

A right-wing coup threatens

Fall of Turbay will clear the way for massive drug exports

A barrage of press and media propaganda centered around the cover story in the Jan. 29 Time magazine ("The Colombian Connection") and a CBS "60 Minutes" program last Sunday have left a sizable proportion of the U.S. population with the impression that Colombian marijuana trafficking is so profitable and so corrupting at all levels that nothing will work to stop it.

This is a lie, disseminated by corrupt media outlets at precisely the moment when Colombia's drug-running networks led by Conservative oligarch Alvaro Gomez Hurtado and Defense Minister Camacho Leyva are preparing to completely eliminate constitutional rule in the country in order to legalize and expand marijuana production and export as Colombia's main economic activity. The international press campaign to create a climate favoring legalization of marijuana and other dangerous drugs is backup for Alvaro Gomez's coup plans.

Gomez is not acting alone, nor is the issue limited to events in Colombia. The strategy for the entire region is genocide, designed by U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, already applied in Central America and planned for elsewhere on the continent. If there is a military coup in Colombia as Gomez plans, it will set off civil war, terrorism and total chaos on a **regional basis**; the disruption of productive economic activity, particularly food production, will leave entire populations to starve — and force them into marijuana cultivation.

This will be Alvaro Gomez's contribution to the maintenance of the crumbling world monetary system and the International Monetary Fund: exterminate the regional population, and flood the United States with marijuana to destroy the physical and intellectual capabilities of its skilled population.

Time magazine's six-page spread report on "The Colombian Connection" reports that a network of 70,000 families, most of them novices of smalltime entrepreneurs is responsible for supplying a \$25 billion per year habit in a business that is bringing Colombia more revenue than coffee. Efforts to control it have barely made a dent and, according to Time, do not even worry the Colombian drug mafias.

The truth is that Time correspondent Donald Neff, one of the authors of the article, was present last November at a press conference sponsored by the Andean Labor Party where spokesmen for Colombia's largest agrarian organization FANAL, called for a government crackdown on marijuana pushing to permit peasants to grow food rather than drugs.

Time also knows that Colombian President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala has stated his commitment to prevent any Colombian marijuana from leaving the nation's shores, and has asked for U.S. technical assistance to this end. A U.S.-assisted paraquat-spraying program carried out in Mexico several years ago succeeded in reducing the Mexican contribution to U.S. marijuana supply from 75 to 85 percent to below 25 percent, and Drug Enforcement Administration chief Peter Bensinger has said such a program would be easier and cheaper to carry out in Colombia. In a press conference in Bogota last week, Turbay reiterated his commitment to stop the drug flow out of the country and stated unequivocally that he would not incorporate revenues accruing from marijuana exports into the formal economy, as some of the country's large financial institutions have requested. If Alvaro Gomez wants to maintain the Colombian franchise of the international drug trade, he will have to establish a military dictatorship in Colombia. He has been preparing for that since Turbay took office in August of 1978.

The would-be dictators

Leading the current assault against constitutional rule under the pretext of "guarding the institutions" from subversive activities are three principle figures: Gomez, Defense Minister Camacho Leyva and Gomez's brother-in-law and Justice Minister Hugo Escobar Sierra. They are the allies of the same British-centered oligarchy which has run the Far Eastern drug trade since the 1820s.

From the pages of his newspaper El Siglo, Alvaro Gomez has openly and repeatedly called for the legalization of the marijuana trade because, as he explains, this is the only way to do away with the "crime and corruption" inspired by the illegal drug trade. He adds that the revenues from a legalized drug trade could constitute a new "bonanza" to replace coffee as the country's main export. Camacho Leyva has repeatedly made known his intention to put the military in power. He is the author of "shoot to kill" orders to deal with public protests and has been characterized by the Colombian Communist Party as "a Colombian Pinochet." Escobar Sierra has overseen the implementation of the Security Statute, the "emergency measure" passed last September which effectively institutionalizes military justice and martial law. Since Turbay's inauguration these three have directed the step-by-step process by which constitutional guarantees have been eliminated.

Colombia

It is no exaggeration to say that the apparatus for a right-wing military coup is already in place in Colombia. Under the direction of Camacho, Colombia's military is arresting and torturing hundreds of citizens of varying political affiliations, under the pretext of hunting for members of the terrorist grouping, the M-19, which raided an important military installation in Bogota on Jan. 1.

The wave of repression is reminiscent of the worst excesses of the Southern Cone dictatorships. Reliable sources and eyewitnesses report that at the Brigade of Military Institutes (BIM), the center of the military's counterintelligence operations, persons arrested for suspected connections to the M-19 are subjected to electric shock, cigarette burns, and hanging from a "parrots perch" to extract "confessions" of guilt. "Technicians" have reportedly been invited in from Uruguay and Chile to "advise" the military in perfecting their torture techniques.

Arrests have been indiscriminate, with over 2,400 persons reportedly detained since the military began its "antisubversive" sweep three weeks ago. Those seized include prominent Liberal Party political and intellectual figures, members of the clergy, university students and trade union leaders. Victims subjected to jailings at the BIM headquarters report they were blindfolded for days, deprived of food and water, and drugged. Several reported having hallucinations as a result of drugging.

The targets

The actual target of the repression and torture is Colombia's organized labor movement, united since August 1977 in a National Union Council (CNS) that brings together Liberal, Conservative, Catholic and Communist unions around a program of opposition to austerity and militarization.

A national one-day work stoppage carried out by the CNS in September 1977 terrified the Colombian oligarchy, which feared the alliance of Liberals and Communists embodied in the CNS might evolve into a political force that would challenge the no-growth policies they had succeeded in imposing for two decades through the National Front apparatus set up in 1957.

The ending of the National Front—a system of alternating and hand-picked Liberal and Conservative governments—constituted a serious threat to the Conservative oligarchy. It meant that independent factions of the Liberal Party, generally supported by the majority of the population, could gain control of the government and adopt policies contrary to the goals of the

Kennedy associate endorses legalized drugs

In the midst of the high-profile international press campaign to create a climate favoring legalization of marijuana and other dangerous drugs, one of Colombia's leading oligarchical figures, Alberto Lleras Camargo, has suggested that the United States adopt the British model of "not fighting" drug trafficking to solve the drug problem it now faces. The "father" of Colombia's Liberal Party, a close associate of the Kennedy family and architect of John Kennedy's Alliance for Progress in Latin America, cited the arguments of writer Gore Vidal in a recent column to explain that the U.S. has a drug problem only because law enforcement officials and stringent laws have made the illegal drug trade too attractive and too profitable. Anyone can be bought off, anyone can be "corrupted." "Where there is no fight," Lleras commented, "as in England, there is no problem."

In what is clearly a cover-up of the role of the British financial oligarchy in controlling the international drug trade, as recently exposed by the U.S. Labor Party, Lleras Camargo asserts that "In any case, England doesn't appear to have a drug problem, nor Mafias, nor fantastic world connections to destroy the morality of the British population..." This Colombian lauds the British policy of legally granting heroin addicts their "fix," and again citing Gore Vidal, remarks on the reduced number of heroin addicts in England, as compared to the U.S.

Lleras' commentary, published in the Liberal daily *El Tiempo* on Jan. 28, is an explicit approval of the health care plans recently elaborated for both the advanced and underdeveloped sectors by Senator Ted Kennedy, and promoted internationally by British policy-makers: hospices in which people "die with dignity" — with the help of heroin or cocaine mixtures — to replace modern health facilities and scientific advances in medical research.

World Bank or International Monetary Fund which have played a major role in Colombian economic planning throughout the postwar period. When Liberal President Lopez Michelsen entered office in 1974, he was subjected to a series of destabilizations to force him into line on matters of economic policy— austerity—and clamping down on the labor movement and population at large.

During Turbay's electoral campaign in 1978, Liberal and Conservative oligarchs joined forces to insure that Turbay would pose no problem to them. A slander and watertight campaign—including charges of drug running—succeeded in forcing Turbay to join with the Conservatives in forming a government, something he had initially vowed he would never do. It is those Conservative oligarchs who have, together with their military allies, brought the country to the brink of fascist dictatorship.

—Laurence Hecht