

Big-Spender Mott Fights Gift Curbs

8/10/75

By Stephen Isaacs

Washington Post Staff Writer

Stewart Rawlings Mott, the General Motors scion, believes that what is good for a General Motors scion is good for America.

Millionaire Mott, one of America's most prolific contributors to liberal politics over the past eight years, feels he has a constitutional right to continue spending as much as he wants to promote what and whom he wants.

The reforms in campaign laws that Congress hurriedly passed last year restrict his spending and, he believes, are heinously unconstitutional.

In an affidavit Mott filed in court challenging the new laws that limit the amount a person can give to candidates, he insists that his own contributions have been to further causes and not to help individuals.

When he spent \$25,000 for advertisements in 1968 to try to draw then-Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller into the race for the Republican presidential nomination, he swore, he did it not for any love for Rockefeller but from his hatred for the war in Vietnam.

"I acted as I did," he said, "because I felt that our presidential candidates owed the American people genuine alternatives vis-a-vis the greatest national disgrace—the continued Vietnam war. Acting without Rockefeller's foreknowledge or sanction I advocated his candidacy because I could not stomach the Vietnam positions of Nixon or Johnson."

He ended up giving \$110,512 that year to provide



STEWART R. MOTT
... donated \$6 million

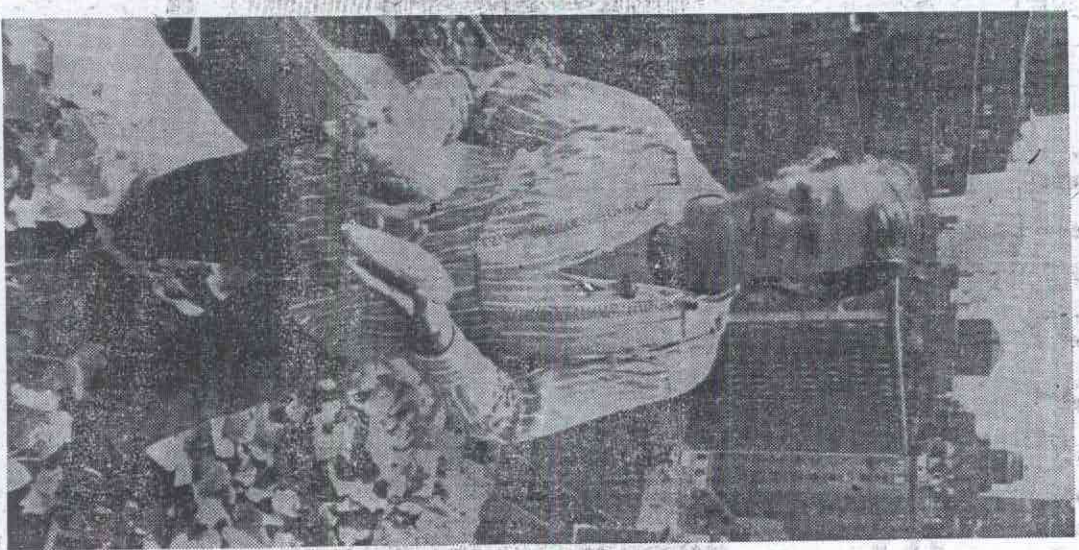
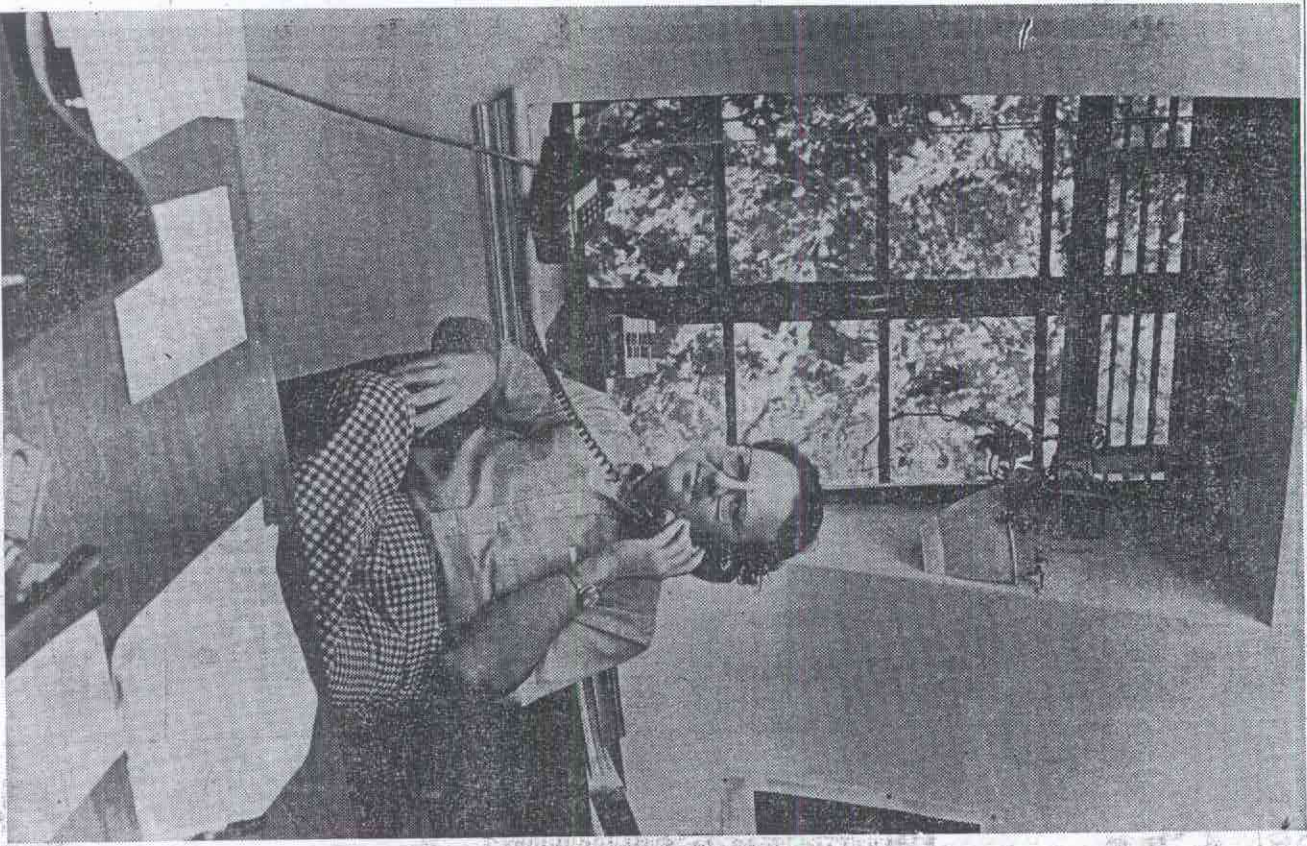
Rockefeller's candidacy and later gave \$206,310 to then Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy's campaign for the Democratic nomination.

With McCarthy, he says, "Candidate and issue were joined as if one. I perceived McCarthy's candidacy as the vehicle best designed to protest U.S. public policy.

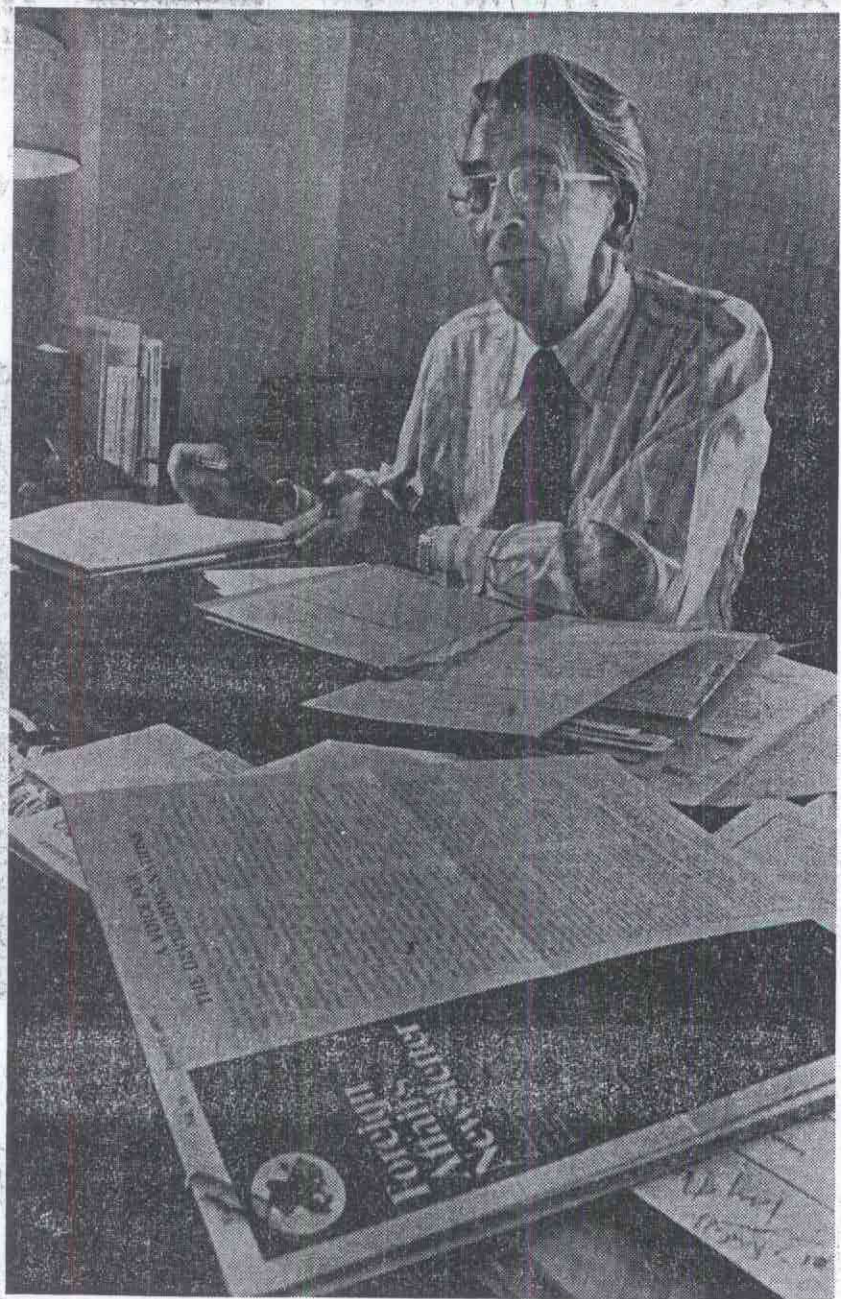
"No organization, political, philanthropic or otherwise, could have competed effectively for public attention during the summer of 1968 with the McCarthy campaign in making the point that the U.S. should get out of Vietnam. Strictly from a cost-effective point of view, the McCarthy campaign was the best vehicle for propagandizing that message."

Mott the propagandist, is now 37. His late father was

See MOTT, A1 Col. 1



Stewart R. Mott displays a squash and cucumber in his garden on 14th floor penthouse in New York. At left, Morton Haldperin at his desk in National Security Study, a Mott tenant in Washington. At right, Carl Macey, editor of Foreign Affairs Newsletter, another tenant.



MOTT, From A1

once GM's largest individual shareholder.

Mott has an income of about \$1 million a year, mostly from GM dividends, and gives it away as fast as he can. Since 1964, he has given more than \$6 million to candidates, causes and charities.

Mott's visible role in the challenge to the campaign law is ironic in that its passage by a Democratic Congress was triggered essentially by abuses in the last Republican presidential campaign.

The W. Clement Stones and Richard Mellon Scaifes—the big Republican contributors of 1972—are not among the challengers, but the two biggest contributors to the Democratic loser—Mott and Max Palevsky—are.

According to Herbert Alexander of Princeton's Citizens' Research Foundation, Mott was the No. 1 giver to George McGovern, at \$407,747.50. Palevsky was second, at \$289,673.30.

The new law, which went into effect Jan. 1, limits individuals to giving \$1,000 to a candidate for a nomination, with a total limit of \$25,000 to all candidates.

Mott says he may soon seek out a candidate who will accept more than \$1,000 and intentionally break the law. He says that McCarthy recently joked that he'd consider accepting if Mott makes the check large enough.

Mott sees the limit on individual giving as but one outrage of the new law. He contends that it solidifies the position of incumbents, penalizes Senate candidates in small states, and weakens provisions in earlier laws for public disclosure of financing, among other things.

But his principal complaint is that it will sap the kind of influence that he and people like him have had in American politics, an influence he considers beneficial.

Mott sees nothing wrong with a person or persons having large influence.

In a letter to acquaint-

ances complaining about the strictures of the new law, Mott wrote that "Mrs. Mary Q. Smith can have an 'undue influence'—more than a one-man one-vote influence—on the outcome of an election, because Mrs. Mary Q. Smith happens to be a volunteer who happens to be able to spend 40-60 hours weekly at campaign headquarters working hard and effectively and affecting the outcome of an election.

There are thousands of Americans, wealthy, poor, famous or unknown, who have an undue influence—and that's because they're motivated in the marketplace of ideas and instincts and gut reactions to give more support to one candidate than another."

Mott denies that his gifts buy access to representatives and senators, the kind of special access that the new law was intended to

curtail. Some observers on Capitol Hill say they do.

In 1974, Mott gave \$48,785 to 91 candidates for the House, and another \$20,750 to 20 candidates for the Senate.

Asked in a recent interview whether he wasn't trying to buy access, Mott replied:

"I'm looking for multiple things. I'm looking for the passage of certain bills in Congress, whether it's the cutoff of military intervention in Cambodia or adequate funding for population issues, which are then the product of supporting candidates, such as those the National Committee for an Effective Congress identifies each year—seeking freshmen or challengers who are of the type who would elect a Phil Burton to chairman of the caucus."

Mott maintains that "of the 90 or 100 candidates that I supported last year, I have met maybe half of them. I have not made any special efforts to go around and meet the ones who are just names to me.

"Take a Bob Traxler. I heard about his by-election in 1973 . . . I put \$2,000 into that campaign. To this day I haven't met him and . . . wouldn't recognize him if he walked up the steps . . . It'd be nice to meet him some day, and that applies to at

least a couple or dozen other people on that list."

Mott a few minutes earlier had ticked off names of members of Congress he has been attracting, in small groups, to his new base of operations in Washington to lobby them on population control legislation. (He has given more than \$2 million since 1964 to that cause.)

He names Reps. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), Donald M. Fraser (D-Minn.), Stephen J. Solarz (D-N.Y.), Edward I. Koch (D-N.Y.), Jonathan Bingham (D-N.Y.), James Scheuer (D-N.Y.), Donald W. Riegle Jr. (D-Mich.), Sen. Frank Moss (D-Utah) and "two or three staff aides" as having come to hear a panel of experts he assembled.

His new operational headquarters here is a large house, at 122 Maryland Ave. NE, across from the Supreme Court. He bought it as an investment, he says, and as a place where he could house a number of organizations he is funding.

Mott said he paid \$375,000 for the house last August. He rents 80 per cent of it to the Fund for Peace and some of its member organizations, and uses the other 20 per cent for two of his own Washington employees and for space for himself when he is here "five or six days a month."

Mortgage payments and upkeep on the house run \$43,000 a year, and the tenants pay \$35,000 of that, Mott said. But that \$35,000 is more than made up by the \$50,000 he gives them. He is chairman of the executive committee of the Fund for Peace.

Mott's tenants are organizations consisting mostly of former government officials who have become disaffected "oppositionists."



Photos by Gerald Martineau—The Washington Post

This house, at 122 Maryland Ave. NE, is operational headquarters for Stewart R. Mott's activities.

They are the Fund for Peace's Center for National Security Studies, a left-wing think tank set up to investigate the use of intelligence and national security claims to justify the growth of government power, which is headed by Robert Borosage; the Center for Defense Information, set up to scrutinize the Department of Defense, headed by retired Rear Adm. Gene R. LaRocque; the Twentieth Century Fund's National Security Study, headed by Morton Halperin, the one-time aide to Henry A. Kissinger who has sued Kissinger for tapping his telephones; a media project, In The Public Interest, which prepares material for newspapers and radio stations, and the Institute for International Policy, set up to publish a foreign affairs newsletter edited by Carl Marcy, who was top assistant on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when it was headed by then-Sen. J. W. Fulbright.

Mott spends most of his time in his eight-room New York apartment at 800 Park Avenue.

His bizarre lifestyle, focusing on his 3,000-square-foot organic garden on the apartment's terrace, has attracted wide publicity, as has his penchant for riding about Manhattan on a bike or in an old, battered car, or talking openly about parental relationships, his life, his frequent lovers, his money, his anything.

Mott seems to live a life of what might be termed clothed exhibitionism.

But relatively little of the attention to Mott has focused on just how much he has been giving away, and to whom, what that nets him and why he does it.

Mott from his youth wanted to be anything other than frivolous with his inheritance. He says he has long had a fixation with trying to impress his elders—a trait he attributes to trying to please his father, a serious man who was past 60 when Stewart was born.

Stewart was 18, he says, when he decided to spend much of his time and money on arms control and population control.

"I realized," he says now, "that I had unusual resources. I didn't know quite what, I didn't know how big the Mott Foundation was, or what my share of family income would be." But he knew his would be spent in those areas.

He likes the publicity his philanthropy accrues, he says, because he hopes it will encourage other rich young people to do what he does. "I think in some measure that's what publicity is all about," he says.

"Of course it's gratifying to see your name and face in print," he continues. "It's an ego trip.

"But it's also important to me, and this sounds arrogant and presumptuous, to set an example. I was especially pleased to have thoughtful, well-written stories in so-to-speak quality magazines like Fortune and New Yorker. I have been dismayed by the kind of periodic stories that have appeared in the (New York) Daily News, because they've been so full of inaccuracies, and they're not reaching an audience I especially want to influence.

"Not everybody has the opportunity to do the kind of things with their resources that I have. Obvi-

ously, the sons and daughters of Fortune and New Yorker readers have considerably more option to forego a life of financial gain in favor of public service."

Mott maintains that it is not especially ego-lifting to watch candidates fawn over him.

"Candidates fawn—if you want to make use of that derogatory term—with all potential helpers," he says, "whether they are potential district leaders or voters or union bosses or movie stars, or others of all ilk who can help in a campaign.

"So if they have a fawning attitude — your word, not mine—toward a contributor or a potential contributor, it's not greatly different, except in that case he's seeking money, in other cases he's seeking talent, in another case he's seeking a political commitment.

"Some candidates, so to speak, fawn more than other candidates. When I'm seeking a favor from somebody, I'm likely to have a deferential, particularly agreeable attitude in trying to be persuasive and sell whatever it is I'm trying to sell."

Mott, however, does not have to seek many favors.

Thanks to a series of trusts his father set up, beginning in 1939, Mott now derives income from two trusts that hold about 245,000 shares of GM stock, and will get income at the age of 40—in 2½ years—from yet another trust with about 45,000 shares in it. A trust set up for his mother will give him the dividend income from another 80,000 shares should her death precede his, and he has a personal investment portfolio of, he says, from \$3 million to \$4 million.

In addition to his non-

deductible political gifts, he tries each year to give half his adjusted gross income to charities. That adjusted gross for the last 10 years has been:

1965	\$1,100,000
1966	951,516
1967	695,083
1968	743,961
1969	629,556
1970	748,308
1971	906,921
1972	1,251,574
1973	1,503,159
1974	784,811

The fluctuations primarily correspond to variances in GM's annual dividends.

His first big political contributions were triggered by the Vietnam war but, earlier, he had been giving hundreds of thousands of dollars to birth-control-related organizations. By 1968, he had given \$1.24 million to such groups. Until then, says his accountant, John Hodgkin, 80 per cent of his contributions went to population and family planning.

Mott has cut down on those in more recent years because, he says, the causes have become established and don't need his money in the way they did.

"Up until 1967," he says, "I was working almost fulltime as a volunteer under the Planned Parenthood system. I got distracted away from it by the continuing Vietnam war and the opportunity to do something.

"... I found myself working more and more in politics... and I realized gradually that in order to change substantive issues, we had to change the people who held political office."

Mott's reduced giving is still handsome. Because 1968 and 1974, analysis of his accountant's ledgers shows, Mott gave \$801,928 to population planning organizations, the largest beneficiary being

the Planned Parenthood Federation:

1968	\$139,657
1969	64,823
1970	140,648
1971	145,526
1972	58,813
1973	26,513
1974	15,000

Other organizations in that general field receiving Mott money during that period include Zero Population Growth, Flint (Mich.) Planned Parenthood, New York City Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger Research Bureau, Population Reference Bureau, Population Crisis Committee, Population Council, Congress on Population and Environment, Reproductive Biology Research Foundation, Abortion Rights Association, Association for Voluntary Sterilization, National Organization of Non Parents, Society for the Scientific Study of Sex, and the Population Institute, among others.

In the last few years, most gifts have gone to anti-war groups, and groups and politicians trying to change the system.

From 1970 through 1974, he gave \$283,747 to the Fund for Peace, \$301,482 to an anti-war program of the United Methodist Church; \$89,164 to the anti-war Businessmen's Educational Fund; \$20,000 to Peace, Inc.; \$175,000 to the Center for Political Reform; \$100,000 (in 1972 alone) to People Politics, an effort to get blacks and youth and women to the conventions; \$20,498 (also in 1972) to the "Informed Delegate" newsletter at the Democratic National Convention; \$63,953 to the National Committee for an Effective Congress; \$25,000 to the Center for the Study of Non-Medical Drug Use (marijuana); \$14,650 to the National Women's Education Fund; \$15,000 to the League of Women Voters Educational Fund; \$37,000 (last year) to the consumerist Center for Corporate Responsibility; \$63,636 to the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, and about \$100,000 to support the work of activist lawyer William Dobrovir.

There were also smaller gifts, around \$10,000 or un-

der, to such groups as Amnesty International, the Center for Public Financing of Elections, the New Democratic Coalition, Members of Congress for Peace Thru Law, Americans for Democratic Action; Business Executives Move for Vietnam Peace; National Women's Political Caucus, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, Citizens Research Foundation, plus hundreds of others mostly dedicated to peace or governmental change.

In the midst of this were the overtly political donations. In 1968 they totaled \$365,000; in 1969, an off-year nationally, it was \$75,000; in 1970, it was \$50,000; in 1971, it was about \$50,000; in 1972 it was more than \$700,000, including \$40,000 spent try-
 int to force Sen. Edmund S. Muskie to reveal the names

of those who contributed to his campaign prior to the public disclosure clause that took effect April 7; in 1973 it was more than \$100,000, and in 1974 was \$150,000.

He has contributed to some candidates in New York City and state.

In 1969, for instance, he backed two candidates for mayor: John V. Lindsay, to the tune of \$26,600, and Rep. Herman Badillo, for \$6,500. In '73 he also backed two mayoral candidates, Badillo (\$39,500) and Albert Blumenthal (\$6,188). He spent \$45,000 trying to help Howard Samuels win the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 1974.

In many of his donations,

Mott gives shares of stock that have appreciated, having the receiving organization sell the stock and give him back his cost, keeping the appreciated amount as his contribution. In fact, says accountant Hodgkin, most of his giving to McGovern in '72 was done this way.

Meanwhile, Mott constantly tries to increase his holdings, so as to increase the amount he gives away each year. He has a staff of five working on his finances, and has come up with an unusual investment system (of buying bonds on margin) that results in huge annual interest payments and his having to pay almost no taxes, what with deducting interest and charitable contributions.

With the new law's having dried up Mott's candidate giving, he is spending some of his time now on The Fund for Constitutional Government, a tax-deductible organization he established here last summer with attorney Edward Greensfelder Jr. Mott is its president and has given \$124,000 of the \$176,000 it has raised so far.

Among the fund's projects, Mott says, are lawyer Dobrovir's activities, like the case to keep Richard Nixon's presidential papers public; a military auditing project to "expose and litigate . . . sweetheart relationships with the Department of Defense and defense contractors, illegal foreign arms sales" and the like; distributing leftover sets of Ralph Nader's study of Congress by subsidizing libraries' purchases of them; underwriting a direct-mail campaign and the publication of the third edition of The Almanac of American Politics.

Trying to get Congress to reassess what it had done with the new campaign law, Mott wrote to some members of Congress months ago to tell them they no longer would be seeing the usual Mott largesse—that they'd have to settle for a penny apiece from him henceforth unless they "do something to set aside these preposterous donor ceilings."