

Weekly Top 10

WASHINGTON, D.C. July 12, 2019

TO: NCSEJ Leadership and Interested Parties

**FROM: Daniel Rubin, Chairman;
Aleksander Smukler, President;
Mark B. Levin, Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO**

Dear Friend,

Please see below for NCSEJ's Weekly News Update.

Sincerely,



Mark B. Levin
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO



On Thursday, July 11, NCSEJ organized a meeting in New York City with Prime Minister of Latvia Arturs Krisjanis Karins for representatives of its member organizations.

(l-r) Samuel Kliger, American Jewish Committee; Gideon Taylor, World Jewish Restitution Organization; Daniel Mariaschin, B'nai B'rith International; Malcolm Hoenlein, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; PM Karins; Mark Levin, NCSEJ; Dr. Gerald Platt, NCSEJ; Andrew Srulevitch Anti-Defamation League; Betty Ehrenberg World Jewish Congress; Evan Hochberg, World Jewish Restitution Organization

NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10 **Washington, D.C. July 12, 2019**

Zelenskiy, Putin Discuss Ukraine Conflict In First Phone Call
RFE/RL, July 11, 2019

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy have held their first

telephone call and discussed the conflict in eastern Ukraine as well as swapping prisoners. The two have exchanged barbs through the media over the past two months. When Putin offered Ukrainian citizens living in the Donbas passports days after Zelenskiy was elected, the new Ukrainian president dismissed it as a ticket to a country with little freedom.

The July 11 call comes just days after Zelenskiy posted a video statement offering to meet with Putin in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, to discuss the annexation of Crimea and conflict in Ukraine. Zelenskiy said that he would like the leaders of the U.S., Britain, France, and Germany to join the talks.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Immigration to Israel in 2018 up from Russia, down from France and US

By Stuart Winer

Times of Israel, July 9, 2019

Over 28,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel in 2018, with more than two-thirds of them coming from countries of the former Soviet Union, according to figures published Tuesday by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

In addition to those who were new to the country, there were also 3,502 “returning citizens,” amounting to a total of 31,601 immigrants in 2018.

The highest figures came from Russia — 10,460 or 37.7% of the total arrivals — a jump of 46.6% compared to 2017, when 7,135 arrived.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Netanyahu speaks with Putin as Iran breaks nuclear deal

The two leaders discussed the ongoing situation regarding Syria, Iran and bilateral relations.

JNS, July 8, 2019

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday concerning the ongoing situation regarding Syria, Iran and bilateral relations.

According to the Prime Minister’s Office, Netanyahu took the opportunity to express his condolences on the deaths of 14 Russian sailors in the Barents Sea on July 1. President Putin also invited Netanyahu to Moscow to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in May 2020.

A Russian statement on the call said that the two leaders discussed “Russian-Israeli cooperation on the Syria issue” as part of a follow-up to the trilateral Jerusalem summit on June 25 attended by the national security advisers from Russia, Israel and the United States, and “in particular, the importance of further coordination between militaries.”

[Read the full article here.](#)

In Moscow, First Graduates of the WUPJ Institute for Modern Jewish Studies

World Union for Progressive Judaism, July 11, 2019

In a grand ceremony, with thousands in attendance, the first graduates of the Institute for Modern Jewish Studies – Dan Menzhynov, Artem Kozliner, Shimon Nikitenko and Daria Sevastsyanchyk – received their bachelor’s degrees in Jewish Theology from the Russian State University for Humanities in Moscow.

The Institute for Modern Jewish Studies is a partnership of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, Abraham Geiger College, Russian State University of the Humanities (RSUH), and Pottsdam University. Its goal is to train Russian-speaking rabbis to serve the growing Progressive community across Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The four-year BA degree program at RSUH Institute in Philology and Jewish Theology specializes in “Art and Humanities with a specialization in Jewish Theology”.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Ukraine, Israel sign declaration on enhanced cooperation

UkrInform, July 11, 2019

The Ministries of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and Israel signed a declaration on the intensification of cooperation, Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov has stated.

“Today we signed a declaration on the intensification of cooperation, which will finally put an end to misunderstandings when crossing the border. In addition, we implement the consequences of the readmission agreement signed between Ukraine and the State of Israel. I want to emphasize that the simplification of travel between the countries is of mutual interest. I thank our Israeli friends and partners, and invite you to visit our country,” Avakov said.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Netanyahu meets with head of Ukrainian party that includes neo-Nazis

By Sam Sokol

JTA, July 10, 2019

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has come under fire in recent years for allegedly failing to confront anti-Semitism and revisionism in Central and Eastern Europe, met Wednesday with the head of a European political party whose membership includes ultranationalists and neo-Nazis.

Oleh Lyashko of the Ukrainian Radical Party came to Jerusalem as part of a parliamentary delegation led by Jewish lawmaker Georgii Logvynskyi. Lyashko was shown shaking Netanyahu’s hand in a video tweeted out by the Prime Minister’s Office.

Lyashko’s party includes nationalist Yuri Shukhevych, the son of Nazi collaborator Roman Shukhevych, whose troops engaged in war crimes against Jews during World War II. Another party lawmaker is Artyom Vitko, who was filmed in 2015 singing a song celebrating Adolf Hitler with lyrics that included “Adolf Hitler, together with us, Adolf Hitler, in each of us, and an eagle with iron wings will help us at the right time.”

[Read the full article here.](#)

The view from Jerusalem on Ukraine’s Jewish president

By Natalia A. Feduschak

Kyiv Post, July 7, 2019

JERUSALEM — I am drinking a latte at a café overlooking Jerusalem’s Old City, eavesdropping on two animated conversations occurring concurrently in English and in French...

Walking to my hotel in the Old City, I reflect upon the varied opinions I have encountered about President Zelenskyy’s election on this trip. In a country where I would have — perhaps stereotypically — expected wide-ranging support given the new president’s Jewish heritage, I found many conflicting views, sometimes more sharply defined than in Ukraine. Some individuals, like the men I spoke to, welcomed his election. Others took a wait and see approach. Still others said he was inexperienced, naïve, and if he failed in reforming Ukraine, they feared that ultimately Jews would be blamed.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Amid 'Quiet Rehabilitation Of Stalin,' Some Russians Honor The Memory Of His Victims

By Lucian Kim

NPR, July 8, 2019

Now, more than half a century after his death, many Russians look up to Stalin as the leader who defeated Nazi Germany and transformed a backward nation into a nuclear superpower. In the 20 years that he has been in power, Russian President Vladimir Putin has turned the Soviet Union's victory in World War II into a celebration of national pride, raising Stalin's stature at the same time. On the Victory Day holiday in May, the Communist Party erected a bust of Stalin in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk.

A civic initiative called Posledny Adres or "Last Address" is doing its part to defend the memory of the voiceless victims of Stalin's crimes. Supported by the human rights organization Memorial, it has put up more than 900 plaques on buildings across the former Soviet Union, memorializing those who were unjustly arrested and murdered by Stalin's security services.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Now it’s personal: Georgian TV host unleashes nasty tirade against Putin as tensions with Russia escalate

By Amie Ferris-Rotman

Washington Post, July 8, 2019

MOSCOW — Tensions between Russia and Georgia sharply escalated Monday after a television host in the former Soviet republic unleashed an expletive-laden tirade directed at President Vladimir Putin, provoking a rebuke from the Kremlin and condemnation within Georgia.

The on-air rant, broadcast Sunday evening, came after two weeks of violent anti-Russian demonstrations in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, culminating in a Russian government ban on direct flights between the two countries. The ban took effect Monday, disrupting travel for thousands of passengers.

Speaking in Russian, Rustavi-2 host Giorgi Gabunia turned to the camera to address Putin. He called the Russian leader a “stinking occupier” and a rash of obscenities, told him to “f--- off,” cursed his dead parents and promised to defecate on his grave. Gabunia also said Putin’s “slaves” should immediately get out of Georgia.

[Read the full article here.](#)

The Impact of Taglit-Birthright Israel on Participants from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Germany

eJewishPhilanthropy, July 10, 2019

The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies has released The Impact of Taglit-Birthright Israel on Participants from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Germany.

The study focuses on two groups of Birthright Israel participants: first, those from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus and second, Russian-speaking Jews (RSJ) in Germany. It is part of a larger program of research designed to understand the impact of Birthright Israel (known in the FSU and Germany as Taglit) on its participants. The study draws on pre- and post-trip surveys of the summer 2017 cohort from these countries, as well as on a long-term survey of participants from Russia and Ukraine who participated in the program during 2010-14.

The study was made possible with the support of Genesis Philanthropy Group and Birthright Israel.

[Read the full article here.](#)

U.S. oil makes it to Ukraine in another blow to Moscow

By Olga Yagova, Gleb Gorodyankin, Dmitry Zhdannikov

Reuters, July 11, 2019

MOSCOW/LONDON - U.S. crude exports are gaining traction in Europe as even Ukraine turns into a significant consumer of American barrels at the expense of Russian supplies amid heightened U.S. political pressure on Moscow and problems over contaminated Russian oil.

Ukraine this month received its first ever barrels from the United States, according to Refinitiv Eikon flows data, as the tanker Wisdom Venture unloaded 80,000 tonnes of Bakken crude in Odessa on July 6 for the Kremenchug refinery, the port said.

“The Ukrainian oil industry is set to rise from the ashes with its new president (Volodymyr) Zelenskiy, so it’s an obvious new market for the United States, though the price matters,” a trader in a European oil major said. Ukraine’s oil sector, formerly mostly operated by Russian companies, has struggled since geopolitical tensions between the countries escalated in 2013-2014.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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About NCSEJ

Founded in 1971, the National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry represents the organized American Jewish community in monitoring and advocating on behalf of the estimated 1.5 million Jews in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, including the 15 successor states of the former Soviet Union.

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