

Editorial

Cholera strikes in Texas, as we warned

Cholera has hit the Brownsville area of Texas, an impoverished town on the U.S. side of the Mexican border. Mexicans in Brownsville are living in poor conditions very like those of their brothers and sisters on the other side, in ramshackle communities without safe drinking water or adequate sanitation.

These are conditions which can only grow worse if the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is signed. Cholera in Texas is the truth behind the farcical claims by the Bush administration that an economic recovery is under way. As we have insisted, without immediate investment in infrastructure projects, the global economy is headed for a collapse on a scale rivaling that of the Dark Age. And the United States is no exception: Here, as elsewhere, investment in major water projects, mass transportation, and expansion of the energy grid is urgently needed.

In the *EIR* Special Report, "Auschwitz Below the Border: Free Trade Pact Is George 'Hitler' Bush's Mexican Holocaust," we warned that failure to improve the conditions in the border slave labor camps known as *maquiladoras* (assembly plants), would rapidly lead to the spread of diseases such as cholera on both sides of the border. The count of cases in Mexico is now over 3,500 with a 10% death toll. It appears that the same strain of cholera now found in Texas has already killed 4,000 people in South and Central America.

In the cited report we warned of the threat: "During the time that *maquiladora* practices grew over the past 20 years from about 120 plants in 1970, to over 1,800 today, and from 19,000 workers to 500,000, the essential infrastructure was not provided—water, housing, electricity, transportation, primary health care, cultural amenities. Just the opposite. The poverty wage rates, and lack of provision of means of existence have been called the 'competitive advantage.' The results are evident in the disease rates." The report documents the threat of a pandemic spread of cholera and other diseases under these conditions.

There is nothing to stop the disease from moving from the border areas of the United States into the inner

cities, where conditions of life are not too dissimilar from those in the Brownsville region.

The moral of the story is clear: Free trade and the kind of brutal austerity imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as a condition for the granting of any loans, mean genocide. According to the World Health Organization, 50 million people are being killed each year by diseases, many of which can be eradicated, such as cholera and tuberculosis.

On the one hand we see the deliberate destruction of the standard of living of the majority of whole populations in Africa and Ibero-America in particular, and similar conditions emerging in the cities of the United States, and in the border areas between the U.S. and Mexico. On the other we see riots in Los Angeles.

It is plausible to attribute the riots to "sociological" conditions occasioned by poverty and hopelessness in the inner cities, but it is becoming more and more obvious that the riots were orchestrated by the same genocidalists who lay down the policy guidelines for an international, IMF-led bankers' dictatorship. Thus we find "radical" groups such as the Revolutionary Communist Party, and youth gangs such as the Crips and Bloods, which are controlled by the same kind of intelligence-connected poverty-pimp apparatus that created the 1960s' counterculture.

This is underscored by the horror at the violence and wanton destruction expressed by residents of the areas destroyed by rioters, and by responsible community leaders as well. If we look behind the immediate circumstances leading up to the riot, we find a reality in which black and Hispanic Americans no longer expect to find justice in the courts; where frameups and railroads lead to judicial murder.

We must defeat the NAFTA slave labor treaty because it represents a *policy* to turn all of the poor and minorities into slave laborers, as the new Auschwitzes are filled not only with poor farm workers, but with men, women, and children driven out of their homes and jobs—as America's cities go up in flames, under the torch of terrorists.