

# AIDS has emerged as top election issue

by Patricia Salisbury

In a statement released Sept. 15, *EIR* contributing editor Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. argued that in the course of the 1986, 1987, and 1988 election campaigns, the spread of a new global pandemic more deadly than the bubonic plague, AIDS, would become the issue which will determine the outcome of elections throughout the United States and Western Europe (see "U.S. politicians comment on AIDS," *EIR*, Sept. 27, 1985).

Although generally ignored in the press in both the United States and in Europe, the first signs of this coming political explosion were clear from the results of the 1985 off-year elections. In large cities such as New York and Houston, where the ravages of liberal and counterculture politics had seemed unstoppable, liberalism was put on the defensive almost overnight. The National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC)—the political action committee founded by LaRouche—with its call for an emergency public health approach to AIDS and rejection of the liberals' cynical "civil rights" sloganeering, polled more than 300,000 votes nationally and sparked strong campaigns by conservative political figures in both political parties.

In New York, the AIDS issue was first raised by NDPC-backed primary candidate for mayor Judah P. Rubinstein, but was then taken up in the general elections by GOP candidate Diane McGrath. The supposedly unchallengeable Mayor Koch was forced to immediately respond with promises to re-examine his positions on maintaining "gay" bathhouses, and other "civil rights" for gays. McGrath, who was abandoned in favor of Koch by the liberal wing of the Republican Party, did not follow through on her promising beginning in driving home the AIDS issue, but nonetheless drew 10% of the vote.

Just days before the election, with a landslide electoral victory assured, Koch was forced to go against all his natural inclinations and announce moves to shut down the city's homosexual bathhouses. Within days of his re-election, police padlocked a gay sex club called the Mineshaft. The Mineshaft had been one of the most protected assets of the pornography-dope mafia in New York City. Police officers who raided the establishment in 1980 were subjected to grand jury investigation, and were ultimately hounded out of their jobs. But, a few days after the election, the New York police,

no doubt bolstered by the beginnings of anti-AIDS insurgency, have finally held a 5,000-person demonstration against Koch's fellow liberal Brooklyn District Attorney Elizabeth Holtzman for hampering law enforcement efforts.

In neighboring New Jersey, the State Assembly—dominated by Democrats for the past 12 years—shifted over to a lopsided Republican majority. Most commentators attributed the results to the coattail effect of the big-margin victory of New Jersey Republican Gov. Thomas Kean, who trounced pro-drug liberal Democrat, Peter Shapiro. In fact, the AIDS issue, avoided by Kean himself, was raised as a major issue in the state legislative campaigns. Most liberal Democrats beaten were sponsors of a "gay civil rights" bill being considered by the Assembly Judiciary Committee, occasioning heavy attacks from their Republican opponents. The Democratic Party leader of the Assembly complained to the press, following the election, that defeated Democrats had been smeared for being "pro-AIDS" and "pro-gay." Democrats in the state legislature also reacted to the direction of the political winds by electing conservative Democrat John Russo, the primary opponent of ultra-liberal Shapiro, as the new president of the senate.

## Pro-AIDS liberals on defensive

In Texas, the issue of AIDS completely dominated the municipal elections, with two conservative slates challenging the liberal incumbents, and as in New York, liberal incumbent Kathy Whitmire was forced onto the defensive. An 11-candidate slate backed by the National Democratic Policy Committee polled over 90,000 votes, and were instrumental in shaping the issues in the race. The liberals were also challenged by the "Straight Slate"—a pro-family, anti-homosexual coalition. Two of Whitmire's close allies on the city council were forced into runoffs, because of the size of the NDPC and Straight Slate vote. Political observers credit the strong showing of NDPC-backed candidate Elizabeth Arnold, who received 37,149 votes, with forcing a runoff for city councilman-at-large in the 5th district. Both incumbents and Straight Slate candidates are now reportedly seeking advice and endorsement from the NDPC. In the aftermath of the primary, Texas Gov. Mark White endorsed a proposal by the state health commissioner to quarantine AIDS victims on a case-by-case basis.

In the West Coast states of California and Washington, the leadership of the anti-AIDS insurgency was carried entirely by the NDPC in a series of municipal and school board elections. NDPC-backed candidates won two county community school board seats in California, and consistently polled over 30% of the vote in the Washington state elections—something the liberal *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* warned could happen only if "the mainstream political system and voters hand power to them by default." The AIDS issue broke wide open when the Republican candidate for King County Executive, publicly adopted the NDPC program for screening and quarantining AIDS victims.