

*‘There is obviously a great storm brewing’*

# Visionary, Ecological Prophet, Heretic —R.I.P. John Tanton, M.D.

LEON KOLANKIEWICZ

*There is obviously a great storm brewing.*  
—John Tanton, from his 1975 essay,  
“International Migration”<sup>1</sup>

## MIGRATION THEN AND NOW

Migration is an ecological phenomenon that transcends our own species, as any casual observer of V-shaped flocks of waterfowl winging south across the crisp autumn skies of North America can attest. It is also more ancient than our species, and it is linked to the emergence of *Homo sapiens* as a potent geophysical force. It was the means by which certain venturesome specimens of *H. sapiens* — the ancestors of most humans alive on Earth today, billions of us — trekked out of the East African savannah to settle every continent on this planet, except for Antarctica. This migration out of Africa by a relative handful of intrepid forebears began perhaps 50,000 to 70,000 years ago and took tens of thousands of years to reach the far-flung corners of the Earth in places like Tierra del Fuego, Polynesia, and the Arctic.

For many millennia, on an annual or decadal basis, migration occurred mostly at a relative trickle, on the scale of individual, family, clan, sect, and village, as

humans walked, paddled, rode, and sailed — escaping overpopulation, localized resource depletion, shortages, oppression, or conflict. The migrants went in search of freedom, of new horizons, new opportunities, and virgin, untapped lands and resources to settle and exploit. Occasionally migration occurred when marauding armies on horseback swept across the vast Eurasian steppe to conquer or raid other settled lands and peoples, to pillage their accumulated wealth, rape their women, and take slaves to toil at the backbreaking drudgery that our fossil-fuel-fed machines (“energy slaves”) now perform without bondage, complaint, or rebellion. Or when ascendant empires invaded others, or were themselves invaded or infiltrated in turn.




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<sup>1</sup> “International Migration” was an essay penned by John Tanton and submitted as an entry in the 1975 Mitchell Prize competition. It was awarded third place in this competition at the Limits to Growth Conference, held in Woodlands, Texas, sponsored by the Club of Rome, University of Houston, and Mitchell Energy & Development Corporation. “International Migration” also became the cover story for the July 1976 issue of the British publication *The Ecologist*.

Contemporary mass migration is now taking place on another scale altogether, orders of magnitude greater, measured in millions rather than tens, hundreds, or thousands. Never before in human history have so many people been on the move — on foot, by boat, car, bus, train, and plane. This current mass movement of humanity is happening both within and between nations, from depopulating or ecologically stressed rural areas to overcrowded Third World urban slums; from rustbelt to sunbelt; from overused, depleted landscapes to resource-rich, “virgin” ecosystems awaiting plunder. Migration flows now hop from continent to continent with a rapidity unrivaled in history, aided and abetted by modern modes of transport a thousand times faster than ancient ones.

The phenomenon of mass migration is on the upsurge in our world today, both physically and politically. Not only are there unprecedented numbers of people voluntarily or involuntarily picking up stakes and resettling elsewhere, or attempting to. But there are also the contentious, even explosive, politics of migration. It has become a defining, divisive issue in many regions — among them Europe, North America, and Australia, but also Asia, Africa, and Latin America — in essence, *everywhere*, precisely because of its sheer scale, which can destabilize both sending and receiving societies.

In the twenty-first century, migration *en masse* is both a cause of multi-faceted problems (and it must be said, some benefits, although diminishing ones at the current massive scale), as well as an effect of other problems. It engenders widespread environmental, economic, social, and cultural consequences for both sending and receiving countries. At the same time, migration itself is a manifestation or symptom of rapid population growth and pressures on resources, scarcity, social instability and widening inequality, political unrest, unemployment and poverty, ethnic/racial oppression, violence, conflict, and strife, as well as rising seas, stronger hurricanes, drought, and crop failure, which may themselves be the harbingers of a climate in rapid transition.

### **A VISIONARY EYE DOCTOR, YEARS AHEAD OF HIS TIME**

One visionary eye doctor — Dr. John Tanton — an ophthalmologist and life-long resident of Michigan, foresaw the emergence of these trends and developments many decades ago, well before others did who lacked his foresight and fortitude. In that respect, the late Dr. Tanton was an ecological prophet. Yet he did more than just foresee and warn about the kind of calamitous future that contemporary ecological and demographic trends were pushing America towards — he dedicated himself to organizing and leading other concerned citizens and activists to try to avert this dystopian future. And when

social taboos or lack of consensus prevented existing activist groups from taking up a controversial cause, John used his organizational talent and indefatigable drive to found new groups that would.

Tanton originally became concerned about the environmental impacts of rapid population growth more than half a century ago. John had grown up in the 1940s and early '50s doing chores on his family farm in Sebewaing, in eastern Michigan next to Saginaw Bay on Lake Huron. He milked the cows every morning before heading to school. It is probably not a coincidence that one of Tanton's ecological mentors and fellow population prophets, Garrett Hardin, also spent a good part of his youth working hard and learning life's tough lessons on a Midwestern family farm. Effete political correctness and shallow, phony compassion have no place on a farm. Hard work, and getting yourself muddy and bloody do.

John's youthful experience helping manage a farm had instilled in him a sense of what conservation pioneer Aldo Leopold called the land ethic: the view that human beings are an integral part of the ecosystem and not apart from it, nor its lords and masters. As Leopold put it: “A land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it.” We are part of nature rather than insulated and isolated from it and exempted from its laws, in spite of the bubbles of comparative comfort constructed by industrial civilization. Humanity must exercise prudent stewardship and conservation of natural resources, not their wanton exploitation for short-term ends.

Tanton's biographer and fellow Michigan native John Rohe wrote in a 2002 biography — *A Journey into American Conservation* — of Tanton and his wife Mary Lou, who also came from a farming family: “even as an early teenager, John had formed the understanding that our role was not to multiply and subdue the earth. He believed we were to co-exist in an easy partnership with it and to study the natural world.”

For some, this understanding would have amounted to heresy of sorts, for it explicitly rejected the most widely held interpretation of the Biblical injunction in *Genesis 1:28*:

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth.

John Tanton and Mary Lou Brown met in 1956 at Michigan State University, where John was president of the campus Delta Upsilon fraternity chapter. They soon bonded over their common background, interests, and values; they were married in 1958. John received his M.D. at the University of Michigan and did his residency in Denver, Colorado. Civic activism on conservation and family planning attracted both Tantons almost

as soon as they were resettled in their home state, and John joined a practice in the small town of Petoskey, beside Little Traverse Bay on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. Their energy and initiative founded the Bear River Commission to raise appreciation for this local river and tributary of Lake Michigan, and spearhead the removal of rubbish, old tires, and garbage dumps from its banks. Soon thereafter one or both Tantons founded the Petoskey Regional Audubon Society (1967), Hartwick Pines Natural History Association (1969), League of Conservation Voters for the 11th Congressional District (1970), and Little Traverse Conservancy (1972).

Mary Lou became involved with Planned Parenthood in the early sixties, and by 1967, the year before Paul Ehrlich published *The Population Bomb*, both Tantons had expressed interest in starting a Planned Parenthood affiliate and clinic in northern Michigan. John served as president of Northern Michigan Planned Parenthood from 1970 to 1975.

Larger national organizations with greater reach beckoned. In 1971, the national Sierra Club's Population Committee appointed John as its chair. In 1973, he was elected to the board of directors of Zero Population Growth, founded in the aftermath of Ehrlich's best-selling book, *The Population Bomb*. In 1980, John joined the board of the Environmental Fund, which eventually became Population-Environment Balance.

During the week surrounding the first Earth Day in 1970, John and Mary Lou crisscrossed Michigan and gave some 30 speeches on population and the environment. They noticed that while audiences were receptive to the topics of teen pregnancy, contraceptive methods and availability, and the need to reduce America's fertility rate, there was more reluctance when they broached the topic of immigration. This was at a time when immigrants comprised less than five percent of the U.S. population, and immigration accounted for only 10-15 percent of the country's annual population growth.

It had not yet dawned on Michiganders or Americans, but the profound, long-term demographic consequences of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) were just starting to be felt. The first ripples were appearing in what would become the greatest, most prolonged wave of immigration in American history, one that has still not crested or broken, half a century later.

Yet given John's close attention to detail and his ability to perceive and diagnose emerging long-term trends — hallmarks of the medical scientist he was — he observed that the source of U.S. population growth was undergoing a historic shift. For the previous half-century, ever since the 1924 legislation which had ended the previous wave of immigration early in the twentieth

century, America's above-replacement-level fertility rate had been the prime driver of almost all of the country's population growth, especially robust in the post-World War II Baby Boom. Now, just as fertility rates in America were falling to replacement level and below, raising the prospect of finally halting environmentally damaging U.S. population growth after two centuries of steady, rapid growth, migration rates were rising, which would undermine or thwart efforts to stabilize the U.S. population or reduce it to more sustainable levels.

The U.S. population was approaching its sixth doubling since the first census in 1790, when it stood at a mere four million, and just two more doublings would push it to more than one billion. Just at the time when lower birth rates were starting to dislodge us from the unsustainable exponential growth curve, higher immigration rates might be forcing us back onto this tragic trajectory. And yet even those most concerned about stopping U.S. population growth either missed or ignored these early signals of the profound shift that was just getting under way. Not John Tanton.

It would be another two decades before it became obvious to those who paid attention that immigration was now the unavoidable elephant in the room, or the fly in the ointment of those first Earth Day activists in 1970 who dreamt of halting environmentally damaging U.S. population growth by 1990.

### 'A GREAT STORM [IS] BREWING'

According to Tanton himself, one day in the mid-seventies he was leafing through an issue of the journal *Science* when he saw an ad for an essay contest being held in conjunction with the first in a series of upcoming biennial conferences co-sponsored by oilman George Mitchell, the University of Houston, and the Club of Rome. The first would be held at The Woodlands Inn in Houston, Texas, in October 1975. These were called the Limits to Growth conferences, and they were inspired by the 1972 book of the same name, authored by young scientists and computer simulation modelers at MIT under the guidance and using the World3 model developed by pioneering systems scientist Prof. Jay Forrester. The first Woodlands conference was attended by over 300 business leaders, scientists, university professors, and government officials, up to and including U.S. Senators. The conference chairman was Dr. Dennis Meadows, formerly of MIT and then with Dartmouth; Meadows was the leader of the Limits to Growth research team, its primary spokesman, and a co-author of *The Limits to Growth*.

John Tanton had been collecting written materials on immigration for several years in hopes of convincing someone else to write an article about it that John could then use to convince others that rising immigration rates



were an emerging but overlooked population issue that would need to be addressed sooner rather than later. But so far he had found no takers. Intrigued by the *Science* ad for the essay contest, he decided to enter it himself, and try his hand at his first serious writing on the links between migration, population growth, and the environment. He submitted an outline for his proposed essay to the judges, who selected him as one of the 12 finalists and authorized him to proceed with the essay. Four Mitchell Prize winners would be selected. First place would receive an award of \$10,000; second \$7,000; third place \$3,000; and fourth \$1,000. \$10,000 in 1975 dollars would equal \$47,700 in 2019, some serious pocket change and an incentive to think clearly and write persuasively.

John spent the summer of 1975 drafting and editing his essay “International Migration,” submitting it by the deadline. Much to his astonishment, he won third place in the contest and the \$3,000 prize money that came with it, funds which he used as seed money to get the immigration reform movement off the ground. One of the other Mitchell Prize essay finalists was Edward Goldsmith, editor of the new UK magazine called *The Ecologist: Journal of the Post Industrial Age*. Goldsmith liked Tanton’s essay, and ran it as the cover story for the July 1976 issue of his magazine, which was then a leading periodical in the up-and-coming environmental movement. Now Tanton at last had the essay he had been looking for, which he could share with others and use as an organizational and motivational tool.

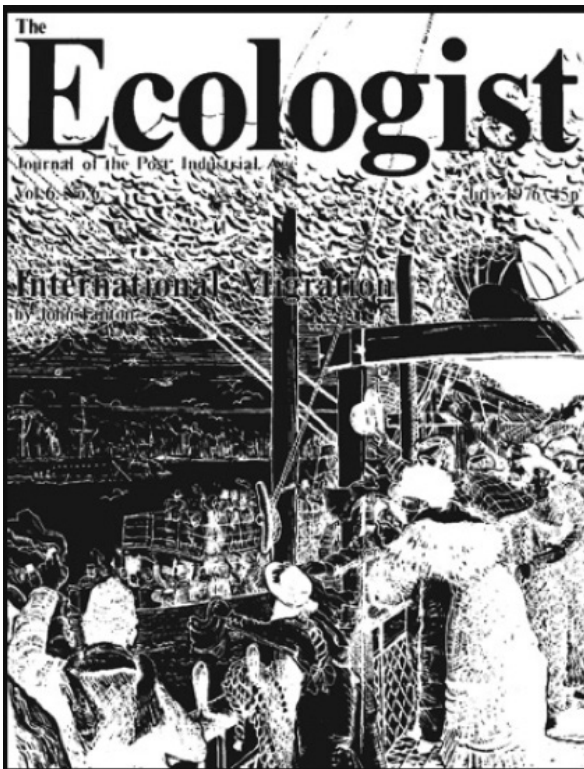
John began “International Migration” by observing that:

Continued population growth is now widely recognized as a major component of the social, economic, and environmental problems facing mankind. The inevitability of some form of stationary state is gaining wider acceptance.

He then went on to note that while the spatial distribution and other attributes of population were being discussed extensively in the environmental literature, conspicuous by its absence was “...the role international migration plays in the demographic and other problems facing mankind.”

He suggested several possible reasons for this omission:

- Oversight because of so much emphasis over the decades being placed on reducing births to control population growth;
- Migration had traditionally been the domain of sociologists and economists, “who have generally shown little concern about population and environmental problems;”
- The fact that “those interested in environmental and population problems tend to be drawn from the physical and biological sciences, disciplines not traditionally touching the migration question;”
- Fear because immigration was considered by many to be too controversial or sensitive.



The 1976 issue of *The Ecologist* (above left), featuring John Tanton’s essay, winner of the 1975 Mitchell Prize (above right).

With regard to this last factor — the reticence many felt at broaching immigration for fear of being condemned as a hypocrite or a xenophobe — John had a sensible response:

This visceral reaction is understandable, as most of us have immigrant roots [Tanton's own father was an immigrant from Canada], and we feel compromised. It is, however, no more inconsistent for the offspring of immigrants to consider the limitation of immigration than it is for the products of conception to plan to limit births, or the beneficiaries of past economic growth to consider its limitation.

In view of the scurrilous smears to which Tanton himself was subjected beginning in the following decade and continuing for the rest of his life, his succeeding statement is rather ironic:

An aversion to discussing immigration is also understandable in light of the seamy history surrounding past efforts to limit immigration. These were marked by xenophobia and racism, and gave rise to the likes of the Know-nothing political party, and the Ku Klux Klan. Other -isms of past debates that we seldom hear today include jingoism and nativism. The subject was often highly emotional and divisive. Any person who attempts discussion of immigration policy will soon learn as has the author that the situation is unchanged in this regard.

John was acknowledging that much of the opposition to immigration at earlier periods in American history appeared to be rooted in what would now be considered ignoble motives. He lamented that this sordid history now served to dissuade many people of good will from forthrightly engaging the environmental challenges posed by rapidly rising rates of modern immigration.

In the rest of the Introduction to “International Migration,” John revealed that he had been influenced by early advocates of ecological economics such as Herman Daly, Kenneth Boulding, E.J. Mishan, or Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen. He endorsed the “stationary state” economy, a term popularized by Daly, and referred to it as “inevitable.” The “growth of both human numbers and material consumption must eventually end,” he wrote.

Tanton also displayed a stubborn optimistic streak, making a prediction, which unfortunately subsequent events have still not borne out, even 45 years later:

...international migration on its current scale is destined to end in the near future, owing to the same finiteness of the globe. As the

principal countries currently receiving immigrants — the United States, Canada, Australia — reach or surpass the limits of population which they can support, they will likely move to curtail immigration.

While opposition to population-growth-forcing mass immigration has certainly increased in the United States and Australia — and to a lesser extent Canada — it has not grown strong enough to substantially curtail or stop immigration into these countries. Indeed, at least in the United States, legal immigration rates today are about three times higher than when Tanton made that prediction.

John can be excused for not possessing the clairvoyant powers back then to foresee how immigration gathers pace, how it could become an almost unstoppable force, like a snowball gathering mass and momentum as it rolls downhill. As the number of settled immigrants grew implacably over the decades (from less than 10 million in 1970 to almost 50 million today) — along with the number of their American-born descendants, immigration lawyers and other businesses dependent on immigrants, patrons, clients, and other vested interests with a deep stake in maintaining or increasing immigration levels — their combined political clout increased commensurately and enormously. This in turn has made it very hard for a paralyzed, fractured Congress to stem the immigration flow, in spite of a growing public and populist backlash against it.

The essay went on to describe the history of modern migration, of how growing European populations in the 1800s began to “press hard” against their resources and environment. Newly developed steamships burning newly exploited coal (which had begun to replace firewood on a large scale as a denser energy source) were used to export “excess population” to the Americas and Australia while carrying natural resources and raw materials from these frontiers back to European powers. “Push” factors to leave home and “pull” factors of opportunities abroad emerged. Between 1840 and 1930 at least 50 million migrants departed Europe.

John noted that the flow of migrants from Europe had diminished since World War II, and that an earlier migration pattern from less developed (poorer) to more developed (richer) regions had returned in force. Emigration flows from Latin America, Africa, and Asia were now increasing. More than 55 percent of legal migrants to the U.S. in the early seventies (and even more now) were arriving from the less developed countries. However, as he emphasized: “There are no remaining virgin continents waiting to be peopled or to have their resources exploited.”

After reviewing estimates of legal and illegal immigration to the United States, John estimated that, in

aggregate, immigration accounted for about half of U.S. population growth in the mid-seventies. As the decades have passed, that percentage has gradually risen higher and higher. Nowadays, demographers project that contemporary and upcoming immigration will directly and indirectly (via American-born offspring) account for 90 percent or more of U.S. population growth to more than 400 million by 2060 and up to half a billion or more by 2100.

John then contrasted the United States with its “developing neighbor to the south” — Mexico — where in the mid-seventies unemployment and underemployment were running at about 40 percent and GNP per capita was just one tenth that of America’s, creating a tremendous incentive to emigrate across the border to the north. He emphasized the remarkable fact that Mexico’s annual incremental increase in population from births minus deaths (natural increase) was 50 percent larger than that of the U.S., in spite of a population only one fourth as large as America’s, arguably due to its much higher birth rate. In the 44 years since then, while Mexico has more than doubled in population (from 59 million to 131 million), it also underwent a veritable demographic revolution and became a leader among Latin American countries in promoting family planning and smaller family sizes. By 2018, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) among Mexican women had dropped to 2.2, barely above replacement level (2.1).

Tanton discussed the “brain drain” and other effects on those developing countries facing large-scale emigration of their work force and citizenry. These unfortunate countries “lose the very persons on whom campaigns of social and economic development must be based; those with the highest expectations, the greatest initiative and intelligence, and those most dissatisfied with conditions at home,” he contended. He called this a “new and subtle and highly effective form of colonialism” and argued that the loss of their most ambitious citizens helped prolong the undeveloped status of developing countries. While some argued that remittances from emigrants constituted an effective de facto form of foreign aid, Tanton called their value into question, citing a report by the international foreign affairs journalist Jonathan Power that “such monies are spent mainly on consumer goods, often imported, and not on financing development. In the end, trade deficits are increased. Native agricultural systems are undermined. Sights are set on emigration, and enterprising families are lost to the economy of the less developed country.”

In sum, both the push and the pull factors were giving rise to enormous migratory pressures, not just in Mexico, but throughout Latin America and the wider Third World — that is, in Africa and Asia as well. It was at this point that John observed: “*There is obviously*

*a great storm brewing.*” It may have been obvious to an ecological prophet like John and to a few other prescient, courageous observers, but the bulk of run-of-the-mill politicians, policy-makers, and the public chose to bury their heads in the sand like proverbial ostriches, ignoring the ticking time bomb.

Today, in 2019, the “great storm” that John Tanton predicted 44 years ago is upon us. Brewing and building for many years, in 2015 it broke in full force upon Europe’s shores. There, a real-life “Camp of the Saints” scenario played out when German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s heart broke upon seeing the image of a drowned Syrian migrant toddler washed ashore on a Turkish beach. With her blessing and that of other European elites, in 2015 alone more than a million Middle Easterners and Africans poured across Eastern and Southern Europe on foot, or boarded rickety vessels to cross the Mediterranean en route to salvation in the promised land.

In the United States, the storm broke in 2016 when immigration became the single most salient primary campaign issue propelling the nomination of political novice Donald Trump over nearly 20 other more experienced Republican presidential rivals, as well as the signature issue in Trump’s shocking subsequent election over Hillary Clinton on November 8. In the Trump presidency, immigration has become the single most contentious problem dividing the country and the administration from the Democratic opposition in Congress.

Since Tanton’s 1975 essay, tremendous strides have been made with regard to both economic development and family planning/smaller family size in many Asian and Latin American countries. This is already reducing and will likely further reduce migratory pressures from those regions in the years ahead. (This progress does not eliminate migration, which might still increase for a while in the years ahead, but it sharply reduced these pressures from what they might have been had the population bomb not been defused somewhat.)

Africa, however, is an altogether different case. Incredibly, most of the entire world’s population growth from now until 2100 is expected to occur in sub-Saharan Africa, in this one region alone. U.N. demographers project that Africa as a whole will grow by about four-fold by 2100, from one billion-plus to four billion-plus, this in a continent that has already increased four-fold in population size since 1950. As documented in Duke University African Studies professor Stephen Smith’s sobering new book, *The Scramble for Europe: Young Africa on Its Way to the Old Continent*, this rapid population growth will only intensify migratory pressures emanating from Africa.

The storm Tanton predicted decades ago has



already hit, but unlike thunderstorms in nature, this human storm will last for many decades to come, and its aftermath could persist for centuries.

### AN ECOLOGIST HOLDS OUT HOPE FOR A SUSTAINABLE, DESIRABLE FUTURE

Dr. John Tanton concluded his landmark essay “International Migration” with a guardedly optimistic tone. It is clear that he was considering international migration not just in the context of stopping population growth around the world, but more broadly, in terms of pursuing environmental sustainability (a term which did not yet exist in 1975), and the alternative stationary state economic systems that were just then beginning to be adduced by pioneering ecological economists.

It is time to take a fresh look at international migration in the light of the *need to slow the economic growth of the developed nations*, rather than stimulate it, and in turn to *promote the economic growth of the less developed countries, at least to some minimal acceptable standard*. Current migration policy pushes both considerations in the wrong direction, and stimulates overall population growth as well. [italics added]

A prescription to “slow the growth of the [already]

developed nations” for the sake of environmental sustainability, while simultaneously encouraging the economic growth of the less developed countries for the sake of fairness and equity, was certainly a non-starter with mainstream American politicians and voters back in the mid-1970s. If anything, it would enjoy even less popular political support in 2019, after four decades of largely stagnant wages and salaries for the struggling working and middle classes, and a widening and troubling wealth gap separating them from their betters in banking, finance, and high tech.

Republicans and Democrats alike, from conservatives and populists like Donald Trump to flaming liberals like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, all sing the praises of more rapid economic growth. They differ only in how the benefits of that growth should be divided up and shared. But all American politicians worship heart and soul at the altar of infinite growth. Growth is now our unofficial national secular religion, and “In Growth We Trust” our de facto national motto. Growth is one of the few sacred cows around which Americans across the political spectrum can rally unabashedly, much more so than such other once sacred patriotic symbols as the flag, national anthem, or pledge of allegiance. And many if not most — certainly among the elites — believe that unending population growth — whether from births or migrants — is a prerequisite



for the chimera of perpetual prosperity and everlasting political stability.

The essay “International Migration” became the vehicle that launched John Tanton wholeheartedly into the immigration activism and leadership at which he persevered for the rest of his life. Immigration became what defined him to the public, to his admirers, followers, and detractors alike, rather than the deep-seated ecological concern, advocacy, and prophecy that drew him to immigration in the first place, as an inconvenient, uncomfortable, but unavoidable issue that most environmentalists lacking a spine would rather just go away. John went on to found or facilitate such organizations as the Federation for American Immigration Reform, U.S. Foundation, U.S. English, Social Contract Press, and Center for Immigration Studies, all of which have played important roles in the public policy area.

Decades before Al Gore discovered an “inconvenient” but politically correct truth in global warming, John Tanton had discovered an inconvenient but highly politically incorrect truth in mass immigration:

Immigration may be good for the vast majority of the migrants themselves. They find new economic opportunities, and in the special case of refugees, new freedoms. It emerges, however, that their migration in the main runs counter to the real interest of both the countries of origin and the recipient countries, and the world as a whole. This is true whether the analysis is conducted in the traditional growth framework, or in the context of the stationary state.

For promoting his inconvenient but politically cor-

rect truth about climate change, Gore was venerated by global elites and Hollywood A-listers, received a Best Documentary Oscar at the Academy Awards for a film about his campaign, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In contrast, for his inconvenient but politically incorrect truth about mass migration, John Tanton was regularly maligned in the mainstream media and vilified by the obscenely wealthy smear merchants at the misnamed Southern Poverty Law Center. These diametrically opposed outcomes have no bearing on the relative truth or merit of Gore’s and Tanton’s respective claims. It will be up to future historians to adjudicate these.

As for John Tanton himself, this particular ecologist was happy to “envision a world in which international migration could become free and unfettered.”

In the final words of his essay, John Tanton the visionary gave voice to his fondest hope — his epitaph in a sense — that unrestricted migration could and should resume when and if the timing is right:

Appropriately, it is the world of a stationary state, in which people in different regions are in equilibrium with resources, and in which there is a reasonable chance in each region for self-fulfillment, matched with social equity. Under these conditions, international migration could be unfettered, because there would be little incentive to move. Contentment with conditions at home, coupled with man’s strong attachment to things familiar, would serve to keep most people in place. While the freedom to migrate at will is incompatible with the physical realities of today’s world, it is one of many things that can be restored as man achieves balance with his environment. ■

## Tribute to John Tanton

FRED ELBEL

I first met Dr. John Tanton at a Writers’ Workshop, then again in Denver about 2006. Somehow I made a decent impression, and I ended up doing technical consulting for *The Social Contract*. I didn’t know John very well personally, but my discussions with him over the years led me to immensely respect his intellect and ethic. He was a visionary — inquisitive, honest, and steadfastly determined to address important societal issues.

John was incredibly effective. He singlehandedly established the modern immigration sanity movement. In accordance with rule 13 of Saul Alinsky’s *Rules for Radicals*, John became the target of incessant personal attacks by leftist Marxists. Yet he continued his important work apparently unaffected by his mindless critics. John said in an interview, “If you can’t take the heat, get out of the kitchen.” Good advice for all of us who will carry on in John’s absence. ■