

Editorial

WHO admits AIDS pandemic

EIR predicted that not long after the Nov. 4 vote in California on Proposition 64, the same health authorities and other prominent figures who had frantically opposed that measure would admit they had been wrong, that AIDS was spreading out of control, and that urgent measures must be taken. Proposition 64 simply called for classifying AIDS as a dangerous communicable disease, to which classical public-health measures should be applied, and for which a crash research program must be put into motion.

Now, just 15 days after Proposition 64 was defeated at the polls, on Nov. 19 the director of the World Health Organization has made the belated admission, that AIDS is threatening to become a *pandemic*, the term that *EIR* and the supporters of Proposition 64 alone dared to use until a month ago.

In an extraordinary press conference at the United Nations, Dr. Halfdan Mahler, the Danish director general of the World Health Organization (WHO), called AIDS "a health disaster of pandemic proportions" and predicted that there would conservatively be 100 million infected with the disease within five years. Heretofore, the WHO has been leading a global disinformation campaign to downplay the threat of AIDS, in coordination with the now collapsing and discredited Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States.

Last year, at a press conference in Zambia, Dr. Mahler said that people should keep AIDS in perspective to other diseases and not overplay its threat. At his U.N. press conference, however, Dr. Mahler admitted that he had not had "a feeling for what was brewing with regard to AIDS." "We stand nakedly in front of a very serious pandemic as mortal as any pandemic there ever has been," he said. "I don't know of any greater killer than AIDS, not to speak of its psychological, social, and economic maiming." Dr. Mahler made an unusually candid admission that he had not taken the disease seriously enough. "Everything is getting worse and worse in AIDS and all of us have been underestimating it, and I in particular," he said.

Dr. Mahler said several factors changed his attitude and led him to push his organization to begin an AIDS

program. One was pressure from governments of the world, along with a growing awareness that the "industrialized countries and developing countries are in the same boat" with respect to AIDS. Another was criticism from news organizations that WHO had not done enough. To our knowledge, the only news organizations that have made that criticism have been *EIR* and associated publications.

A third reason was his appraisal of newer data. He referenced the discovery of new AIDS-virus type variants in Africa.

Dr. Mahler chided many countries for lacking "political guts" to face the reality of AIDS and for "everyone wishfully believing AIDS won't penetrate" their borders because "things are different here."

Warren Hamerman, director of *EIR*'s Biological Holocaust Task Force, said in a press release issued on Nov. 22, "On behalf of the Task Force and its initiator, Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., I welcome the essentially accurate report of Dr. Mahler. We regret deeply that the new assessment of the WHO was not circulated prior to the vote on California Proposition 64. Nonetheless, Dr. Mahler's statement is extremely useful and to be commended. We have been severe critics of the previous disarming misinformation emanating from the WHO and, in particular, its Soviet-directed Communicable Diseases Division. Nonetheless, we now welcome the turnaround in its perspective.

"Perhaps, now, governments will be compelled to drop their excuses that a research and public health crash program against AIDS is 'cost prohibitive.' Perhaps, now, governments will begin to act with necessary vigor and energy. We need nothing less than a worldwide Apollo moonshot crash research program, combined with emergency public health efforts in the Tropics. Some of us, who have intensively studied the nature of this new type of disease threat for over a dozen years, have been proven not to have been exaggerating the danger of what we warned would be a 'biological holocaust.' We are eager to collaborate with any individuals or agencies which now see the reality of the global threat.' "