

Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

The 'Brazilian connection'

It is not known if Ibrahim Abi-Ackel will be charged with cultivating dope—but he did cultivate Edmund Safra.

On Sept. 3 in Lexington, Kentucky, a grand jury was convened to investigate the smuggling of precious stones from Brazil to the United States, which activity functions as a mechanism for laundering dirty money from narcotics trafficking. Among those implicated in what is being called the "Brazilian connection," the name that sticks out is Ibrahim Abi-Ackel, an ex-minister of justice of Brazil.

As *EIR* documented in its book, *Dope, Inc.*, the world market in diamonds and other precious stones not only occupies a prominent place in conducting "hot money," given the ease of transport and difficulty of tracing the stones, but also, the trade in illegal drugs pegs the price of the drugs to the prices of gold and other metals.

At the same time that this scandal was reverberating through various Brazilian circles, it was revealed that the South African company, Anglo-American, has taken control of all industrial gold production in Brazil, according to the lawyer Alfredo Ruy Barbosa, legal counsel to the company Vale de Rio Doce.

It turns out that Anglo-American is the biggest gold producer in South Africa, and runs the Hong Kong side of laundering dirty money with diamonds. Its top director is Sir Harry Oppenheimer, of Oppenheimer-de Beers Corporation.

Investigations by Brazil's Federal Police into the activities of Abi-Ackel have yielded the following leads:

- Ibrahim Abi-Ackel is the lawyer

of Antonio Carlos Calvares, smuggler and boss of the Brazilian mining and export company EMBRAIME. According to press reports, Abi-Ackel is actually a partner in EMBRAIME. On March 29 the Miami Customs officials seized a number of diamonds from the "courier" of the firm, one Mark Lewis.

- U.S. Customs officials in charge of the investigation made it known that between May 23 and June 25, Ibrahim Abi-Ackel made two phone calls to the United States. Both were to the Bank of Boston at its agency on Fifth Avenue in New York. On Feb. 8, the Bank of Boston pleaded guilty to having illegally processed \$1.2 billion from known organized crime figures and transferred the funds to Swiss banks. In fact, the bank is a pivot of the world illegal-drug economy.

- The son of Ibrahim Abi-Ackel, Paulo, succeeded in obtaining, from the ministry of justice, the naturalization as a Brazilian citizen of the banker from the outlaw P-2 freemasonic lodge, Umberto Ortolani, who thus evaded being extradited to Italy in 1983. Ortolani, and his partner Licio Gelli—also a fugitive from justice—are part of the "board of directors" of Dope, Inc. Ortolani managed the "formalities" of naturalization papers through the mediation of Raymond Khazwal, an adviser to the former minister and believed to be also a fugitive today.

- Anacer Abi-Ackel, brother of the former justice minister, was a part-

ner until last year of the cocaine trafficker and precious-stones merchant José Luis Oliveira Neto. They were owners of the daily *Jornal da Semana*, headquartered in Campo Grande. The newspaper owned a small blue Cessna airplane which crashed in September 1984. All those on board died, and they all turned out to be drug traffickers connected to Bolivia.

- Antonio Calvares, "the client" of Abi-Ackel, is suspected of cocaine trafficking. He started his smuggling activities in the capital of illegal drugs, Hong Kong. His monetary transactions are carried out in Switzerland and Paraguay. He is tied to the evangelical society Assas del Socorro, which owns five aircraft. The police are investigating it for smuggling precious stones.

But what is making some financial circles in Brazil and abroad nervous, is not what has already come out on the "Brazilian connection," but what could potentially be revealed by Ibrahim Abi-Ackel himself. Perhaps the most nervous is Edmund Safra, whose family is part of the clan of old Jewish families of Aleppo, Syria, who control world-class organized crime operations. In the United States, Safra has been linked to the gold and diamond trafficking of the Israeli mafia.

Until recently he was the main shareholder in Shearson-American Express, naming Henry Kissinger to its board of directors. On April 3, the Financial Task Force of the U.S. government raided the Shearson-Lehman Bros. stock brokerage firm, in a probe of dirty-money-laundering operations.

It is not known whether Brazil's former minister of justice, Ibrahim Abi-Ackel, will be accused of participating in the cultivation and trafficking of drugs. What is known is that he did cultivate the friendship of Edmond Safra.