

MEMO

TO: Fred Stanback File
BY: John Tanton
DATE: November 2, 1995

On Wednesday, October 25, 1995, Mary Lou and I drove to Salisbury, North Carolina to have lunch with Fred Stanback. We met up with him at his office at 507 West Innes Street, Room No. 230. This is located in the Central Carolina Bank building. He had a small office with no secretary in sight. He had a cluttered desk, though he professed to be a "clean desk man." He commented on the tremendous volume of reading material we all get. One theme to which Mr. Stanback returned time and again during our visit to getting advice on what groups were most effective.

Stanback knows Buffett from their time together at the Columbia University graduate school of business. He met Charlie Munger through Buffett. He shared with us several letters while we were still in his office. One was from Garrett Hardin in response to a request that Stanback had made for advice on which groups to contribute to. They apparently had similar lists. He once asked me this question and I responded in writing.

He also showed us a letter from Allen Greenberg dated 1994, in which Greenberg said they had stopped supporting FAIR not because of any difference in ideology, but simply because they wanted to get away from supporting activist organizations.

While we were attending meetings in Chapel Hill, the Buffett name came up frequently as a source for funds on projects relating to sterilization, abortion, and population work overseas. It turns out that one of Stanback's sons works for Family Health International (FHI) in Chapel Hill. Stanback did not know about the quinacrine sterilization — I should send him some information on it.

Stanback knows Alan Weeden well, and Weeden's efforts to get conservation organizations to take on the immigration question. He knew of Pat Baldi's (sp?) efforts at Audubon, and did not think highly of them. He was aware of the Wilderness Society's article on this published several years ago, and gave us

a copy. He also knew of the battle at the Sierra Club to get their population program to include immigration. He was aware of Yeh Ling Ling's video produced by CNN, and felt it was not well done. He felt she was hard to understand; he finally gave up watching it.

Stanback said he did not know Ken Bilby. (Ken had said at the FAIR board that Alan Weeden was his best friend.) I described Ken's work with NBC, and said a little bit about Dan Stein's possible weekly television show. Stanback agrees with Mrs. May that getting on television is an essential step. Stanback also knows Tom Brokow, who sits on the PEB board (they met on a PEB-sponsored boat trip in Baja, California!). Brokow had sent Otis Graham down to see Stanback several years ago. He knew that Otis now lived in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Stanback wanted to know something about the internal politics of the Environmental Fund, Population/Environment Balance and CCN. I told him as best I could about the machinations there, and about Dave Durham's modus operandi.

He's also acquainted with Virginia Abernethy, whom he has never met, but with whom he corresponds. He is aware of her journal, *Population and Environment*.

Stanback said he got started on all this because he was a conservationist from an early age, and soon figured out that population was part of the problem. He had a number of conservation slogans tacked to the front of his desk. He had on a nearby shelf a copy of Thomas Jefferson's quotations — he heard about it through my review of the book in *The Social Contract* (Vol V, No. 3, p. 235). It was evident that he has read a good deal of *The Social Contract*! He also had on his side shelf a book produced by the Sierra Club on clear-cutting, with many devastating photos of this practice, chiefly on national forest lands.

Stanback knows Pat Noonan, and has been active in land preservation efforts in North Carolina. He told us about Rockefeller's purchase of the falls at Linville and of his (Stanback's) efforts and willingness to purchase a number of inholdings. Throughout our conversation, he referred in a modest and simply informative way the many things he has supported financially through the years.

He did not think highly of the National Parks and Conservation Association's efforts to participate in this in-holding purchase — they wanted to spend much more money than the property values just to set up a plan to acquire the land.

He, in a recurrent fashion, returned to the topic of how and with whom money might be best spent.

Fred serves on a board at Duke University with Pat Noonan — I did not catch the exact name of it, but it has something to do with conservation. Mrs. Stanback (who we did not get to meet — she was hosting a birthday party for Fred's 92-year old mother, which would seem to make it quite likely that Stanback himself is not over 70 years of age) now serves on the board of the statewide chapter of the Nature Conservancy, which has received awards for its good efforts.

Mr. Stanback is also down on billboards — Mary Lou and he had a good discussion of that topic. He brought Ed McMahon of Scenic America to town to give talks. These went over well with all the groups — except the Chamber of Commerce!

I tried to raise the topic of how we might get around the economic opposition to population and immigration control efforts, but the conversation did not go anywhere.

Stanback said that *The Wall Street Journal* was controlled by Catholic interests, until it went public. He thought that perhaps this was behind their opposition to immigration control ... he thought the editorial staff was heavily Catholic.

I asked if he knew of Steve Mumford's work on the influence of the Catholic Church — he said not. Perhaps I should provide him with some information in this regard.

Stanback and we agreed that continuing to read new books on population really wasn't worth our time. We already knew most of the material. Rather, it was better to read around the sides of the issue with groups one might hope to influence.

Again Stanback asked me who I thought was most worthwhile to support. I told him that I thought FAIR was on top of the list. He asked about CIS.

Stanback repeatedly spoke of his adherence to Buffett's investment philosophy, and to Buffett's idea that it is the people who are important. I told him about Buffett's support of U.S. for three years from 1983-86, following the visit and recommendation of Shirley Anderson, whom he knew. I told him about how U.S. operates, chiefly as an agency for trying to develop new ideas and writers, both through *The Social Contract* journal and **PRESS**, and the Writers' Workshops. I described to him how I had encouraged Brimelow to write his book, and had provided the necessary research funds to get it done.

We also talked about English Language Advocates, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision, and our plans to take the case to the Supreme Court.

Stanback told us of his own U.S. Supreme Court case. North Carolina had an intangibles tax on stocks for companies headquartered outside of the state. He felt this inappropriate, and after a number of false starts in the legislature in an attempt to repeal it, took the case to court. The district court found against him; the state appeals court found for him. The state legislature then changed the law — and the next day the state supreme court reversed the appeals court. He has now taken the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, with oral arguments scheduled in the near future. He plans to go to Washington to hear these.

We mentioned our children. Stanback has three sons and a daughter. One son lives in Boca Raton; another one in New Orleans shares his father's views (if somewhat less intensely) and contributed to English Language Advocates at his father's suggestion; and a third son who is a lawyer. His wife also has three children, apparently from a previous marriage.

Stanback mentioned that he was listening to an audio tape of Will Durant's book, *Lessons of History*. I believe this is the same one that Gus Uhlich (see *The Social Contract*, Vol. V, No. 2, p. 102) has mentioned to me. It is a summary of Durant's shelf of historical books.

Stanback was raised in the Salisbury area. I asked him about the Stanback headache powders and its slogan, "Snap back with Stanback." He said an uncle had started the company, and his father had gone into business with him — drawing only a \$60 per month salary from the company for the first five years. Apparently it was never a really big operation. A cousin bought it out recently. It is still in business ... the pill is mainly aspirin.

Stanback said he has encouraged Buffett to run his own foundation, feeling that no one is better equipped than he to wisely decide on projects. Buffett has declined to do this, preferring to setting up a good board that can carry his ideas forward. His former son-in-law, Allen Greenberg, is still with the foundation as far as Stanback knows. Apparently Susie Buffett runs the foundation; Stanback fears that she's a bit on the "bleeding heart" side of things.

Stanback knows Mrs. May, having spoken with her on the phone several times. They frequently exchange literature. He has never met her, however.

Stanback also knows Dorothy Blair. They have retreats close to each other in the North Carolina mountains. He had on the wall an autographed copy of a photo of Walter Cronkite standing in front of some defoliated North Carolina trees

– Stanback participated financially in a documentary on the effect of acid rain in the high mountains that Cronkite narrated.

Stanback also told about his disillusionment with some television specials he had helped underwrite. In response, I told him about the concept "earned media," and told him the story of how Roy Beck's article on the Hmong ending up on the *60 Minutes* program for 14 minutes. He had seen it on TV.

He also told us that Buffett had formerly supported the Population Institute, but had stopped abruptly when he thought the money was being wasted. He wondered about Population Action International – I confessed to not having much knowledge of the international population organizations. We agreed that it was easier to spend money closer to home where the effects could be seen.

I told him of my idea that the single most effective form of foreign aid is to assure that the talented, educated, and dissatisfied people in the less-developed countries stay home to work on their own country's problems, rather than move to the likes of the Research Triangle to write papers on them from afar.

Stanback also mentioned having put money into promoting RU-486, and had offered to pick up the local county costs for a Norplant program that was otherwise to be abandoned.

Stanback also told us about the problem of pollution of rivers in North Carolina from hog waste. North Carolina is the second biggest hog producing state in the nation. When the rains are heavy, the ponds that collect the hog waste often break, discharging into the rivers. There is now a big bloom downstream of the "red tide" algae called dinoflagellates, which is killing millions of fish. The state has finally gotten the message and closed a number of miles of beaches.

Throughout the discussions, Stanback was disparaging our society's ability to address problems through its legislatures, especially in view of business pressures. He tends to feel that little gets done until the situation is acute, but that we still needed to keep trying from day to day.

He disparagingly says that Salisbury wants to be like Durham; Durham wants to be like Atlanta; and Atlanta wants to grow to be like New York! He thought that if Salisburyans wanted to live in a Durham-type situation, they should simply move there.

Stanback mentioned visiting friends at Crystal Lake, Michigan (100 miles southwest of Petoskey) this past summer, and driving to Mackinac Island. He must have passed through Petoskey, but didn't realize the connection. Next time!

Stanback has purchased a number of copies of *The Camp of the Saints* — but from AICF. He noticed that their price (\$9.00, which **includes** shipping and handling) was cheaper than ours (\$12.95 **plus** shipping and handling)! He sent AICF \$5,000 to purchase copies of the book to be distributed to others! In discussing AICF, about which he asked and which he saw as quite conservative, I told him about the background of the founders as social rather than economic conservatives.

I also told Mr. Stanback about the brochure advertising Russian women, and he seemed surprised at that program.

Stanback said that North Carolina used to be solidly Democratic, but that now it is overwhelmingly Republican. When the new Republican Senator was sworn in some years ago, he turned to Jessie Helms and said, "now you're the liberal Senator from North Carolina!" The majority of the state congressional delegation is now Republican.

SUMMARY

Mr. Stanback is a very engaging and polite southern gentlemen. He's slight of build, and has obviously taken care of himself. I would judge him to be about 70 years of age, and very vigorous of both mind and body. He's obviously squarely in the population camp.

FOLLOW UP

Send him the items mentioned above:

1. Russian women brochure.
2. Information on quinacrine sterilization methods.
3. Consider sending information on Mumford.

He should be considered for membership on the FAIR board. He is a major donor, and obviously knows many other people of means.

Dan and I should visit when possible.

Should try and meet his son from new Orleans.

Drop a note to Dorothy Blair.

Consider sending Stanback the section of John Trevor's biography about his shuttle diplomacy, and its role in passing the 1924 act.

Perhaps we should consider approaching Stanback for funds to distribute *Camp of the Saints* to college sociology and other departments that might use it as a course textbook, as some are already doing.

Send information on Steven Mumford (?).

JHT/nlc

cc: D. Stein
M. Wilkinson
S. Barnes

Enclosure: Stanback's giving history.