

tell the pot smoker he was smoking a contaminated plant, and in this version it passed both houses. To date the bill remains an obstacle to Colombian eradication efforts.

When Julio Cesar Turbay won the election in June 1978, the pot lobby slander against him began to backfire. Turbay made a point of emphasizing his commitment to the total eradication of the Colombian crop, promising that none of the huge expected November harvest would leave Colombian shores.

At this point, the Colombian liberal and leftwing agents of the pot lobby went into full-scale operation. The biggest circulation left rag in Colombia, *Alternativa*, began spreading the line that U.S. paraquat spraying in Mexico was similar to the Vietnam defoliation programs, and was equally "imperialist." A Front for Guajira Liberation was formed demanding the rights of the natives of the largest pot-growing region to cultivate marijuana without government interference in their "indigenous culture."

In tandem, the National Association of Financial In-

### Bensinger: wipe it out, Mexican style

*Following are excerpts from an interview with Drug Enforcement Administration chief Peter Bensinger published in the Washington Star, Jan. 22, 1979.*

**Q: ... What about getting to the root of the problem in Colombia, where the impact of drugs is even more enormous than it is here?**

**A:** It is enormous. There might be between 100,000 to 200,000 Colombian families involved in all aspects of the marijuana business in that country. But in terms of comparative difficulty and numbers the mission can be carried out, and I think far easier than in Mexico. The land mass in Mexico is three to four times as big, the number of people affected by it is about equal. But Mexico has been tremendously successful by spraying poppy and marijuana fields and arresting farmers growing these crops. The attitudes of farmers in Mexico is changing because their illegal fields are being sprayed, they can't get a crop, they are being arrested, some 1,500 to 2,000 of them. They are deciding that it is more profitable to go back to planting corn or crops that will pay them.

**Q: That could work in Colombia?**

**A:** If the same pressure was applied in Colombia, yes...

**Q: So what's to be done?**

**A:** The way to have an impact is financial, go after the assets of the traffickers ... and try to have a better understanding of the health hazards....

If someone had said five years ago that Mexico would destroy 41,000 poppy fields, people would have said you're crazy. But that's what happened.

stitutions (ANIF), representing some of Colombia's largest businesses and banks, including the financier's of Turbay's campaign, joined the push for legalization. At a November 1978 press conference, an ANIF spokesman informed this press agency that they were financing a propaganda drive to convince the country that marijuana is not dangerous to health. "If we can convince President Trubay of this," the ANIF representative stated, "we are sure he will drop his opposition to legalization."

On the U.S. side, the Zionist lobby moved to sabotage Turbay's drug control efforts. Decriminalization advocate Benjamin S. Rosenthal, a congressman from New York City, was the man chosen to "help" Colombia control its marijuana problem. In October 1978, the Colombian government had announced a plan to militarily encircle the drug-growing Guajira province and control the entry and egress of every plane, ship and ground vehicle — to take effect Nov. 1. Days before the target date, Rosenthal, a 17-year veteran of the House International Relations Committee went to Colombia under the rubric of "U.S. cooperation." Most of his time was spent, however, meeting with some of the more notorious Colombian advocates of drug legalization, including a full day spent with the Justice Minister and Attorney General — both close associates of Colombia's number one pot lobbyist, Alvaro Gomez Hurtado. Needless to say, the Guajira sealing operation has not seriously hurt the drug traffickers.

Another side of the U.S. operation is being run by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, which includes on its Board of Directors Doug Fraser of the United Autoworkers and Rabbi Morton Rosenthal of the Anti-Defamation League. Larry Birns is the director of this organization which, though very small, has almost unlimited access to media coverage. The Council specializes in using the issue of human rights violations for political destabilization.

In Colombia, the Council is broadcasting charges of human rights violations — real enough — as part of the plan to dump Turbay in favor of a drugpushers' coup. In a document circulated by Birns, a member of the Council calls for drug legalization and the elimination of democracy in favor of more "informal" means of government.

#### How to stop them

In the past month, the calls for legalization have escalated to include support from every leading Colombian daily. Ex-President Alberto Lleras Camargo last week upped the ante, calling for the implementation of the British system of legalized drug use. The collapse of wholesale coffee prices to half their 1976 levels is being used as yet another argument for switching over to drugs as the country's principal legal export (illegal marijuana earnings already exceed those from coffee).

What will stop the drug traffickers is a full U.S. commitment to aid Colombia in carrying out a paraquat eradication program modeled on Mexico's highly successful Operation TRIZO, as well as stepped up anti-narcotics interception stateside. As Drug Enforcement Administration chief Peter Bensinger stated in a Washington Star interview, in terms of land mass to be covered and personnel