

EIRInvestigation

AIDS scandal in Germany proves LaRouche was right

by Rainer Apel

Over the past month and a half, Germany has been swept by an all-too-predictable scandal, as part of the awful truth began to leak out about the extent of the spread of the HIV virus, the cause of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, AIDS. The scandal first broke out on Oct. 6, when Germany's Federal Health Office (Bundesgesundheitsamt, BGA) presented federal Health Minister Horst Seehofer with a list of 372 cases of people who had become infected with the HIV virus via blood transfusions they had received since 1985, the year when Germany introduced what were thought to be adequate measures to prevent any such possibility.

Further revelations since then showed that this was only the tip of the iceberg, and that certain private companies' acquisition and processing of blood has been so negligent, that as many as 1.2 million Germans could now be infected with the AIDS virus, according to a report from the state government of Lower Saxony.

Political heads have rolled, and several blood-processing firms are about to be indicted. Minister Seehofer has ordered that the BGA be dissolved, and has announced that anyone who has received blood transfusions in Germany since 1985 can come in and receive a free AIDS test.

But the true tragedy is that all this could have been prevented, and many lives saved, if the responsible health agencies had heeded the warnings of Lyndon LaRouche, his German wife Helga Zepp-LaRouche, along with many medical professionals, who already in 1985 were demanding that AIDS be treated as the deadly epidemic that it is, and that insane budget-cutting policies such as handing out condoms and treating AIDS as a "disability" were worse than useless.

Indeed, already in 1974, before the AIDS virus was even discovered, a special task force under Lyndon LaRouche's guidance had accurately predicted the outbreak of entirely

new types of epidemic diseases under conditions of continued International Monetary Fund and World Bank economic looting of the weakest nations of the Third World, especially Africa.

But instead, as Helga Zepp-LaRouche pointed out in a recent statement (see below), LaRouche and his associates were branded internationally as "fascists" for calling for the application of standard public health procedures to slow the spread of the virus until a crash effort could be mounted to find a cure. Meanwhile, in the United States, the likes of Patty Duke and Elizabeth Taylor went on a feminist rampage against a California ballot initiative mounted by LaRouche supporters, falsely accusing LaRouche of wanting to build "concentration camps" for homosexuals.

But now history has proven LaRouche right. The following pages, therefore, should perhaps best be read as working material for a tragic drama of truly Shakespearean dimensions. One can look on as the actors directly involved, such as Prof. Dr. Hans-Philipp Pöhn (see accompanying interview), tried but failed to get a morally corrupted officialdom to realize the deadly consequences of their cowardice in the face of a political propaganda campaign waged by a crazed but powerful malthusian elite obsessed by their desire to cling to momentary, perverse pleasures—even when that meant their own deaths in the not-too-distant future.

The crisis unfolds

On Oct. 29, the national parliament of Germany voted to form a special investigatory committee to investigate the criminal use of AIDS-contaminated blood reserves for transfusions over the past 8-10 years. The committee is also supposed to look into medical and political responsibilities for the crucial period in the mid-1980s, when decisions to test

the blood supply were recommended but not taken.

The investigation is certain to have explosive repercussions within Germany's political establishment. The opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD), which wants to topple Christian Democratic (CDU) Chancellor Helmut Kohl in next year's elections, has announced its intention to request special testimony before the committee by the two Christian Democratic ministers of public health during the investigated period around 1985—Heiner Geissler and Rita Süssmuth.

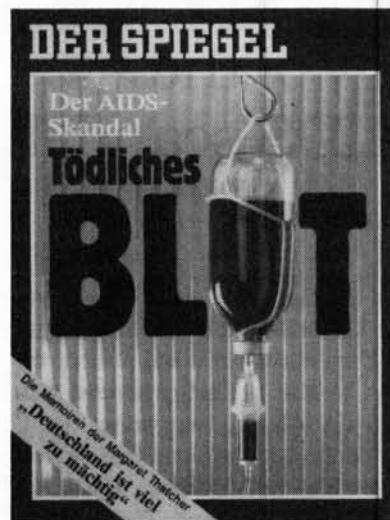
On the surface, the scandal seemed to break out all of a sudden, over the question of whether evidence that an even larger number of blood products and coagulation agents were AIDS-contaminated, had been covered up by leading health officials. On top of this, however, was an increasing flow of new information and hints coming in over the past weeks through the World Health Organization and other agencies, that the spread of AIDS on an international scale far exceeds earlier forecasts, and that there is now an urgent need to collect more reliable data. The news from the United States that more than 200,000 Americans have already died of AIDS in the past 10 years, also played a role in bringing the scandal to the surface.

Health Minister Seehofer reacted on Oct. 7 with the suspension of two senior health officials: Manfred Steinbach, a longtime top aide to Bonn health ministers, and Dieter Grossklaus, president of the BGA. Seehofer also announced criminal charges against an unknown number of other officials for having covered up the contaminated blood affair, possibly including the filing of forged reports.

Seehofer's decision was followed a few days later by another announcement that for reasons of "high inefficiency," the BGA structure would be dissolved, with the aim of reducing the bureaucracy and make the work of the six different scientific institutes operating so far under the jurisdiction of the BGA, more efficient.

Many in the news media began to argue with some justification, that the firings had been done in order to target only a few scapegoats, and that the political consequences had to hit people much higher up in Germany's political hierarchy. This impression was fueled by new scandals erupting over the role of a number of firms specialized in the production of blood plasma and coagulation agents. One of the suspected firms, UB Plasma in the city of Koblenz, was quickly investigated and found guilty of criminally covering up clear evidence that many of the blood supplies they had used for further processing had been contaminated; that no tests had been made; and that blood imported from countries as far away as Ibero-America and Romania had even been mixed together, in a conscious effort to create less traceable contamination factors.

But just as with the savings and loan bank scandal in the United States, it is also clear that if these firms' managements acted with criminal negligence, they had been *encouraged* to



The cover of the Oct. 11 Der Spiegel magazine, which revealed that a large number of Germans may have been infected with HIV without knowing it. The title reads "The AIDS Scandal—Deadly Blood."

do so by the German government, and especially by Rita Süssmuth, who presided over the Health Ministry from 1985-88. Using such weapons as her March 1987 book, *AIDS, Wege aus der Angst* (*AIDS: Escape Routes from Fear*), the feminist Süssmuth launched a propaganda campaign designed to play down the entire AIDS issue as a problem that could be solved by the distribution of condoms.

Any public critics of Süssmuth's policy were publicly branded as followers of Adolf Hitler, or, as Süssmuth put it in her book, undemocratic and in the tradition of "an oppressive chapter of German history." Several weeks before the book's appearance on the market, massive doses of this type of black propaganda had been thrown against the LaRouche organization's call for a "war on AIDS," during the entire hot period of the election campaign for parliament in January 1987.

But the cranes of Ibykus are now hovering over Süssmuth's head, since with the outbreak of the current scandal, it is all but certain that she will be held responsible for a large part of the political side of the scandal.

Will all this cause Germany to finally adopt sensible measures to combat the epidemic, such as the obligatory, name-and-address reporting of all cases, as demanded by Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche and Dr. Pöhn? That all depends on whether responsible members of the government decide to stop playing Hamlet and at minimum include AIDS on the official list of contagious diseases so that it can be treated accordingly. The public debate on measures against AIDS has only just resumed, and it is not yet clear whether any truly effective new policy will be launched, besides Seehofer's demonstrative firings. But on the hopeful side, the scandals have succeeded in breaking years of officially ordered silence on the AIDS issue, and moreover, have proven that LaRouche was right and that his political and administrative adversaries were dead wrong.