

move to Guantanamo, and Cuba will be Libre.

What, you say that there will be "too many" people in the little area of Guantanamo? But I thought it was supposed to be statist, racist, and xenophobic to be opposed to "open borders" in any and all circumstances. So let's open the Guantanamo borders. Then U.S. taxpayers can keep all 11 million Cubans detained in a kind of concentration camp/welfare state. After all, Uncle Sap can support the world.

It would be a fascinating social experiment. Overcrowding? Well, let us say that the Cubans, herded into a tiny area, will end up, along with the restive Haitians, in a neo-Darwinian "survival of the fittest." As this slugfest and Hobbesian war-of-all-against-all heats up, maybe then we will realize that this is no longer the late 19th century, and that the U.S. can pull out of that naval base and fueling station altogether, and turn all of Cuba over to the Cubans.

In the meantime, the Cuban emigres in Florida are clamoring for a U.S. invasion of Cuba or, at the very least, for the U.S. to "unleash" them from the shackles of the Neutrality Act and let them invade Cuba on their own. Good. The Neutrality Act is a joke anyway, and it now only keeps private citizens neutral while the U.S. government wades hipdeep in every quarrel on the face of the earth.

Let's allow the exiles (in-

deed, let's encourage if not push the exiles) to take off on their own rafts and sail into Cuba, where they can duke it out, *mano a mano*, with Fidel and the Fidelistas. Whatever happens, and whoever emerges from the Cuban snakepit, the American people will be better off. ■

## Nafta and the "Free Trade" Hoax

by M.N.R.

Now that Nafta has been safely passed in the estimable name of "free trade," the Establishment has at last deigned to let us in on the hoax. An article in the *New York Times* (Sept. 6) ruefully admits that trade barriers between the United States and Mexico, which Nafta was supposed to eliminate or at least sharply reduce, have, if anything, *increased* since Nafta took effect on January 1, 1994. Even though tariffs between the two countries have indeed been lowered, both the Mexican and the U.S. govern-

ments, driven by their respective special interests demanding protection, have rushed to raise such *non*-tariff trade barriers as phony health and safety regulations, government fees and taxes, anti-"dumping" measures, new rules of national origin and labeling requirements, and new and harsher environmental and labor regulations. All these new regulations, in addition to being statist and cost-raising in themselves, serve as barriers to trade between the two countries. Steel, meat, dairy, cement, lumber, oilfield pipe, paper and wheat industries in both countries have taken the lead in the protectionist clamor. The *Times* article also admits a point hammered at by Nafta's critics: that "the pact's sheer

complexity, with hundreds of pages of cross-referencing clauses and formulas, has befuddled even many customs agents."

Nor did this consequence take the U.S. Establishment by surprise. As the *Times* concedes: when "Washington and Ottawa reached a trade accord in 1988, [it] brought down tariffs but [it] was fol-

lowed by a host of new trade barriers." As Jeffrey E. Garten, Under Secretary of Com-

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merce for International Trade, recently admitted in an interview on trade with Mexico: "The history is that as tariffs are reduced, nontariff barriers are raised to substitute."

So why didn't Garten and his colleagues let the American people in on this important nugget of history *before* Nafta was driven through Congress by hysterical governmental and allied private propaganda warning of the dire protectionist consequences should this wondrous "free trade" measure not be quickly passed?

Moreover, one of the loudest arguments in behalf of Nafta was that should it fail to pass, our beloved "friend," the Salinas government of Mexico, and its one-party rule, might even be endangered. We all know one of the sour fruits of Nafta: the peasant revolution in Chiapas, explicitly timed to protest the initiation of Nafta on January 1; followed by the assassination of Salinas's hand-picked successor as Mexican president by forces still unknown. But the *Times* article also reveals near its bottom paragraph that part of what it calls "the anti-import furor in Mexico" is being generated by our buddies of the Salinas government itself! Thus, "public service" TV commercials feature U.S. imported automobiles breaking down or zippers on imported dresses getting stuck at inopportune times. Even the public schools have been conscripted into the battle against U.S. imports;

thus, a Mexican "Children's Day" party this spring featured banners warning kids and their parents against evil "foreign toys."

Indeed, our brothers in the Mexican dairy industry have descended to outright hooliganism. In the northern border state of Chihuahua, the dairy interests obtained a 9 percent tax on milk imports from the United States. But still Mexican consumers in the city of Juarez kept buying milk from El Paso, and so the Mexican dairymen resorted to gangster tactics, slashing the tires of and torching American milk trucks, and beating up American truck drivers. It is fascinating to ponder the relative priorities of the U.S. government: threatening to invade Haiti for not being "democratic" enough even though no American interests are at stake, while Mexican thuggery against American trucks and truck drivers passes with scarcely a protest.

The *Times* article actually underplays the importance of these non-tariff barriers to trade, for it implies that one set of restrictions is merely replacing another. But it is well-known to economists that tariffs, as unfortunate as they are, are the *least* coercive and intrusive form of trade barrier. A tariff merely raises a price, whereas other restrictions impose various quantitative controls and forms of coercive rationing. Nafta has succeeded in substituting more harmful for less harm-

ful forms of barriers to trade.

So what was the point of the Nafta exercise? The drive for Nafta was a cozy coalition: of left-liberals, who want regional and governmental bureaucratic control over trade for its own sake and as a giant step toward world economic planning, redistribution, and world government; big corporations who face import competition but who understand about non-tariff barriers and benefit from the increased paperwork and costs which disproportionately cripple their smaller competitors; and of course, big U.S. export corporations and their bankers who realize that "free trade" has, since World War II, been merely a cover for a network of U.S. governmental subsidies to export industries. The losers: U.S. consumers and small businesses in all industries. In short, the usual suspects who gain and lose, respectively, from the modern regulatory-welfare state.

The fight over Nafta may have come and gone, but it is important for Americans to heed its lessons: most immediately, in the coming fight over the World Trade Organization. ■

## The Menace of the Religious Left

by M.N.R.

All the hysteria thrown up about the "religious" or the