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Hartsdale, N.Y. 10530  
June 30, 1991

Mr. Brian Lamb  
C-SPAN  
400 N. Capitol St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I have consistently enjoyed your lively and intelligent conversations and interviews on both "Book Notes" and other programs on C-Span. They are very welcome additions to television and vital for an intelligent understanding of what is going on.

I am writing to you out of concern about the call-in segment on last night's program, "Journalists' Roundtable," (aired in New York on June 29th with Ms. Ifill, Mr. Horock and Mr. Walsh). As usual, the program was an interesting exchange of opinions, much of it concentrating on the coming replacement of Justice Marshall.

My concern is that, in the short call-in time segment, three or four people felt no compunctions about making blatantly anti-Semitic remarks about the number of Jews in the media, the unfairness of the over-represented control, etc., etc. Incidentally -- or perhaps not so incidentally -- people also seem perfectly free to "quote" statistics that may or may not have basis in fact, with no apparent need to corroborate the numbers they throw out. (I realize it's an age-old political device to do this, but that doesn't excuse it when the general public starts adopting the technique.)

I am also concerned about the recent trend toward "political correctness" in the universities and I certainly believe in free speech, but on a program where none of the callers would think of attacking other races and ethnic groups with such vehemence, they feel totally free to say almost anything about "Jews," and these remarks seem more and more prevalent.

I think you did well to question these callers as to what was bothering them. I like your direct approach very much, but along with the right-veering trend of the country with the courts and in so many other areas, I feel that these latest outbursts are by no means benign. The lack of response from Jewish listeners, including me, was also of concern, but at least I am writing.



This country is in great trouble in so many ways, not unlike the terrible troubles facing Germany in the 1930s and as usual, scapegoats will be found. Must it be the "Jews" again? I find all these remarks shocking, insulting, boring and really quite stupid.

My reason for putting "Jews" in quotation marks is because of another point I wish to make. As Billy Crystal said in his segment on a television special on Jewish humor, the very word "Jews" sounds like something people are spitting out.

One-time negroes made it known that they wished to be called blacks and have now stipulated their general preference for African-American, which most people have picked up on. The one-time Indian is now the Native-American. I emphatically believe it is time for the "Jews" to be known as what they are: the Jewish people, and I would hope that your program might be a beginning for the use of this term. Obviously, to differ with Juliet, there is something in a name!

→ By the way, since I am writing to you, I would like to add an aside. My friend and I recognized you on our stay in Dublin when you came into the lobby of The Herbert Hotel on May 26th. If you were conducting an interview, we would both be very interested in knowing when the interview is being aired.

My friend did approach you and mention that beautiful Ireland had not changed much in sixty years, since her childhood visit. We loved our ten days there, travelling throughout the country, were wonderfully lucky with the sunny, cool weather and especially lucky to see the Gorse bush (which the Irish call the "furze" and I now know what Edna O'Brien is referring to in her stories when she mentions it.) Apparently, it only shows its beautiful yellow blossoms in May and I could not stop taking pictures of it. I wonder that it is never mentioned in travel writing on Ireland, including today's travel section of The New York Times that tells us so much other information about Ireland.

It is wonderful that Ireland has not changed much, but it is terrible that anti-Semitism never changes. Why is it re-asserting itself in America today? -- although I have speculated on the answer myself. I confess I am worried about this country and about my grandchildren growing up in it.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Yours sincerely,

