

Heroin Traffic Shifts South of Border

By Jack Anderson

For decades, international heroin gangs have sent their deadly wares from Marseilles' back-alley laboratories directly to Mafia distributors in New York City.

But crackdowns have now made this direct trade dangerous for the Corsican criminals in France and their Cosa Nostra counterparts in the New York City area.

Increasingly, they are shipping the addictive white powder through Latin America and the Caribbean, where bribery, bootlegging and buccaneering have been respected pursuits since the days of Blackbeard, Henry Morgan and Captain Kidd.

The Central Intelligence Agency, which only lately has gotten into dope counterspying, has summarized the problem in a 20-page secret report circulated to a few federal agencies.

Area by area, here is the CIA's picture of this new dope circuit:

Central America—Mexico produces "15 to 20 per cent (perhaps up to 25 per cent) of all heroin used in the United States . . . most notorious of the illicit drug centers in Mexico is Culiacan, capital of the state of Sinaloa.

"It has been called the 'Heroin Capital of Mexico.' Many of the well-to-do townspeople, including those now engaged

in legitimate businesses, are said to have gotten their start dealing in narcotics."

The home-grown Mexican heroin is sent to San Diego, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, Phoenix, Albuquerque, Houston, Fort Worth and Dallas.

Mexican Fixes

Our own investigation has turned up a government-protected dope "shooting parlor" in Juarez, Mexico. Young American addicts from El Paso, some on military drug withdrawal programs, simply cross into Mexico to get a "fix."

Panama, whose foreign minister Juan Tack was recently exposed by us as sanctioning dope traffic, is "one of the great contraband centers of the world," reports the CIA. Heroin pours in from Lima and Santiago, cocaine from Guayaquil and Quito, in Ecuador, and from Colombia. European and Asian dope exporters also use Panama as a transshipment point.

Costa Rica opium crops have been discovered recently "in gardens, in a cemetery, and on the slopes of Irazu Volcano." There are unconfirmed reports of clandestine labs.

The Caribbean—Nicaragua may be a "transit point for heroin shipped north from South America via Panama to the United States," says the CIA.

Puerto Rico and the Virgin

Islands have heroin operations run by "Cuban exiles and Puerto Ricans in the United States (who) act as middle men . . . while Argentinians, Chileans, Uruguayans, and nationals of other transshipment countries act as couriers."

Guadeloupe, Curacao, Aruba and Trinidad are also named by the CIA as "stepping-stones" for shipment of heroin, cocaine, hashish and marijuana to the U.S.

South America—"Big-time operators with international connections and innumerable small-scale smugglers called 'hormigas' (ants) cross the sieve-like borders with impunity," alleges the CIA.

"The busy ports of Barranquilla, Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Valparaiso, Antofagasta, Callao, Guayaquil, and Buenaventura act as funnels. . . . Smuggler planes, ranging from Piper Cubs to DC-3s, and even to four-engined Lockheed Constellations . . . are used," says the secret CIA report.

Official Corruption

"Most of the drug traffic in South America involves marijuana, which is grown extensively in Colombia, Brazil, and Paraguay and coca leaves and cocaine produced in Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Ecuador."

But there is also some opium production in Colombia and Ecuador.

"An Italian shipping line is

currently involved in smuggling heroin from Marseilles, France, to Valparaiso, Chile, via Panama," says the CIA without naming the shipping line.

Power Plans

The Interior Department, which is supposed to market low-cost power from federally owned dams on the Missouri River, connived with the big private monopolies to drown out small consumer-owned plants.

Assistant Interior Secretary James Smith, a former private utilities man himself, quietly committed the department to the controversial Mid-Continent Area Power Pool (MAPP). This is a scheme for pooling electricity cooked up by Northern States Power, one of the fattest of the fat cats in the private power field.

The Smith plan would put more than 10 per cent of the federal power plant capacity in the area into the big companies' power pool, even though the federal power is supposed to serve consumer-owned systems.

Under MAPP, the little consumer systems would be allowed to pay dues and sit in on meetings, but would be denied the vote on issues vital to the pool.

Smith was so enthusiastic about MAPP that he accepted the idea without detailed analyses by Interior's lawyers and engineers.