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AIDS ACTION NEWS!

Montréal: 5th International AIDS Conference

This year Canada will host the V International Conference on AIDS. It will take place in Montréal between the 4th and the 9th of June.

It will be preceded by a two-day meeting of Non-Governmental AIDS Organizations (NGOs) from around the world. The NGO conference is being organized by the Canadian AIDS Society (CAS). All member organizations of CAS, including AAN!, will be sending delegates to this meeting, which will be the first of its kind attached to an International AIDS Conference.

The federal government and the World Health Organization are jointly sponsoring the V International Conference. It is expected that there will be 10,000 delegates. Papers will be presented not just on medical-scientific issues, but on social issues as well, including the psychological, sociological, ethical, economic, and international aspects of AIDS. The World Health Organization expects that there will be an important focus on AIDS in the Third World.

To help develop a political focus for the Conference, AAN! has proposed to activists who plan to attend that a framework for setting demands. Issues are to be divided into international, national and regional. We have suggested four international issues for the conference. These are, 1) World acceptance of AIDS as a manageable but chronic condition. 2) An international code of human rights for people living with AIDS. This would incorporate accessibility to proper treatment and healthcare, including the issues of testing and quarantine. 3. Standardization and coordination of an international drug approval process by the World Health Organization. 4) Unilateral condemnation of placebo trials involving people with HIV infection.

For Canadian activists, we have also proposed a number of national issues, including: a restructuring of the Federal AIDS Centre's mission statement to include

the national co-ordination of treatment; an overhaul of the management of drug research so as to provide for community research initiatives; and a new approach to the management of the epidemic to other groups and communities outside the gay male population. (e.g. IV drug users, prisoners, street kids, sex-trade workers, etc.)

We have made no proposals for regional issues.

Besides participating in the NGO meetings, AAN! is developing plans to assist the political work of aids activists from around the world, at the International Conference. To date, we have done three main things: first, we have gotten or are getting in touch with activists who are planning to come to the conference. Secondly, we have developed in outline a political framework for facilitating the various agendas of AIDS activists coming to Montréal. Thirdly, we have begun to take steps to set up a media centre to be used by activists during the conference.

In addition to facilitating the organization of activist activities in Montréal, we are in the process of planning our own involvement at the conference. The media committee is publishing in May a new bulletin called "Testing AIDS". The material in this issue will be combined with the contents of last year's "Treatment AIDS", and will be translated into French, and produced for the conference. On May 7th, there will be an AAN! teach-in at Toronto's City Hall, part of which will be concerned with AAN!'s presence at the Montréal conference. Many members of AAN! are already planning to go to Montréal for the conference and we expect to be able to help in facilitating transportation to Montréal for the actions we are planning there. Bernard Courte, a member of the AAN! media committee, will be hired to work at the conference as the Gay-Media Liaison Person. Tim McCaskell, the Chair of AAN!, will be attending the NGO meetings on behalf of our organization.

George Smith