

# Californians vote up fascist anti-immigration measure

by Kathleen Klenetsky and Carl Osgood

In a fit of xenophobic rage fostered in part by the collapse of the California economy over the past five years, voters in that state approved a draconian anti-immigration measure on Nov. 8 that only the deluded could believe will actually improve California's miserable economic plight.

Passage of the controversial initiative, Proposition 187, will almost certainly feed into the incipient nationwide hysteria surrounding the immigration issue, and lead to passage of other restrictive legislation on the national level.

Passage of the initiative signifies the emergence of fascist proclivities among the American population, said economist Lyndon LaRouche during his weekly "EIR Talks" radio interview on Nov. 9. "You have, in Proposition 187 in California, an example of a *fascist victory* in the state of California" similar in mentality to the Ollie North campaign, he stressed.

Commenting on the overall results of the Nov. 8 elections, LaRouche warned that "the mood in the American electorate is comparable today to something that occurred in the German population in particular in the early 1920s, the kind of development which led to the rise of Hitler's Nazis, along with a whole array of people who were part of what was called the 'Conservative Revolution,' " which has become manifest more recently "through the rise of Thatcherism in Britain in the 1980s, in the influence of the professedly neo-conservative or Conservative Revolution instrument of Friedrich von Hayek, the Mont Pelerin Society, and the ideas of people like Milton Friedman or Phil Gramm, the senator from Texas. . . . These people are essentially what we called back in the 1920s and 1930s, *fascists*."

Proposition 187 typifies the kind of "fascist 'lifeboat' cannibalistic economics" which these Conservative Revolution types are attempting to foster within the American population, LaRouche said.

## Recipe for disaster

Heavily promoted by incumbent Gov. Pete Wilson (R), who opportunistically seized on growing anti-immigration sentiment to shore up his own faltering reelection campaign, Proposition 187, dubbed the Save Our State initiative by its

sponsors, won by a hefty margin of 59% to 41%.

The initiative would apply sweeping controls over illegal immigrants in California. Under its key provisions, illegal immigrants would be barred from the public schools; prohibited from receiving medical services, except in dire emergencies; and denied all other forms of social services, such as food stamps.

State and local workers—teachers, for example—would be turned into an army of snitches, required to report suspected illegals to the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and to the California state Attorney General.

Although passage of the initiative had seemed assured earlier this fall, when polls showed over 60% of the California electorate behind it, support had recently begun to wane, as civil rights, religious, educational, public health, and other organizations waged an aggressive campaign to educate the public on the actual implications of the measure.

These organizations warned that Proposition 187 would create much larger problems than it was supposed to solve. With illegals banned from the public schools, there would undoubtedly be a further proliferation of gangs and street crime. With illegals refused medical services, the possibility of a major public health threat—epidemics of measles or deadlier diseases—would become far more likely.

In the weeks leading up to the Nov. 8 elections, a number of prominent out-of-state political leaders reinforced this message. President Bill Clinton came out strongly against Proposition 187 while on a campaign swing through California on behalf of Democratic gubernatorial candidate Kathleen Brown and Democratic Senate candidate Dianne Feinstein, both of whom opposed the initiative.

Clinton told a rally in Oakland on Nov. 5 that the measure "says that the adults of this country and the authorities are not able to keep illegal immigrants out of California, we will punish their children. . . . It says, close the health clinics to them, even if it creates a public health problem for everybody else. It says, turn the teachers into police officers and kick the kids out into the streets. Let me ask the children here, don't you think we've got enough kids on the street already?"

A few weeks previously, two key Republicans, Jack

Kemp and William Bennett, also denounced the proposal, breaking ranks with fellow GOPer Pete Wilson.

The Mexican government publicly scored Proposition 187. The Ministry for Foreign Relations issued a statement in September stating that the debate over the measure had "racist and xenophobic overtones" and warning that if it were passed, it could adversely affect "commercial and economic relations between our country and the state of California."

Unfortunately, these efforts were not sufficient to overcome the populist rage among Californians, which propelled Proposition 187 to victory.

### **Worse to come**

While Proposition 187 will undoubtedly face numerous legal challenges—and all or parts of it may ultimately be tossed out by the courts—there is little question that its triumph in California will translate into further efforts, both on the state and national levels, to impose harsh restrictions on immigration, both legal and illegal.

This is especially the case for Capitol Hill, where an array of anti-immigration legislation was put forward in the last Congress, and where the new, Republican-controlled House and Senate will almost surely read the Proposition 187 outcome as a mandate for federal action.

The stage for such efforts has already been set by the bipartisan Commission on Immigration Reform, which was established by Congress several years ago to overhaul U.S. immigration policy. The commission, headed by former Democratic Rep. Barbara Jordan of Texas, issued a preliminary report on Sept. 30 which made several proposals for cutting down on illegal immigration which, while not quite as horrific as Proposition 187, tend in its direction.

Perhaps most controversial was the commission's proposal to establish a national computerized registry of all persons eligible to work in the United States. Under this system, an employer would have to check with a national computerized database to verify whether a potential job-seeker was listed. The job-seeker would also have to produce some form of identification to qualify.

"That proposal would require every employer to obtain federal government approval before job applicants could be hired," warned George E. Bushnell, Jr., president of the American Bar Association. "The registry would involve the development of national data files on every citizen and legal resident."

Congressional Hispanic Caucus chairman Rep. José E. Serrano (D-N.Y.) characterized the proposed program as "a first step to an inevitable nationwide Big Brother ID system. . . . It would unquestionably lead to discrimination against those who look or sound foreign."

Another commission proposal, and one which bears an uncomfortably close resemblance to Proposition 187 (despite the fact that Jordan subsequently attacked the California ballot initiative), recommends that "illegal aliens should not

be eligible for any publicly funded services or assistance except those made available on an emergency basis or for similar compelling reasons to protect public health and safety."

"If a person is here unlawfully, he should be entitled to no benefits," Jordan told the National Press Club on Sept. 30. "Illegal aliens don't have a right to be here. . . . They broke the law to get here. They never intended to become a part of our social community and they are not entitled to benefits."

That such a provision was recommended by the commission is not too surprising, given that former INS official Howard Ezell, who is one of the two main authors of Proposition 187, is also one of the nine members of the Jordan panel.

The Jordan commission report also called for stiffer sanctions against employers who hire illegals, as well as beefed-up U.S. border control efforts, including the "use of fences to . . . facilitate enforcement."

### **Seriously deluded**

Clearly, the United States' declining economic situation is fueling a populist upsurge tending, as LaRouche stressed, toward outright fascism. As the case of California illustrates, immigrants are among the first targets, and demands for blood will mount, unless and until action is taken to reverse the U.S. economic collapse. However, those who have seized on the belief that cracking down on immigration, denying illegal aliens social services, etc., will somehow rescue the U.S. economy, are suffering a serious delusion.

First, as several recent reports have documented, immigrants—including illegal immigrants—give more to the U.S. economy than they receive. In a February 1994 study, the Tomas Rivera Center demonstrated that immigrants make an annual net contribution of \$12 billion to the California economy.

Second, by scapegoating immigrants, Americans avoid coming to terms with the real problems underlying the U.S. economy's nosedive. Cutting off immigration won't revive an economy suffering from 30 years' worth of insufficient capital investment and massive speculative activity. Nor will it ameliorate the conditions existing in Ibero-America and other countries whence many illegals come. Over the past ten years, Mexico has suffered a 50% decline in living standards as a result of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) austerity "conditionalities."

Rather than resort to the cheap tactic of immigrant bashing, Americans and their political leadership should take on the twin tasks of revising U.S. economic policy, getting rid of the financial derivatives market and other speculative scams which have destroyed our productive base, and scrapping IMF diktats in favor of policies that encourage true economic development and job creation in less developed countries. If this were done, the immigration "crisis" would evaporate.