

Colombia to be a pot plantation

EIR's Dennis Small reports back from Latin America

Executive Intelligence Review's Latin America desk chief Dennis Small recently spent several weeks in Colombia and Venezuela. The following report on Colombia, is the first in a series on developments in the two nations.

In 1975, three quarters of the marijuana consumed in the United States came from Mexico. That same year, the Mexican government of Luis Echeverria initiated Operation TRIZO, a paraquat spraying program designed to obliterate Mexico's marijuana and poppy fields. With assistance from U.S. agencies and a firm commitment on the part of their government to eliminate the drug plague, Mexico had drastically reduced drug cultivation by late 1976.

Within months of Mexico's initiation of Operation TRIZO, the international narcotics cartel had decided to shift to Colombia as their primary supplier of marijuana, and to take all necessary political steps to ensure this. Since that decision, a leading Colombian general who opposed having the military oversee the drug traffic has been assassinated; a top trade unionist who was organizing worker unity in favor of an expanding industrial economy was murdered; and, in the course of the last year and a half in particular, the Colombian constitution has been undermined to the point where virtual military justice prevails today in Colombia.

In the past weeks, and under the guise of various "constitutional" provisions, hundreds of trade unionists and political activists have been rounded up. Of these, dozens have been subjected to the most gruesome of physical and psychological tortures, in classic "South American" style. And indiscriminate military raids on various party offices — such as those of the Communist Youth — are also being carried out. Perhaps most ominous of all, there are increasing calls in the nations' press for declaring the mass-based Colombian Communist Party illegal, a sure preview of a broad wave of repressions throughout the country.

The result of these measures? Between 1975 and 1979, Colombia passed from providing less than 15 percent of U.S. marijuana to growing over 80 percent of the "grass" smoked in America — and it is marijuana that is three times as potent, as physically and psychologically destructive, as the old Mexican variety. In short, Colombia is rapidly being converted into a marijuana hothouse under the direction of the international drug interests. And a bloody Chile-style military coup will be carried out in Colombia if that is what is deemed necessary by U.S.

National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski — linked to the drug trade through his ties to London and the "Zionist lobby" — and his Colombian hatchetmen to keep the marijuana flowing to the U.S. Eastern Seaboard.

Press campaign

This is the conclusion drawn by this reporter from a recent two week trip to Colombia. In addition to the growing frightening wave of repression sweeping that Andean nation, one is struck by the way in which the population is being systematically bombarded with a lying press campaign to convince them that the entire multi-billion-dollar marijuana trade should be legalized. And if one were to believe the Colombian press, that nation's entire population already favors such an approach.

Spokesmen from all shades of the political spectrum are lining up on this pro-drug campaign behind the leadership of top Colombian oligarch Alvaro Gomez Hurtado. Gomez, a leader of the Conservative party and a member along with the fascist Count Otto von Hapsburg of various Mont Pelerin Society-linked institutions, has used his newspaper *El Siglo* to orchestrate the campaign for legalization. Legalization advocates' dominant argument is that the drug trade is too big to be stopped, so why shouldn't Colombians benefit from it? To aid this line, the grossest of distortions about the United States have been willfully propagated by various media outlets — that marijuana is being legalized in the U.S.; that it is physically harmless in any event; that pro-legalization Sen. Edward Kennedy is the probable next president of the U.S.; and so on.

It was in this context that the Andean Labor Party, co-thinker party of the U.S. Labor Party, decided to reproduce in Colombia an open letter from an American physician, Dr. Ernest Shapiro, which explained the actual fight against drugs in the U.S. and marijuana's physical destructiveness. The letter created an instant uproar throughout the capital city of Bogota, with at least one radio station reading the letter in its entirety to a national listening audience.

It should be noted that the same media that are lying to Colombians about the U.S. are also intent on convincing the American population that Colombians, in particular the Colombian peasantry, are reaping windfall profits from the drug trade and that they have no aversion whatever to producing drugs for U.S. consumption. This too is a bald-faced lie. In talks with Fausto Charris, the Secretary

General of FANAL — the largest peasant confederation in the country — Charris told EIR that marijuana is destroying the Colombian peasantry, which views its primary responsibility as producing food, not drugs, for the nation's population. "It is ridiculous and imbecile to think that marijuana production benefits the peasant sector," Charris wrote recently in a press statement. "It is inconceivable to think of replacing food production for the nutrition of the Colombian population, especially children, with a drug which is harmful to the health and to the morale of our population."

— Dennis Small

Lawyers denounce military torture

In a meeting with President Turbay Feb. 8, representatives from the Colombian Association of Democratic Lawyers presented detailed evidence that personnel of the Brigade of Military Institutes (BIM) tortured individuals jailed in Bogota on charges of "subversion."

Mr. Pedro Cardenas denounced the fact that six workers of the Augustin Codazzi Institute had been tortured, subjected to electrical current on their genitals and hung from the arms tied behind their backs. Military personnel warned the individuals that if they retracted their "confessions," their own lives and those of their families would be endangered.

Counselor Jorge Enrique Sanchez reported that BIM personnel are using drugs and tying victims' with barbed wire to extract confessions. He added that these tortures were being applied not only in urban areas, but also against the peasantry, "whose wives are raped, and whose work implements are destroyed."

A document signed by all the lawyers present at the presidential Palace cites the case of Olga Lopez de Roldan and her five-year old daughter, both of whom were jailed. The woman's head was covered with a hood and she was repeatedly beaten with a metal object. Her hands were tied behind her and she was hung in this position for a period of hours. The military forced her to undress and threatened to sodomize both her and her daughter with a broomstick. Tape recordings of her daughter's voice were played constantly as a form of psychological torture.

All of this information appeared in the Bogota daily *El Tiempo* on February 9.

'Human rights for some'

The following are excerpted editorial statements from the Jan. 16 and 20 editions of the Colombian daily, El Pueblo:

... But the moment the country receives patriotic satisfaction from the victory of the forces of order against the famous urban criminal organization (the M-19), an Army patrol on routine duty is a victim of a dynamite attack, whose painful toll was seven soldiers dead and others gravely injured.

This crime occurred near the town of Yacopi, a region that has always been the epicenter of movements of uniformed bandits (and) has been attributed to that other clandestine organization which goes under the name of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia; and which presents itself as the armed wing of the Communist Party directed by Moscow, which has never denounced these kind of attacks, despite being a party which functions legally, which participates freely in electoral campaigns and whose leaders work within public institutions, form part of the representative bureaucracy, with profitable emoluments, social benefits, travel, etc. ...

Thus there is a monstrous contradiction between accepting all the benefits of liberty and of democracy — including conspiring — and to arm shock forces probably financed with international funds against the Army and the Police who heroically battle in the service of the protective institutions of the republican system. Either the Communist Party rejects the legal order and its bourgeoisified leaders march off to the mountains to overthrow democracy and install the dictatorship of the proletariat, or they must openly condemn armed rebels which in their name treacherously and cowardly assassinate the guardians of those institutions theated by a party which has worked within legality and which is secretly allied with the agents of subversion . . . (Jan. 20, 1979)

(The Colombian) government guarantees the safeguarding of the Constitution, of the laws and of human rights for all those citizens not involved in subversive acts. But with those that attack the institutions or violate penal laws, that government will be implacable. (Jan. 16, 1979)