

Andean Report by Carlos Méndez

Peru stalls on ADL's education reform

The government will not decentralize education because this would favor terrorist infiltration. B'nai B'rith protests.

The president of the masonic B'nai B'rith in Peru, León Trahtemberg, is furious because President Alberto Fujimori has pulled the plug on his own plan to decentralize education in the country and hand it over to the townships. Fujimori's reason is that the ranks of Peru's teaching profession are already heavily infiltrated by the narco-terrorist Shining Path. "The risk of politicization [i.e., infiltration] is much greater than originally thought when we proposed Law 260111," which would transfer the public schools to local control, said Education Minister Alberto Varillas to the magazine *Semana*.

Varillas explained that Shining Path infiltration among teachers "is slightly decreasing. . . . It has taken a lot of work to eradicate such an acute problem, but the achievements . . . are extremely important, which inspires one to insist on eradicating this infiltration completely."

The decision has caused hysteria among the leftists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which had the most to gain from the abandoned "reform," but most hysterical of all is B'nai B'rith President Trahtemberg, who demands what purports to be a "non-authoritarian," "non-dogmatic," and "non-discriminatory" curriculum reform. According to Trahtemberg, the current model of Peruvian schooling, "rather than training for democracy, is training for dictatorship and for admiration of dictators, be they civil, military or subversive."

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), whose "World of Difference" curriculum is now infiltrating school districts across the United States, has launched a campaign to reform education not only in Peru, but also in Argentina and other countries of Ibero-America. For example, in mid-May the ADL cosponsored a conference in Buenos Aires with the U.S. Information Service, whose star was ADL's International Affairs director Rabbi Morton Rosenthal. The theme of the conference was getting rid of "discrimination," and Rosenthal's other activities were concentrated on encouraging educational reform in Argentina.

A few days before the Fujimori government reversed its education reform plans, the newspaper of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement, *Solidaridad Iberoamericana*, had warned that "the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith is trying to bring the New Age into the schools. 'Education in Human Rights' helps Shining Path."

The hysteria of the local B'nai B'rith chief comes as no surprise, given that his viewpoint coincides with that of Shining Path on a number of points. Like Shining Path, Trahtemberg violently attacks the evangelization of America by Catholic Spain: "In Peru . . . entire generations have been educated without knowing or reflecting upon the racist burden our history bears since the arrival of the Spaniards. The mistreatment and discrimination against the Peruvian Indi-

ans has been taken as an unquestioned historic fact—at times justified—which is only beginning to be treated seriously nearly 500 years later, thanks to the contributions of students of Andean (indigenous) culture, as well as of Shining Path harassment," wrote Trahtemberg in the daily *Expreso* of Oct. 19, 1992.

According to Trahtemberg, "goals and curriculum appropriate to indigenous culture and reality as a function . . . of their values, beliefs, habits, and philosophy of life, should be presented" (*Expreso*, Sept. 19, 1992). "To Peruvianize national education requires that it be 'peasantized' and 'Indianized,' in recognition of their values and identity" (*Expreso*, Oct. 17, 1992).

On June 20, at a forum organized by the Lima daily *La República*, Trahtemberg emphasized that one of the "great absurdities of Peruvian education" is "the creation of educational programs on a national level, as if Peru were a homogeneous country without pluricultural problems." He insisted that the "municipalization [of education] is inevitable, because the state has lost the capacity to run the education sector."

Why Trahtemberg insists that each town handle its own education services is clear enough. In an article published in *Expreso* of June 19, he argues the need to "re-educate" the teachers and to change "the obsolete curriculum" with "the help of international entities and the many technical teams that abound in the think tanks, universities, and NGOs." Educational reform, he insists, should not be merely administrative but, above all, "curricular." Such reform should not be carried out by the Education Ministry, with national criteria, but by an "independent" commission made up of Peruvian NGOs, the majority of whom are defenders of Shining Path.