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USA

Open the borders now!

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Whenever he gets around to it, president Obama might or might not take “executive action” to slow down the machinery of destruction that has earned him the title of “Deporter-in-Chief.” Meanwhile, the new tide of desperate children and families fleeing Central America piles up at the U.S. border.

Why has this happened? It’s the legacy, first, of the much-praised Ronald Reagan whose administration sponsored Central American military dictatorships, death squads and contra armies in the 1980s. Civil wars substantially shattered those societies.

This crime was compounded by the Reagan gang’s insane “war on drugs,” which effectively put the multi-billion dollar drug trade in the hands of violent criminal syndicates (and brought crack cocaine into U.S. inner cities). Many of the brutal gangs terrorizing young people in El Salvador today actually formed in Los Angeles by refugee youth from shattered families and brought when they returned home.

Let’s not deny the Clintons their share of the credit. The North America Free Trade Agreement and subsequently another for Central America (NAFTA and CAFTA) largely destroyed indigenous agriculture and the livelihood for farmers, especially in El Salvador and Honduras. Finally, credit the Obama administration for enabling and endorsing the 2009 Honduran coup and subsequent savage repression.

Amidst the social catastrophe, brutal armed gangs prey on these countries’ young people, whose families send them on the desperate road north to escape slavery or death at home.

The crisis at the U.S. border is the harvest of genocide, counterrevolution and “free trade.” Every one of these asylum seekers is entitled, at minimum, to a full hearing in their own language, with due process and effective representation. In reality, the borders need to be opened to them and a full moratorium on deportations is necessary — now.