

## NAFTA Final Stage Blows Up U.S.-Mexican Border

On Jan. 1, 2008, the final stage of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—the flagship agreement of British free-trade policies among the United States, Mexico, and Canada—went into effect. As of that date, Mexico was forced to end all tariff protection of its most essential food production, including corn, beans, sugar, and powdered milk.

This will lead to mass unemployment and starvation in a country already ravaged by globalization and free-trade economics; and it will drive millions more Mexicans to attempt to cross the U.S. border in desperation, at exactly the time that about a million per year are now being *expelled* from the U.S. back to Mexico, and anti-Mexican hysteria

and even lynch mobs are being whipped up in U.S. border states.

Six million Mexicans left the countryside in the first 14 years of NAFTA's implementation, as 5 million jobs in agriculture were wiped out, even before this final blow. Poverty became concentrated in communities where only the elderly, women, and children now live, since the men went to the United States in search of jobs. One peasant a day loses his life trying to cross the border. And hundreds of thousands of others are being driven into the waiting arms of the drug cartels, which today control entire sections of the country, especially along the border.

Starvation is looming, because Mexico already imports 40% of the food its people eat. In 1997, Mexico produced 250,000 tons of beans, but only 50,000 in 2007. And in 2008, the prices of basic necessities are expected to rise by at least 30%, because of the scheduled increase in diesel fuel, gasoline, and electricity rates.—*Dennis Small*