

ensuing years, 56 Israeli nuclear scientists were trained in the US, while 24 more visited nuclear installations there. The reactor was installed at Nahal Soreq on the Mediterranean coast. While it may not be used directly for developing weapons, there is certainly a spill-over of expertise to the Dimona plant. Moreover, in the sixties, the CIA transferred considerable technical information to the Israeli nuclear program.

The US's other contribution to Israeli nuclear capacity is over two decades of deliberate official 'oversight'. The US administration usually rants and raves over any country allegedly developing nuclear power without signing the non-proliferation treaty, which 'Israel' has not done. Yet successive US administrations have kept silent despite knowledge since the sixties that 'Israel' had the bomb or at least all its components. In this permissive environment, 'Israel' has engaged in all the tricks of the trade - fraud, theft and international piracy.

The Zionist state probably got the fuel needed for the first charge of the Dimona reactor from France, South Africa and Dead Sea phosphates. This being insufficient to continue, the Mossad's services were brought into play. One of the biggest steals was the siphoning off to 'Israel' of 361 pounds of nuclear-grade plutonium in the early sixties. The uranium had been supplied by the US government to NUMEC, a firm in Apollo, Pennsylvania, ostensibly researching how to preserve foods by nuclear radiation. Under Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' program, NUMEC was to cooperate with Westinghouse Corporation on the production of uranium oxide for US nuclear submarines. In 1966, the US government granted NUMEC the largest contract for plutonium processing ever

Claudia Wright noted, «In the past few years, several men investigated by the FBI and indicted for various offences, including the illegal export of nuclear materials and arms to Israel, have been allowed out of jail on bail and have fled.» Clearly, the Pollard case is the exception and not the rule for the treatment the Zionist state receives from the US.

Another major act of nuclear piracy occurred in 1968, when 200 tons of stolen nuclear-grade uranium were smuggled by ship on a diversionary route from Belgium to 'Israel'. Some estimate that by 1981, 'Israel' was producing sufficient uranium from Negev phosphates to keep Dimona in operation, but Israeli nuclear espionage continues apace. As an example, it was revealed in 1985 that 800 krytons, nuclear triggering devices, were illegally transferred from the US to 'Israel' from 1979 to 1983. 'Israel' was requested to return only part of them retaining those that had been used.

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Besides relying on imperialist support and permissiveness, the Zionist state's nuclear quest springs from its own nature as a settler colony, implanted and expanded through violence, at the expense of the indigenous people. All means of destruction are considered necessary and justified. Two corollaries of this make 'Israel' an ideal possessor of the bomb from imperialism's point of view. One is secrecy, and the other, lack of internal dissent.

The Dimona plant was kept secret not only from the Israeli public, but from the Knesset; even some members of the cabinet were kept ignorant of the exact details. Not until 1966 was the IAEC moved from the Defense Ministry to the prime minister's office, and there are reports that Defense Minister Moshe Dayan ordered a continuation of the nuclear program in the Defense Ministry, secretly and at an accelerated pace, in 1968. Maintaining such secrecy over so many years is only possible in a 'security' state where true democracy, even for Jewish citizens, is more facade than reality when it comes to strategic military matters. This point is also emphasized by the Mossad's kidnapping of Vanunu, his isolation in a Mossad-Shin Bet detention center, deprived of the rights usually accorded Jewish prisoners, and the fact that he is being tried *in camera*. When the *Sunday Times* broke Vanunu's story, Prime Minister Peres summoned major Israeli editors, urging them in the «national interest» not to cover the story. (This was in any case prevented by the censor.)

Internal dissent to the Israeli nuclear program has been minimal, although it was probably the reason for the 1957 resignation of six out of seven government-appointed members of the IAEC. In the sixties, debate was confined to the political-military elite. Those who opposed the development of the bomb did so for pragmatic not principle reasons. They were convinced that conventional weaponry was sufficient and feared the repercussions on the international standing of 'Israel'. The *de facto* result of the debate was keeping up the program, but still in secret. This Israeli policy was articulated by Levi Eshkol, who was simultaneously defense and prime minister in 1963-4, and is often billed as a 'dove': «Israel would not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East, but neither would it be the second in the race.» The success of the nuclear program was acknowledged by Israeli President Ephraim Katzir in 1974: «It has been our intention to provide the potential for nuclear development... We now have that potential. We will defend this country with all possible means at hand.»

Vanunu's photo: cutaway model of Israeli atomic bomb

given to a private firm. The owner of NUMEC was Zalman Shapiro who, besides being a Zionist, had participated in the US's Manhattan project for developing the nuclear bomb -hardly an unknown fact for the US government. The co-owner of NUMEC was the Israeli government. Among the many foreigners visiting the plant each year was Rafi Eitan, one-time Mossad head of operations and more recently a major figure in LEKEM (Liaison Bureau for Scientific Affairs), the technical espionage unit of the Israeli Defense Department, which was ostensibly broken up after the arrest of Jonathan Pollard as an Israeli spy in 1985. There have been subsequent disappearances of uranium from the US, but despite extensive investigations of this nuclear smuggling, the US government never took any action. Writing in the *New Statesman* of November 29, 1985,