

Traprock Peace Center

**Interview with Mordechai Vanunu (via telephone)  
August 13, 2004**

Miller: My name is Sunny Miller. I'm the director of the Traprock Peace Center in Deerfield, Massachusetts, and we're privileged to have on the phone with us Mr. Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli who spoke the truth about nuclear weapons and spent 18 years in prison for doing that, 11 and a half years I understand was in a very small cell. Mr. Vanunu, can you tell us about your situation now in Israel?

Vanunu: The situation now is that I was released from prison on April 21st and since then I have my place in St. George Cathedral in East Jerusalem, an Anglican church. I'm staying here because the Israeli government imposed on me a restriction not to speak to foreigners for six months and not to go freely for 6 months ... and for one year I'm not allowed to leave the country. We appealed to the Supreme Court in Israel, and the Supreme Court left this restriction as it was, so the situation now is that I am staying at St. George, and I'm not allowed to leave the country, but I'm meeting and speaking to foreigners who come to the church because I'm a Christian and this is a bad situation and I am trying to do all that I can to receive my human rights. The basis of a democracy system is to have freedom of speech, freedom of movement. I'll be very glad to leave as soon as possible.

Miller: I hope that you will be able to enjoy freedom soon. Can you tell us about the threat that you feel is posed by the nuclear reactors in Israel at this time?

Vanunu: My information was about nuclear weapons secrets in Israel. That's why we revealed in 1986 to the newspaper in London, the Sunday Times. I've come out with new details, most interesting revelation about how many nuclear weapons has Israel developed in that time up to 1986. It was about 100 to 200 nuclear weapons. I also revealed Israel producing new atomic bombs like hydrogen bomb and neutron bomb. Hydrogen bomb has no justification, nor any real excuse for Israel's defense. It's a real holocaust weapon, a hydrogen bomb, and it only can be used against civilians in cities, so I revealed this information to prevent and to bring the attention of the world to what Israel is doing. And also the situation of the reactor working for forty years without any inspections from abroad, from international people or even from the Israel government, Israel

parliament, even in the media - no one discussing what was going there, so all those subjects were raised by my revelation.

Miller: Thank you very much. We, too, here suffer the fear of living with a government who has hydrogen bombs. Can you tell about the environmental concern? I understand that you feel Jordan may be particularly threatened by the emissions from the Dimona nuclear reactor.

Vanuau: About the environmental dangers..., it's easy to tell that the Dimona reactor also has sent into the Earth some radioactive production as a result of the nuclear radioactive activity in Dimona. Because the Dimona reactor was built in the Negev, near the Jordan border, about five to ten miles from the Jordan border. It's very close, so anything that can be (emitted) to the air can flow back to Jordan. And, also, they used to produce Plutonium to dissolve the Uranium only when the air flew toward Jordan. That was one of the conditions. When I was working there, we should asked the control room to give us permission to start dissolving uranium only when it was clear that the air flew toward Jordan's border. That was the situation. And when we dissolved the uranium after every nuclear s... now there are dissolving... materials that can also out-gas and can go to the air, and they can flow to the borders and environment around the Dimona reactor. So the radioactive materials were going outside from Dimona and also include the production of other radioactive materials. Dimona reactor sending with water that is going to the underground. They are sending water ... from the reactor that can be contaminated with radioactive materials.

Miller: So both air and groundwater, you fear, are contaminated downwind and down river from the Dimona reactor.

Vanunu: Yes.

Miller: I commend you for incredible strength and perseverance all these years, still having a desire to speak the truth. I wonder how do you keep your strength, and how incredible it was that you maintain this commitment to the truth even after solitary confinement. Can you speak about that?

Vanunu: Yes, it started by the urgent demand from my conscience to go and reveal the nuclear secrets about all the nuclear weapons that Israel produced. That's (how) my story began, to reveal the nuclear weapons secrets. Then all what happened later, the kidnapping, the isolation, the injustice by Israel's Supreme Court and obviously their justice system that gave me 18 years; they sentenced me as a traitor and spy, and all the treatment, cruelty, barbaric treatment, by ... Mossad in prison, made me much more determined and firm and bold to continue to speak the truth. And, also, the Israel situation that continued to silence anyone and treating any state, all of this makes it very sure

that I should continue to speak and repeat and bring the news to all the world's attention. So I suffered and paid 18 years, and, yet, I could be also arrested again or questioned, but I think I'm doing the right thing. I'm very sure that I'm doing the best thing for all the human rights, for peace and for world peace and for the Middle East peace. That was sending me to speak very clear and bold.

Miller: The question of your capture, that itself was a kidnapping in Italy. Can you speak about that incident?

Vanunu: Yes, after the explanation to the Sunday Times in 1986, the Mossad and other spy organizations in not only Israel but foreign states too, who were helping Israel nuclear weapons for many years, those states also helped them to try to silence me, to try to kidnap me, and they succeeded and brought me to Rome by an American young woman. And then the Rome was waiting for me, the Mossad and other spy organizations like Italy, French, and England. And then they took me to a boat, a yacht in the sea, and in the sea I asked them you are you who would kidnap me. They said we are here French, England, and Israel. It was a cartel of foreign spy ... who were behind the nuclear proliferation during the cold war to Israel and South Africa and other states, and my revelation damage all their work during the cold war. So they decided to try to sentence me and to kidnap me. And they succeeded ... for 18 years to gain from that kidnapping and sentence me for 18 years.

Miller: Yes. I understand that you wish to travel and particularly that you have friends; is it Minnesota?

Vanunu: Yes, adoptive parents in Minnesota.

Miller: And I understand that you would like to leave as soon as possible and be a free man.

Vanunu: Yes. I absolutely was working for this for 18 years. To feel free is to be out of Israel. In Israel I certainly cannot feel free, especially a man like me who is now called a traitor, and regarded as an enemy of Israel. And also, as a Christian who was baptized to Christianity in Australia in 1986, but here in Israel they regard my baptism to Christianity as also another kind of betrayal. So ... I cannot feel free. I cannot feel safe. There are some threats to my life. But I'm not enjoy to go on the street and walk with people as I want. So all the time I was waiting, but I will not be free. I will go straight to the airport and fly away to the free world: Europe and the United States. That's what I want to do.

Miller: I hope that when you are here we will still have some freedoms left in the United States in spite of our government and its criminal record regarding nuclear weapons and experiments on our own people. I thank you for your time, and I understand next you're going for a long swim. Is that right?

Vanunu: Since I'm staying in St. George, and they don't have sea here, so I'm going to swim in a swimming pool, in a hotel swimming pool. I love to swim. I love the water. That is very good – what do you call it -- rehabilitation for all my body and my spirit, to swim. I'm swimming about one hour every day I'm going to swim. It's good exercise.

Miller: Wonderful. I hope that we will welcome you to the waters here in the United States soon.

Vanunu: Yes. I hope to come swim to the United States and meet lots and lots of friends from all the United States, including from Massachusetts, Boston, I received many, many letters during the 18 years in support, encouragement -- from the people but not from the government and not from the media. The people of the United States are beautiful and wonderful sending their message of support for many, many years.

Miller: Thank you. We will welcome you heartily. Thank you so much for your courage.

Vanunu: The media there has not enough courage just to speak against Israel and also the Washington governments still are not able to speak clear and loud against Israel's nuclear policy or even to demand my human rights, my basic human rights. Imagine if one man like me was in an Arab state what the United States was doing, or in other states, but, because I am in Israel, the United States government are silent. So I hope this will change. I hope I'll be free and come to the United States and speak, and maybe I will bring back the message of that freedom that they lost in the last two years after September 11.

Miller: Thank you very much, Mr. Vanunu. Mordechai Vanunu speaking to us from the cathedral, St. George Cathedral in is it Jerusalem there?

Vanunu: East Jerusalem, yes.

Miller: Thank you so much. Best wishes to you.

Vanunu: Thank you, too, for bringing my voice to those in the United States. I hope to meet you and continue to work together in others to bring good news to the U.S. citizens.

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