

## Weekly Top 10



Rabbi David Hill speaking Jerusalem. December 2011.

**WASHINGTON, D.C. December 6, 2019**

**TO: NCSEJ Leadership and Interested Parties**

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

Dear Friend,

Last Saturday night we lost one of the giants of the Soviet Jewry Movement and a founder of NCSEJ when Rabbi David Hill passed away. I had the privilege of knowing and working with David for almost forty years. David was a mentor and friend who gave so much to the American Jewish community and the State of Israel. David and his late wife Lee were a dynamic couple who were blessed with many children, even more, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Nothing made David happier than talking about his family.

He was affiliated with and supported many Jewish institutions. In the early 1960s as president of National Council of Young Israel, David raised the plight of Soviet Jewry with President Kennedy. This would be the first of many meetings with successive U.S. Presidents and foreign leaders to urge their support in the fight to free Soviet Jews. David and his family owned a kosher meat company called Real Kosher Sausage Company or 999. For those of us of a certain generation, we had the privilege of bringing his family's kosher products to thousands and thousands of Jews inside the Soviet Union. I can't count the number of people who told me after they arrived in Israel or elsewhere what it

meant to receive a kosher salami stamped with the 999 logo. In fact, David created Operation Lifeline under the NCSEJ umbrella to ensure that not only food was sent into the Soviet Union, but educational, cultural and religious items as well.

In 2011, NCSEJ honored David by presenting him with the first NCSEJ Lay Leadership Achievement Award. David was not only the first recipient, but the award is known today as the Rabbi David H. Hill Leadership Achievement Award. We presented the award to him in Jerusalem at the reception of former Soviet Jewish refuseniks, activists and most importantly a large contingent of his family. It was an unforgettable evening and I know one of David's proudest moments. I and so many others have lost one of the most thoughtful and generous friends, we will ever know. David lived a long and full life whose memory should be a blessing.

Today marks the 32nd anniversary of the Soviet Jewry March in Washington, DC. On that cold and blustery winter day, more than 250,000 Americans gathered on the Mall to send a loud and clear message to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, to free Soviet Jews. It was a remarkable coming together of all parts of American society. To learn about the March and its impact, please visit [www.SovietJewry.org](http://www.SovietJewry.org). This website has incredible archival material about the march and rally as well as the history of the Soviet Jewry movement.

Sincerely,



Mark B. Levin  
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO

### **NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10** **Washington, D.C. December 6, 2019**

#### **Andrew Mac: Ukraine needs better connection with diaspora** **Kyiv Post** **Igor Kossov | December 6, 2019**

The name Panevežys undoubtedly rings a bell for huge numbers of Jews all over the world. Despite its relatively small size in comparison to the far more important Lithuanian Jewish centers of Vilna (or Vilnius, the "Jerusalem of Lithuania"), and Kovno (or Kaunas, the country's capital during its interwar period of independence), the city earned considerable renown because it was the home of the famous yeshiva of Ponevezh (the city's name in Yiddish).

The yeshiva building still stands opposite the local bus station, with a ceramic plaque to note its origin. Today the building houses a bakery and konditorei, or small cafe. But there is no mention of the Jewish community's 300-year history in the city's municipal museum.

[Read the full article here.](#)

#### **Lithuania continues Soviet-style censorship 30 years post-independence** **Jerusalem Post** **Efraim Zuroff | December 2, 2019**

Other than playing guessing games about whether efforts to form a government will succeed or whether there will be a third election, the big question for many Israelis is whether Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is due to visit Jerusalem in January, will bring with him Naama Issachar, the American-Israeli woman who could spend up to seven-and-a-half years in a Russian prison because 9.5 grams of cannabis were found in her possession during a routine security check at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport when she was flying home from India via Russia.

[Read the full article here.](#)

#### **Jews angered by activists' use of Holocaust victims' remains** **Kirsten Grieshaber** **Washington Post | December 3, 2019**

BERLIN — Jewish groups expressed outrage on Tuesday at an oversized urn placed in front of the German parliament that those behind it claim contains Holocaust victims' remains and is meant to highlight the dangers of far-right extremism.

The International Auschwitz Committee condemned the action by the Center for Political Beauty, which unveiled the urn near the Reichstag building Monday, calling it a "pillar of resistance." "Auschwitz survivors are aghast at this installation, which hurts their feelings and the eternal peace of the dead of their murdered relatives," the organization said.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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**Ellie Cohanim tapped as US deputy envoy on anti-Semitism**  
**JNS | December 6, 2019**

(December 6, 2019 / JNS) Veteran TV correspondent Ellie Cohanim has been tapped as the U.S. State Department's Deputy Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism.

The department's top anti-Semitism envoy, Elan Carr, made the announcement on Friday.

"Proud to announce that Ellie Cohanim of New York has joined my team. Ellie will be a strong asset in combatting anti-Semitism around the world. Congratulations Ellie! We're thrilled to have you on board!" tweeted Carr.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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**Moscow is wary of Belgrade's Balkan Balancing Act**  
**Riddle.io**  
**Julia Petrovskaya | December 2, 2019**

A couple of weeks before a planned meeting between Serbia's President Aleksandar Vučić and Russia's Vladimir Putin in Sochi on December 4, a full-blown "spy scandal" erupted between the two countries. The scandal has become an unwelcome reminder of the real contradictions in relations between Russia and Serbia, giving observers new grounds to argue about their future development. Vučić, who actively plays on Russophile sentiments in Serbia to further his political goals, has recently tried to draw clearer red lines in Serbia's relationship with Moscow. And while it seems that the potential for rapprochement between the two countries has been largely exhausted, Moscow is not giving up its efforts to strengthen its influence with its traditional Balkan ally.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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**Towards a Sino-Russian entente?**  
**Riddle.io**  
**Michael Kofman | November 29, 2019**

At a recent gathering in October Vladimir Putin announced that Russia has been helping China develop its own ballistic missile early warning system. From a technical point of view, this development is not especially significant, improved early warning only serves to benefit crisis stability between the major nuclear powers. The relevance lies in the underlying political decision, Russia is willing to collaborate on technology related to strategic nuclear arsenals, which is an important step forward in the kind of technical assistance it is willing to offer the Chinese. Kremlin spokespersons are keen to emphasize the special nature of Russia's relationship with China, particularly when it comes to military ties and defense cooperation. Russian senior officials have increasingly characterized their ties in terms of a strategic partnership, or a 'strategic alliance.' An intensifying regimen of military exercises, military consultations, and codified frameworks for military cooperation substantiates some of these claims. Indeed, there's plenty of evidence to suggest a growing military alignment between the two countries. However, the proposition of a Sino-Russian alliance remains a difficult and analytically divisive question, one that has steadily increased in significance for U.S. policy considerations.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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**Putin says Russia's gas talks with Ukraine 'difficult': RIA**  
**Reuters**  
**December 6, 2019**

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday said that Moscow's gas transit talks with Ukraine were progressing with difficulty, the RIA news agency reported.

Ukraine is a key transit route for Russian gas supplies to Europe but a current deal between the countries expires at the end of the year.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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**What the New EU Leadership Should Do About Russia**  
**Moscow Carnegie Center**  
**Sabine Fischer | December 4, 2019**

The EU's Russia policy is at a crossroads. A new European Commission has just taken office, and its

president, Ursula von der Leyen, has declared she wants a “geopolitical commission” that takes note of the fundamental changes in the international system, thereby preserving the EU’s key interest in democracy and a rule-based, multilateral international order.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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### **Russia Taps Into Chinese Gas Market via Power of Siberia Pipeline**

**Moscow Carnegie Center**

**Sergei Kapitonov | December 5, 2019**

Gazprom launched its Power of Siberia pipeline to China on December 2: the Russian company’s first step onto a Chinese gas route stretching for more than 8,000 kilometers. The gas pipeline is not due to reach full operating capacity until 2025, but certain conclusions can already be drawn regarding demand for Russian gas delivered via the pipeline on the Chinese market, as well as the project’s advantages and shortcomings.

[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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