

Thatcher leads European prime ministers in 'war on AIDS'

Meeting in London on Dec. 5 and 6, the prime ministers of the 12-nation European Community decided for the first time to coordinate efforts to combat AIDS. With Britain concluding its presidency over the EC, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher spoke for the nations of Europe, declaring AIDS to be the "new scourge," similar to the 14th-century Black Death.

Britain's Independent Radio Network announced on Dec. 6 that Thatcher was "declaring war on AIDS," and had defined the 100% fatal epidemic as "the single most important challenge facing Europe." According to IRN, her concern is to launch "combined European efforts to combat the AIDS menace," particularly by upgrading cooperation on research.

The European Council of prime ministers identified links between the problems of AIDS, drugs, and terrorism. The final communiqué states: "The European Council expressed its concern about the rising incidence of AIDS . . . they noted the link that existed with the drug problem." Britain pressed for the establishment of "the first international data bank" to deal with AIDS, along the lines of that already being established to deal with terrorism. This would chart the growth of AIDS, and keep track of research efforts to combat it.

The communiqué also underlined "the importance of coordinating the diverse national campaigns, with the aim of increasing public preoccupation, and preventing propagation" of the disease. The European leaders also wished to assure "an effective exchange of information, prevention, and treatment, together with upgraded cooperation in the field of investigation."

Impact of *EIR* report

Throughout Western Europe, serious discussion about the AIDS threat is being shaped by *EIR*'s 140-page Special Report, "An Emergency War Plan to Fight AIDS and Other Pandemics," issued last February. The book has been widely circulated to public health authorities, scientific laboratories, and elected officials, in many cases purchased for them by *EIR* subscribers who understood how important it was to get this report out. Last summer, *EIR*'s AIDS report was also published in a full Italian-language edition.

Back in February, *EIR* and its scientific collaborators were virtually alone in describing AIDS as a potential "pan-

demic" and warning that the slow-acting virus could not be confined to so-called risk groups, which were only the "fast track" of transmission of the disease. The report mapped out the economic co-factors which help spread AIDS; described the scientific research frontiers which must be opened in a "crash" research program to treat and prevent the disease; and warned that only the immediate application of the "classical" public health measures, used for other highly infectious diseases, could keep AIDS from wiping out the human race before a cure is found.

Over the past month, the actions taken in Europe on AIDS reflect a belated acknowledgement that *EIR* was absolutely correct and that those who opposed it, including the World Health Organization, were perilously wrong—as WHO director Halfdan Mahler admitted on Nov. 19, when he said that AIDS could infect 100 million people within five years.

Great Britain

Following the EC summit, British Secretary of State for Social Services Norman Fowler went on a "fact-finding mission" to West Germany and the Netherlands. According to the Dec. 10 *Times* of London, this trip is bringing to Fowler's attention "the grim realities of the AIDS epidemic among Britain's European neighbors."

Within Britain, the debate on how to combat AIDS is expanding as the disease spreads. While some ministers and self-professed health experts are advising measures like free syringes to addicts and distribution of condoms, others are looking into scientifically and politically competent means of dealing with AIDS. The *Sunday Times* of London reported on Dec. 7 that the U.K. Ministry of Defense will soon announce measures to combat the disease in the armed forces. Service chiefs were meeting the week after the EC prime ministers, and will be sending their views on the AIDS threat to the U.K. Cabinet Committee on AIDS, chaired by Lord Whitelaw, "which is known to be particularly concerned about the potential threat to Britain's security."

France

The European Labor Party in France (ELP) has released the draft of a law which would force the French government and health authorities to take decisive action against the spread

of AIDS. The bill was presented to the press in Paris Dec. 9 by ELP secretary-general Jacques Cheminade and Dr. John Seale, of the British Royal College of Physicians, one of the most prominent British backers of a "war on AIDS." Dr. Seale stated, "No press has reported the truth about AIDS. . . . AIDS is a virological nightmare, a lentivirus of the retrovirus family which destroys not only the immune system but the brain, intestines, and lungs. . . ." Rather than being simply a sexually transmitted disease, he said, "AIDS is characteristically a blood-transmitted infection."

The proposed law uses the guidelines of the *EIR* Special Report, and would extend existing French health regulations to the specific threat posed by AIDS. The bill is modeled on laws that already apply to tuberculosis, hepatitis, polio, and syphilis. It would provide for every resident of France to be screened (for free) every six months, and every non-resident crossing the border into France to show an AIDS-negative test certificate dating from less than six months before, or be tested, before he can be admitted into France.

Among other measures, the ELP-proposed law would also set up an AIDS research and treatment center in every hospital; create a National Research Institute on AIDS; carry out mass vaccination as soon as a vaccine is available; and take measures of relative isolation for full-blown AIDS cases until an effective vaccine and cure are found.

The draft law called for annual expenditures of about \$1.5 billion (100 million French francs), not including vaccination.

Less far-reaching measures were called for at a press conference on Dec. 1 at the National Assembly, by National Front parliamentarian Dr. Bachelot, in the name of his parliamentary delegation. "France is not at all prepared to face this infection. . . . If nothing is done to fight the contagion, there will be no more people on the planet in the year 2025. . . . AIDS is not just a medical problem, but a problem of political responsibility." He added that AIDS is potentially "worse than nuclear war," and that it might be transmitted by mosquitos. Dr. Bachelot proposed an "AIDS-atorium" to isolate AIDS-sick individuals as well as a systematic screening of the high-risk population. He proposed organizing a "popular referendum" concerning measures which "would be transitional" in the waiting period for the discovery of a vaccine. He also proposed, to finance this plan, launching a state loan of 15 to 20 billion francs.

Italy

The panic over AIDS has arrived in Italy, but the measures announced by Health Minister Carlo Donat Cattin and publicized with great fanfare as a "War on AIDS," are inadequate to the point of absurdity. The Italian government's anti-AIDS plan allocates a mere 50 billion liras (about \$50 million), "less than the top prizes in the popular national betting game, Totocalcio," points out Fiorella Operto, pres-

ident of the Schiller Institute in Italy. The Institute is using the *EIR* report to mobilize the population for emergency measures to stop the spread of AIDS.

Schiller Institute spokesman Marco Fanini noted during a televised roundtable on AIDS over the major northeastern Italian regional channel "Tele Alto Veneto" on Dec. 10, that it costs 300-400 billion liras to build *one* new hospital alone—several times the figure allocated by the Health Ministry for the entire program.

Italy's "experts" are coming closer by the day to the scientific standpoint of the *EIR* Special Report on AIDS, which has saturated the relevant circles in the Italian-language edition. Only last May, at a conference on AIDS in Milan, the same experts were rabidly attacking the Schiller Institute's "extreme" views. Now, from one end of the peninsula to the other, medical professionals are joining Schiller spokesman in town meetings and television panels, to inform the public on the reality that AIDS is a far greater threat than previously stated.

In the cited television roundtable, Fanini was joined by Prof. Dante Bassetti, infectious diseases specialist at the University of Verona, who stated that besides blood and semen, saliva is almost certainly a vehicle for the virus, and perhaps in certain situations, mosquitos. Bassetti also noted that in Verona he is treating more than 260 AIDS patients with only 25 hospital beds available. When one day these 260 cases must be hospitalized, where will they be put? Bassetti said he hoped new hospitals will be built for AIDS patients—like the new very modern one in Houston, Texas—or at least new wings devoted to AIDS.

The Schiller Institute and *EIR*'s growing acceptance as "the" authority on AIDS in Italy, was reaffirmed when the health commissioner of Lombardy, Italy's most populous region, Dr. Isacchini, appeared at a press conference on AIDS in Brescia on Dec. 19, hosted by the Schiller Institute.

At the southern end of Italy, in the town of Alcamo in Sicily, the editor of the Italian edition of the *EIR* Special Report on AIDS, Claudio Rossi, was guest of honor on Nov. 29 at a conference organized by the local Lions Club, "AIDS: The Greatest Threat to Human Survival," attended by 110 citizens. Alcamo Lions Club head Dr. Francesco Filippi opened the conference with a brief treatment of the medical aspects of the disease based on the *EIR* study. He clarified that the transmission of the disease is not solely among "risk groups," where contagion follows a fast track, but that the entire population is at risk. Claudio Rossi, speaking for the Schiller Institute, presented *EIR*'s new computerized epidemiological model for AIDS.

On Nov. 28, in Salerno, an important city south of Naples, the local Red Cross invited the Schiller Institute's Galliano Speri to address a conference on AIDS. The more than 100 citizens who attended included the entire civic leadership of Salerno and representatives of the local military district.