

Andean Report by Manuel Hidalgo

What does the 'human rights' lobby say?

Shining Path's "indigenists" have been practicing genocide against Peru's native Ashaninkas.

Those who believe in the good intentions of the international "indigenist" networks should take a close look at the exploits of Shining Path in Peru, an offshoot of these same networks. In late August, Peruvian Army patrols discovered in the Ene Valley of Junín, the first of some 300 graves, containing the remains of at least 1,200 Ashaninka Indians who had been enslaved and then assassinated by the Shining Path narco-terrorists. The graves were identified by Ashaninkas who were liberated from Shining Path concentration camps by the Army, and for the first time revealed the true magnitude of what the Peruvian press called "the worst genocide in decades. . . . Perhaps only the Nazi concentration camps could approach this macabre reality."

On Sept. 12, the president of Peru's congressional human rights commission protested that not one of the panoply of international or domestic human rights and "indigenous rights" organizations has seen fit to condemn these massacres. "In recent times, they have only come forth to denounce cases in which members of the Armed Forces are implicated," he charged.

As of 1988, the Army and peasant self-defense units in Ayacucho province were successful in expelling Shining Path from their place of origin. The terrorists sought refuge in the adjacent Ene Valley, and turned it into a "red zone." The Maoist terrorists enslaved the native Ashaninkas, "forcing them to work from sunup to sundown, stripping them of their lands, their animals, and their meager be-

longings, subjecting them to the continuous recitation of [Shining Path leader] Abimael's catechism in interminable sessions of 'ideological indoctrination,' watched, tortured and assassinated on the slightest suspicion of 'treason' by political commissars," revealed the daily *La República* on Sept. 3.

Shining Path "attempted to build a reproduction of Pol Pot's Cambodia by force, plunging those it was supposed to be helping into starvation and disease, since all that they produced went to [Shining Path's] 'warriors' and leaders. . . . The 'popular republic' revealed itself soon enough as a cross between a concentration camp and a cemetery, which Shining Path wanted to extend nationwide. It is no accident that hundreds of Ashaninkas tried and succeeded in escaping, at risk of their lives, to then return with the Army to try to rescue relatives."

Until just a few years ago, the Ashaninka tribe was the most numerous in the Peruvian jungle, with some 24,000 members. It is estimated that at least 10,000 of them were liberated from Shining Path by the Peruvian Army. "Of the other 14,000 belonging to 55 dispersed communities, there is no news. . . . Some 6 or 7,000 could still be in the hands of subversion. The rest could eventually turn up in hidden grave sites," reported the daily.

The Lima daily *Expreso* reported on Sept. 11 on the testimony of two repentant terrorists who showed a military patrol where the first graves were: "The [Shining Path] leaders killed without mercy. The Ashaninkas were killed when they got sick, when

they got . . . measles, chicken pox, tetanus. Sick Indians were a burden, and since there was no medicine to cure them, it was decided to kill them, because the leaders said they had become human parasites."

The Ashaninkas were by no means the only victims: "Executions of [Shining Path] members and their families [who wanted to surrender] were carried out through 'peoples' trials.' . . . No one could defend them without risking the same fate, and so from fear of assassination, we preferred to stay quiet," said one of the surrendered terrorists.

Despite the pleas of the Ashaninkas, the human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have had nothing to say on their behalf; rather, they focused all their attention on the burial that same week of Shining Path's "children of the people," the alleged victims of La Cantuta (in which military men were accused of killing 10 pro-Shining Path students at Cantuta University in 1992). The Nobel Peace Prize winner and "indigenous rights" activist Rigoberta Menchú has also refused to condemn the Shining Path genocide.

The intellectual authors of this genocide are the "indigenist" linguists, the anthropologists, the promoters of "intercultural bilingual education." Exemplary is Efraín Morote Best, rector of the University of Huamanga, whose "personnel director" was Shining Path chairman Abimael Guzmán, and whose son Osmañ was Guzmán's lieutenant. Morote Best was the coordinator of "intercultural bilingual education" in the Peruvian jungles in the late 1950s. Another anthropologist who did "field work" with the jungle tribes is Estéfano Varèse, a disciple of Nicaraguan Sandinista Ernesto Cardenal and a cofounder of Peru's other terrorist group, the MRTA.