

Isi Leibler scores one over India

by Susan Maitra and Ramtanu Maitra

Despite a string of rationalities put forward by the Indian Foreign Ministry to justify India's vote at the United Nations on Dec. 16 to repeal the "Zionism is racism" resolution, it is becoming apparent that the visit to India several weeks before of Isi Leibler, co-chairman of whiskey baron Edgar Bronfman's World Jewish Congress, had a lot to do with the change of heart. Leibler himself said, in an interview with the *Australian Jewish News* of Dec. 6, that he had received encouraging signals from the Indian, Thai, and Singapore governments concerning repeal of the 1975 resolution.

The Indian vote in support of Israel is an example of India's new-found policy of *realpolitik*. The move, it is said, has put India on a stronger ground with the United States vis-à-vis Pakistan, since the latter opposed the repeal. There are some who even dream that Washington will now put pressure on Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, because India did what President Bush wanted. Others, who whisper about their access to the corridors of power, claim that the move will earn Washington's support to make India a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. The process will lead to India establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel, they note.

More aggressive backers of the Zionist lobby offer anti-Arab (anti-Muslim) explanations. They claim that the Arabs were divided on the vote, and the United States and Israel had an ensured majority anyway. They also cite the Arab nations' continued backing of Pakistan on thorny issues involving the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. Under the circumstances, they claim, with the United States firmly ensconced in the Persian Gulf, India did not have to vote out of fear of an oil boycott by the Arab nations.

'Realpolitik'

India's new *realpolitik* did not come out of thin air. It is said that U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle himself lobbied Indian Prime Minister Narashimha Rao over the telephone for the vote. The untiring Indian ambassador to Washington, Abid Hussain, who is referred to as the "U.S. ambassador to India based in Washington" by some in government circles here in New Delhi, was rewarded by a call from Arnold Kanter, undersecretary of state for political affairs, thanking him and the country's leadership for the vote. Israel's deputy prime minister and foreign minister, David Levy, sent a letter of

congratulations to the Indian mission at the United Nations.

Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Aftah Seth told Reuters: "The vote was motivated mainly by the fact that Israel and its benefactors have often tried to justify the refusal to entertain a U.N. role on the ground that the resolution equating Zionism with racism showed U.N. bias against Israel." Seth conveniently chose to forget that prior to 1975, when the resolution did not exist and Israel was sitting pretty occupying large tracts of land in West Asia, Tel Aviv had shown equal contempt for the United Nations when it came to mediation to prevent Israel's land grab.

The vote is giving rise to prospects of some Israeli investment in India. A high-level team representing Israel Chemicals Limited, one of the largest public sector companies in Israel, came to Delhi right after the U.N. vote to discuss the possibility of setting up a phosphoric acid plant in India as a joint venture. It is reported that the proposal will be accepted soon.

Opposition emerges

The change of policy was not without detractors, even within the ruling party. Congress (I) Member of Parliament and a close associate of the late Rajiv Gandhi, Mani Shankar Aiyar, a former diplomat, strongly criticized the shift. Expressing distress at the country's change in foreign policy in an interview with a Delhi-based English daily, Aiyar said: "This is the first time since India gained independence that its view on Israel has been out of consonance with those of the Arab nations directly affected by the West Asian crisis."

There is at least one report which indicates that some ruling party MPs have begun actively to campaign against the pro-Israel shift. If such a campaign picks up and blocks the opening of full diplomatic relations with Israel, the Zionist lobby in India has only itself to blame. Over the years, a number of sleazy individuals belonging to the international Zionist establishments have visited India to lobby for Israel.

During Rajiv Gandhi's reign, a high-powered delegation from the U.S.-based Anti-Defamation League, helped by their friends in India, met with Gandhi and Foreign Ministry officials. Delegation leader Abe Foxman, director of international affairs for the ADL, had already made a name in Asia with his 1986 venomous attack on Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, a good friend of India, in the *Australian Israel Review*. Attacking Dr. Mahathir for his "racist," "anti-Chinese" policies, Foxman compared the Malaysian prime minister with Adolf Hitler—the ultimate abuse for those who do not see eye-to-eye with Israeli policies.

Last November Isi Leibler was in Delhi, and he, too, met with the Indian premier. In an interview with the *Times of India*, Leibler could not hide his contempt for Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi—the two assassinated prime ministers who were cautious about the ADL. Addressing the former prime ministers as the "Gandhi clan" and accusing them of "wearing blinkered glasses," Leibler arrogantly em-

phasized that Israel is not “losing sleep over the relations with India” because “even if India were to upgrade its relations with Israel, we cannot expect this country to be an ally for various reasons.”

Who is Isi Leibler?

Such arrogance is a stock-in-trade for Leibler, a figure who enjoys protection at high levels. An Australian, Leibler is chairman of the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, an institute that he set up in the 1980s under direction of Edgar Bronfman of the Seagrams liquor empire, to carry out a similar role to that which the ADL plays in the United States. The institute’s main interest area is China, but it is of late focusing on Asia as a whole. Leibler has said that he is getting a good response from Indian intellectuals. Among his objectives are the spreading of “sympathetic awareness in Japanese academic circles of Jews” and “expanded exchange with influential educational authorities in South Korea.”

But Leibler’s objective has run into rough weather lately. Like the Bronfmans, members of the Leibler family have been the subject of special investigations that point to the drug trade. This September, an Independent Member of the Australian Parliament, Denis Collins, gave evidence that the

Leiblers were linked to the international pornography and drug trade (see *EIR*, Dec. 20, 1991). Subsequently, the Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee announced that it would launch an extensive inquiry on the charges of offshore tax violation by some individuals. A member of that committee, Ken Adred, was particularly critical of the activities of Mark Leibler, brother of Isi Leibler, on this account.

Last April, Barbara Smith of the Phillip Institute of Technology charged that “there are extremely powerful and privileged people” who are protecting tax-avoiders. Smith was promptly labeled an “anti-Semite” by the Leibler crowd.

If such sleazy activities surprise the Indians, it is because of their sketchy understanding of the ADL. Former ADL chairman Kenneth Bialkin was the attorney for drug baron Robert Vesco, and Bialkin’s clients also include arms merchants like Shaul Eisenberg and international mafiosi such as Edmond Safra.

Another bright light in the ADL, Max Fisher of Detroit, has long been associated with sleaze. Fisher’s United Brands, formerly the United Fruit Co., was charged in 1978 by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials with responsibility for bringing in 20% of the cocaine that came from Ibero-America to the United States each year.

Zionism: Britain’s racist tool

In the mid-19th century the British colonialists patronized modern Zionism as a means to seize control of the Middle East, then dominated by the Ottoman Turks. The idea was to transplant European Jews into Palestine to form a colonial, militarized enclave. During World War I, Lord Balfour proclaimed Britain’s intent to form a so-called Jewish state, eventually formed after World War II. Israel is an Anglo-American puppet state, as it was originally conceived. The Earl of Shaftesbury, a cousin of the Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston and one of the most powerful figures in England, was one of the first to endorse this policy in 1840. “Syria and Palestine” are important for the British Empire, he said, adding, “capital and population, the Jews can give it both. . . . England has a special interest in promoting such restoration.”

Zionism’s founder Theodore Herzl in his book *Der Judenstat*, openly admitted that Zionism was imperial: “We should, there, form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism. We should, as a neutral state, remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.” Elsewhere, Herzl wrote that “the English” were

“the first to recognize the necessity of colonial expansion in the modern world . . . the Zionist idea, which is a colonial idea, must be understood in England easily and quickly.” Herzl, in a letter to Britain’s arch-imperialist in Africa, Cecil Rhodes, compared the Zionist project to the British seizure of Africa. “Had this [the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine] been on your path you would have done it yourself by now . . . because it is something colonial.”

As late as 1961, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, South Africa’s prime minister, reflected the same sentiments: “The Jews took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there for a thousand years. In that I agree with them. Israel like South Africa is an apartheid state.”

Chaim Weizmann, who later became Israel’s first President, said in a 1914 letter to a sympathizer: “Should Palestine fall within the British sphere of influence, and should Britain encourage a Jewish settlement there, as a British dependency, we could have in 20 to 30 years a million Jews there—perhaps more; they would . . . form a very effective guard for the Suez Canal.” Winston Churchill, as Lord of the Admiralty during World War I, had the same view: “If, as it may well happen, there should be created in our own lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish state under the protection of the British crown . . . [it] would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire.”