

For EC meeting, 9/10 March

Singlespacing  
normal

Draft statement on AIDS

~~aids-1~~

An atmosphere of panic has been whipped up about AIDS. Sections of the press have played a shameful role with misinformation and scaremongering about the disease and its source.

But it is also wrong to play down the seriousness of what is a major developing public health problem. At present there is no known cure. By the end of February 132 cases had been confirmed in Britain, double the number at last August, and 58 have died.

All the predictions are that the numbers will rise sharply. But the DHSS Chief Medical Officer basing his forecast on US experience considers that the ~~nan~~ rise will slow after reaching between 1,000 and 2,000 in 1986.

The claim that AIDS is a "gay plague" is totally false as well as <sup>a</sup>/contemptible slander. Gays are victims, not the cause of the disease, which is due to a virus. The principal risks are those which maximise trans<sup>m</sup>mission of blood, semen or saliva fluids infected with the virus from one person to another. Gays are not the <sup>potential</sup> only/victims. In Africa half the sufferers <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ women.

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The government's refusal to provide extra funds so that hospitals can cope with the additional burden of Aids cases without diverting resources from other pressing needs must be condemned. Special grants must be made to meet ~~wi~~ the exceptional <sup>costly</sup> demands that the long and ~~xxxx~~ debilitating illness makes.

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