

Argentine Church rips Alfonsín culture mafia

by Cynthia R. Rush

The Argentine Bishops' Conference has put President Raúl Alfonsín on notice that it will not stand idly by while the ruling Radical Civic Union (UCR) attempts to replace the nation's strongly Catholic cultural matrix with the pessimism, hedonism, and relativism appropriate to the post-industrial society which international bankers want to impose on Argentina in the name of "democracy."

In a document published on Aug. 5, the bishops confronted the government on the issue of the latter's educational reform—part and parcel of its economic austerity program—whose program for sex education and liberalization of school curricula has outraged many citizens. The bishops warned against those who, under the guise of "modernization," seek "a real change in culture, that is, of the values which constitute the Nation's lifestyle, and which make up its identity."

This controversy came to a head recently when educational authorities tried to ram through a pilot sex education program in the province of Mendoza. But as early as May 1986 the National Directorate for Middle School Education began circulating a call by the "Community Psychology Workshop" to create "a sex education workshop for health." Among the topics to be discussed at this workshop, were "sexuality . . . new contributions to sexology . . . erogenous zones, masturbation . . . the teacher as a sexual orienter." The circular, which was distributed to high school teachers, emphasized that "the proposed methodology implies that each individual become the protagonist of his own learning process, through lucid, graphic, and bodily experiences, expositions, and work in groups."

As has already been seen in the United States and other industrialized nations, these sex education programs have only one purpose: to substitute the family's role in teaching moral values with a system in which all notions of absolute truth or morality are discarded; the student is left to experiment with whatever makes him "feel good"—drugs, perversion, even suicide. Children "educated" under, can hardly make judgments about what is good or bad in the society around them.

The bishops' document addressed this issue directly: "A false conception of freedom cannot erase the distinction between good and bad. Freedom is man's capacity to realize

[his potential], choosing the path of what is objectively good and just."

ralism which we accept, cannot lead us to an unbelieving relativism."

Hedonists rally

Italo Di Stéfano, archbishop of San Juan and president of the Church's Pastoral-Social Affairs Commission, put it more bluntly. In a late-July comment to the press, he warned: "Argentina's decline is evident. With its economy wasted, its productive forces diminished, the family disintegrated, religion discredited, and the national community dispersed, the systematic insinuation of hedonism is upon us. . . ."

Pointing to the Education Ministry's promotion of sex education workshops, Di Stéfano warned that "we no longer stand before a neutral State. Shortly, we can expect that the much-publicized Argentine homosexual munity will also demand that its practices be taught" in schools!

The target of what Di Stéfano correctly characterized as "cultural aggression,"

rent of cultural optimism, due in large part to the development of its scientific and technological capabilities. Gen. Juan Perón's founding of the nuclear energy program in the 1950s was one such achievement.

The International Monetary Fund, and its local allies, have almost succeeded in dismantling Argentina's industrial and scientific apparatus, through repeated application of "adjustment" programs, such as Raúl Alfonsín's orthodox Austral Plan. The *Washington Post* could hardly contain its enthusiasm when it reported on Aug. 14 that Argentina's nuclear program has come to a virtual standstill.

Coinciding with this, the Argentine population has witnessed a dramatic increase over the past four years in the national drug trade and drug consumption, especially among youth, the unbridled growth of pornography, and well-financed propaganda campaigns favoring divorce, abortion, and "sexual freedom."

Federico Storani had the nerve to call, "the transition to democracy."

Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences loudly proclaims that Alfonsín's "democracy" is "the route that we want to follow!"

The bishops replied: "We want to grow in those values which define us as a Nation. . . . We want to be Argentines, part of Latin America with 500 years of evangelization, part of a world which advances in science and technology, to which we must offer the values of our identity, while we [become] enriched with theirs."

Storani tried to dismiss the bishops' response, claiming that "authoritarian elements" in the Church wish to "limit the [population's] freedoms." Apparently, not all Argentines agree. In the Aug. 2 special election for governor in San Juan, the UCR candidate lost the race, accused among other things, of being the candidate of "free sex."