

ACT UP

SYDNEY

AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power

ACT UP DEMONSTRATION 19 JUNE 1990
US CONSULATE SYDNEY

(speaker: Bruce Brown)

FIGHT AIDS - NOT PEOPLE WITH AIDS!

ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, is a diverse, non-partisan group of individuals united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis. We lobby government and public health officials; we research and distribute the latest medical information.

We protest and demonstrate; we are not silent.

ACT UP Sydney has organised this demonstration as part of a world-wide protest to mark the opening of the Sixth International Conference on AIDS in San Francisco. This Sydney action, and an action by ACT UP Canberra, are actually starting before the main protest in San Francisco. ACT UP San Francisco is publicising these Australian demonstrations in the American media, and reports of this protest will be faxed to San Francisco this afternoon to be added to their campaign.

100,000 people are expected to march on the Immigration and Naturalization Bureau in San Francisco. Organisers of the Conference say they fear an uncontrollable ACT UP demonstration at the opening of the Conference.

And so they should!

The United States, instead of waging war on the AIDS epidemic, is conducting a war against People with AIDS - its own citizens and those from other countries who are living with HIV. The current US travel restrictions are a political and autocratic solution to a health crisis. A health crisis demands a response of treatment and education. One treats a disease and educates to prevent its spread - one does not legislate against and punish those who have it.

The US has been perhaps the greatest exporter of AIDS to the rest of the world, and yet this preposterous, superficial and morally indefensible charade of travel restrictions seems designed to convince the American public and the world that the US Government is doing something to protect its citizens against the epidemic. What utter bullshit! In American idiom, that's "closing the gate after the horse has left". The American Government is doing NOTHING about AIDS - let's be clear. There are no needle exchange programs, no housing programs for people with HIV and AIDS, and no Federal provisions for HIV-related health care. Like the city-states in Europe during the Middle Ages, which closed their gates and locked their doors when the plague came - and still perished - the United States will learn that this ridiculous idea WILL NOT WORK.

The world is facing a health crisis, and persecuting people with the virus will not make it go away!

American Presidents, in particular the second-rate comedian who preceded current one, are enormously concerned about funding the Contra rebels in Central America. So are many US Congressmen. Where is their concern for the PLWAs in their own country - in their own states!? These so-called legislators are criminals, financing and exporting terrorism while People with HIV and AIDS are seen homeless, begging for money on the streets of America's major cities.

Stalin was infamous for a dark episode in Soviet history, where millions starved to death in the Ukraine, because their leader simply refused to have food sent there during a famine. This is just what Reagan and Bush and the US Congress have done and are doing - committing an act of genocide against their own citizens, their own constituents, their own taxpayers. One AIDS death every 12 minutes in the USA - that makes George Bush the most spectacularly successful serial killer in history.

It is, in fact, the Bushs, the Reagans, the Congressmen and the beauracrats who are actually spreading AIDS through their passivity, their fear-mongering, their non-caring and their cold, calculated murderous callousness.

ACT UP demands that the US immediately lift these immoral and insulting travel restrictions.

We demand legislation to end discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS.

And we demand that the Australian Government set the example.

People With AIDS are not dying of this disease, they are living with it. ACT UP is not about death, it is about life, self-empowerment and health. Because of this, no government, no department of health, no President - of any country - no Cardinal, no trumped up preacher-cum-politician, no customs official and no scientist can shut us out or shut us up.

We will not be silenced!

As long as HIV and AIDS are here, so are we!

ACT UP! STOP AIDS! FIGHT BACK! ACT NOW!