

Editorial

The economics of AIDS

A great deal has changed since the fall of 1986, when the frantic lying and lavish spending of the Hollywood mafia-linked "AIDS lobby" caused Proposition 64 to be defeated at the polls in California. Proposition 64 was a referendum calling for AIDS to be classified as a reportable disease, to which traditional public health measures are to be applied.

Fortunately, the state's voters will have a second chance to consider the measure, in the June 1987 primary. Over 720,000 Californians have signed petitions for the new initiative, which is almost identical to Proposition 64.

It has always been obvious that the California AIDS initiatives had a significance far beyond the boundaries of that state, and indeed beyond the United States. "Prop 64" and its successor require massive expenditures to care for, and isolate where necessary, the current victims of AIDS; to build up the healthy population's defenses against the disease; and to carry out the research in frontier domains of optical biophysics needed to find a cure. It is our firmly held view that we have no alternative but to face this, lest the entire human race be engulfed in a pandemic likely to destroy our civilization.

Clearly, we can afford this cost only if we begin the economic recovery Lyndon LaRouche maps out elsewhere in this issue, immediately.

However much the satanic irrationality of the organized "gay lobby" provided cannon fodder for California's anti-Prop 64 movement, it is the refusal of the Reagan administration and its Democratic opposition to consider spending the money to defend citizens from AIDS, that has blocked an effective public-health and research effort against the menace.

Two developments of early October, bear on this most crucial political issue: 1) the Reaganomics myth crashed through the floor with the stock market and the dollar; 2) there has been a fissure in the stone wall of the world health establishment's insistence that "AIDS cannot be transmitted by casual contact," and that therefore, there are no economic co-factors involved in the spread of AIDS.

As the financial markets began their dizzying slide, for the first time at an international conference, environmental factors were cited as a major contributing cause for the otherwise inexplicably rapid spread of AIDS in Africa. At the Oct. 8-9 conference in Naples, Italy, "chilling statistics" were presented showing that as many as 60 million Africans may already be infected with the virus—10% of the continent's population.

Scientists at the Naples conference rejected a cover-up statement issued in August by U.S. scientist Harold Jaffe, who argued the Reagan administration line that AIDS only threatens members of so-called high-risk groups: homosexuals, drug addicts, and those infected through use of dirty needles.

● Dr. Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute in France, one of the world's top AIDS scientists: "There are nations on that continent [Africa] which were absolutely 'clean' up to three or four years ago, without one single case of AIDS registered. Now they are included in the pool of the worst-stricken countries, like Zaire, Tanzania and Uganda. This means that the transmission of the disease is taking place at breathtaking speed."

● An explosive report by a group of German doctors, withdrawn from the conference at the last minute but reported in the Italian press, detailed a study of several hundred people in the central African nation of Malawi, described as "generally at risk of disease, but not members of risk groups for AIDS." Of these, a horrifying 56% were infected with AIDS and 83% were carriers of hepatitis B virus.

● An expert from Zaire, Dr. Kapita, estimated that more than 2 million people are sick with AIDS in Africa, pointing out: "In 80% of the cases of infection with AIDS, the people affected are heterosexual and not homosexual, as in the U.S., or drug addicts, as in some European or Latin American countries."

The Belgian AIDS scientist Nathan Clumeck warned, "The black continent is the mirror of our own destiny in the very near future." The political movement manifested in California's AIDS initiative, is the one hope of stopping that prophecy.