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**REPORT THAT LITHUANIA IS PARDONING  
WAR CRIMINALS SHOCKS JEWS WORLDWIDE**

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Sept. 5 (JTA) -- Jews around the world have reacted with shock and profound anger to revelations that the Lithuanian government has begun pardoning citizens convicted by the Soviets of collaborating in Nazi war crimes.

American Jewish groups mobilized quickly to protest the pardons, which were disclosed Thursday in a report on the front page of The New York Times.

The National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council scheduled a Friday morning meeting with the Lithuanian legation in Washington. Participants were to include survivors of the Kovno and Vilna ghettos.

In addition, Jewish leaders in Chicago, Los Angeles and New York were to hold meetings Friday with officials of the three Lithuanian consulates in the United States.

In Moscow, the Vaad, the federation of Jewish groups in the Soviet Union, planned to make a "direct representation" to the Lithuanian government, according to Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress.

Steinberg learned this after telephoning Michael Chlenov, the Vaad's co-president, who was "appalled" at news of the pardons.

Steinberg asked the WJC representative in Brussels, Maram Stern, to "contact the European Community leadership, both to raise our fervent objections to this very sorry development and to seek E.C. intervention in this matter."

**'The Goyim Kept Quiet'**

According to the Times story, the newly independent government in Vilnius has been issuing certificates of exoneration to literally thousands of Lithuanians who were convicted as war criminals by Soviet courts.

Among those pardoned are people who confessed to mass murder of civilians, the report said. Moreover, those who served in prison are receiving compensation for that time.

The pardons are seen as part of the overall effort to shuck off more than 50 years of Soviet rule. The Lithuanians have long complained that their republic was overrun first by Nazis and then by Communists.

But Jews from the Baltic states remember with gruelingly painful memory that Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians were especially helpful to the Nazis in the mass killing of Jews.

One Lithuanian war crimes witness, Rabbi Ephraim Oshri of the Slobotka Yeshiva here, recalled how "the goyim kept quiet" during the war, while the Jews were killed. Oshri, a survivor of the Slobotka ghetto, near Kovno, wrote a book about the destruction of Lithuanian Jewry.

Another man who survived the Vilna ghetto and joined the partisans said the Lithuanians were for the most part "bandits and murderers. They killed most of the Jewish people."

Holocaust survivors, Soviet Jewry activists and Jewish communal leaders alike expressed anger at the news Thursday and called upon the Lithuanian government to reverse the pardons.

Jewish groups are finding the news particu-

larly disturbing, because Lithuanian officials had assured them they would under no circumstances pardon war criminals responsible for mass murder.

They recalled that in May 1990, Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis issued a proclamation condemning "without reservation" the "genocide executed against the Jewish nation during the Nazi occupation in Lithuania," among whose executioners "there were Lithuanian citizens."

**Survivors Feel 'Angry And Betrayed'**

"For the crimes committed against the Jewish nation in Lithuania, and outside its borders, there is not and cannot be any justification or any statute of limitations on criminal prosecution," Landsbergis said then.

In Washington, the U.S. State Department said Thursday that a Lithuanian law adopted last year "that annulled illegitimate convictions by Soviet authorities also specifically excluded genocide and the murder of civilians."

"We would expect that (the Lithuanian government) would be acting in accordance with that law," department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

Neal Sher, director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, was surprised at the Times report. He said he hoped the Lithuanian authorities would still cooperate with OSI's investigations of war criminals living in America.

Benjamin Meed, president of the American Gathering/Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, said the group's members feel "angry and betrayed" by the Lithuanian action.

"We who survived can never forget that the Lithuanian guards stood arm in arm with Nazi soldiers in helping to execute masses of innocent Jewish men, women and children," he said.

Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and acclaimed chronicler of the Holocaust, sent a cable to Landsbergis, conveying his feeling of "disappointment and deception and outrage" at the news and asking him to rectify "this mistake" immediately.

"Remembrance must be a very short thing in Lithuania," remarked Elliot Welles, head of the Nazi task force of the Anti-Defamation League. "I am shocked, outraged."

**Contact With Lithuanian Prosecutor**

In Los Angeles, the Simon Wiesenthal Center said it had known about the pardons for some time and had sent an envoy to meet with the Lithuanian chief prosecutor.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, the institution's dean, said the center had received information a few months ago from Jewish activists in Lithuania that not only were war criminals "being exonerated for all the time they had spent in jail, they were being given back pay, and their property that was confiscated was being restored."

"To my way of thinking, it meant people were being rewarded for killing Jews," Hier said in a telephone conversation.

The center's Israel representative, Efraim Zuroff, met with the Lithuanian prosecutor, Arturas Paulauskas, in June. The prosecutor told him that "anyone implicated in murdering civilians would not be exonerated," Hier said.

About a third of those pardoned are still

alive, the prosecutor indicated. But he turned down Zuroff's request for a list of those pardoned, Hier said.

The center has since identified four people implicated in mass murder who were pardoned.

"In other words, what the prosecutor general told Zuroff did not square with the facts of what the Lithuanians were doing," Hier said.

"Despite the reassurances of the prosecutor general, information which has now reached the center clearly proves that individuals convicted of active participation in the murder of civilians have in fact been granted rehabilitation," he said.

Last week, the Wiesenthal Center asked Landsbergis to stop the rehabilitation process.

"We told the president we have additional information on at least 10 other cases of people implicated in crimes of murder who have been exonerated," Hier said.

Hier said the Wiesenthal Center is going to approach members of Congress to raise the matter with the Lithuanian government.

"We basically feel there can't be a commitment" to the Lithuanian government "without resolving this issue," he said.

*(JTA correspondent Howard Rosenberg in Washington contributed to this report.)*

## NEW TESTAMENT VIDEOS UNDER FIRE FOR SINISTER PORTRAYAL OF JEWS

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 5 (JTA) -- A widely advertised series of videotapes, "Animated Stories From The New Testament," has drawn fire from two Jewish organizations, which charge that the videos abound in grotesque and sinister Jewish stereotypes reminiscent of Nazi caricatures.

The videos were produced by the Family Entertainment Network in Dallas.

Both the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Anti-Defamation League have protested that the skillfully animated videos, aimed at Christian children, carry the potential of implanting anti-Semitism in young viewers.

Stephen Griffith, chief executive of the Family Entertainment Network, has agreed to discuss the matter with Jewish leaders.

In a statement, Griffith said: "We are saddened that offense was taken" in regard to "our classically animated stories based on the King James version of the Bible. We are in no way an anti-Semitic organization nor would we wish to propagate materials which may serve an anti-Semitic position."

The strongest objection to the videos revolves around the drawings of the characters.

Jews who rejected Jesus have long, hooked noses, whining voices and sinister leers, and are portrayed as cunning moneylenders, bribe-givers and inhumane doctors and rabbis. For anyone missing the point, these Jews are almost invariably shown wearing prayer shawls and skullcaps.

By contrast, the Jews who accept Christianity have fair, all-American features, Gentile noses, soft voices, and no prayer shawls or skullcaps.

### Reminiscent Of 'Der Sturmer'

"The message seems to be that God grants nose jobs to Jews who become Christians," observed television critic Howard Rosenberg in the Los Angeles Times.

Leaders of both the ADL and the Wiesenthal Center said the animated portrayals are reminiscent of the vicious anti-Semitic caricatures

favored by Nazi leader Julius Streicher in his newspaper "Der Sturmer."

In addition to the physical distortions of the Jewish cartoon characters, parts of the videos are historically inaccurate, show considerable ignorance of biblical Judaism, and go even beyond the negative portrayals of Jews in the New Testament, according to an ADL analysis by its director of interfaith affairs, Rabbi Leon Klenicki.

The videos are sold in shopping malls and have been heavily promoted on television and cable stations across the country through 30-minute commercials.

These commercials carry long excerpts from the videos and enthusiastic endorsements from 14 Christian religious and lay leaders serving on the producer's "executive advisory board."

Included in the set of 12 videotapes is an activity book of suggested games and discussions and a coloring book encouraging youngsters to draw good and bad characters seen in the videos.

ADL, alerted to the videos two months ago by members who saw the television commercial, decided to work quietly with executives at the Family Entertainment Network.

"We sensed a readiness on their part to deal in good faith with the issues we raised," said Charney Bromberg, ADL's director of intergroup relations.

The Wiesenthal Center, which also reviewed the first seven videos, took a more public route and, to the chagrin of the videos' producers, alerted the Los Angeles Times.

In an interview with the Los Angeles Times, Griffin said he was "shocked" by the Jewish criticism and that no slight was intended.

"In every story, like in any Disney animation, there are good guys and bad guys," Griffin said. "We didn't mean anything slanderous to our Jewish friends."

### Commercials Discontinued

Screening of the commercial in its present form has been discontinued by television stations in Los Angeles and Minneapolis, said Rabbis Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper of the Wiesenthal Center.

On Wednesday, ADL officials in New York and officials of the Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles were sent copies of a modified version of the commercial. The new version does not include the offensive caricatures contained in the original commercial. Other offensive portions of the first version have been excised as well.

But the Family Entertainment Network, while agreeing to further meetings, has not committed itself to altering the videos themselves. In a letter to Bromberg, Griffin said only that the network "would review and, if and when possible, revise our material."

Nevertheless, Bromberg, in a telephone interview, said he is convinced that Griffin is acting in good faith.

"Their intentions were not anti-Semitic, although the effect is deeply troubling. We believe they are sincere in not wanting to do harm and in wanting to rectify the problem," he said.

"If they are unwilling or unable to make changes," he added, "we will address it at that time and say so publicly."

**REMINDER:** The JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, Sept. 9-11.

**U.S. JEWRY PUSHING AHEAD WITH DRIVE TO OBTAIN U.S. GUARANTEES FOR LOANS**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Sept. 5 (JTA) -- The American Jewish community will continue to press Congress and the Bush administration for rapid consideration of Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees, despite Secretary of State James Baker's plea for "more time" to study it.

"The American Jewish community is fully united" in seeking the loan guarantees now, Shoshana Cardin, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said at a news conference here Thursday.

"This is the critical item on our agenda," she said.

Israel's ambassador to the United States, Zalman Shoval, is expected to make a formal request for the loan guarantees at a meeting he has scheduled with Baker for 4:30 p.m. Friday.

Israel is seeking the U.S. guarantees so that it can more easily obtain \$2 billion in commercial bank loans each year for the next five years. The money would be used to resettle an estimated 1 million Soviet immigrants expected to arrive in Israel during that period.

Baker asked Congress on Wednesday to give the administration "a little bit of time to review this request," in order "to assess its impact on the peace process" in the Middle East.

That heightened fears in Israel and the American Jewish community that the administration would seek to link the loans to concessions on the peace process.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents, warned Thursday that any suggestion of linkage would be dangerous.

**Will Hold Baker To His Word**

"If the message is that the United States is going to use whatever leverage it has to get Israel to take certain political steps, then you are strengthening the hands of those who resist the peace conference," he told the news conference.

"We hope that Congress will reject the efforts to engage in that kind of leverage," Hoenlein said.

Baker himself said Wednesday that he was not "drawing any linkage" between the guarantees and the Middle East peace process. But then he added: "I am not suggesting that there's not some relationship. There will be an impact."

Cardin said Thursday that the American Jewish community would hold Baker to his word.

"The secretary and the president have said to us that there will be no linkage, and I accept at face (value) the fact that they will not link it," she said.

And in Israel, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Thursday that Baker told him in a telephone conversation this week that the United States does not support linkage between the loan guarantees and the peace process, and that the Bush administration is committed to helping Israel absorb its immigrants from the Soviet Union.

The prime minister also denied media reports Wednesday that Baker had urged him in the phone call to postpone making the request for guarantees.

Shamir and Baker are expected to discuss the issue further when the secretary of state visits Jerusalem later this month.

In Washington, the State Department announced Thursday that Baker would travel to

Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria after visiting Mexico and the Soviet Union next week.

Meanwhile, the Conference of Presidents and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council are gearing up for a massive lobbying campaign on Capitol Hill, to persuade Congress to adopt legislation authorizing the loan guarantees before the government's 1992 fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

**A Million Letters And Telegrams**

The two umbrella groups have organized a National Leadership Action Day next Thursday, when some 750 Jewish activists from 40 states are expected to converge on Washington to lobby their senators and representatives on the issue.

And that is only the beginning.

"We haven't yet begun our efforts in full force," Hoenlein said. "We hope to have a million letters and telegrams sent to Congress and the administration over the next couple of weeks."

Hoenlein said he feels confident that a majority of members of Congress support the loan guarantees.

But there were reports from Capitol Hill on Thursday that the administration had begun an intensive lobbying campaign of its own to convince members of Congress to back Baker's request for a delay in considering the Israeli request.

Nevertheless, Hoenlein expressed confidence that the request would move forward. "Frankly, I think they want to move with it," he said.

But he added cautiously, "What will happen in the course of the debate, we don't know." He pointed out that Congress also will be coming under intense pressure to provide the newly independent Baltic republics with special economic assistance.

One of the greatest challenges in winning both congressional and popular support for the loan guarantees continues to be educational.

The argument that the United States, with all its dire domestic needs, cannot afford to guarantee \$10 billion in loans, is one Jewish leaders expect to hear from many corners.

But the argument is fallacious, according to the Conference of Presidents leaders, because providing Israel with the loan guarantees will cost American taxpayers very little, if anything.

**'Negligible' Cost To U.S.**

The amount that will need to be set aside in escrow to cover any loan default will be part of the foreign aid package working its way through Congress, and will have no effect on the money available for domestic programs, according to Hoenlein.

That amount is a percentage of the sum of the guaranteed loans and is determined on the basis of the risk involved.

In the case of Israel, which has never defaulted on any loan, the amount required for escrow is expected to be between 2 percent and 8 percent, Hoenlein said, considerably less than some of the figures cited in recent press accounts.

The cost of administering the loan guarantees, an amount Hoenlein called "negligible," would ordinarily be paid by the United States, but could be one of the elements negotiated with Israel, he said.

(JTA correspondents Gil Sedan in Jerusalem and Howard Rosenberg in Washington contributed to this report.)

## TIRED OF WAITING, 2 SCHOLARS PUBLISH PIRATED VOLUME OF DEAD SEA SCROLLS

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Sept. 5 (JTA) -- Two Bible scholars have reconstructed a portion of the Dead Sea Scrolls from a secret concordance of the text, breaking "the lock a small group of scholars have hitherto maintained on the scrolls," according to Hershel Shanks, editor of the Biblical Archeology Society and publisher of the new book.

The Dead Sea Scrolls comprise some of the most extensive documentation extant of life in Judaea during the Second Temple period, the era to which both rabbinic Judaism and Christianity trace their roots.

But both the authors of the new volume and members of the committee charged with the scrolls' official publication agree that the version assembled in the newly published "A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls: The Hebrew and Aramaic Texts From Cave Four," is no more than about 80 percent accurate.

"The reliability of such a document is highly questionable," according to Eugene Ulrich, a senior member of the official editorial committee and a professor at Notre Dame University, who was interviewed Wednesday on public television's MacNeil Lehrer NewsHour.

Authors Ben-Zion Wacholder and Martin Abegg reassembled the Dead Sea Scroll texts from a concordance compiled between 1957 and 1960 by four scholars chosen by the committee of editors with official control over the scrolls.

That committee kept the concordance secret until 1988 when, according to Shanks, it was made public to a select few.

### Alcoholism And Mental Illness

The Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, where Wacholder is a professor and Abegg is a doctoral student, obtained a copy of the concordance in 1989. In 1990, the two scholars began the task of re-creating the fragments.

The concordance alphabetically lists each word in the non-Biblical texts found at one of the Qumran sites, identifies the document in which it appears and lists adjacent words.

With the aid of a computer, Wacholder and Abegg then pieced together the texts.

The concordance "was not meant to produce a version of the scrolls," John Strugnell of the Harvard School of Divinity told Reuters. He said that he gave Wacholder a copy of the concordance solely for his scholarly use.

Strugnell was removed from his position as chief editor of the Dead Sea Scrolls project after giving an interview published in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz in October, 1990, in which he called Judaism "a horrible religion," "originally racist," and said that "the correct answer of Jews to Christianity is to become Christian."

His comments have since been attributed to alcoholism and mental illness.

The step taken by Wacholder, Abegg and Shanks in publishing an "unofficial" volume of transcriptions is the latest round in what has been a very political -- and public -- war over access to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The scrolls have been under the tight control of the official editors since an original committee of eight was appointed by the Jordanian government, soon after the first scroll was discovered by Bedouins in 1947.

The original scholars, some of whom have since died, claimed the right to bequeath the scrolls to younger scholars, which has had the effect of restricting control over the important documents to a handful of experts, Shanks asserted.

The site of the first scroll discovery, an area then under Jordanian control, came to be known as Qumran Cave One.

Between 1952 and 1956, 10 more caves were found to contain 800 manuscripts -- scrolls and fragments of scrolls -- documenting the life of a group believed by many scholars to have been the Essenes, an ascetic Jewish sect that flourished in Palestine from 200 BCE to 68 C.E.

### 'Cultural Glasnost'

The richest of the sites was Cave Four, which contained approximately 575 manuscripts. The first of Wacholder and Abegg's volumes contains 23 of those manuscripts.

Only about 20 percent of the scrolls' transcriptions have been published in the nearly four decades since they were discovered, according to Shanks, a figure contested by those connected to the official committee.

"Seventy-five to 80 percent of all the real usable knowledge has long since been available," Ulrich said.

"The Dead Sea Scrolls have been a scandal," Shanks said at a news conference Wednesday. "They are probably the greatest manuscript discovery of this century, and it has been marred by this scholarly attitude of secrecy."

Shanks also publishes the magazine Biblical Archeology Review.

"This secrecy is a breach of trust," he said. "These texts do not belong to these men, they are fiduciaries, trustees. The beneficiaries of that trust are you and me," he added.

"The time has come for a little cultural glasnost, some scholarly perestroika in the way these scrolls are doled out by a small group of men who have enormous power."

In the early 1950s, the contents of Cave Four were collected by Jordan in what was then known as the Palestine Archeological Museum. It is now the Rockefeller Museum.

The international team of eight editors, none of them Jewish, was appointed to edit and publish the manuscripts.

### 'Vehemently Anti-Israel'

"Until the Six-Day War in 1967, Jewish scholars were completely cut out of work on the scrolls under the editing team's authority," Shanks wrote in the March/April 1991 issue of Biblical Archeology Review.

The scrolls came into Israeli hands during the war, but the committee of non-Jewish scholars, most of whom were "openly and vehemently anti-Israel," remained in control of the scrolls, according to Shanks.

Until the mid-1980s, no Jewish scholar worked on the scrolls. Ironically, it was Strugnell, then chief editor, who began enlisting the aid of Israeli scholars.

When he was removed from his post last year, an Israeli scholar, Dr. Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University, was appointed to replace him.

The Dead Sea Scroll texts from Cave Four published this week reveal intimate details of the life the Essenes lived, the way they organized their group, whom they admitted and what they believed.