

TIMES ARE ROUGH – DON'T SCAPEGOAT IMMIGRANTS!

These are worrisome times: there aren't enough jobs, and California has the highest unemployment rate in the country. Politicians, union leaders and media figures are saying that what we need to do is keep THEM from coming.

Don't Believe the Myths

Three million U.S. manufacturing workers have lost their jobs since 1980, but not one of those jobs was taken by an immigrant. Those jobs were a casualty of the "globalized" economy. The big corporations are transforming the U.S. economy, and hoping we'll blame other victims instead of the real culprits.

*Since 1980 the average compensation for Chief Executive Officers leaped 138% after inflation; average wages fell 19%. Every day you read of another big company laying off as much as 20% of its work force; but they aren't taking a pay cut at the top.

*If you are working full time, your average working working hours have gone up 15% since 1980; only one other industrialized country works longer hours than the U.S. Why? Because it's cheaper to make you work overtime than to hire someone else and pay them benefits. At the same time, more than a third of jobs are now part-time, temporary or "freelance" work with no security or benefits.

*Companies are closing offices and factories in the U.S. and moving them to other countries where wages are lower. Or if they don't move the company, they ship out the work. Auto workers in Brazil assemble cars for the U.S. market; data for U.S. college is done in the

Philippines. It's always been easier for companies to move than workers, and the new trade agreements make that truer than ever.

Well, Why Do Immigrants Come to the U.S., Then?

No one wants to leave home and family for an uncertain future. No one wants to take the worst jobs at the bottom of the U.S. economy. People come to the U.S. because the same corporations that are laying us off are buying up their land and ransacking their economies. These economic forces, and political repression of people who fight them, will keep forcing people to leave their homes, and no border will keep people from crossing to reunite their families. Only by restructuring the global economy to ensure jobs and adequate wages for everyone can we create a permanent solution.

The anti-immigrant hysteria is being fed by irresponsible politicians who think it will get them votes. And it gives permission to violent racists to attack immigrants physically.

Make a Difference!

What you do can make a difference!

- Take a stand when you hear anti-immigrant prejudice and misinformation.
- Let elected officials know you want them to support human rights for everyone and taxing and spending for the public instead of the wealthy and big corporations.
- Add your support to groups fighting for immigrant rights: in the legislature, in the courts, in the workplace, and in the streets.
- See the resources on this leaflet.

Support Immigrant Human Rights Action/Resource List

Legislative proposals:

Clinton's health care reform explicitly excludes the undocumented; call 202-456-1111 or fax 202-456-2461.

Senator Boxer wants to put troops on the border; call her office at 415-403-0100.

Senator Feinstein wants to levy a \$1 toll to finance more border cops; her S.F. office is 415-249-4777

Governor Wilson's budget proposes cutting out prenatal care for pregnant women without papers; call 916-445-2841 or fax 916-445-4633.

Immigrant Rights/ Advocacy Groups:

Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Immigrant assistance: English/Spanish 415-554-2444;

Mandarin/Cantonese/Japanese/English 415-554-2454

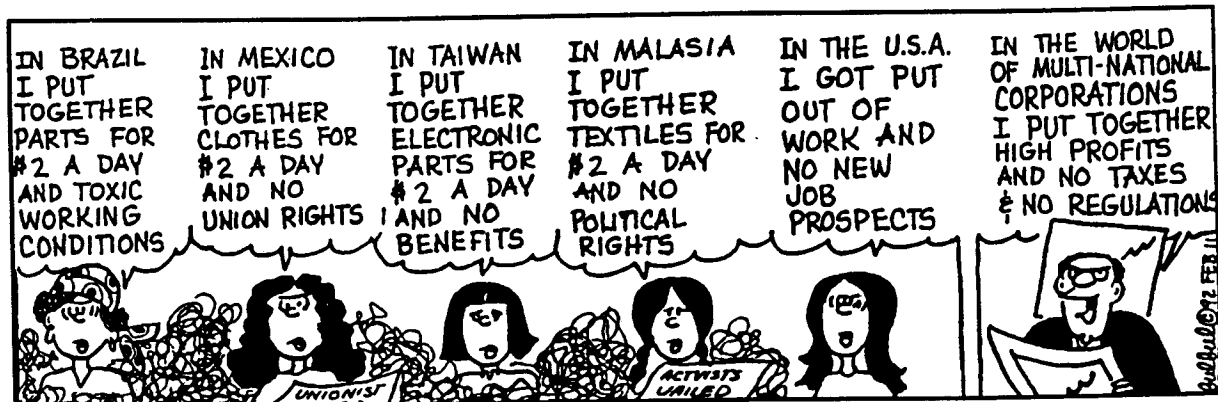
Coalition activities 415-243-8215

Mujeres Unidas y Activas: self-help and organizing projects of immigrant women; 415-621-8140

Asian Immigrant Women Advocates: immigrant assistance or information about the boycott of S.F. dress manufacturer Jessica McClintock 510-268-0192

Immigrant student hot-line of the UC Student Association 916-447-8272

This leaflet produced by Prairie Fire Organizing Committee 415-330-5310. Call us for copies or to talk about ideas to support immigrant rights and fight racist attacks on immigrants.



WILSON'S IMMIGRANT BASHING AND THE BUDGET

Immigration foes claim that your tax money pays for people streaming into the U.S. to have babies, enroll their children in school, and cash in on the welfare "gravy train." Last summer Governor Wilson took out a full page ad in the *New York Times* to assert that California taxpayers pay a billion dollars a year to educate "illegal immigrants" and another billion for emergency health care. Now he's trying to balance the state budget by billing the U.S. for \$3 billion for services to immigrants. He's proposed cutting prenatal care to pregnant women who cannot produce papers. Anti-immigration forces have flooded the U.S. Congress and the California legislature with bills.

What are the Facts?

1. Most immigrants are legal, and many who are not are family members of legal residents.
2. The idea that millions of immigrants don't pay taxes is a myth. We all pay sales taxes and we or our landlords pay property tax. Immigrants' untaxed income is a drop in the bucket compared to the legal loopholes and tax accountant tricks of corporations and wealthy individuals.
3. While Wilson wants to blame California's budget crisis on immigrants, the corporate share of U.S. income tax revenue is less than half as much now as it was in the 1950s (17% compared to 39%), so that individuals now pay more than 4 out of every 5 U.S. tax dollars.
4. Immigrants pay about \$90 billion a year in Federal, state and local taxes. But they only get about \$5 billion a year in social services. In fact, the average immigrant family pays about \$2500 MORE in taxes each year than they receive in tax-supported benefits of all kinds.

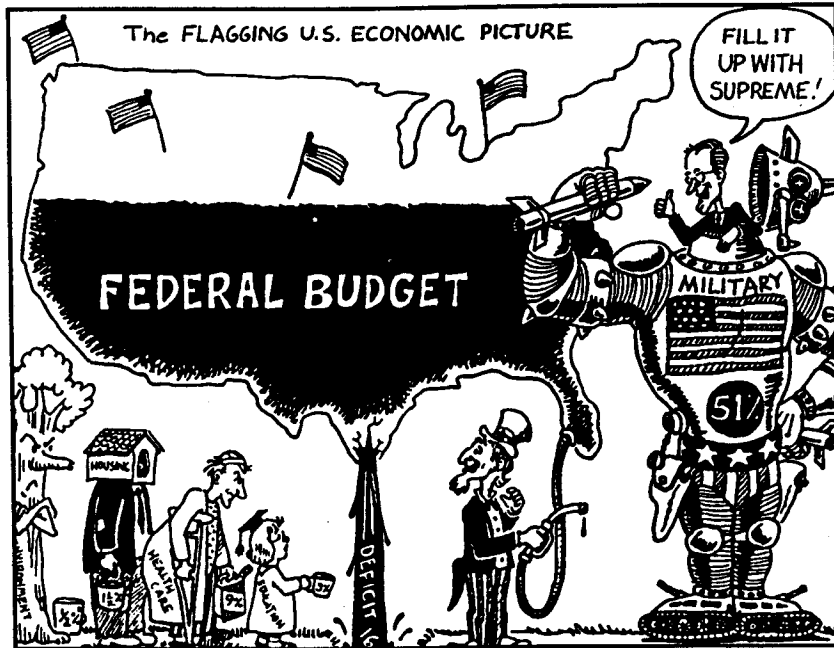
Welfare for the Rich

All U.S. social services – health, education, welfare – cost only about a fourth of our tax dollars. The "defense" budget is \$300 billion dollars a year, twice what is spent on schools for our kids. And \$500 billion of our tax money – \$2500 for every single person in the U.S. – is going to bail out the bankers who destroyed the savings and loan institutions in the 1980s.

If Wilson were really worried about the quality of life for Californians he would propose taxes on the wealthy and Federal spending that put peoples' needs before those of bankers and the Pentagon. Instead he cynically preys on our worries about the economy and our dissatisfaction with poor public services to promote racist targeting of immigrants. His official racism gives permission to violent racists, from skinheads to the Border Patrol, to physically attack immigrants.

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IMMIGRANT BASHING — AN AMERICAN TRADITION

The U.S. likes to refer to itself as a nation of immigrants, yet every time things get tough for people who were born here a lot of people want to blame it on the most recent immigrants!

In May 1844, nativist Protestants in Philadelphia destroyed the homes of Irish immigrants and attacked a Catholic church, claiming unskilled Irish workers were taking jobs from skilled native workers. Irish were denounced as "low-browed", "savage", "groveling", "bestial", "lazy", "wild", and "simian".

Between 1879 and 1880 San Francisco mobs marched almost daily to demand the dismissal of Chinese workers from their jobs and their deportation. This political movement led to the first racially-based anti-immigrant law, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

In 1923 Professor C. C. Brigham of Princeton University published a book claiming that immigrants were less intelligent than the native born U.S. population. His most important "discovery" was that, while earlier immigrants were highly intelligent due to their "Nordic" blood, the recent wave of Italian, Slavic, Turkish, Polish and Jewish immigrants were less intelligent due to their "Alpine" or "Mediterranean" blood.

Between 1929 and 1939 Texas authorities drove out 250 to 300 thousand Mexican people, many of whom were born in the U.S. Texas Representative John Box argued that "their minds run to nothing higher than animal functions," while even people who opposed the deportations said that Mexicans "have no effect on the American standard of living because they are not much more than a group of fairly intelligent collie dogs."

Get the Picture?

During hard times it's easy to scapegoat other victims when we need to under-

stand how all working people are suffering from corporation decisions to lay people off and government policies that favor the wealthy. Today it's people from Haiti, Mexico and China who are targets of the anti-immigrant hysteria. Fear and suspicion is fed by the media and by irresponsible politicians who think it will get them votes. And it gives permission to violent racists to launch physical attacks on immigrants.

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Immigrants and the Economy — What's the Story?

PETE WILSON AND OTHER politicians would like you to believe that unemployment, high taxes and declining social services in California are all the fault of immigrants. What's the real story?

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

In the last decade, hundreds of thousands of Californians have lost jobs in major industries. **These jobs were not filled by immigrants.** Instead, encouraged by government tax incentives, manufacturing corporations have moved their plants to countries like Mexico or Indonesia, where labor is cheap and unions weak or nonexistent. In addition, the end of the Cold War brought decline to the aerospace-defense industry. Other industries have cut back — or gone under — because of the national recession.

WHO PAYS THE TAXES?

Through the 1980s the richest 1 percent of Californians saw their incomes rise by 70 percent — while the incomes of the bottom 80 percent of Californians stagnated. Yet the ballooning incomes of the top 1 percent are taxed at almost the same rate as the incomes of middle class taxpayers. The corporate share of U.S. income tax revenue is less than half as much now as it was in the 1950s. In California loopholes for the wealthy and the corporations cost citizens billions of dollars in tax revenue through write-offs for country club dues, golf course greens fees and other "perks" for the rich.

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES LIKE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND MASS TRANSIT?

As industry has emigrated, California's tax base has declined. Proposition 13 locks in low property tax rates, preventing school districts, cities and counties from raising money to fund these services. Meanwhile,

many millions of dollars that could be used for health and education are going to build new prisons.

HOW DO IMMIGRANTS AFFECT THE STATE'S ECONOMY?

Immigrants subsidize the agricultural, garment, and service industries by working for low wages. Without immigrant jan-

standard working conditions. Many immigrants work in highly exploitative sectors like agribusiness, the garment industry and as nannies. Numerous studies by groups such as the RAND Corporation, the Urban Institute and the Heritage Foundation have shown that immigrants do not take jobs from native workers or depress wages.

DO IMMIGRANTS PAY TAXES?

In fact, **immigrants pay considerable amounts of taxes and do not over-consume services.** According to *Business Week*,

immigrants pay \$90 billion in taxes, and receive only \$5 billion in welfare. Despite Pete Wilson's rhetoric, it is important to remember that undocumented immigrants are barred from most public assistance programs; indeed many don't seek services for which they are eligible, out of fear of being deported.

SO WHY DO POLITICIANS BLAME IMMIGRANTS?

They want to distract us from the mess they have made of our state and keep us from getting together to clean it up. Attacking immigrants, the poor and people of color is an old trick those in power often use when times are rough. They're hoping we'll blame poor people of color for the shape California is in, instead of placing the blame where it belongs: on the

wealthy and the corporations who are getting rich off of us while most of us get poorer and we see our social fabric torn apart.

Show the politicians they can't fool you! Don't blame immigrants for California's problems! We're all in this together, no matter when we or our ancestors came to California. Let's not blame each other. Let's work together to transform our state into a place where we can all realize our hopes and dreams.

itors, farm workers, dishwashers and room cleaners, much of the state's economy — especially in Southern California — would collapse. The economic benefits of immigration for Central Valley growers are overwhelming. This explains the fact that this normally politically conservative group took a neutral stand on Proposition 187.

DO IMMIGRANTS TAKE AWAY JOBS?

Immigrants work at low-wage, often dangerous jobs with long hours and sub-

