IMF’d Up, Man!

July 1, 2000 By Julie Hantman

Washington, DC—HIVers and their allies at the two-day megaprotest here charged the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank with forcing debtor nations to slash social spending as part of their payment plans. On April 16, some 850 AIDS activists—many bused in by ACT UP/Philadelphia—rallied on the Ellipse as Vietnam vet–cum–PWA John Bell addressed the crowd of 15,000. ACT UP helped blockade the meeting site by holding a “Piggy Bank Roast” at the intersection of 19th and M (pictured). The protest was marred only by reports of police misconduct of some of the 1,300 arrestees. World Bank president James Wolfensohn made front-page news when he acknowledged the scope of the pandemic and urged his delegates to grant more loans for AIDS-specific projects. “If you have programs, we will fund them,” he said, and then actually agreed with activists who cautioned that underdeveloped health infrastructures will still be a hurdle.

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