and environmental situation in which there were few incentives for people to move. This in turn would require relatively stable populations and equitable distribution of opportunity and wealth, hardly a description of today's world. Without these conditions, it appears that open immigration policies are about to be added to the growing list of casualties of continued population growth and resource depletion.

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References

1. *Population and the American Future: The Report of the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future* (New American Library, New York, 1972), p. 201.

Tanton correctly points out that decisions often have to be made with deficient data. Current immigration data are not equal to the task of providing needed insights into the effects of proposed changes in immigration policy. I agree that population considerations should be included in immigration policy, but political, economic, and social considerations also have a place in such deliberations. Tanton's discussion and conclusion indicate the paramount importance he gives to population. Restrictionism has previously been viewed as an answer to problems in the United States. Our experience should warn us to tread carefully. Ansley Coale's evaluation (*1*) of immigration's contribution to population growth should give us pause about considering radical cutbacks of immigration as a way of checking the effects of population growth.

Concern for the quality of life should also cause us to be vigilant about equity in our laws and about repressive administration and enforcement, which affect not only aliens but native-born and naturalized citizens. Our shared concern about population growth should not blind us to the complex effects of immigration policy and administration. We should seriously ponder whether mere survival is enough.

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Obvious Question

I was much interested in Irving H. Page's editorial "A sense of the history of discovery" (27 Dec. 1974, p. 1161), especially the description of the ludicrous circumstances under which Fleming discovered penicillin. I think I can add a further ludicrous note to the discovery of penicillin.

When I was an undergraduate in medical school and taking a bacteriology course (in 1914), we learned how to grow bacteria on agar plates. One day my plate had a number of black spots on it surrounded by clear halos. I asked the instructor what those clear halos were containing a black spot in the center; I don't recall his exact words, but the tenor of his response was, "Those are molds: you were careless in your technique and you got your plate contaminated by molds. You must be more careful."

I am sure that bit of knowledge was not his alone. The other instructors and the professor of bacteriology must have known also of the black spots surrounded by clear zones. There must have been hundreds of bacteriologists around the world at that time who had seen this same thing. Incredibly, it seems that the perfectly obvious question, "If something diffuses out from a colony of molds which will prevent bacterial growth in culture, might this also prevent infection in man?" seems not to have occurred to any of them. Why didn't that so very obvious question occur to me? Instead, I went back to my place thoroughly chastened, having been chided before the whole class for carelessness in technique. Before the day was over, all my classmates knew that molds destroyed bacterial growth. They were all reasonably intelligent; why didn't the question occur to one of them?

If a reasonably intelligent and curious high school student had wandered in to visit the laboratory, he, being thoroughly disinterested, might very well have asked, after the situation was explained to him, "Is that what you use in sick people to kill bacteria?"

It has always seemed to me that this was a prime example of how extremely obtuse even intelligent people may be. After all, the only reason we were studying bacteriology was to learn how to control infectious diseases!

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