

The anti-Koop majority did not wish to put out merely a preliminary report but wanted the First Report to declare a full-scale war on AIDS which began with overturning Koop's policies and moved onto mass testing. Chairman Mayberry was forced into the position of having to contemplate writing a minority report as chairman, against the majority of his own Commission.

In the fight which ensued, Mayberry resigned because he was outnumbered. When Admiral Watkins replaced him as chairman, there was hope that now the majority view for a war on AIDS would prevail. However, in the climate of "no-budget-for-anything," which rules in the White House after the stock market crash, the White House ordered the Commission to punt on all major issues and be "cost-effective and cost-efficient."

Thus, instead of the first presidential report declaring an all-out war on AIDS, Chairman Watkins repeatedly apologizes that his report is only "preliminary."

We can still fight

Now that the political-economic crisis underlying the failure to mobilize against AIDS has come into focus, we have a few precious months, corresponding to the period of the presidential primaries, to shift policies onto a war mobilization against AIDS. The substance of that mobilization is fivefold:

1) AIDS must be treated as a communicable infection requiring application of a full spectrum of available public health law to prevent the spread of infection. This would include extensive use of testing, reporting procedures, and quarantine measures modeled on those used in Chicago to halt the spread of tuberculosis.

2) More attention must be paid to co-factors in the progression from infection to active disease, particularly the economic co-factors in impoverished areas.

3) Institutions must be created to enable the infected, asymptomatic individual to continue making productive contributions to society, while eliminating the risk of transmission to others.

4) The government should suppress the drug traffic rather than distribute drug paraphernalia in the form of sterile needles.

5) A Biological Strategic Defense Initiative should be implemented, creating a multidisciplinary scientific mobilization to apply the most advanced technologies of optical biophysics to AIDS and the life process. We require an approximate 10-year research program which masters the spectroscopies of the different processes of mitosis in cells which are a) healthy; b) infected but dormant; c) virus factories. The price tag for basic biological research alone should begin at \$3 billion per year.

With these measures, 1988 can be the year in which mankind starts to win a few battles against the AIDS virus.

Time is running out for Africa

by Mary Lalevée

"Not everyone works as hard as you," said the German journalist to the African doctor in charge of the AIDS patients at Congo's main hospital in Brazzaville. "Do you think Africa is going to die of AIDS?" The doctor answered, "Well, perhaps not Africa . . . but Congo? Congo will die."

Every week in that hospital, between 15 and 18 new patients with AIDS were arriving. The Norwegian Red Cross has already described Africa as "the continent of death" because of AIDS. Conservative estimates are that 8% of Africa's urban population is already infected with AIDS—40 million people!

In 1987, these horrific facts could no longer be ignored. The January issue of the German magazine, *AIDS-Forschung*, published an anonymous article by a researcher on AIDS in Africa, detailing the catastrophic situation. On Oct. 5, Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda announced that one of his sons had died of AIDS the previous year, showing that Africa's elite is far from immune. An international conference on AIDS in Naples, Italy Oct. 8-9 heard the dreadful warning, "There will be a hecatomb" in Africa. Speakers stressed that in the very near future, everyone will be at risk of infection with AIDS. Professor Luc Montagnier said, "Transmission of the disease is taking place at breathtaking speed."

The World Health Organization's efforts to play down the disaster would be laughable were the situation not so tragic. Interviewed on the same German television broadcast that, for the first time, fully revealed the situation, Jonathan Mann, the Geneva coordinator of the WHO's worldwide AIDS program, commented that African societies had "some advantages" over the Western industrial countries. What advantages? "AIDS patients will not be isolated, their families will look after them."

On average, African governments have \$1 per capita per annum to spend on health care. One AIDS test alone costs \$15. The result, in the Central African Republic, for instance, is that blood supplies are tested for AIDS, but there is no money available to test patients who are suspected of having AIDS. "We have to rely on doctors reporting the clinical

symptoms,” said the head of the Anti-AIDS Committee at the hospital in Bangui, C.A.R. The doctor in Brazzaville showed the television team disposable syringes intended for one-time use that had been re-used at the hospital. There is a shortage.

The role of poor environmental living conditions, malnutrition, and poverty in the spread of the disease has also begun to emerge. The Italian daily *La Stampa*, for instance, reporting on the Naples conference, wrote, “Extreme poverty and the lack of sanitary conditions favor the spread of AIDS in Africa.”

U.S. presidential candidate LaRouche has repeatedly called for urgent measures to be taken against AIDS, and in a paper published in July 1987, he said, “The priority for Africa is an effective war-plan against the scourge of AIDS.” He stressed that “a tremendous amount of money” should be spent to implement the traditional health measures taken against all such contagious diseases, “detect the infection, and isolate those infected from persons who are not infected, while also improving nutrition, health, and sanitation of the population generally.” He went on, “A few billions of dollars worth of technology transfer into each African nation would be sufficient to make possible an economic revolution in Africa.”

LaRouche concluded, “We must begin to act, economically, now at all costs. The price of not doing so is certain death for entire nations. AIDS has laid down this ultimatum, which no nation can successfully ignore or refuse.”

So far, no other political leader in the West has faced up to this ultimatum.

The economic situation

Africa’s economic situation steadily worsened throughout 1987, with conference after conference detailing the increasing outflow of funds from the continent to the advanced sector, the devastation caused by IMF austerity policies, and the prospects for further decline due to the continued collapse of commodity prices. Commodity prices are now one-quarter to one-third what they were in the 1970s. As they are generally priced in U.S. dollars, the collapse will only accelerate with the fall in the dollar’s value.

UNICEF once again warned that IMF “adjustment policies” meant “a deterioration in the situation of children, that is, more malnutrition, a deterioration of sanitary infrastructure, a drop in school attendance.” Dispensaries have been closed, teachers dismissed. Africa is facing “a financial famine.”

President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia imposed a 10% limit on the amount of export income to be used for debt payment, and broke ties with the IMF. In a speech May 1, he said, “The IMF program was supposed to help us get out of the quagmire we had got into. But the time has come to reconsider the situation in its entirety. The severe austerity program of the IMF has only brought suffering and malnutri-

tion to Zambians.”

Ivory Coast was the next country to follow, with the government of Houphouët Boigny announcing on May 28 that it was no longer able to service its external debt.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in a report published shortly before the August meeting, documented that some developing countries have been forced to export even more capital than post-Versailles Germany, with some countries transferring resources “equivalent to almost 10% of GDP and to half of the government’s revenues in the period 1982-84.” In countries where drastic IMF measures have been implemented, there was actually “a decline in the average annual growth rate.” In fact, the decline in growth in these countries was even greater than in the Least Developed Countries as a whole.”

At the OAU special summit on Africa’s debt crisis in November, in Addis Ababa, it was reported that Africa’s export revenues fell from \$60.6 billion in 1985 to \$43.3 billion in 1986, with a further drop expected in 1987. Africa’s foreign debt increased from \$13 billion in 1970 to over \$200 billion in 1986. The debt accounts for 44% of total GDP and 293% of annual exports. The average debt service ratio is reaching 40%. The debt conference called for the suspension of foreign debt service for 10 years, the improvement of terms of trade, setting a reasonable limit to the debt service ratio, and conversion of past official bilateral loans into grants. They also called for new congressional loans with 50-year maturity and 10-year grace.

However, a key element is still missing from Africa’s own efforts: a link to Ibero-America. The OAU summit coincided with the Acapulco summit of Ibero-American Presidents, also on the debt crisis, but according to French radio reports, OAU officials were not even aware that the Acapulco meeting was taking place.

The response from the advanced sector to Africa’s plight has been silence—at best. More often, Africans have heard insulting diatribes by Western representatives on the need for more “free enterprise.”

There are two notable exceptions. French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac’s call for a new “Marshall Plan” for Africa have been warmly praised by President Kaunda, who said in a June interview, “Jacques Chirac’s approach is simply marvelous. If the great powers who are in the IMF thought like J. Chirac, many African countries would return to the IMF. And Chirac talks about economics, not politics.”

The other exception is the Vatican under Pope John Paul II, who has repeatedly urged Western leaders to see that economics and morality are inextricably linked. A document issued by the *Justitia et Pax* Commission, headed by the French Cardinal Rofer Etchegaray, at the end of January 1987 spoke of the need for urgent action on debt, criticizing the “authoritarian” action of the IMF. The pontifical commission proposed a sort of “Marshall Plan” in favor of the Third World, echoing French proposals.