imputation of bad motives. What should I make of your own?

There are two problems of political correctness in this country, and you have now publicly endorsed the version of PC espoused by Dr. Cheney, President Bush, and the Olin and Heritage Foundations. How good for the Democratic Party is that, Senator? Much more important, how does that aid the free exchange of ideas in a democratic society?

I have never written an angry letter to a public official before, but I have never felt so betrayed by someone I admired.

Yours sadly,


Stanley N. Katz

SNK:mb

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human Lear's people for the American Way issued a report slandering Mr. Thomas's tenure at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The Association of the Bar of the City of New York, which nearly lost its charity-tax status for its lobbying against Robert Bork, is calling federal judges looking for dirt on Judge Thomas; one judge we know asked the caller from the group why the New York bar felt itself more important than the bar in Lubbock, Texas. The American Bar Association, which also ought to be cut out of any special place in the process, has yet to be heard from.

It appears, though, that if white television moguls and elitist lawyers want to do in Judge Thomas, they will have to do it without much help from black civil-rights groups. While the Urban League and NAACP would prefer a black of a different persuasion, they are holding their fire. Indeed, while it's gone largely unreported, the NAACP's Benjamin Hooks pretty much endorsed the nominee in a news

Court. If Judge Thomas is not confirmed, he said, the next nominee probably would not be black and would also be what Mr. Hooks called "unimpeachably conservative, far-right Genghis Khan." We're not sure if a Justice Khan would have practiced judicial restraint, but Mr. Hooks's bottom line sure sounds to us like a vote to confirm.

As we've said, Judge Thomas is an excellent nominee quite aside from his race, and the court's deliberations do benefit from a diversity of backgrounds. At 43, he would also be the first representative on the court of the new generation of intellectual conservative legal scholars. Some interest groups might not like it, but it looks to us as if President Bush summed up the matter pretty well with a photo-op quote yesterday. "There was a kind of flurry of outrage and predictable smearing of the man. But as people get to see him, they get to know his record, they get to know his background. I have a feeling this country is strongly behind him."

Asides

Class Warfare

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a New York Democrat, was appalled when Ted Kennedy and his cat's-paws rejected conservative literary critic Carol Iannone for the advisory council of the National Endowment for the Humanities. He told the Senate he deplored "the further intellectual decline of the Democratic Party. I almost said demise, but will leave bad enough alone." The former Harvard professor believes the attacks on Ms. Iannone represented a form of intel-

lectual elitism. Her rejection did not stem "from the quality of her work, but from her genes, social and otherwise. She is an Italian, Catholic ethnic with a working-class background." Senator Moynihan noted that such people have been driven from the Democratic Party in droves. Nonetheless, he thinks Ms. Iannone has a bright future. She "has now been banned in the Democratic Party," he noted. "What greater fortune could befall an American intellectual in this decadent *fin de siècle*? I wish her well."

prevented Saddam from taking care of his own. The ruling Revolutionary Command Council recently established a new "Socialist Bank," to provide interest-free loans to, among others, "the friends of Saddam Hussein." Journalists returning from Baghdad say that the life of the elite is unaffected by sanction-induced shortages. However, the population is hurting badly. It was that deprivation that led the U.N. Secretary General's special envoy, Prince

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I May Be a Teache

By JOHN TAYLOR GATTO

I've taught public school for 26 years but I just can't do it anymore. For years I asked the local school board and superintendent to let me teach a curriculum that doesn't hurt kids, but they had other fish to fry. So I'm going to quit, I think.

I've come slowly to understand what it is I really teach: a curriculum of confusion, class position, arbitrary justice, vulgarity, rudeness, disrespect for privacy, indifference to quality, and utter dependency. I teach how to fit into a world I don't want to live in.

I just can't do it anymore. I can't train children to wait to be told what to do; I can't train people to drop what they are doing when a bell sounds; I can't persuade children to feel some justice in their class placement when there isn't any, and I can't persuade children to believe teachers have valuable secrets they can acquire by becoming our disciples. That isn't true.

Government schooling is the most radical adventure in history. It kills the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and by teaching disrespect for home and parents.

An exaggeration? Hardly. Parents aren't meant to participate in our form of schooling, rhetoric to the contrary. My orders as schoolteacher are to make children fit an animal training system, not to help each find his or her personal path.

The whole blueprint of school procedure is Egyptian, not Greek or Roman. It grows from the faith that human value is a

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7/25/91
CSJ

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