

Some Concluding Thoughts on John Tanton

THE EDITORS

As we close this special feature on John Tanton's life and legacy, we offer some concluding thoughts about John. His true nature, recalled in this issue by those who knew him, differs considerably from the mythical persona portrayed in "news" articles and the blogosphere.

As Richard Weaver once argued, "Propaganda may be defined as the conscious attempt to create attitudes and induce actions with reference to some predetermined end." Ultimately, *power* is the "predetermined end" in branding John as some detestable ogre. The cavalier use of "white nationalist" is employed as a rhetorical weapon to thwart the effectiveness and credibility of the accused.

Linda Chavez's description of John as "the most influential unknown man in America," as reported in *The New York Times*, is a backhanded compliment. It recognizes the hard work of a principled individual who decided to make a difference as a citizen activist.

Over time, John became a walking target for Social Justice Warriors and open-border activists, who worked hand-in-glove with far-left "journalists" to undermine his work, not by debating or refuting his positions, but by smearing John as some repulsive fiend. The end that justifies this scurrilous means is *political power*.

The commentary by Mary Sanchez, an "editorial columnist" for the *Kansas City Star*, "The Fountainhead of Modern Anti-Immigrant Bile," published shortly after John's death in July, is typical of this vacuous name-calling:

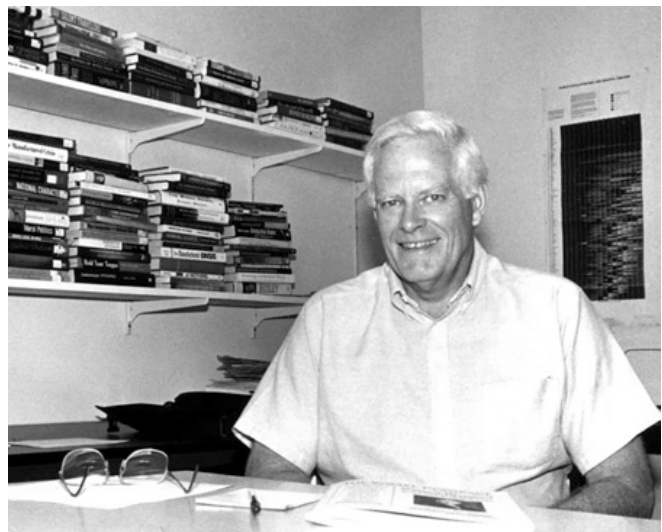
[T]anton, who once touted theories of eugenics, was a key figure for the most restrictive voices on immigration during the last 40 years.

The nation will continue to be affected by Tanton's ideals through the organizations that he helped found. And not for the better.

Tanton's imprint is evident in the pervasive nativism and outright ignorance that dominates conversations on immigration. In President Donald Trump, Tanton gained his highest acolyte.

So what is it that Sanchez finds so repulsive? "Efforts to end U.S. citizenship by birth, the promotion of English

language only, dreams to revert to decades-old visa patterns that favored European migrants over all others." In other words, preserving American folkways, customs, and cultural traditions is considered extreme and dangerous by today's commentators. As John once noted, "each nation has a solemn responsibility to provide for the health, education, employment, and security of its own citizens." Is this not a legitimate and rational outlook?



Robert Frost's poem, "Into My Own," is a fitting epitaph for John:

One of my wishes is that those dark trees,
So old and firm they scarcely show the breeze,
Were not, as 'twere, the merest mask of gloom,
But stretched away unto the edge of doom.

I should not be withheld but that some day
Into their vastness I should steal away,
Fearless of ever finding open land,
Or highway where the slow wheel pours the sand.

I do not see why I should e'er turn back,
Or those should not set forth upon my track
To overtake me, who should miss me here
And long to know if still I held them dear.

They would not find me changed from him they knew—
Only more sure of all I thought was true. ■