

## Report from Rio by Mark Sonnenblick

### Something is rotten. . .

. . . in the state of Rio, where liberals are legalizing the numbers racket, male prostitution, and drugs.

**B**razil is fast becoming like the country Shakespeare writes about in *Hamlet*, wrote Rio de Janeiro's Archbishop Eugenio Cardinal Sales in a homily delivered at the end of the annual Carnival *bachanalia* in March. The archbishop observed that Brazil's conspicuous depravity makes "its authorities lose the support they deserve for their just outcries against their creditors." He concluded, "No people can survive when their moral principles are guarded by immoral individuals."

Nowhere is this more true than here in Rio, where the new liberal justice secretary, Tício Lins e Silva, is creating a Sodom and Gomorrah. In his former position on the Federal Drug Council, Lins e Silva sought national legalization of marijuana consumption and fought those officials who wanted to repress Brazil's rapidly expanding narcotics trade.

Now he has teamed up with the only Club of Rome member in Brazil, Hélio Jaguaribe, to write a plan for the first hundred days of the new state government. The plan calls for a reduction in police action against narcotics traffic, and for the legalization of Rio's unique contribution to the world of organized crime, the animals lottery (*jogo do bicho* in Portuguese).

This gambling method was invented a century ago by the Baron Dummond to finance the zoological park. Gamblers bet on animals with any of the thousands of numbers runners who loiter at designated sites throughout Rio's streets. The money

and the tickets go to a "bank," from which winners are paid. The equivalent of millions of dollars a day are run through this system; and the "bankers" have enough to openly buy up politicians. The money flows are also ideal for "laundering" funds from narcotics traffic.

On March 21, Rio's new police chief announced that *bicho* was now legal in Rio. The angry national justice minister, Paulo Brossard, answered, "The *bicho* game is *not* legal."

On March 24, the Rio police chief announced that the transvestites, who are giving Copacabana and Ipanema a bad name in tourist circles, would now have freedom to operate in a downtown plaza named for the hero of Brazilian independence, Tiradentes. He also offered assurances that hotels and other tourist centers would help their clients get there.

No statements, on the other hand, have been forthcoming on the "Pan Am Connection," in which 100 kilos of cocaine per month were transported on Pan Am flights from Rio to New York. There were 40 arrests in the United States on March 11. Police in Sao Paulo quickly moved in on a modern cocaine-refining lab they had been watching, and made major discoveries in raids on the homes and offices of ring members.

Such was the case, for example, with lawyer Claudio Petenucci, whose office was in the most elegant section of Sao Paulo, with a panoramic elevator and protected by sophisticated

closed-circuit television. Aside from finding cocaine and automatic weapons, computer disks were discovered which, once the access code was cracked by police experts, revealed complete cocaine accounts and the names of at least three banks. According to Sao Paulo police inspector Sergio Fleury, the computer disks gave them "names of very important individuals in Brazilian society, implicated in the drug trade, used to launder the dollars from the sale of narcotics. . . . We expect to soon have very important people giving information to the police," Fleury added.

Brazilian Federal Police chief Romeu Tuma told the Fifth International Assembly on Fighting the Drug Trade in Sao Paulo March 24, "We have noted a tendency of the criminals to transport cocaine as paste to regions where there is a greater supply of ether and other chemicals used in refining." Thus, cocaine refining is increasingly relocating from Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia to Brazil, the only country in South America which manufactures ether and acetone. *EIR* first reported this shift in 1981.

The barrels of chemicals found in the Sao Paulo raids were reportedly sold by two wholesalers in Rio, where there are also reportedly three other major cocaine labs and dozens of tiny ones. But, on this there is nothing but silence.

Rio's Cardinal Sales observed in his March 20 radio message that if *bicho* were legalized simply because it is "a fact of life," then drug traffic would soon follow. "Good men and drug merchants or sellers of chance and sex would stand as equals before the law. And, is there any country which could survive that for long? The apparently immortal Roman Empire fell victim to a virus—perhaps another type of AIDS—which corroded it."