

Schwarzenegger Hangover Sickens California Dems

by Harley Schlanger

During the campaign to recall Gov. Gray Davis (D), which culminated in the election of Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger as Governor of California, Democratic Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche warned at a Burbank town meeting on Sept. 11, 2003 that the election of Schwarzenegger would have devastating consequences for the state. LaRouche characterized Arnie as a “Hollywood geek act,” whose appointed role would be to beat down resistance to a fascist-style austerity regime in California—which would result in many premature deaths among the poor, elderly, and disabled. He called on Democrats to mobilize to defeat the hand-picked Beast-Man of Wall Street.

Instead, the Democratic Party caved in, under the willful misdirection of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), which acted to undermine efforts to rally support for Governor Davis. With the exception of the extraordinary mobilization against Recall waged by the LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM), in collaboration with a small group of Democratic activists, Schwarzenegger was given a free ride.

Since his election, the new Governor has put forward a series of fiscal and budgetary proposals which confirm LaRouche’s warnings. Either accept the cuts I am proposing, he has repeatedly told both legislators and voters, or there will be much more draconian cuts to come. With the state’s plunge toward bankruptcy continuing unabated, his first measure, to repeal the higher car license fee passed by the legislature, added \$4 billion to the deficit. His second action was to bully the legislature to place a \$15 billion bond measure on the March 2 ballot, threatening that failure to do so would ensure that the state would run out of cash before the end of the fiscal year in June 2004.

Next, to “balance” the budget for the upcoming year, which begins in June 2004, Schwarzenegger proposed over \$4.6 billion in cuts, largely from health and social services, in a state where more than 6 million people already lack health insurance, and which has seen a dangerous level of hospital closings and triaging of community health centers. Doctors at USC/County Hospital in Los Angeles, the largest remaining public hospital in the county, have already submitted affidavits which document unnecessary deaths due to overcrowded emergency rooms, even before this latest round of cuts.

The Governor has demanded additional cuts in education, trashing his campaign promise that it would be cut “over my dead body.” His 2004-05 budget includes \$2 billion in cuts



A meeting of two synarchist “beast-men” who threaten the United States republic with fascism: Vice President Cheney (left), whose energy-pirate allies looted California through the energy deregulation swindle; and Arnie Schwarzenegger, whom they then rammed into the California governor’s office for another round of vicious looting.

in K-12 education funding; over \$700 million from higher education; and massive tuition and fee increases in the state college and university systems. He intends to grab \$1.3 billion in property tax revenue from cities and counties, to be channeled into the state’s coffers, producing damaging hits to already over-stretched municipal police and fire departments.

Even after these cuts, there is a projected deficit of more than \$6 billion in 2004-05, on top of the projected \$14 billion this year—and these figures assume a “robust recovery” arising from Arnie’s bloody budget cuts! That Dracula script is more fantasy-ridden than any underlying his successful Hollywood fantasy flicks.

Beast-Man Warns of Armageddon

Why no fight from more sensible circles in California? Has everyone bought into the neo-con ideology of less government? Does no one in the state remember that the budget crisis is a product of the implementation of electricity deregulation, which was sold on the lie that it would reduce electricity costs? Has everyone forgotten that the prosperity of the once-Golden State was built through an alliance between government and productive industries, with a special emphasis on government spending on infrastructure, an approach championed by President Franklin Roosevelt and continued by governors such as Pat Brown? Or have potential opponents been cowed by Arnie’s “aura of power,” and reduced to impotence by his repeated threats?

The Beast-Man quality nailed by LaRouche was in full display in Schwarzenegger’s first outing the week of Jan. 19, promoting Proposition 57, the \$15 billion bond referendum. If voters don’t approve it, he bellowed at a hand-picked audi-

ence at a Fresno ceramics plant, “we will have to make drastic cuts, deep cuts. I call them *Armageddon cuts*. Cuts in services that we don’t want to make, that would be devastating.” Hyperbolic? This is standard for Schwarzenegger, whose election was pushed through by “neo-conservatives” linked to Vice President Cheney, synarchist bankers guided by George Shultz, and swindlers tied to former Gov. Pete Wilson, the man who opened the door to deregulation, Enron, and the energy pirates.

Since his election, Schwarzenegger has used a steady stream of violent images to force legislators to knuckle under, and accept imposing killer austerity on state government. In a previous series of public meetings, he threatened there would be “severe casualties” among legislators if they resisted his efforts. In his State of the State address, he said he did not intend to merely “move boxes around” in a reorganization of the state’s administrative structure, but “to blow them up.”

The rhetoric appeals to frightened but enraged suburbanites who are losing ground—not due to government spending and regulation, but due to the reversal of the national economy from one based on production, to a consumer-driven post-industrial society. The popular base of Schwarzenegger is drawn largely from such debt-ridden rageballs lacking any sense of economics or history, who want to see someone pay the price for their insecurity and fears. It is a classic example of the social base which can be mobilized to back a strong man, or a Beast-Man, who promises to make the weakest section of the population—the poor, the elderly, minorities—suffer for being “overly demanding.” This is the social base which cheered lustily when Arnie, during his campaign, told

them he would “terminate” Governor Davis, and foamed at the mouth when right-wing radio jocks promised “bodies flying out of windows in Sacramento,” the state capital.

The violent rhetoric pleased Pete Wilson, who served as co-chair of his campaign, and whose former staffers are the top aides to Schwarzenegger. Wilson enthused that, finally, there is someone with the “stomach” required to destroy the social safety net for the bankers.

Dems’ Denial on Economy Feeds Fears

Many leading Democrats have capitulated to the environment of terror created by Schwarzenegger, which is hyped by star-struck media as proof that he is a “real leader.” The annual state Democratic convention, held on Jan. 17-18 in San Jose, was poorly attended. While there were some weak jabs at Schwarzenegger, the deliberations as a whole were shaped by Democrats’ fears of Arnie and his fascist base. They are suffering from what LaRouche called the “Schwarzenegger Hangover Effect,” the sense of impotence stemming from the Recall, and the fear that the screaming lunatics of the far right represent a new majority in the state. This effect is reinforced by the Democrats’ strong denial that the financial crisis battering the state is part of a systemic global financial meltdown, not merely a “cyclical” problem.

The political vacuum created by this effect is most obvious in the dilemma, among party activists, over whether to back the \$15 billion bond referendum. If we don’t support the expanded borrowing, some party leaders argued at the convention, Schwarzenegger will use emergency powers to destroy the already-inadequate safety net. (He has already used emergency powers to make cuts, asserting such powers even more rapidly than Hitler did on assuming power!) Other Democrats countered that they should oppose the referendum, citing polls going against it, and saying that the chaos which will result from lack of funds will turn people against Schwarzenegger.

LaRouche noted that the only way out of this trap is to attack the underlying problem, the collapse of America’s physical economy. The real issue is leadership. With the cringing lack of it coming from party officials, it was left to the LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM) to fill this vacuum in San Jose. They intervened with a spirited deployment which challenged party activists to get a spine. The 1,000 delegates attending saw the LYM everywhere, as more than 100 LaRouche activists engaged the dispirited delegates in Socratic dialogues and uplifted them with Classical music. At first startled to hear beautiful polyphony in the convention center, many delegates were moved, even some who “did their duty” by removing the activists from some party caucuses!

The only alternative to complete chaos soon in California, is to get out from under the “Schwarzenegger hangover,” and join LaRouche in an impassioned fight to protect the General Welfare from the gang of synarchists who are deploying Arnie as their fascist Beast-Man.