



M-19 leader Carlos Toledo Plata (r) with his subordinates Alvaro Fayad, a sociologist, and Carlos Pizarro León-Gómez, a law student, during a court martial in the spring of 1981.

Organized crime and terrorism: mapping the Latin American links

by Valerie Rush

EIR has launched an in-depth investigation of several Latin American countries where the drug/terrorism networks now under attack in Italy retain great political power. We present below the first of a two-part series on the preliminary findings of this investigation—findings which point indisputably in the direction of the same international Propaganda 2 Masonic Lodge identified in Italy as the power center of the drugs and terrorism networks.

The Mexican left, as we show, has important terrorist links to the Italian Red Brigades. But among all the countries of Latin America, Colombia stands out for its role as the world's premier producer of illegal drugs—a fact which affects both its own population, through the drug mafia's growing domination of all political and economic life there, and that of the United States, which is the primary market for Colombia's illegal exports of marijuana, cocaine, and quaaludes.

Not accidentally, Colombia is also the country with Latin America's most active and best-known terrorist group, the M-19.

The American public has recently been made aware of some of the implications of this "Colombian Connection." There has been a sudden flood of newspaper stories on bloody gang warfare among petty Colombian drug mafiosi living in the United States. And some attention is being paid to the degradation of the state of Florida, today one of the international drug cartel's entrepôts for Colombian contraband.

But these reports bypass the scope of the process under way.

Colombia is a nation in the grip of a drug-trafficking "black oligarchy" which deploys terrorism—of both the left and right varieties—as a means of maintaining its control. Organized crime no longer threatens to destabilize the government in Colombia—in many parts of the

country, it is the government. Citizens who used to warn that the drug mafias were “buying” up politicians to represent their interests, now report that the mafiosi are themselves running for office.

The terrorist M-19, which, for almost a decade, has plagued Colombia with assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings, and violence, turns out to be run from the top by the drug mafia—as we demonstrate below. Yet the M-19 is today being wooed by most of the candidates in the upcoming presidential elections, who describe the terrorists as nothing worse than “disaffected intellectuals with high ideals.” Although the M-19 has pledged to use terror to prevent the May presidential elections from taking place, the candidates are falling over each other to offer a more attractive “political amnesty” to the terrorists.

Official Colombian toleration of terrorism has gone so far that when a Red Brigade fugitive, Leandro Barozzi, who was hiding out in Colombia, was recently discovered by Italian authorities and his extradition requested, the Colombian courts—on orders from the Justice Ministry—refused to arrest him because “he has committed no crime in Colombia.” Colombian authorities are now “studying the matter”—while Barozzi, accused of participating in the 1978 murder of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro, freely walks the streets of Colombia.

Right-wing terrorism is also being viewed with equanimity in mafia-ridden Colombia. At the end of 1981, a right-wing death squad called “Death to Kidnappers” (MAS, for its Spanish acronym), was formed by Colombia’s most prominent drug runners, who issued a mass leaflet to announce their existence as “the action arm of the Mafia.” Their emergence has not only been met with a resounding silence on the part of the Colombian authorities; it is being acclaimed in certain circles as a necessary, “if extreme,” precedent. According to one Colombia judicial authority interviewed by *EIR*, “the MAS has proven that terrorism can be dealt with,” and has established the need for certain “new legal precedents.”

Mafia control of life in Colombia has become so brazen that ironic press commentaries like the following have begun to appear in the national dailies. Writes satirist Antonio Caballero in the daily *El Tiempo* of Feb. 10:

“The Mafia is on the side of the institutions. And it is apparently for this reason that the Security Statute [a presidential decree establishing military control over the judicial process—ed.] has not interfered in any way with drug trafficking nor defended the judges who have been persecuted by the mafia. In a country where only subversion is a crime, the Mafia has become a bulwark of these institutions, as respectable as the Conservative Party’s National Directorate or the Council of State.”

Documentation

The Colombian M-19 and the drug traffic

by Valerie Rush

In Colombia, two interconnected sets of developments that have come to light since December 1981 afford a useful entry point for launching an Italian-style investigation into the networks which have converted Colombia into the centerpiece of the Latin American drug trade and into a dangerous source of instability for the entire region.

- On Dec. 9, 1981 the Mexican authorities arrested one **Jaime Guillot Lara**, a prominent Colombian drug trafficker operating out of Miami and, according to high-level Mexican sources, a leading member of the Colombian terrorist organization the **M-19**. Under interrogation, Guillot reportedly confessed being one of the M-19’s principal arms suppliers and provided details on several arms shipments he had made to the terrorists in the past few months. According to various public charges, including those of the U.S. State Department, Guillot had worked out a high-level deal with **Cuban** government officials through which his drug ships were allowed refueling and repair privileges by the Cubans.

One shipment of arms delivered by Guillot to the Colombian coastal city of Barranquilla was collected on Oct. 24, 1981 when an M-19 commando squad hijacked a Colombian airliner to carry the weapons to the M-19’s jungle hideout in the province of Caqueta. Another arms shipment to the M-19 was lost Nov. 16, 1981 when a ship, the *Karina*, which had just rendezvoused in Colombian waters with one of Guillot’s ships, was sunk by the Colombian Navy, presumably with the weapons aboard.

- During the month of December 1981, the **MAS**, a right-wing death squad suspected of military or paramilitary origins, began to operate in the drug-finance city of Medellin. Calling itself “Death to Kidnappers” (MAS is the acronym in Spanish), the death squad proclaimed itself to be the “action arm of the Mafia” dedicated to capturing and/or executing kidnappers who were preying especially on the local drug mafiosi and their families for the lucrative ransoms they brought. Among the 30 to 40 victims the MAS has claimed since then, many have been labor leaders and civic activists from the area. In addition, however, the MAS has reportedly kidnapped or fingered to the authorities as many as 100 members of

the M-19. The MAS has recently begun to spread its activities to the cities of Bogota, Cali, and elsewhere.

According to the Jan. 14, 1982 issue of the Colombian daily *El Siglo*, the MAS targeting of the M-19 represents a sort of "falling out among thieves." *El Siglo* explained that the M-19 and drug mafias had long maintained a profitable trade of arms for drugs, a business relationship upset by the M-19's decision to begin kidnapping mafiosi. *El Siglo* suggested that the ease with which the MAS has identified M-19ers is due to the long-standing intimacy the terrorists and the drug-traffickers have shared. The M-19 confirmed this in a public communiqué in which it claimed to know the names of the mafiosi behind the MAS, but would not reveal those names for fear of endangering at least 15 of their own members believed to be held by the MAS.

The controllers

In order to fully understand the M-19 terrorists—their origins, their support networks, their financial controllers—it is necessary that such an investigation proceed from the standpoint laid out by Italian judge **Ferdinando Imposimato** in describing his methodology in going after the Red Brigades. Imposimato informed the press Jan. 17, 1982 that both "Red and Black terrorism"—i.e., of the left and right—were controlled by the same international forces, and that these included three principal elements:

- 1) Radical Arab networks linked in particular to Libya's terrorist dictator, **Muammar Qaddafi**. Qaddafi in turn is an important element in the **Propaganda-2** (P-2) Freemasonic lodge.
- 2) Elements of the Soviet **KGB** interested in destabilizing the West;
- 3) The Israeli intelligence service, the **Mossad**.

Propaganda-2

The M-19's links to the P-2 lodge date back to the origins of the terrorist group in 1970, when the M-19 was identified with the political ideology of former Argentine dictator **Juan Perón**, a well-documented accomplice of the P-2 crime networks. The April 19th Movement, or M-19, was formed in the immediate aftermath of the April 19, 1970 presidential elections in Colombia which defrauded the followers of the **ANAPO Party**, headed by former dictator Gen. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. Rojas Pinilla was a notoriously corrupt individual who openly modeled his 1955-57 military government on that of Argentina's Perón. The M-19 formed itself largely of ex-military men who had made up the leadership ranks of Rojas Pinilla's ANAPO party. One of the original M-19 founders, **Carlos Toledo Plata**, was active in the right wing of the Peronist movement in Argentina during the 1950s, where he studied as a medical student. He later returned to Colombia and

joined the ANAPO under Rojas Pinilla. Recent interviews with Toledo Plata reveal that the terrorist leader claims to have undergone a "conversion" from right to radical left during the period of his political activism. Toledo Plata is currently in a Colombian jail, accused of having masterminded both the M-19 assassination of Colombian labor leader **José Raquel Mercado** in 1976, and the January 1979 theft of some 4,000 arms from a military depot in northern Bogota.

The M-19's links to **Panama** and the **Torrijos** family also suggest a P-2 connection worth investigating, given the Torrijos family's suspected involvement in drugs and arms trafficking, as well as its long-standing close relationship to Juan Perón. Panama has long represented a safehouse for the M-19, especially for its present leader, **Jaimé Bateman**, who is believed to operate out of that country. In addition, Panama has frequently served as a "launching pad" for the M-19's activities, notably including the attempted "invasion" of Colombia on its southwest coast in March 1981.

Socialist International

The M-19's close ties to the **Socialist International**, whose representative in Italy, Bettino Craxi's **Italian Socialist Party**, is implicated in the fascist P-2 conspiracy, also bear investigating.

• On Feb. 26, 1980, an M-19 commando group seized the embassy of the Dominican Republic in Bogota and demanded the release of a number of their jailed comrades. Asked by the press at the time to describe his group's political orientation, the commando leader responded, "Social Democratic." His model of the kind of society he wanted for Colombia, he stated, was "Austria's popular democracy"—the Social Democratic government of **Chancellor Bruno Kreisky**.

Kreisky, in fact, personally participated in the mediation efforts, and eventually sent the M-19 a telegram thanking them for releasing the Austrian ambassador who had been taken hostage. The Austrian government, according to the Colombian press at the time, had reportedly paid a ransom of one million dollars to the terrorists to obtain their ambassador's release, a move which reportedly infuriated the Colombian government. The Austrian government was also one of three governments to offer the M-19 asylum at the conclusion of the embassy affair.

While direct links between the M-19 and the Red Brigades have still to be confirmed, it is significant that the Italian government requested the extradition from Colombia of one **Leandro Barozzi** in February, a Red Brigader wanted in connection with the Aldo Moro murder. The Colombian government balked at the extradition request, while Barozzi himself is claiming that the charges against him are for "political," activities, and he therefore cannot be extradited.

The KGB and the Mossad

Despite fierce denials of involvement in, or relations with, drug trafficking on the part of the Cuban government, there is conclusive evidence that at least a faction within that government, a faction linked to **Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez** and to tainted elements of the **Soviet KGB**, have a long-standing collaboration with the **Meyer Lansky**-led drug-mafia dating back to the Batista days of the 1950s and earlier.

Reliable Mexican sources have confirmed that drug trafficker Guillot did in fact meet with high Cuban officials and worked out an understanding, along the lines indicated above. Further, the Cuban government has time and again welcomed the M-19ers to Cuba with open arms following their terrorist operating—for example, after the Dominican embassy seizure referred to above and the more recent M-19 hijacking of a Colombian Aerotal plane in Bogota ending in Cuba.

- Mossad links to the M-19 must be sought in connection with the American corporation **United Brands**, the banana multinational whose Honorary Chairman of the Board, **Max Fisher**, is known to maintain a close working relationship with the Israeli intelligence agency. United Brands has had extensive operations in Colombia—under various names—for nearly 80 years, and currently has plantations in areas of the country which are notorious centers of drug cultivation and trafficking. Indicative of the kind of products United Brands cultivates is the fact that M-19 chief Jaime Bateman was raised on a United Brands plantation where his father was a UB foreman.

Financial and support networks

As with the Red Brigades in Italy, the M-19 has had a host of well-connected “intellectuals” and apologists to serve as its funders, its propaganda outlets, and its contact points with the country’s “respectable” oligarchy. Several avenues of fruitful investigation are immediately apparent:

- *Alternativa*, the now-defunct magazine run by novelist **Gabriel García Márquez**, whose network has been transferred intact to the leftist political umbrella group, **Firmes**. *Alternativa* readily published the M-19’s communiqués throughout the 1970s, even going so far as to publish the results of a so-called plebiscite conducted by the M-19 on whether the kidnapped labor leader Mercado should be murdered or not.

- Gabriel García Márquez grew up in a United Brands company town in northern Colombia. He sought political exile status last year when he claimed that the Colombian military was seeking him for questioning regarding his links to the M-19. García Márquez is a member of the **Bertrand Russell Human Rights Tribunal**, which has frequently run cover for terrorist activities in Latin America and elsewhere. In Mexico,

where he has lived for the past 15 years, García Márquez was reportedly instrumental in setting up a **Colombian Studies Center**, which sources have reported to function as a safehouse for M-19 fugitives. Márquez’s close relations to both the Cuban and Panamanian governments are well documented.

- The **Michelsen** family in Colombia controls the **Grancolombiano** financial group, the single largest financial entity in the country, whose profits soared proportionally to the Colombian drug trade’s massive growth since 1975. The private lobbying group of Grancolombiano is the **National Institute of Financial Institutions** (ANIF), a think tank whose primary efforts over the past several years have been devoted to pressing for legalized drug trafficking. The former director of the ANIF, **Ernesto Sámper Pizano**, is currently the campaign manager of presidential candidate **Alfonso López Michelsen**, who has publicly urged amnesty negotiations with the M-19 terrorists in order to bring them into “an active role in Colombian politics.” López Michelsen’s candidacy has been endorsed by Gabriel García Márquez.

- **Alvaro Gómez Hurtado**, a leading right-wing Conservative Party senator linked to “black oligarch” circles in Europe associated with the P-2 lodge. Gómez Hurtado runs the newspaper *El Siglo* whose extensive coverage of the M-19 over the years has reflected an intimacy with the group’s operations. *El Siglo* employed one **Camelo Franco**, a member of an M-19 front group called the **Workers Self-Defense Movement** who was arrested for the murder of former Colombian Interior Minister **Rafael Pardo Buelvas** in September 1978. Gómez Hurtado’s brother-in-law and the former editor of *El Siglo* who hired Camelo Franco, **Hugo Escobar Sierra**, has been named by well-informed Colombian sources as suspected of involvement with the M-19.

- **Carlos Ardila Lulle**, a “self-made” millionaire based in the “drug capital” city of Medellin and politically associated with the Michelsen family. Ardila Lulle offered his personal executive plane to the M-19 terrorists who hijacked the Aerotal plane in January, enabling them to fly to Cuba. Lulle’s gangster methods of doing business have fostered the widespread suspicion that his fortune was made from the illicit drug trade.

- **Carlos Lleras Restrepo**, a former president of Colombia and a leading member of the country’s coffee oligarchy, is also a director of the **Banco Francés e Italiano**, one of the subsidiary banks of the P-2 linked bank **Sudameris**. Lleras Restrepo conceived and presides over a special government-backed “amnesty commission,” established for the explicit purpose of giving the M-19 terrorists legitimate cover and negotiating them into the political mainstream of Colombia. The amnesty proposal is vigorously backed by Lleras Restrepo’s protégé, presidential candidate **Luis Carlos Galán**.

Otro Por Qué and Mexican terrorism

by Dolia E. Pettingell

In the aftermath of the Italian government's recent blow against the Red Brigades terrorists, evidence has come to light linking the Italian Red Brigades with Mexican and Chicano terrorists in San Antonio, Texas. This evidence, in turn, leads to a network of terrorist sympathizers associated with former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark inside the Justice Department in Washington, D.C. The following is a summary of these findings to date.

- The Spanish-language underground terrorist magazine, *Otro Por Qué*, published and printed in San Antonio, Texas, is distributed in Italy by the Feltrinelli publishing house. Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, an Italian noble, supported the formation of the prototype of "left" terrorist organizations and their support networks, the Alpha group, in the late 1960s. Members of this group moved to Sicily to "study Mafia methods," and there members met with Michele Papa, the Socialist Party member who was Billy Carter's Libyan connection. Feltrinelli was himself killed by a bomb in 1969; his widow maintains the publishing house and the terrorist connections.

Otro Por Qué is written by a group that calls itself by the same name, which was introduced to the Feltrinelli operation and the Italian left sect *Lotta Continua* by an Argentine by the name of **Elías Condal**. Condal is a member of the Argentine **Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT)** a political party which gave birth to the terrorist **Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP)** in 1970, for which it continues to be a support operation. Feltrinelli also publishes Condal's political writings. *Lotta Continua* assists the *Otro Por Qué (OPQ)* distribution network in Italy to publish posters and leaflets against "repression" in Mexico. *Otro Por Qué* is also distributed in Europe by support strata for the Colombian terrorist **M-19** group. *OPQ*'s correspondent in Sweden is **Harriet Jansson**, married to **Javier Bustamante**, a Colombian whose brother is an M-19 leader. In France, *OPQ* is distributed by **Violane Coulondre**, whose M-19 husband is currently in jail in Colombia on charges of terrorism.

- The *OPQ* group's activities in Italy are carried out

in conjunction with the publishers of the Spanish-language *Debate* magazine, published in Rome and printed in Spain. *OPQ* editorial board member Isaiás Rojas recently told an interviewer that *OPQ* works closely with the *Debate* group, and that they had been put in touch via the Feltrinelli editorial house. The editorial board of *Debate* includes Red Brigades-linked Italians and former Latin American terrorists now exiled in Europe. *Debate*'s editor, **José Luis Rhi Sausi**, is a former member of the Mexican **Liga 23 de Septiembre** who fled to Turin during the 1976 political amnesty. The Mexican "correspondent" for *Debate* is **Rosa Albina Garavito**, also a "former" Liga 23 member. *Debate*'s editorial line is that Italy and Mexico share strong "political" and "social" conditions and that, therefore, the struggle against the "system" should be carried out through similar (terrorist) tactics in each country.

- *Sin Censura* is a recently issued magazine aimed at cultivating support for terrorism among intellectuals and other "citizens above suspicion." (**Oswaldo Soriano** appears on the masthead of this magazine and *Debate*.) The editors of *Sin Censura*, which include famous Latin American writers such as the Colombian **Gabriel García Márquez** (an open supporter of the M-19 and also an editor of *Debate*) and the Argentine **Julio Cortázar**, have put together a group of high-level Socialist International-linked human rights defenders, in an attempt to give their publication credibility: **Lord Averbury**, British member of Amnesty International; **Ernesto Cardenal**, a Trappist monk and Nicaragua's Minister of Culture; **Regis Debray**, the "former" guerrilla friend of Che Guevara who is now an adviser to French Socialist President François Mitterrand; **Carlos Andrés Pérez**, the former Venezuelan President and member of the Socialist International; **François Rigaux**, Belgian President of the Lelio Basso Foundation; and the French admiral **Antoine Sanguinetti**. The list of *Sin Censura*'s collaborators includes many Jesuits and Jesuitical writers, such as **Pablo Latapí** and **Marcos Kaplan**.

- *OPQ* is the result of a 20-year alliance between some of the most dangerous terrorist elements on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. The editorial board of the *OPQ* group includes Mario Cantú, Fausto Trejo, Isaiás Rojas and "Rafael Tinoco," the pseudonym used by Juan Ortega Arenas.

Mario Cantú is the San Antonio-based Chicano leader who back in the 1970s was sending arms to Mexican guerrillas in exchange for drugs. In the late 1960s, Cantú served five years and nine months in U.S. federal prison after being convicted on heroin charges. Since then, Cantú has travelled on and off to Europe and Mexico (Monterrey) as a fugitive from U.S. law enforcement forces. He is currently living in San Antonio, Texas.

Cantú's "southern connection" in the 1970s was the late **Florencio ("Güero") Medrano**, the leader of the

armed guerrilla group **Partido Proletario de México** (PPM). "Güero" had his base of operations in Cuernavaca, Morelos, where he was in touch with both the CIDOC brainwashing center directed by **Ivan Illich**, and with **Sergio Méndez Arceo**, the radical bishop of Cuernavaca. Medrano was killed in 1979 by Mexican troops. Since 1979, Cantú has increased his ties with other well-known Mexican terrorists, all of whom have served time in Mexican jails on charges related to terrorist acts and drugs.

Juan Ortega Arenas, who writes under the name **Rafael Tinoco**, has recently been reactivated in Mexico to try to lead a mass-based "dissident" labor movement against the Mexican government. In a recent interview, Ortega Arenas spelled out his desire to see Mexico turned into another Iran. "Iran had one of the most modern armies and only 2 million people in Teheran. Nonetheless, the masses overthrew the monarchy. Think about Mexico: here we have a small army of 80,000 while Mexico City has 12 million people. Imagine what they could do." More important than Ortega Arenas' often-noted Cuban links are:

1) his training in Jesuit primary and secondary schools and his close ties to the Jesuit creator of the Liga 23 de Septiembre terrorist group, **Herman von Bertrand**; and

2) ongoing close contacts with the Israeli intelligence branch, the **Mossad**. In 1980, Ortega Arenas visited Israel invited by the Histadrut labor federation. On his return, he talked frequently about the "wonderful Israeli kibbutz," which he called a "true show of solidarity."

• The San Antonio Cantú-led branch of the *OPQ* group has over the years developed a support network that includes both lawyers and Church people. The two most prominent names in this support network are **Rubén Sandoval**, a "human rights" lawyer who works closely with Cantú, and **Patrick Flores**, the Chicano "liberationist" bishop of San Antonio. In the 1970s, Bishop Flores and his Mexican counterpart in Cuernavaca, Méndez Arceo, jointly attended rallies in San Antonio in support of Cantú and other Chicano terrorist leaders.

• **Rubén Sandoval**, **Mario Cantú**, **Corky González** (Denver), **Herman Vaca** (San Diego) and **Ricardo Romero** (Denver), received in the late 1960s a \$250,000 grant from the U.S. Justice Department to "help" them fight for human rights. Out of this, Sandoval created the San Antonio-based **Centro Legal de Derechos Humanos** (Legal Center for Human Rights). Justice Department-Chicano relations are run through the **Community Relations Service** (CRS) division of the Department, a mechanism created by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark to promote "social leaders" among ethnic communities. The current director of the CRS is **Gilbert Pompa**, himself part of the San Antonio Chicano nest both by disposition and by marriage into Sandoval's family.



A call for mass insurgency

The overall message of *Otro Por Qué* magazine is glorification of bandits, guerrillas, and terrorists. "The causes which began the peasant wars of 1910-17 have not ceased," declared an article in a September 1981 issue. "The peasants are at the point of returning to take up arms with their own hands. The Revolution has not ended: it has barely begun!"

Regularly reprinting bulletins from the Iranian Embassy in Mexico City, *Otro Por Qué* holds up the "Islamic revolution" there as a model which "has achieved a 'lowering of consumerism, and an increase in the quality of distribution of wealth, which must be limited to satisfying the basic necessities of individuals and society.'"

The editorial in the September issue calls upon its readers to prepare for a general strike: "In the face of the general failure of capitalism at the national and international level." An interview with three jailed members of the terrorist 23rd of September League in the same issue demands, "Raise high the banner of the revolutionary civil war," and upholds "the clandestine struggle."