

Weekly Top 10

WASHINGTON, D.C. June 21, 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 the links to this week`s news updates.

Regards,



Mark B. Levin
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO

NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10 **Washington, D.C. June 21, 2019**

[MOSCOW] Integrated Special Needs Program Opens Summer Day Camp
By Kirby Goodman
World Union For Progressive Judaism, June 20, 2019

The Meodomik Integration program operates year round activities for children with special needs and their families, integrating social, cultural and recreational programs based in the Moscow Jewish Community Center, MEOD. Irina Sherban, Chair of the Russian Union for Progressive Judaism (RUCPJ), directs MEOD. It is home (Domik in Russian) to various Jewish congregations, including the Progressive congregation, Hadash.

The center opened its Meodomika Summer Day Camp in early June, bringing together children with and without special needs and their families for a week of activities, tours, workshops and other programming.

The camp`s theme, "Heading Outdoors," highlighted outdoor games and hikes, day trips, and therapeutic art activities. 48 children, ages 6 to 14 years, participated in this year`s program, 15 of whom have special needs.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Of Jews and Bolsheviks
By Tibor Krausz
The Jerusalem Post, June 13, 2019

Here`s the thing about anti-Jewish canards: despite what their purveyors may think, they aren`t insults. They`re compliments.

These old tropes may have little grounding in reality, yet even so they redound to the credit of Jews. After all, Jewish people are believed by their detractors to be masters of the world. They own all the big banks, run all the important media outlets, and engineer the rise and fall of entire nations. Woe betide anyone who opposes them.

They also have a finger in every pie, apparently. Both Hitler and Stalin were ostensibly mere puppets in Jewish hands. Or at the very least the “Zionists” – as an antisemitic code word has it – were allied wholeheartedly with these brutal dictators, notwithstanding their wholesale murder of Jews. (Then again, the Holocaust never really happened, did it?)

Former London mayor Ken Livingstone, a Labour Party stalwart, recently gave voice to this view by asserting that Hitler “was supporting Zionism before he went mad.”

Is there anything then that Jews can't or won't do?

[Read the full article here.](#)

The Heroic Soviet Jewish Activist You Never Heard of

By Adina Hershberg

Aish.com, June 17, 2019

Most Jews have heard of Natan Sharansky, but few know of Hillel Butman (pronounced Boot mahn), a giant of a man who recently died at the age of 87.

“Hillel Butman was the first, before the rest of us,” Sharansky said. “Already in 1966, a year before the Six Day War, he founded the Zionist Youth Movement in Leningrad. Who thought about Zionism back then, before 1967? It was very rare. He established an underground organization; taught Hebrew, literature and Judaism; established secret ‘ulpanim’ in which the young people met; and he tried to scream to the world the cry of the Jews in Russia who wanted to go home to Israel. Dozens of people, and then hundreds of people and then thousands of people got carried away by this movement.”

Butman was born in Leningrad in 1932 into a typical Jewish Russian family. His family was neither religious nor Zionist, nor did they know anything about Jewish history or Palestine. But they were not assimilated. His father had a seat in the Leningrad synagogue where he attended High Holy Day services. He enjoyed singing Yiddish songs. The family ate matzah during Passover.

[Read the full article here.](#)

This former Krakow synagogue is now a bar, and Polish Jews are protesting

By Cnaan Liphshiz

JTA, June 14, 2019

Thousands of Polish soccer fans attending a match in Warsaw between their national team and Israel's applauded during the playing of the Jewish state's anthem.

The Euro qualifiers match came at a sensitive time for Polish-Israeli relations, which have suffered over the past year as politicians from both countries made provocative statements about Holocaust-era complicity and restitution.

Stewards and security guards took extraordinary precautions to prevent the eruption of violence during the match, which ended without incident.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Romania hosts inaugural summit for anti-Semitism envoys

By Cnaan Lipshitz

JTA, June 17, 2019

BUCHAREST (JTA) — Government coordinators in the fight against anti-Semitism from over a dozen countries gathered Monday in this Romanian capital for the first professional conference of its kind. The meeting took place amid significant increases in the number of reported anti-Semitic incidents in the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Austria, among other countries.

Organized by the World Jewish Congress and the government of Romania, the summit included Elan Carr from the United States and Katharina von Schnurbein, the European Commission's first coordinator on combating anti-Semitism.

Envoys from Bulgaria, Poland, Russia and Azerbaijan, among other countries, met leaders of Jewish communities from across the world at the International Meeting Of Special Envoys and Coordinators Combating Anti-Semitism. Talks centered on exchanging working practices and efforts to have additional government adopt the definition of anti-Semitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, or IHRA.

[Read the full article here.](#)

How the Soviet Literary Establishment Censored Vasily Grossman

By Robert Chandler

The New Yorker, June 19, 2019

The Soviet Jewish writer Vasily Grossman's novel "Life and Fate," completed in 1960, is an epic story centered on the Battle of Stalingrad, the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany that marked the turning point in the Second World War. The novel includes many subplots—some civilian, some military, some set in German or Soviet concentration camps. A central and powerfully argued theme is the equivalence of the Nazi and Stalinist regimes. This made "Life and Fate" anathema to the Soviet authorities, and the K.G.B. confiscated most copies of the typescript. Eventually, however, a microfilm was smuggled out of the Soviet Union, and, in 1980, the text was finally published, in Switzerland, in the original Russian. In 1986, I translated and published a version in English.

Since that time, "Life and Fate" has been hailed as a major work of art and has been translated into most European languages, and also into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Turkish, and Vietnamese. However, many readers do not realize that Grossman did not intend "Life and Fate" to be a self-contained novel. It is, rather, the second of two closely related novels, originally conceived as two halves of a single work. The story line of "Life and Fate" begins where the previous novel ends, and the characters in the two novels are largely identical. The first novel was published in several different editions in the nineteen-fifties, under the title "For a Just Cause." Those editions were heavily censored. My wife Elizabeth and I have published a translation of the novel, using Grossman's original and preferred title, "Stalingrad," and restored many of the lost passages.

[Read the full article here.](#)

A moment for truth: Pioneering Holocaust remembrance in Belarus

By Ezra Mehlman

Times Of Israel, June 20, 2019

June 29, 1942. 5 a.m. Slonim, Belarus. By the time the trumpet blast sounded, and the lorries creaked through the ghetto gates, the Jews knew better than to run. In November of the previous year, 10,000 men, women and children — nearly half of the ghetto's population — were rounded up in the marketplace and driven eight kilometers out of town to the nearby village of Czepelova. There, they were stripped naked, lined up in groups of 10, and shot in burial pits by a drunken group of Germans and Lithuanian auxiliaries. The child observers to these massacres, many of them requisitioned by the killing squads to perform tasks that day such as cooking, entertaining the Germans, and sifting through clothing, describe a mass graves that "lived" for days as the muffled cries of victims buried alive persisted long after the day ended.

No. Today the Jews would hide. As hundreds of hooligans streamed through the ghetto's gates — Germans, Latvians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians among them — "all of them shouting for the final battle with the Jews of Slonim," they would find hardly a soul in the streets. The Jews had entrenched themselves in makeshift shelters dug into the foundations and basements of their homes. While the crowd ran through the ghetto yelling, "Jews, out of your hiding places!" trucks wound through the narrow streets and sprayed gasoline on the squat buildings. Within minutes, the ghetto was ablaze. Human candles streamed out of basements and were shot. Babies were thrown into fires still alive. Those who emerged from their homes were marched in a long column back out to Czepelova or another killing field at Petrelovitch Hill and shot as their neighbors had been the previous year. Somewhere in this column, perhaps — we will never be sure — marched my great-grandmother and a great-aunt. Survivor Nachum Alpert describes a group of the town's Christian residents, dressed in their festive clothes for a religious holiday, watching the event from outside the ghetto gates.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Holocaust survivors to receive increase in compensation from Germany

By Uri Bollag

The Jerusalem Post, June 21, 2019

Holocaust survivors are set to receive an upgrade in the compensation they receive from the German government, after an agreement was signed on Thursday between the finance ministries of Israel and Germany.

The Holocaust Survivors' Rights Authority — which is housed within the Finance Ministry and leads the initiative to improve the conditions of Holocaust survivors in Israel — assessed that there was a need to increase the stipends the German government pays directly to survivors.

The lengthy negotiation between the authorities resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding, according to which survivors will receive an additional 100 Euros to 400 Euros per month. This increase will raise total funds that Germany pays them each year to 15 million Euro.

"I am pleased to announce the significant addition to the benefits of Holocaust survivors who are receiving direct stipends from Germany," said the authority's director, Ofra Ross, who called the addition "unprecedented."

[Read the full article here.](#)

A Chat with Sharansky

By Jay Nordlinger

National Review, June 17, 2019

Natan Sharansky looks the same as he always has — and he is a welcome sight. So is Avital, his wife. She came out of the Soviet Union before he did — a good twelve years before. She campaigned for the release of her husband, who was in the Gulag. I tell her, "I remember watching you on Nightline and other programs." Her husband remarks, "The biggest mistake the KGB made was letting Avital out."

From what I can tell, they have a tender, warm relationship — truly spousal.

We are sitting in a coffee shop here in Jerusalem, with mutual friends. The Sharanskys are known in this shop, as I understand it, and basically left in peace. In other places, Natan would be surrounded. "By admirers and autograph-seekers?" I ask. No, he answers: By people wanting him to return to politics.

This is a turbulent season in Israeli politics. (When is it not, really?). There has been one election in April and there will be another — a re-do, so to speak — in September.

Let me provide a brief reminder of who Natan Sharansky is: He is one of the hero-dissidents of the Soviet Union, a leading "refusenik," which is to say, a person who was denied the right — refused the right — to emigrate to Israel. After nine years in the Gulag (1977 to 1986), he was released, and allowed to come to Israel. He wrote a memoir, one of the great prison memoirs ever: *Fear No Evil*. He eventually entered Israeli politics, reaching high levels. Later, he was the head of the Jewish Agency, a huge non-profit that is devoted to a strong Jewish identity.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Georgia's president blames Russia over violent protests

By Nathan Hodge, Milena Veselinovic, Bianca Britton and Luka Gviniashvili

CNN, June 21, 2019

The president of Georgia has accused Russia of meddling in its internal affairs and stirring anger that led to protesters attempting to storm the Georgian parliament on Thursday.

Thousands of people tried to storm the parliament in the capital, Tbilisi, Thursday evening, protesting a visit from Sergey Gavrilov, a member of the Russian Communist Party.

Following the chaotic demonstrations, President Salome Zourabichvili wrote on Facebook late Thursday: "Russia is our enemy and occupier. Today, the Fifth Column orchestrated by Russia might become more dangerous than open aggression."

Zourabichvili described the events in parliament as "humiliating the country and insulting its dignity," but added that "in no case does this justify the artificially stirred wave of anti-state actions aimed at storming the parliament and overthrowing the authorities."

[Read the full article here.](#)

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1120 20th Street NW, Ste. 300N Washington, DC 20036-3413
Telephone: +1 202 898 2500 | ncsejinfo@ncsej.org

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.

