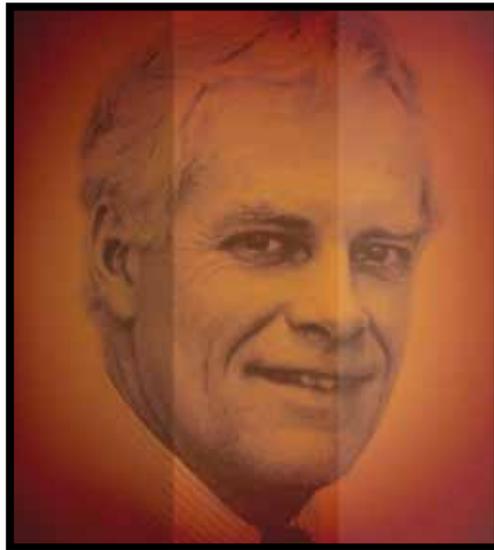


The Nativist Lobby

Three Faces of Intolerance



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The Nativist Lobby

Three Faces of Intolerance

BY HEIDI BEIRICH • EDITED BY MARK POTOK

THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER is a nonprofit organization that combats hate, intolerance and discrimination through education and litigation. Its Intelligence Project, which prepared this report and also produces the quarterly investigative magazine *Intelligence Report*, tracks the activities of hate groups and the nativist movement and monitors militia and other extremist anti-government activity. Its Teaching Tolerance project helps foster respect and understanding in the classroom. Its litigation arm files lawsuits against hate groups for the violent acts of their members.

MEDIA AND GENERAL INQUIRIES

Mark Potok, Editor

Heidi Beirich

Southern Poverty Law Center
400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, Ala.
(334) 956-8200

www.splcenter.org • www.intelligencereport.org • www.splcenter.org/blog

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Editor's Note

BY MARK POTOK

Three Washington, D.C.-based immigration-restriction organizations stand at the nexus of the American nativist movement: the **Federation for American Immigration Reform** (FAIR), the **Center for Immigration Studies** (CIS), and **NumbersUSA**. Although on the surface they appear quite different — the first, the country's best-known anti-immigrant lobbying group; the second, an “independent” think

tank; and the third, a powerful grassroots organizer — they are fruits of the same poisonous tree.

FAIR, CIS and NumbersUSA are all part of a network of restrictionist organizations conceived and created by John Tanton, the “puppeteer” of the nativist movement and a man with deep racist roots. As the first article in this report shows, Tanton has for decades been at the heart of the white nationalist scene. He has met with leading white supremacists, promoted anti-Semitic ideas, and associated closely with the leaders of a eugenicist foundation once described by a leading newspaper as a “neo-Nazi organization.” He has made a series of racist statements about Latinos and worried that they were outbreeding whites. At one point, he wrote candidly that to maintain American culture, “a European-American majority” is required.

FAIR, which Tanton founded in 1979 and where he remains on the board, has been listed as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Among the reasons are its acceptance of \$1.2 million from the Pioneer Fund, a group founded to promote the genes of white colonials that funds studies of race, intelligence and genetics. FAIR has also hired as key officials men who also joined white supremacist groups. It has board members who regularly write for hate publications. It promotes racist conspiracy theories about Latinos. And it has produced television programming featuring white nationalists.

CIS was conceived by Tanton and began life as a program of FAIR. CIS presents itself as a scholarly think tank that produces serious immigration studies meant to serve “the broad national interest.” But the reality is that CIS has never found any aspect of immigration that it liked, and it has frequently manipulated

data to achieve the results it seeks. Its executive director last fall posted an item on the conservative National Review Online website about Washington Mutual, a bank that had earlier issued a press release about its inclusion on a list of “Business Diversity Elites” compiled by *Hispanic Business* magazine. Over a copy of the bank's press release, the CIS leader posted a headline — “Cause and Effect?” — that suggested a link between the bank's opening its ranks to Latinos and its subsequent collapse.

Like CIS, NumbersUSA bills itself as an organization that operates on its own and rejects racism completely. In fact, NumbersUSA was for the first five years of its existence a program of U.S. Inc., a foundation run by Tanton to fund numerous nativist groups, and its leader was an employee of that foundation for a decade. He helped edit Tanton's racist journal, *The Social Contract*, and was personally introduced by Tanton to a leader of the Pioneer Fund. He also edited a book by Tanton and another Tanton employee that was banned by the Canadian border officials as hate literature, and on one occasion spoke to the Council of Conservative Citizens, a hate group which has called blacks “a retrograde species of humanity.”

Together, FAIR, CIS and NumbersUSA form the core of the nativist lobby in America. In 2007, they were key players in derailing bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform that had been expected by many observers to pass. Today, these organizations are frequently treated as if they were legitimate, mainstream commentators on immigration. But the truth is that they were all conceived and birthed by a man who sees America under threat by non-white immigrants. And they have never strayed far from their roots.

The Puppeteer

Correspondence reveals how racism and eugenics motivate the founder of the leading organizations of the nativist lobby

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan is an unassuming place, more like a small-town library than a research institute. But hidden away in 17 cardboard boxes deep inside the simple facility are the papers of John Tanton, the retired Michigan ophthalmologist who has been the most important figure in the modern American anti-immigration movement for three

decades. The papers, which include more than 20 years of letters from the founder of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and a batch of other nativist groups, contain explosive material about Tanton's beliefs. They also show that FAIR, on whose board of directors Tanton still sits, has been well aware of Tanton's views and activities for years.

Tanton has long claimed that he is no racist — that, in fact, he came to his immigration restrictionism through progressive concerns for population control and the environment, not disdain for the foreign born. He characterizes himself as a “fair person,” and on his website he condemns the “unsavory characters whose views can easily be characterized as anti-American, anti-Semitic and outright racist.”

Fair enough. But what do Tanton's letters have to say?

As it turns out, quite a lot. Although Tanton has been linked to racist ideas in the past — fretting about the “educability” of Latinos, warning of whites being out-bred by others, and publishing a number of white nationalist authors — the papers in the Bentley Library show that Tanton has for decades been at the heart of the white nationalist scene. He has corresponded with Holocaust deniers, former Klan lawyers and the leading white nationalist thinkers of the era. He introduced key FAIR leaders to the president of the Pioneer Fund, a white supremacist group set up to encourage “race betterment” at a 1997 meeting at a private club. He wrote a major funder to encourage her to read the work of a radical anti-Semitic professor — to “give you a new understanding of the Jewish outlook on life” — and suggested that the entire FAIR board discuss the professor's theories on the Jews. He practically worshipped a principal architect of the Immigration Act of 1924 (instituting a national origin quota system and barring Asian immigration), a rabid anti-Semite whose pro-Nazi American Coalition of Patriotic Societies was indicted for sedition in 1942.

As early as 1969, Tanton showed a sharp interest in eugenics, the “science” of breeding a better human race that was utterly discredited by the Nazis, trying to find out if Michigan had laws allowing forced sterilization. His interest stemmed, he wrote

in a letter of inquiry that year, from “a local pair of sisters who have nine illegitimate children between them.” Some 30 years later, he was still worrying about “less intelligent” people being allowed children, saying that “modern medicine and social programs are eroding the human gene pool.”

Throughout, FAIR — which, along with Tanton, refused repeated requests for comment for this story — has stood by its man. Its 2004 annual report praised him for “visionary qualities that have not waned one bit.” Around the same time, Dan Stein, who has led FAIR since 1988 as executive director or president and who was copied on scores of Tanton's letters, insisted FAIR's founder had “never asserted the inferiority or superiority of any racial, ethnic, or religious group. Never.”

Blood and Soil

In the world view of John Tanton, successful societies are not based on a mere sharing of territory, values and political systems. Nations and their cultures, he has suggested on numerous occasions, are largely determined by biology — race.

In a Nov. 13, 1994, letter to white nationalist columnist Lawrence Auster, a regular correspondent, Tanton suggested that the Declaration of Independence was actually a document based on the “bond of blood and ethnicity — nationhood.” Almost a year earlier, in a Dec. 10, 1993, letter to Garrett Hardin, a controversial ecology professor, he said: “I've come to the point of view that for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that.” On Jan. 26, 1996, he wrote Roy Beck, head of the immigration restrictionist group NumbersUSA (and then an employee of Tanton's foundation U.S. Inc.), questioning whether Latinos were capable of governing California.

“I have no doubt that individual minority persons can assimilate to the culture necessary to run an advanced society,” Tanton said in his letter to Beck, “but if through mass migration, the culture of the homeland is transplanted from Latin America to California, then my guess is we will see the same degree of success with governmental and social institutions that we have

seen in Latin America.” Referring to the changing California public schools, Tanton wondered “whether the minorities who are going to inherit California (85% of the lower-grade school children are now ‘minorities’ — demography is destiny) can run an advanced society?”

For Tanton, the question was entirely rhetorical.

“The situation then is that the people who have been the carriers of Western Civilization are well on the way toward resigning their commission to carry the culture into the future,” he wrote in an Aug. 8, 1997, letter to Harvard professor Samuel Huntington, a fellow immigration critic. “When this decline in numbers is coupled with an aging of the core population ... it begins to look as if the chances of Western Civilization passing into the history books are very good indeed.”

This kind of thinking led Tanton to defend racial quotas imposed on immigrants. In a Nov. 3, 1995, memo to FAIR boss Dan Stein and the entire FAIR board of advisers, Tanton defended the infamous “White Australia” policy that restricted non-white immigration into that country from 1901 to 1973, saying it was not racist, but intended to protect native-born labor (the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act outlawed racial quotas in Australia). Tanton also mocked the idea that the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, banning Chinese immigration to the U.S., was racist.

Similarly, Tanton has defended America’s Immigration Act of 1924, which formalized a racial quota system that was only dismantled in 1965. In fact, as shown in his correspondence, Tanton has long lionized a principal architect of the act, John B. Trevor Sr. (In addition to founding the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, Trevor was an adviser to the extreme-right, anti-Catholic Christian Crusade of Billy James Hargis, who regularly referred to the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence as Communist documents.) Tanton arranged for the Bentley Library to house the papers of both Trevor and his son, long a Pioneer Fund board member and a close friend of Tanton’s until his 2006 death.

Despite the elder Trevor’s extremely unsavory past, Tanton has sent his unpublished autobiography to numerous friends, including, on Nov. 21, 2001, FAIR board member Donald Collins. In a cover letter, Tanton told Collins that the work of Trevor — who distributed pro-Nazi propaganda, drew up plans to crush uprisings of “Jewish subversives,” and warned shrilly of “diabolical Jewish control” of America — should serve FAIR as “a guidepost to what we must follow again this time.”

Communing with the Movement

John Tanton has not merely flirted with and adopted many of the core ideas of white nationalism over the past three

decades. He has carried on correspondences with some of the key leaders of the white nationalist movement, meeting and even vacationing with some of them, and pushing many of their central ideas.

Over the years, his closest friend on the white nationalist scene seems to have been Jared Taylor, the man who began publishing *American Renaissance*, a racist, pseudo-scientific magazine focusing on race, intelligence and eugenics, in 1990. (“When blacks are left entirely to their own devices,” Taylor wrote in its pages a few years ago, “Western civilization — any kind of civilization — disappears.”)

Tanton, who met Taylor shortly after *American Renaissance* began publication, seems to have been particularly taken with Taylor’s angry opposition to affirmative action, spelled out in Taylor’s 1992 book, *Paved With Good Intentions: The Failure of Race Relations in Contemporary America*. On Nov. 12, 1993, Tanton wrote Taylor and three of his *American Renaissance* colleagues — Wayne Lutton, who would later work for Tanton; Sam Francis, a white nationalist ideologue then working as a *Washington Times* columnist; and Jerry Woodruff, who wrote for the nativist publication *Middle American News* — suggesting that their new journal take on literary critic Stanley Fish, who had defended affirmative action in an article for *The Atlantic*. Tanton enclosed “a little something” for Taylor’s “start-up costs.”

Tanton promoted Taylor’s efforts repeatedly. On Dec. 15, 1994, he wrote a friend to suggest that he read Taylor’s 1992 book. More remarkably, on Jan. 24, 1991, he wrote to the then-president of the Pioneer Fund, Harry Weyher, about Taylor’s *American Renaissance* effort. And as recently as April 20, 1998, Tanton wrote to several FAIR employees, including Dan Stein, to ensure that they were receiving *American Renaissance* mailings: “I write to encourage keeping track of those on our same side of the issue, but who are nonetheless our competitors for dollars and members.” (The underlining was in Tanton’s original letter.)

Tanton also corresponded for years with the late Sam Francis, a one-time *Washington Times* columnist who was fired after details of a racist speech he gave at an *American Renaissance* conference became public. From 1999 until his death in 2005, Francis edited the crudely racist and nativist *Citizens Informer*, the tabloid published by the white supremacist Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), an organization that says it “oppose[s] all efforts to mix the races of mankind.”

What may have been most remarkable of all was Tanton’s endorsement of a proposal from another friend — Peter Brimelow, who would later start the racist anti-immigration website *vdare.com*— that FAIR hire Sam Francis to edit its newsletter. That proposal, which Tanton sent to FAIR’s



John Tanton

Dan Stein on Nov. 3, 1995, was made two months after *The Washington Times* fired Francis for racism.

Tanton's contacts with other white nationalists also are instructive. Beginning in the late 1980s, Tanton corresponded regularly with Virginia Abernethy, now a professor emeritus at Vanderbilt University. Abernethy is a member of the CCC and recently described herself as a "white separatist."

On June 26, 1996, Tanton wrote to Sam Dickson — a Georgia lawyer who has represented the Ku Klux Klan, written for and been on the editorial advisory board of Holocaust denial publications, and spoken at several of the biannual conferences put on by *American Renaissance* — to thank him for a good time during a visit by Tanton and his wife. "The next time I'm in Atlanta," Tanton wrote Dickson, "I hope to take one of your 'politically incorrect' tours."

In a Dec. 23, 1996, letter, Tanton complained that it was hard to write checks for Theodore O'Keefe, who was involved for years in the Holocaust-denying Institute for Historical Review, because O'Keefe would only use a pen name. It was not clear from the letter what O'Keefe had written for Tanton.

On June 17, 1998, Tanton wrote to Stan Hess, who was then a member of the CCC, about Hess' proposal to open a FAIR office in California (the letter was copied to Stein). The letter recounted how Tanton had "presented" Hess' idea to the FAIR board. Hess was arrested later that year for burning a Mexican flag at an Alabama CCC rally that was attended by an unrobed Klansman. Hess would go on in 1999 to help form the neofascist American Friends of the British National Party and, later, to become California state leader of a group headed by neo-Nazi and former Klan leader David Duke.

Tanton on 'the Jews'

In some ways, given his ideas, it's not surprising that John Tanton would cozy up to white nationalists and their fellow travelers. What is unexpected, even among long-time observers of the FAIR founder, is his attitude toward "the Jews."

In the late 1990s, Kevin MacDonald, a California State University, Long Beach, professor, was finishing up a trilogy of books that purported to show that Jews collectively work to undermine the dominant majorities in the host countries in which they live, including the United States. MacDonald said that Jews pursue these tactics — including promoting non-white immigration into white-dominated nations — in order to weaken the majority culture in a bid to enhance their own standing. He would later go on to speak and write for white nationalist groups across America.

Tanton liked what he read. On Dec. 28, 1998 — the same year that the last two books of MacDonald's trilogy were published — he wrote MacDonald, saying, "I hope we can meet some day." On that same date, Tanton sent a memo to Dan Stein and the FAIR board of directors about a MacDonald paper "on the segment of the Jewish community that has an open borders mentality." The paper, Tanton said, "would be fertile for group discussion at the forthcoming board meeting."

Earlier that month, on Dec. 10, 1998, Tanton also sent MacDonald's work to Cordelia Scaife May, a now-deceased millionaire philanthropist who gave regularly to far-right causes and was a close Tanton friend. "I'm sure [MacDonald's article] will give you a new understanding of the Jewish outlook on life, which explains a large part of the Jewish opposition to immigration reform," he wrote.

Tanton's criticism of religious groups wasn't limited to Jews, however. Over the years, he — like some principals of FAIR — lashed out at a variety of religious denominations, especially Catholics, for their welcoming attitude toward immigrants coming to America from the Third World. In his letter to the FAIR board suggesting a discussion of Kevin MacDonald's theories, for instance, he described "the Roman Catholic Church [and] several of the Protestant denominations, the Lutheran Church in particular," as being among "our opponents." In an earlier, May 24, 1994, letter to Roy Beck of NumbersUSA, he said that "one of the problems with churches is that they see themselves as universal, and as transcending national boundaries."

Endorsing Eugenics

For years, FAIR President Dan Stein has hotly denied that his organization had anything to do with eugenics. "Eugenics," he wrote in a 2004 op-ed in the *Kansas City Star*, "is pure junk science, and it is utterly unrelated to FAIR's efforts to bring order to immigration in America." Two months later, in a press release attacking the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) for suggesting otherwise, the group called SPLC's reporting "utterly specious" and "McCarthyist."

The press release went on to accuse the SPLC of unfairly linking FAIR to "a long discredited pseudo-science of eugenics" by noting the group had accepted \$1.2 million from the eugenicist Pioneer Fund, ending in 1994. The release also claimed that the idea that FAIR had an interest in eugenics had been disproven.

Apparently, John Tanton failed to get that message.

On Dec. 30, 1994 — at the end of the year that FAIR finally stopped soliciting Pioneer donations (after negative publicity) and issued its denunciation of eugenics — Tanton wrote to German academic Wolfgang Bosswick to defend the Pioneer Fund, saying its critics were the "hard (Marxist) left in the United States."

On Sept. 18, 1996, he wrote to now-deceased California multimillionaire Robert K. Graham, a eugenicist who started a sperm bank to collect the semen of Nobel Prize-winning scientists: "Do we leave it to individuals to decide that they are the intelligent ones who should have more kids? And more troublesome, what about the less intelligent, who logically should have less? Who is going to break the bad news [to less intelligent individuals], and how will it be implemented?"

On May 21, 1997, Tanton wrote to Richard Lynn — a race "scientist" who claims that black people "are more psychopathic than whites" and suffer from a "personality disorder" characterized by a poverty of feeling and lack of shame — to

congratulate Lynn on his book, *Dysgenics*, on how less intelligent individuals are outbreeding the intelligent. The next year, on Feb. 9, 1998, he wrote to Pioneer Fund President Harry Weyher to propose that Weyher hire Lynn to write “a study of Barry Mehler.” Mehler, the Ferris State University professor who founded the Institute for the Study of Academic Racism, is a harsh critic of race science and eugenics.

FAIR officials may not have known of these contacts, but they certainly knew of others. On Oct. 29, 1998, for instance, Tanton wrote a memo for his file on Harry Weyher discussing the Pioneer Fund’s new website and a paper on “sub-replacement fertility” by Roger Pearson, a notorious race scientist who heads the Institute for the Study of Man. The memo was copied to FAIR’s Dan Stein and K.C. McAlpin, the executive director of ProEnglish, a group on whose board Tanton now sits.

Most remarkable of all, however, was the Feb. 13, 1997, gathering organized by Tanton at the New York Racquet and Tennis Club. Three years after FAIR had stopped taking Pioneer Fund money, Tanton brought FAIR board members Henry Buhl, Sharon Barnes and Alan Weeden — along with Peter Brimelow, future founder of the VDARE.com hate site — to a meeting with Pioneer Fund President Harry Weyher. The meeting, held expressly to discuss fundraising efforts to benefit FAIR, was memorialized in a Feb. 17, 1997, memo that Tanton wrote for his “FAIR Fund-Raising File.” A year later, on Jan. 5, 1998, Tanton wrote to John Trevor, a Pioneer Fund board member and the son of the notorious pro-Nazi eugenicist John Trevor Sr., to thank him for his personal “handsome contribution” to FAIR.

It’s not that Tanton didn’t understand, just as well as Stein and the other leaders of FAIR, exactly how controversial eugenics was. After starting his own eugenicist group, the Society for Genetic Education in 1996, he wrote to Graham, the California eugenicist, to discuss public relations strategies. In a Sept. 18, 1996, letter, Tanton explained how his new group’s website “emphasized mankind’s use of eugenic principles on plants and the lower animals as a way to condition the public to the idea of genetic manipulation, and raise the question of its application to the human race.” Elaborating, he added: “We report

ways [eugenics] is currently being done, but under the term genetics rather than eugenics.”

Immigration and Race

Throughout its history, the United States has been subjected to periodic outbreaks of xenophobic nativism, angry reactions to waves of immigrants who are seen as somehow different than “real” Americans. These movements, directed at different times at Germans, Catholics, Jews, Asians, southern Europeans, blacks and others, have typically been undergirded by racist stereotyping. Again and again, the new immigrants are described as stupid, ugly, disloyal, diseased and more.

Today, no one disputes the vulgar racism of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan, which grew to nearly 4 million members on the strength of hating Catholics and Jews. And much the same can be said of nativist movements from the Know-Nothings of the 1840s, who saw German Catholics as dangerous subverters of American democracy, to the racist demonization of Mexican “wetbacks” during the 20th century.

But John Tanton and his Federation for American Immigration Reform have repeatedly claimed that they are different, that FAIR and its founder are not linked to the irrational fears and hatreds of the past. Their critics, they say angrily, are simply tarring them with the brush of racism to unfairly denigrate their arguments.

As the Bentley Library files show, that is far from true.

Federation for American Immigration Reform

The nativist lobby's action arm has an ugly record of promoting racist ideas, conspiracy theories and anti-immigrant hatred

The forces seeking to sharply reduce the number of immigrants coming to America won a stunning victory in June 2007, when nativist anger at an “amnesty” for the undocumented scuttled a major bipartisan immigration reform package backed by President Bush. Many members of Congress were completely unprepared for the flood of angry E-mails, phone calls and faxes they received — an

inundation so massive that the phone system collapsed under the weight of more than 400,000 faxes.

They should not have been surprised. The furious nativist tide was largely driven by an array of immigration restriction organizations that has been built up over the course of more than 20 years into fixtures in the nation's capital.

The vast majority of these groups were founded or funded by John Tanton, a major architect of the contemporary nativist movement who, 20 years ago, was already warning of a destructive “Latin onslaught” heading to the United States. Most of these organizations used their vast resources in the days leading up to a vote on the bill to stir up a nativist backlash that ultimately resulted in its death.

At the center of the Tanton web is the nonprofit Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the most important organization fueling the backlash against immigration. Founded by Tanton in 1979, FAIR has long been marked by anti-Latino and anti-Catholic attitudes. It has mixed this bigotry with a fondness for eugenics, the idea of breeding better humans discredited by its Nazi associations. It has accepted \$1.2 million from an infamous, racist eugenics foundation. It has employed officials in key positions who are also members of white supremacist groups. Recently, it has promoted racist conspiracy theories about Mexico's secret designs on the American Southwest and an alternative theory alleging secret plans to merge the United States, Mexico and Canada. In 2006, a senior FAIR official sought “advice” from the leaders of a racist Belgian political party.

FAIR officials declined repeated requests for comment.

None of this — or any other material evidencing the bigotry and racism that courses through the group — seems to have affected FAIR's media standing. In 2008, the group was quoted in mainstream media outlets nearly 500 times. FAIR staff have been featured several times on CNN's “Lou Dobbs Tonight,”

along with countless appearances on other television news shows. Dobbs even ran his radio program from a FAIR event in Washington, D.C., this past September. And, perhaps most remarkably of all, FAIR has been taken seriously by Congress, claiming on its home page that it has been asked to testify on immigration bills “more than any other organization in America.”

“The sad fact is that attempts to reform our immigration system are being sabotaged by organizations fueled by hate,” said Henry Fernandez, a senior fellow and expert on immigration at the Center for American Progress, a “progressive” think tank. “Many anti-immigrant leaders have backgrounds that should disqualify them from even participating in mainstream debate, yet the American press quotes them without ever noting their bizarre and often racist beliefs.”

The Founder: Early Hints

For decades, John Tanton has operated a nativist empire out of his U.S. Inc. foundation's headquarters in Petoskey, Mich. Even as he simultaneously runs his own hate group — The Social Contract Press, listed for many years by the Southern Poverty Law Center because of its anti-Latino and white supremacist writings — Tanton has remained the house intellectual for FAIR. In fact, U.S. Inc. bankrolls much of FAIR's lobbying activity and, at least until 2005, Tanton ran its Research and Publications Committee, the group that fashions and then disseminates FAIR's position papers. In its 2004 annual report, FAIR highlighted its own main ideologue, singing Tanton's praises for “visionary qualities that have not waned one bit.”

But what, exactly, is Tanton's vision?

As long ago as 1988, when a series of internal 1986 documents known as the WITAN memos were leaked to the press, Tanton's bigoted attitudes have been known. In the memos, written to colleagues on the staff of FAIR, Tanton warned of a coming “Latin

onslaught” and worried that high Latino birth rates would lead “the present majority to hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile.” Tanton repeatedly demeaned Latinos in the memos, asking whether they would “bring with them the tradition of the mordida [bribe], the lack of involvement in public affairs” and also questioning Latinos’ “educability.”

Echoing his 19th-century nativist forebears who feared Catholic immigrants from Italy and Ireland, Tanton has often attacked Catholics in terms not so different from those used by the Klan and the Know-Nothing Party of the 1840s. In the WITAN memos, for instance, he worried that Latino immigrants would endanger the separation of church and state and undermine support for public schooling. Never one to miss a threatening and fertile Catholic, Tanton even reminded his colleagues, “Keep in mind that many of the Vietnamese coming in are also Catholic.”

The leaked memos caused an uproar. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Walter Cronkite quit the board of a group Tanton headed, U.S. English, after the memos became public in 1988. U.S. English Executive Director Linda Chavez — a former Reagan Administration official and, later, a conservative commentator — also left, calling Tanton’s views “anti-Hispanic, anti-Catholic and not excusable.”

In 1994, Tanton’s Social Contract Press republished an openly racist French book, *The Camp of the Saints*, with Tanton writing that he was “honored” to republish the race war novel. What Tanton called a “prescient” book describes the takeover of France by “swarthy hordes” of Indians, “grotesque little beggars from the streets of Calcutta,” who arrive in a desperate refugee flotilla. It attacks white liberals who, rather than turn the Indians away, “empty out all our hospital beds so that cholera-ridden and leprous wretches could sprawl between white sheets ... and cram our nurseries full of monster children.” It explains how, after the Indians take over France, white women are sent to a “whorehouse for Hindus.” In an afterword special to Tanton’s edition of the novel, author Jean Raspail wrote about his fears that “the proliferation of other races dooms our race, my race, to extinction.”

Tanton’s view of the book he published? “We are indebted to Jean Raspail for his insights into the human condition, and for being 20 years ahead of this time. History will judge him more kindly than have some of his contemporaries.”

Tanton has repeatedly suggested that racial conflict will be the outcome of immigration, saying in the WITAN memos that “an explosion” could be the result of whites’ declining “power and control over their lives.” More than a decade later, in 1998, he made a similar point in an interview with a reporter, suggesting that whites would inevitably develop a racial consciousness because “most people don’t want to disappear into the dustbin of history.” Tanton added that once whites did become racially conscious, the result would be “the war of each against all.”

In 1997, Tanton spelled out his views on the inevitability of immigration overwhelming American whites. “In the bacteriology lab, we have culture plates,” he explained. “You put a bug in there and it starts growing and gets bigger and bigger. And it grows until it finally fills the whole plate. And it crashes and dies.”

The Founder’s Friends

It’s no surprise that Tanton employs people with similar views. His long-time deputy, for example, is Wayne Lutton, who works out of Tanton’s Petoskey offices and edits the journal, *The Social Contract*, published by Tanton’s press. Lutton is not just linked to white supremacist ideas, many of which he publishes in his journal — he has actually held leadership positions in four white nationalist hate groups: the Council of Conservative Citizens, the National Policy Institute, and *The Occidental Quarterly* and *American Renaissance*, both racist publications. Lutton has written for the *Journal of Historical Review*, which specializes in Holocaust denial. Early on, Lutton and Tanton collaborated on *The Immigration Invasion*, a nativist screed that has been seized by Canadian border officials as hateful contraband.

Under Lutton’s editorial leadership, Tanton’s journal has published dozens of articles from prominent white supremacists. One special issue was even devoted to the theme of “Europhobia: The Hostility Toward European-Descended Americans” and featured a lead article from John Vinson, head of the Tanton-backed hate group, the American Immigration Control Foundation. Vinson argued that multiculturalism was replacing “successful Euro-American culture” with “dysfunctional Third World cultures.” Tanton elaborated in his own remarks, decrying the “unwarranted hatred and fear” of whites that he blamed on “multiculturalists” and immigrants.

Presumably, these articles and more are well known to Stein, the president of FAIR — until 2003, he was an editorial adviser to *The Social Contract*. And Stein had lots of company. FAIR board members Sharon Barnes and Diana Hull also have been on the journal’s board of editorial advisers. FAIR’s current media director, Ira Mehlman, was an adviser in 2001 and 2002, and his essay, “Grand Delusions: Open Borders Will Destroy Society,” was published in the journal’s pages. Today, FAIR still advertises *The Social Contract* on its website, saying the journal “offers in-depth studies on immigration, population, language, assimilation, environment, national unity and balance of individual rights and civil responsibilities.”

So where does FAIR stand on the matter of Tanton’s views? The group has never criticized or sought distance from its founder. In 2004, in fact, Stein insisted that Tanton “never asserted the inferiority or superiority of any racial, ethnic or religious group. Never.” The same year, FAIR hosted a gala event honoring Tanton for his 25 years of service. To this day, Tanton remains on FAIR’s board.

The Eugenics Connection

Probably the best-known evidence of FAIR’s extremism is its acceptance of funds from a notorious, New York City-based hate group, the Pioneer Fund. In the mid-1980s, when FAIR’s budgets were still in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, the group reached out to the Pioneer Fund, which was established in 1937 to promote the racial stock of the original colonists, finance studies of race and intelligence, and foster policies of “racial betterment.” (Pioneer has concentrated on studies

meant to show that blacks are less intelligent than whites, but it has also backed nativist groups like ProjectUSA, run by former FAIR board member Craig Nelsen.)

The Pioneer Fund liked what it saw and, between 1985 and 1994, disbursed about \$1.2 million to FAIR. In 1997, when the *Phoenix New Times* confronted Tanton about the matter, he “claimed ignorance about the Pioneer Fund’s connection to numerous researchers seemingly intent on proving the inferiority of blacks, as well as its unsavory ties to Nazism.” But he sounded a different tune in 2001, when he insisted that he was “comfortable being in the company of other Pioneer Fund grantees.” Today, Tanton’s defense is that he is no different than the “open borders crowd” that accepts money from the liberal Ford Foundation, which was founded by Henry Ford, the anti-Semitic auto manufacturer. What he ignores is that the Ford Foundation, unlike the Pioneer Fund, is not promoting racist ideas.

Some have called for FAIR to return the Pioneer money, but that has not happened. In fact, when asked about it in 1993, Stein told a reporter, “My job is to get every dime of Pioneer’s money.” One reason for Stein’s lack of hesitation may be that FAIR has long been interested in the pseudo-science of eugenics.

One of FAIR’s long-time leaders, and a personal hero to Tanton, is the late Garrett Hardin, a committed eugenicist and for years a professor of human ecology at the University of California. Hardin, who died in 2003, was himself a Pioneer Fund grantee, using the fund’s money to expand his 1968 essay, “The Tragedy of the Commons.” In it, Hardin wrote, “Freedom to breed will bring ruin to all.”

Race War and the Duty to Die

That was the least of it. In a 1992 interview with *Omni* magazine, Hardin said he supported abortion — “A fetus is of so little value, there’s no point worrying about it” — as “effective population control.” He argued the Third World is filled with “the next generation of breeders” who need to be stopped. He discouraged aid to starving Africans because that would only “encourage population growth.”

Hardin wasn’t alone. A current FAIR advisory board member, three-time Democratic governor of Colorado Richard Lamm, sounded a similar theme in 1984, while still governor, saying “terminally ill people have a duty to die and get out of the way.”

Like Tanton, Lamm seems to fear a coming race war. In his futuristic 1985 novel, *Megatraumas: America at the Year 2000*, Lamm sketches it out like this: “[O]ur lack of control of our borders allowed 2 million legal and illegal immigrants to settle in the United States every year. That caused unemployment to rise to 15.2 percent by 1990 and 19.1 percent this year. ... [T]he rash of firebombings throughout the Southwest, and the three-month siege of downtown San Diego in 1998 were all led by second-generation Hispanics, the children of immigrants.”

As late as 2004, Lamm was sounding similar racial fears, telling a reporter that “new cultures” in the U.S. “are diluting what we are and who we are.”

For his part, Stein was asked about Hardin’s belief that only “intelligent people” should breed for an editorial by Tucker Carlson in the 1997 *Wall Street Journal*. “Yeah, so what?” Stein replied. “What is your problem with that?”

After Hardin’s death, John Tanton created in honor of his mentor a group called The Garrett Hardin Society, devoted to “the preservation of [Hardin’s] writings and ideas.” On the society’s board are Tanton, Wayne Lutton and former U.S. Inc.’s



board member, John Rohe, the author of an adoring 2002 biography of Tanton and his wife that reads like the life of a saint.

Hiring Haters

In late 2006, FAIR hired as its western field representative, a key organizing position, a man named Joseph Turner. Turner was likely attractive to FAIR because he wrote what turned out to be a sort of model anti-illegal immigrant ordinance for the city of San Bernardino, Calif. Based on Turner’s work, FAIR wrote a version of the law that is now promoted to many other cities.

But there was more to Turner than FAIR let on. In 2005, Turner had created, and then led, a nativist group called Save Our State. The group was remarkable for its failure to disassociate itself from the neo-Nazi skinheads who often joined its rallies — something that virtually all other nativist groups, worried about bad publicity, worked hard to do. Save Our State’s electronic bulletin board, too, was remarkable for the racist vitriol that frequently appeared there.

It was in that forum that Turner made one of his more controversial remarks, amounting to a defense of white separatism. “I can make the argument that just because one believes in white separatism that that does not make them a racist,” Turner wrote in 2005. “I can make the argument that someone who proclaims to be a white nationalist isn’t necessarily a white supremacist. I don’t think that standing up for your ‘kind’ or ‘your race’ makes you a bad person.” The Southern Poverty Law Center has listed Save Our State as a hate group since it appeared in 2005. Turner left FAIR in 2007.

Turner’s predecessor in the FAIR organizing post, Rick

Oltman, was cut from the same cloth. Oltman has been described as a member of the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC) in the publications of that hate group, which is directly descended from the segregationist White Citizens Councils and has described blacks as “a retrograde species of humanity.” He has spoken at at least one of the CCC’s conferences and has taken part in one of its rallies. And he wasn’t alone.

According to the CCC newsletter, FAIR’s longtime associate director, Dave Ray, was scheduled to speak at another CCC event. And, in September 2002, FAIR Eastern Regional Coordinator Jim Stadenraus participated in an anti-immigration conference on Long Island, N.Y., with Jared Taylor. Taylor is both a CCC member and the founder of the racist eugenicist publication, *American Renaissance*.

FAIR has also produced programming featuring hate group leaders linked to the CCC. According to the anti-racist Center for New Community, FAIR’s now defunct television production, “Borderline,” featured interviews with Taylor and Sam Francis, who edited the CCC’s newsletter until his death in 2005.

Donald Collins, a member of both FAIR’s board of directors and its board of advisers, has his own ties to white supremacy. Collins posts frequently to a hate website called Vdare.com, which is named after Virginia Dare (said to be the first white child born in the New World) and publishes the work of white supremacists and anti-Semites. Collins also has been published in *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, a periodical run by longtime academic racist Roger Pearson. (Pearson founded the Eugenic Society in 1963 and worked with at least one former SS officer in England. He is also the recipient of several Pioneer Fund grants.)

Several of Collins’ articles have attacked Catholics and their church for their pro-immigrant stances. In one, he accused Los Angeles Archbishop Roger Mahony of selling out his country “in exchange for more temporal power and glory.” Collins has also accused Catholic bishops of “infiltrating and manipulating the American political process” in order to undermine the separation of church and state.

Collins is not FAIR’s only link to the Vdare.com hate site. Joe Guizzardi, a member of FAIR’s board of advisers, is a former editor of Vdare.com. He writes there frequently about how Latin American immigrants come to the United States in order to “reconquer” it — a conspiracy theory pushed by numerous hate groups.

Bad Press

In the past, FAIR has escaped negative publicity, generally being depicted as a mainstream critic of American immigration policy. But there have been notable exceptions.

In 2000, FAIR ran ads opposing the reelection of Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-Mich.), a Lebanese American who defeated Tanton in the primaries, because he had supported issuing more visas for immigrants with high-tech skills. The ads featured side-by-side photos of Abraham and Osama bin Laden and this question: “Why is Senator Abraham trying to make it easier for terrorists like Osama bin Laden to export their war of terror to any city street in America?” The ads also accused the senator of pushing

a bill that would “take American jobs. Our jobs.”

The ads produced an immediate controversy, and a staunch conservative, Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.), quit FAIR in protest. Under attack, Stein insisted the ads weren’t racist and later claimed that he’d thought Abraham was Jewish.

That same year, FAIR helped fund ads in Iowa that were rejected as “borderline racist” by the general manager of WHO-TV in Des Moines. When the same ads appeared in Nebraska, Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Republican, lost his temper. “The trash that this crowd puts out is just beyond terrible,” Hagel said.

Four years later in Texas, the Coalition for the Future of the American Worker — a FAIR front group designed to look like it represents labor interests — ran ads heavy on images of dark-skinned men loitering on corners and running from police cars. One of the ad’s prime targets, Rep. Martin Frost (D-Texas), condemned the ads as racist. His Republican challenger, Pete Sessions, found them so repugnant that he joined Frost in calling for them to be yanked off the air in their district.

In 2004, FAIR made an extremely unusual criticism of a fellow nativist, a woman named Virginia Abernethy who had just joined the national advisory board of Protect Arizona Now (PAN). PAN, aided by some \$600,000 from FAIR, had worked to collect signatures for a referendum (which ultimately passed) to require proof of citizenship when registering to vote or signing up for public benefits. But as Election Day neared, newspapers trumpeted the revelation that PAN’s new adviser was a self-declared “white separatist” who had long been active in the CCC.

FAIR reacted instantly with a pious press release denouncing “Abernethy’s repulsive views.” The release left many scratching their heads — FAIR, after all, had CCC members on its payroll, and any number of other ties to the group. Its own officials had in several cases endorsed similar separatist views. And Tanton, FAIR’s founder and chief ideologue, was intimately familiar with Abernethy’s work. After all, he had published her writings frequently in *The Social Contract* and his editor, Wayne Lutton, had shared the podium with Abernethy at forums of the CCC.

Whither FAIR?

Following the defeat of the bipartisan immigration package in the summer of 2007, FAIR flew into action one more time. This time, it went after the DREAM Act, a widely supported, bipartisan bill that would have provided a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrant students accepted to college. FAIR was the key advocate for its defeat and, sure enough, the DREAM Act finally died the following October.

Is this the future for FAIR? Will journalists, politicians and the general public continue to take the organization and its nativist propaganda seriously?

Dan Stein thinks so.

As he put it at FAIR’s 25th anniversary celebration in 2004, just when the American nativist movement had begun to sense its own strength: “[T]oday,” he said, “as the country moves finally into a serious and realistic debate, the founders have created a mature and knowledgeable organization prepared to lead.”

Center for Immigration Studies

The nativist lobby's supposedly 'independent' think tank has never found any aspect of immigration it likes

Last October, as America was being roiled by the subprime mortgage meltdown that led to the current financial crisis, the executive director of one of the most influential immigration think tanks in the nation was in a joking mood. ¶ Shortly after the failure of Washington Mutual Bank, Mark Krikorian found a press release issued months earlier by the bank that celebrated its inclusion on

a list of “Business Diversity Elites” compiled by *Hispanic Business* magazine. Krikorian posted the release at the conservative National Review Online, where he writes from time to time, along with his own sneering headline: “Cause and Effect?”

Krikorian no doubt thought of his posting as a simple joke. But to many, the attempt by the leader of the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) to suggest a link between Washington Mutual's commitment to opening its ranks to Latinos and its demise spoke volumes about the nature of CIS and its prolific research. Although the think tank bills itself as an “independent” organization with a “pro-immigrant” if “low-immigration” vision, the reality is that CIS has never found any aspect of immigration that it liked.

There's a reason for that. Although you'd never know it to read its materials, CIS was started in 1985 by a Michigan ophthalmologist named John Tanton — a man known for his racist statements about Latinos, his decades-long flirtation with white nationalists and Holocaust deniers, and his publication of ugly racist materials. CIS' creation was part of a carefully thought-out strategy aimed at creating a set of complementary institutions to cultivate the nativist cause — groups including the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and NumbersUSA. As is shown in Tanton's correspondence, lodged in the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Tanton came up with the idea in the early 1980s for “a small think tank” that would “wage the war of ideas.”

And while Tanton never actually ran CIS, his correspondence shows that as late as 1994, nine years after it was started, Tanton, who remains on FAIR's board of directors today, saw himself as setting the “proper roles for FAIR and CIS.” He raised millions of dollars for the think tank and published the writings of top CIS officials in his racist journal, *The Social Contract*. He maneuvered a friend on to the board of CIS — a man who shared his interest in eugenics and who attended events with Tanton where white nationalists gave presentations. Through it all, CIS pumped out study after study aimed at highlighting immigration's negative effects.

These studies have hardly been neutral. One of them concludes that because foreign women (“Third World gold-diggers”) can obtain work permits by marrying American citizens, it's obvious that fraudulent marriage applications are “prevalent among terrorists.” Another claims that because many immigrants have worked in Georgia since 2000, it's clear that unemployment among less educated native workers is up. A third says that because immigration levels have been high recently, immigrants make up a growing share of those drawing welfare.

But every one these claims, each of them at the heart of a different recent report from CIS, are either false or virtually without any supporting evidence. That came to fore again last September, when CIS organized a panel to accompany the release of yet another new report, this one claiming that municipalities in substantial numbers were permitting non-citizens to vote. When challenged, the panelists could only come up with a single possible example of the purported trend.

“CIS' attempts to blame immigrants for all of the U.S.'s problems have been laughable,” said Angela Kelley of the Immigration Policy Center, a Washington, D.C., organization that uses well-known scholars to produce reports on immigration-related issues and has debunked many of the studies issued by CIS. “It is clear that CIS is not interested in serious research or getting the facts straight.”

Krikorian has had considerable success in giving CIS the look of a reputable commentator on immigration. CIS regularly sends experts to testify to Congress and is frequently quoted by the mainstream media. But every now and then, the mask slips.

In 2007, a year before his comments on Washington Mutual, Krikorian accepted an invitation to speak at the Michigan State University chapter of Young Americans for Freedom. It apparently didn't bother him that MSU-YAF had been widely covered in the media for a series of nasty stunts — staging a “Catch an Illegal Immigrant Day,” holding a “Koran Desecration” competition, and posting “Gays Spread AIDS” fliers across campus. He also didn't seem to mind being part of the same speakers series that included Nick Griffin, a Holocaust denier who heads the

extremist British National Party, and Jared Taylor, who says blacks are incapable of civilization.

Separated at Birth

Although it goes unmentioned on its website and its other materials, CIS was born in 1985 as a program of FAIR, which had been run by Tanton since he started it in 1979. Even then, Tanton understood that CIS would soon need to stand on its own in order to be seen as the “independent, non-partisan” organization that its mission statement claims today. In a letter to Cordelia Scaife May, a far-right philanthropist who supported many of Tanton’s nativist endeavors, Tanton was candid.

“For credibility,” he told the woman whose foundation would go on to support CIS for decades, “this will need to be independent of FAIR, though the Center for Immigration Studies, as we’re calling it, is starting off as a project of FAIR.”

Tanton had a clear vision of the complementary, if unheralded, relationship between FAIR and CIS. As he wrote in another 1985 letter, CIS’ role would be to produce reports “for later passage to FAIR, the activist organization, to remedy.” And indeed, to this day, FAIR frequently cites CIS to back up its lobbying.

CIS was legally separated from FAIR in 1986 because, as Tanton wrote in a memo to two FAIR board members two years later, the think tank needed to be seen as separate “from the lobbying organization.” But Tanton’s correspondence suggests that he continued to steer the “independent” organization. In a 1986 memo to a file kept for the purpose of eventually writing an autobiography, Tanton described CIS as an organization over which he had direct control, as opposed to others that he said were “one level removed from our control.” Eight years

later, in 1994, Tanton wrote that he was still setting what he called “the proper roles for FAIR and CIS.”

A 1994 Tanton letter also shows that he was critical to raising funds for CIS. Although Tanton said he played a “behind-the-scenes role” at CIS, he revealed that key backers of his other organizations had ponied up millions for CIS. Those large donations were key because CIS does not do direct-mail fundraising. (One of the major donors was the Neil A. McConnell Foundation, which is run by Scott McConnell. McConnell, who for a time was on the CIS board, edits *The American Conservative*, a far-right journal founded by white nationalist Pat Buchanan.)

But Krikorian, who has been the executive director of CIS since 1995, shrugged off the idea that Tanton had any influence there. “We’ve never had any institutional relationship,” Krikorian told the *Intelligence Report* in an E-mail. “He’s never been on our board or served as an employee, he’s never even been in our offices.” He said Tanton “had some role back in the mid-80s in helping rustle up money for CIS,” but added that he and Tanton had no “personal relationship.”

Krikorian sounded a similar note in 2004, when he testified before an immigration subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee. “He wrote us a check, I think it was a year ago,” he said of Tanton. “It was the first check I have seen from him in nine or 10 years. ... We have no institutional relationship.”

That may be technically true. But four members of the CIS’s current board of directors — Otis Graham, William Chip, Frank Morris and Peter Nunez, who chairs the CIS board — also serve as members of FAIR’s board of advisers.

And Mark Krikorian knows John Tanton well. He worked for Tanton’s FAIR before landing his post at CIS in 1995. When

Fudging the Facts

Although the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) bills itself as an “independent” think tank that seeks “to expand the base of public knowledge” about immigration, the Washington, D.C.-based group is only interested in one thing. CIS’s reams of reports, as well as its blog postings, editorials, and frequent panels and press conferences, incessantly push the idea that America’s immigration system is an unadulterated evil and that the only way to save America from impending doom is to cut drastically the number of immigrants. CIS has blamed immigrants, both legal and undocumented, for everything from terrorism to global warming. To make its case seem as strong as possible, CIS often manipulates data, relying on shaky statistics or faulty logic to come to the preordained conclusion that immigration is bad for this country. But CIS studies have been regularly debunked by mainstream academics and think tanks including the Immigration Policy Center, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities and America’s Voice. Here are some examples:

“Hello, I Love You, Won’t You Tell Me Your Name: Inside the Green Card Marriage Phenomenon” (November 2008). This report alleges widespread fraud among marriages between American citizens and foreigners, but then goes on to admit that “there is no way of knowing” just how prevalent marriage fraud is because there is no systematic data. CIS even con-

cedes that most marriages “between Americans and foreign nationals are legitimate.” Then, based on this non-data, CIS gets to what seems to be the real point of its study — “if small-time con artists and Third-World gold-diggers can obtain green cards with so little resistance, then surely terrorists can.” Fraudulent marriage applications, CIS concludes, are “prevalent

among international terrorists, including members of Al-Qaeda.”

“Homeward Bound: Recent Immigration Enforcement and the Decline in the Illegal Alien Population” (July 2008). Widely cited by the mainstream press, this report argues that the migration decisions of undocumented workers are based more >>>

he was given the CIS job, Tanton wrote to congratulate him. Not long after, Krikorian began participating in annual Writers Workshops put on by Tanton. Through the years, Tanton wrote Krikorian about various aspects of policy. In 1995, for instance, Tanton warned Krikorian that “feelings overwhelm facts” in the immigration debate. In 1998, he congratulated Krikorian and another man for a CIS award they started for immigration journalism. In 2001, he offered suggestions for “a good hand-out for speeches, press conferences, etc.” He frequently copied Krikorian on correspondence with white nationalists.

But Krikorian dismisses the contacts. “Tanton’s among hundreds of people who send me ideas, suggestions, cc’s of e-mails and the like,” he told the *Report*.

Tanton’s Man at CIS

One of John Tanton’s oldest friends is Otis Graham, a North Carolinian and emeritus professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Graham sits today on the board of directors of CIS and is a key Tanton contact there.

The men have known each other since the 1970s, when both began to see immigration as a greater threat to the environment than population growth. Tanton was so fond of Graham and his late brother, Hugh, that he wrote their parents in 1998 to thank them “for presenting society with these such useful citizens.” A year earlier, he wrote Otis Graham to thank him for 20 years of work together.

When Tanton started CIS as a FAIR project in 1985, Graham was a member of the FAIR board. But Tanton’s correspondence makes clear that he was able to get Graham to leave the FAIR board in order to run CIS, a job he did until Krikorian took over in 1995. (Graham held various titles including executive direc-



Hobnobbing with extremists: CIS Executive Director Mark Krikorian posed in 2007 with Kyle Bristow, then a student leader at Michigan State University who ranted publicly about “Judeo-Bolshevism.”

tor during that decade. But because Graham would not respond to the *Report*’s inquiries and Krikorian refused to say, it remains unclear just what titles Graham held.)

Tanton frequently wrote Graham revealing letters. In 1991, he told him about former Klan leader David Duke’s campaign for governor of Louisiana that year, which he described as based on “the excesses of affirmative action and illegitimate pregnancy.” Tanton told Graham that “there is a lot going on out there on the cultural and ethnic (racial) difference” front and added, in a hopeful tone, that it was “all tied to immigration policy. At some point, this is going to break the dam.”

Graham also frequently attended Tanton’s Writers Workshops, including a number that featured presentations from white nationalists. In 1990, for instance, he was at a gath-

on the level of immigration enforcement than the lure of jobs. In other words, as CIS argues, the Bush Administration’s stepped-up enforcement efforts in 2007 were working, leading to an exodus of undocumented workers. But experts said the decreases in the undocumented population that the report claims to have documented were not mainly the result of enforcement efforts. Wayne Cornelius, director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California-San Diego, said that “undocumented migration clearly responds to changing U.S. economic conditions” more than anything else. The report also suggests, without any supporting evidence, that undocumented workers may have decided to stay

here longer than they would have otherwise because of the 2007 immigration debate.

“Employment Down Among Natives in Georgia: As Immigrant Workers Increased, Native Employment Declined in Georgia” (June 2007).

Focusing on Georgia between 2000 and 2006, this report argues that an increase in less educated immigrant workers caused employment to decline among less educated natives. But it offers no direct evidence to support that conclusion, and most other studies have reached very different conclusions. A study by Jeffrey Humphreys, director of the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia, concluded that during the period of highest immi-

gration in Georgia, starting in 1996, jobless levels among native-born workers remained very low. He also found that in sectors where less educated immigrants are concentrated, such as construction, immigration made it possible for “the industry to expand rapidly,” and said that the increased size of the work force led to improved benefits for all workers. Many other studies concur that immigration is generally good for the economy. In 2007, for instance, the Public Policy Institute of California found that immigrants arriving in that state between 1990 and 2004 increased native-born workers’ wages by an average 4%, because immigrants mainly performed complementary, not competitive work, that helped the economy grow. >>>

ering where one speaker was Jared Taylor. (In November of that year, Taylor started *American Renaissance*, a racist journal focusing on race, genetics and intelligence. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Taylor would write that when black people are left on their own, “any kind of civilization disappears.”) Tanton was so enthused about Taylor that in 1991 he sent Graham materials from Taylor and offered to pay for his subscription to *American Renaissance*.

Tanton also wrote Graham in 1991 about the case of the SS St. Louis, a German boat loaded with Jews trying to escape Europe in 1939. After it was denied entry to the United States and other countries, it was forced to return to Europe, where many passengers eventually were murdered. Tanton suggested to Graham that Jewish support for immigration was based on “guilt feelings” about the episode.

In 1994, after years of negative publicity, FAIR stopped accepting funds from a racist foundation called the Pioneer Fund, which was set up in 1937 to “improve the character of the American people” by promoting procreation by those of white, colonial stock. Though by that time FAIR had taken \$1.2 million from Pioneer, the bad press had simply grown too damaging.

But that didn’t weaken Tanton’s private liking for the Pioneer Fund or for the pseudo-science it promoted — eugenics, the attempt to improve the human race through selective breeding. That same year, Tanton wrote to tell Graham that he was “right that we have a mutual friend in Harry Weyher,” referring to the man who then was running the Pioneer Fund. “I, too, have a strong interest in genetics.”

Tanton had long sought to rewrite the history of the Immigration Act of 1924, which is today widely seen as a racist statute that instituted a national origin quota system and completely barred Asian immigration. As part of that effort, he asked Graham several times to speak at FAIR board meetings or Writers

Workshops about key intellectuals in the nativist movement that led to the 1924 law. One of them was Madison Grant, author of *The Passing of the Great Race*, an influential but racist 1916 book that described race as the basic motor of civilization and history. In one letter to Graham, Tanton suggested that “maybe [Grant] was just ahead of his time!” In another, he asked Graham to explain to the FAIR board that another racist law, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, was “just labor looking out for itself.”

The Later Years

In 1995, Mark Krikorian took over day-to-day operations of CIS as its new executive director. But Otis Graham remained on the CIS board of directors, where he is still today. At the same time, Graham also stayed on the editorial advisory board of a journal published by Tanton, *The Social Contract*, where Graham had served since it started in 1991. The two men’s close friendship continued.

Graham left *The Social Contract’s* advisory board in 2003, but he was still there when it published a special volume entitled “Europhobia: The Hostility Toward European-Descended Americans.” The 1996 issue included articles by white nationalists and argued that multiculturalism was wrecking white culture. He was also there when The Social Contract Press published a frankly racist novel depicting the overwhelming of gullible whites in France by dark-skinned immigrants.

In the years since, Graham has written several articles for *The Social Contract*, most recently a 2006 piece on immigration policy. He also still interacts with The Social Contract Press which publishes the journal. Last October, he spoke to a workshop hosted by the outfit entitled “Immigration Reform and America’s Unchosen Future.” Speaking from the same podium was Frosty Wooldridge, a rabid nativist who has accused immigrants of bringing a “disease jihad” to America and warned that continuing immigration will soon bring “internal civil conflict.”

“Back Where We Started: An Examination of Trends in Immigrant Welfare Use Since Welfare Reform”

(March 2003). This report argues that after declining in the 1990s, immigrants have made up “a growing share of all households using the welfare system” — in other words, they have been sapping public benefits. But the month after it was released, the study was thoroughly debunked by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), which said CIS had manipulated data. First of all, CIS included as immigrant households even those headed by naturalized citizens and it also attributed “benefit use to an immi-

grant household in cases where the only members of the household receiving benefits are U.S. citizens.” CBPP pointed out that the CIS study itself found that use of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income and food stamps by these households had declined substantially between 1996 and 2001, but “because it finds that the share of such households with at least one member who receives Medicaid rose modestly,” it concludes “that the share of immigrant households using ‘at least one major welfare program’ has not declined since 1996.” The CIS report “fails to mention that the modest

increase in Medicaid participation by so-called ‘immigrant’ households is due entirely to an increase in Medicaid or State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) use by U.S. citizens who live in households headed by foreign-born individuals.” “CIS inexcusably fails to disclose,” says CBPP, that “among both noncitizen adults and noncitizen children, Medicaid participation declined between 1996 and 2001.” Even worse, the CBPP report, “using the same database as CIS,” found that “the percentage of legal noncitizens participating in each of the major means-tested federal programs ... declined significantly since 1996.”

Graham isn't the only CIS official to write for *The Social Contract*. Both Krikorian and Steven Camarota, the CIS director of research, have done so, as have CIS Fellow Don Barnett and CIS board members Frank Morris, Vernon Briggs and William Chip. Chip also spoke last October at the Social Contract Press event.

Some at CIS have also written for a nativist hate site, VDARE.com, which is named after Virginia Dare, said to be the first English child born in the New World. They include CIS Fellow John Miano and board member Carol Iannone.

In 2004, Graham also responded to suggestions from Tanton that he look at past immigration debates in the United States to ferret out “good material ... that should be brought back to life.” In his *Unguarded Gates: A History of America's Immigration Crisis*, Graham claimed that a “mythistory” had been created during the civil rights movement that falsely depicted America as a “nation of immigrants” and “immigration restriction in the American past [as] a shameful expression of a bigotry called nativism.” He depicted racist past policies as honest attempts to preserve a “working American nationality.” He credited the 1924 statute's passage to the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, but failed to mention that it was indicted for sedition in 1942 because of its pro-Nazi activities or that its leader drew up plans to crush “Jewish subversives.” And he dismissed the nearly 4 million-strong, angrily anti-Catholic Klan of the 1920s as “on the margins of immigration reform.”

Tanton was with Graham every step of the way, advising him on materials and topics and reading the manuscript. Graham

also thanked CIS board members Briggs and Nunez, along with CIS policy studies director Jessica Vaughn, for their help.

Letting in the Light

CIS makes much of its mainstream credentials, saying it seeks “to expand the base of public knowledge” in an effort to show the need for immigration policies that serve “the broad national interest.” And indeed, CIS' website shows that it has testified to Congress close to 100 times since Krikorian took over in 1995.

But the history of CIS make clear that it has always been part of a broad-based and well-planned effort to attack immigration in all forms. CIS Senior Policy Analyst Stephen Steinlight pretty much captured CIS' brand of “independent” analysis when he told the Inter Press Service News Agency in 2005 that immigration threatens “the American people as a whole and the future of Western civilization.”

That is the real idea that lies behind CIS' worldview, even if CIS founder Tanton — who once warned of the “deadly disunity” that immigration was bringing to America — says it more clearly than most of CIS' officials today. It is much the same idea that has animated nativist extremists for centuries: the fear that Americans will be overwhelmed by foreigners who wreck the U.S. culture and economy.

NumbersUSA

The nativist lobby's grassroots organizer says it rejects racism, but its founder is linked to racist groups and individuals

Congressman Chris Cannon of Utah was bearing down. He'd questioned Roy Beck, head of the immigration-restriction group NumbersUSA, three years earlier, and he hadn't felt that he got straight answers then. Now, in the March 24, 2004, hearing before the immigration subcommittee of the House Committee on the Judiciary, Cannon was trying once again to pin down Beck's relationship to John Tanton, the racist

founder of many of the nation's key nativist groups.

"But you have had a long and intimate relationship with Dr. Tanton, [his organization] U.S. Inc., and the other allied groups...?" Cannon asked.

"Well, I think I would like the definition of intimacy," Beck replied, allowing only that he had known Tanton "as a reporter" in the 1970s and 1980s.

Cannon: "But ... this is rather a close personal relationship where you guys share ideas and you perform functions that he thinks are important?"

Beck: "No, that would suggest that he would be my supervisor."

In the following minutes, a bizarre, parrying exchange between the two men unfolded, as Beck sought to convince Cannon that NumbersUSA had always been "programmatically autonomous," despite being an official program of Tanton's U.S. Inc. for five years. As Beck talked, Cannon grew obviously frustrated.

"You had lunch with John Tanton, I'm sure, did you not at some point?" Cannon asked Beck. (A few minutes later, the Republican explained that he was "talking about ideology and communicating ideological ideas" with Tanton.)

"No," Beck replied. "I think I've had dinner a couple of times."

Roy Beck was, to be kind, understating the relationship. The truth is that Beck was an employee, as Tanton has often written, of Tanton's U.S. Inc. for 10 years. He was one of the editors for Tanton's immigrant-bashing publication, *The Social Contract*, and helped edit a book by Tanton and another U.S. Inc. employee, white supremacist Wayne Lutton. He and his wife vacationed with Tanton, a man who calls the Becks "dear friends," and he once developed a program with Tanton that targeted Republicans for recruitment to the nativist cause. At one point, in fact, Tanton named Beck his "heir apparent," with Beck's consent. As recently as last year, Beck was an invited speaker at Tanton's *Social Contract* conference.

Clearly, the two men *had* "shared ideas," and often.

Why is Roy Beck downplaying his relationship to John Tanton, a man who was Beck's mentor and friend for decades? What, if anything, is he trying to hide?

Beck leads an organization that has reached the heights of mainstream legitimacy, a position that helped NumbersUSA achieve dramatic policy successes, most especially in June 2007, when his followers flooded the Senate with more than a million faxes. (The onslaught helped doom comprehensive immigration reform that had bipartisan support and had been expected by many observers to pass.) He has long insisted that NumbersUSA has no "vision of a homogenous white America," and his website decries all manner of "immigrant bashing" and racism.

But John Tanton has come to be an embarrassment. His longstanding connections to white nationalist ideologues, his flirtation with anti-Semitism, and his many racist statements about Latinos have become well known — and are a huge liability for Beck and his restrictionist program. Pressed, Beck claims he is not ashamed of his mentor. But Tanton's name is nowhere on his website. John Tanton, it seems, is undermining Roy Beck's respectability.

"It is amazing that Beck has attained the mainstream status he has, considering where he comes from," concludes Henry Fernandez, a senior fellow at the progressive Center for American Progress, a think tank based in Washington, D.C. "His extremely close and decades-long relationship with Tanton should give pause to anyone who deals with NumbersUSA."

Beck's Boss

In a long letter to the *Intelligence Report* and in other communications, Beck consistently emphasized his opposition to any kind of racism in the immigration debate. "We do not believe that immigration policy should be used to determine any particular racial makeup of this country," he wrote. As he does on his website, Beck cited concerns about the environment and poorer Americans as his main motivation for seeking lower immigration levels. He also wrote that he and his wife, Shirley, "have spent our entire adult lives" battling racial intolerance and ignorance.

Beck said that the couple had deliberately bought houses in integrated neighborhoods in Michigan, Ohio, Texas and

Virginia, even volunteering their sons for a court-ordered busing program in Dallas. He said his family had welcomed all kinds of minorities and immigrants, included undocumented ones, to their home, and he added that he had “led the forced integration of a segregated private club.”

“I and NumbersUSA have suffered the slings and arrows of racist restrictionists who decry our special concerns for minority Americans and by racist immigrationists who believe foreign workers are needed because non-employed Black Americans are too inferior to hire,” he said in his letter to the *Report*.

What Beck did not do is actually renounce Tanton. Instead, Beck said that he did not “choose to agree or disagree” with “snippets of quotes” from Tanton. In a later letter, he said, “To the extent that any of John’s actions may have provided any support to white supremacists, I would say those were harmful actions.”

Over the years, more and more information has emerged about the racial attitudes of John Tanton, who, like Beck, initially came to the immigration debate through concerns about overpopulation and the environment. As long ago as 1988, a set of his internal memoranda to the staffs of two groups he founded — the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and U.S. English — were leaked and showed Tanton warning of a coming “Latin onslaught,” questioning whether Latinos were as “educable” as others, and worrying that Latinos were outbreeding whites. A decade later, he told a reporter that whites would soon develop a racial consciousness, and the result would be “the war of all against all.” He hired and worked alongside Wayne Lutton, who has held leadership positions in four white supremacist hate groups. He published and endorsed a racist book on immigration, and he published numerous white supremacist tracts. Tanton compared immigrants to bacteria that will continue growing until the population crashes, and sneered at immigrants’ “defecating and creating garbage and looking for jobs.”

But that wasn’t all. Late last year, the *Report* revealed that over the course of some 20 years Tanton had corresponded with Holocaust deniers, former Klan lawyers, and leading white nationalist thinkers. He introduced leaders of FAIR, on whose board he still sits today, to the president of the Pioneer Fund, a racist outfit set up to encourage “race betterment,” at a private club. He promoted the work of an infamous anti-Semitic professor, Kevin MacDonald, to both FAIR officials and a major donor. At one point, pursuing his interest in eugenics, the utterly discredited “science” of breeding a better human race, he tried to find out if Michigan had laws allowing forced sterilization. His concern, Tanton wrote in a letter of inquiry, was “a local pair of sisters who have nine illegitimate children between them.”

These and other revelations came from an examination of Tanton’s correspondence, which is housed at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in Tanton’s home state. The same library contains Tanton’s correspondence with Beck, letters that illuminate their close relationship.

The Star Employee

Roy Beck was a print journalist for three decades, most notably as chief Washington correspondent for Booth Newspapers, a chain of small papers in Michigan. He first met Tanton in the 1970s, when he was an environmental reporter for the *Grand Rapids (Mich.) Press* and knew him, as he told Congressman Cannon in 2001, as “one of the premiere environmental activists in Michigan.”

The two developed an affinity early on. In 1988, when Tanton’s embarrassing memos to the staff at FAIR and U.S. English were leaked, Beck apparently wrote in a way that



pleased his news source. “It was nice to have something evenhanded and understanding after all the contrasting treatment I’ve received,” Tanton wrote Beck that year. Although Tanton resigned from U.S. English after prominent backers including Walter Cronkite and conservative GOP columnist Linda Chavez quit over his memos, Tanton told Beck “the damage is pretty well under control now.”

In 1991, a year after Beck says he left journalism to concentrate on writing about immigration, Tanton approached Beck about a job with his foundation, U.S. Inc. In 1992, Beck signed on as Washington editor of Tanton’s journal, *The Social Contract*, which in coming years would publish a roster of white nationalists and their fellow travelers. In his letter, Beck said Tanton offered him the job as “a way to earn some income.” But that apparently contradicts what Beck told Cannon in 2001, when he testified that he had been “an unpaid, part-time correspondent.”

Tanton liked his new editor. In a 1993 letter, he described Beck as one of three men who made up “the core of *The Social Contract* ‘team.’” The others were Robert Kyser and Wayne Lutton, who has belonged to and written for an array of white supremacist groups. By 1997, Tanton was describing Beck in a memo to his personnel file as “a very good and productive worker.” In several quarterly reports for U.S. Inc., Tanton referred to Beck’s work as “The Beck Projects,” noting in 1997 that those projects had “grown to be a sizeable part of our operations.”

But Beck makes it sound like he wasn't really a part of U.S. Inc., even though *The Social Contract* is legally one of its projects. (For instance, he told Cannon in 2004 that although the NumbersUSA project had been under U.S. Inc. until 2002, he personally controlled its bank account during that period. Later, he conceded he “did not have personal access to that bank account.” Beck also told Cannon that “you’re ascribing a management pattern that just didn’t exist,” although Tanton referred to Beck repeatedly as an “employee.”) In his letter to the *Report*, Beck said that he was only active with the journal until 1994, when he began work on several books, even though his name stayed on the masthead until 2002. He said he spent most of 1996 on a book tour, that he then worked briefly on a U.S. Inc. project created for him by Tanton, and then, the same year, started on another project, NumbersUSA.

Beck portrayed NumbersUSA as his own group, started up with his own money but incorporated as a program under Tanton’s U.S. Inc. as a convenience — a way to get financial and legal services from the parent body in return for a small fee. He said that he raised all the money for NumbersUSA and set all its policies. He said similar things to Cannon, calling his group “programmatically autonomous.”

But that’s not the way Tanton described the relationship. Until 2002, when Beck reorganized his group as a freestanding entity, Tanton repeatedly referred to him as an employee, subject to U.S. Inc.’s personnel policies. (In his testimony, Beck finally told Cannon that his paychecks came from U.S. Inc.) Tanton described Beck as guest-editing entire editions of *The Social Contract*, and, in 1993, helping to edit *The Immigration Invasion*, a book by Lutton and Tanton so raw in its immigrant bashing that Canadian border authorities have banned it as hate literature.

Tanton’s trust in Beck reached new heights in 1997, when he focused on him as a potential heir at U.S. Inc., writing that “there is no other contender.” He wrote Beck asking him to sign on as his “heir apparent” in the case of his death and, on Jan. 6, 1998, to thank him vociferously for agreeing to do so. Although Beck today says he was “honored” by Tanton’s request, you’d never know that from reading his website, which makes no mention whatsoever of Tanton and describes Beck simply as “a journalist for three decades before founding NumbersUSA.”

Palling Around With Racists?

In the 1980s, a notorious eugenicist outfit known as the Pioneer Fund — a foundation focused on race, intelligence and genetics and described by the London *Sunday Telegraph* as a “neo-Nazi organization closely integrated with the far right in American politics” — began to get some very bad publicity. When it was reported in 1988 that FAIR had received substantial Pioneer funding, Tanton claimed he had no idea what the fund’s background was. But FAIR continued to take its cash.

That finally ended six years later, during the debate over California’s anti-immigrant Proposition 187, when Pioneer grants were linked to ads bought by FAIR. By then, FAIR had

received a total of \$1.2 million from Pioneer (since 1985).

It was three years after that very public, 1994 debacle that Tanton and his wife vacationed with the Becks in Florida. The Tantons took the Becks to dine with John Trevor Jr., the son of a key architect of the 1924 Immigration Act that formalized a racial quota system that would only be dismantled in 1965. The younger Trevor was something else as well — a board member for several decades at the Pioneer Fund.

In his letter to the *Report*, Beck said he had “almost forgotten” about the 1997 Trevor dinner and wasn’t sure if he knew then about Trevor’s Pioneer post or even what the fund was. He described the Trevors as “a very warm, erudite and genteel older couple” and said he was “sure nothing of a racial nature” came up.

It’s hard to believe that Beck knew nothing at the time of the Pioneer Fund, given that his mentor had been in such public hot water over it — and that FAIR’s acceptance of Pioneer money became public in the same year that Beck wrote his story about Tanton’s controversial FAIR memos. That, and the fact that Tanton had written Beck a year before the Florida visit to tell him that Trevor “serves on the board of the Pioneer Fund and his father was a key person” in 1924.

Another thing Beck said he only “vaguely remember[ed]” was Tanton’s 1996 effort to create his own eugenics organization, the Society for Genetic Education (SAGE). In any event, Beck said, he has never had any interest in eugenics.

That same year, while on a tour promoting a book on immigration, Beck addressed a meeting of the Council of Conservative Citizens, a white supremacist group that has spread racist propaganda since 1985. His lecture came just six months after his fellow editor, Lutton, spoke to the same group. In his letter, Beck suggested that his talk had been set up by a publicist for his book, said he “had no idea who the group was,” and added that he didn’t recall “hearing anything racist being said by any of the speakers.” He did see “overt racism” reflected in the exhibits in the halls of the meeting but decided to stay and was given “a respectful hearing.”

‘Sharing Ideas’

John Tanton frequently wrote Beck or copied him on letters sent to others — and the letters sometimes expressed ugly ideas. In 1996, he wrote Beck wondering “whether the minorities who are going to inherit California (85% of the lower-grade school children are now ‘minorities’ — demography is destiny) can run an advanced society?” “I have no doubt that individual minority persons can assimilate to the culture necessary to run an advanced society,” Tanton wrote his friend, “but if through mass migration, the culture of the homeland is transplanted from Latin America to California, then my guess is we will see the same degree of success with governmental and social institutions that we have seen in Latin America.” (He also said that “there is scarcely any group more chauvinistic than the Orientals.”)

Also in 1996, Tanton wrote Beck’s wife with a peculiar

request having to do with religion (the Becks are devout Methodists). “It occurs to me that the ‘Book of Joshua’ is a different version of welcoming strangers — after the walls of Jericho come tumbling down, the invading Jews killed everybody, man, woman, and child,” he wrote. He then asked, as a “bit of Biblical research,” about the Book of Ezra and its “strong prohibitions against intermarriage.” Tanton said that Jewish men were “called to task, after which they ‘put away’ their foreign wives and children they had borne.” Tanton had a specific question: What did “putting away” mean?

Tanton had a history of consulting Roy Beck about religion. In 1995, he asked Beck to “monitor” the Protestant press on immigration issues. In 1993, he suggested that Beck write a “Challenge to Religious Leaders” on immigration. In 1992, he criticized the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to Beck, saying it “need[s] to have a supply of refugees to keep their jobs going.” (He also asked if members of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, a pro-migrant organization, were “Marxists.”) And he decried the Catholic Church’s ability to bring in priests from other countries, telling Beck that it was “a clear breach of the wall of separation of church and state.”

In 1998, two years after putting NumbersUSA under the rubric of U.S. Inc., Beck was still listed as Washington editor of Tanton’s *Social Contract* when the journal put out what may have been its most lurid edition ever, “Europhobia: The Hostility to European-Descended Americans.” The lead article came from John Vinson, head of the hate group American Immigration Control Foundation, who argued that “successful Euro-American culture” was being replaced with what he called “dysfunctional Third World cultures.” Tanton chimed in, decrying the “hatred and fear” of whites that he blamed on “multiculturalists” and immigrants.

Tanton’s correspondence shows that he and Beck regularly came up with program ideas together, with Tanton usually being the one to pitch them to U.S. Inc. donors. One of the ideas that was most developed by the pair was what they called “Recruiting Republicans,” a project Tanton described in 2001 as “an idea that can actually move the battle lines ... in our favor.” Tanton plugged the idea hard with major U.S. Inc. donors. “The goal is to educate these members about the political consequences of high-level immigration, to recruit at least some legislators to the immigration caucus in the House and to get them to act and vote accordingly,” he wrote to the late

Cordelia Scaife May’s foundation. (Indeed, the hard-line House Immigration Reform Caucus, which had just 10 members before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, has grown to 112 members today, almost all of them Republicans.)

Tanton wrote another 2001 letter to Fred Stanback, a major funder of Beck’s U.S. Inc. work. “The goal is to change Republicans’ perception of immigration so that when they encounter the word ‘immigrant,’ their reaction is ‘Democrat.’”

The ties that bind the two men, even if considerably less public since Beck separated NumbersUSA from U.S. Inc, remain tight. In 2006, Tanton’s U.S. Inc. gave NumbersUSA a \$20,000 grant. Just last year, both Beck and his employee, Rosemary Jenks, spoke at a conference of Tanton’s Social Contract Press. And Beck currently works out of offices that he shares with another Tanton organization, ProEnglish.

Repudiating John Tanton

Roy Beck says that he is no racist, that he opposes racist ideology with every fiber of his being — and his website and other writings do not contradict that. But when he is confronted with facts that seem to call that into question — in particular, his long and intimate relationship with John Tanton, and what looks a lot like his seeking to obscure that fact — Beck has declined to take an explicit position.

Barack Obama faced a similar problem when explosive comments by his pastor of 20 years, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, were publicized and then went viral on YouTube, where they drew 1.2 million views in the first 24 hours. The comments, as is now well known, bitterly attacked the United States as a racist nation. To many, they sounded like a racist condemnation of all whites and the entire government.

To stay in the presidential race and remain viable, Obama had to react publicly, and he did. He said he “vehemently disagree[d with] and strongly condemn[ed]” the “inflammatory and appalling” remarks made by Wright. He gave a major speech where he said that Wright’s “incendiary language” had “rightly offend[ed] white and black alike.” He said the remarks “expressed a profoundly distorted view of this country.” After Wright continued to speak out, Obama said he was “outraged” and “saddened” and quit the Rev. Wright’s church for good.

Perhaps it’s time for Roy Beck to take a hint from our new president.

