

Weekly Top 10

WASHINGTON, D.C. July 3, 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. I want to wish everyone a safe and festive Fourth of July celebration.

Sincerely,



Mark B. Levin
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO

NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10 **Washington, D.C. July 3, 2019**

Second mass grave of Jewish Holocaust victims discovered in Romania

By Marcy Oster

JTA, July 3, 2019

A second mass grave of Jews killed by Romanian troops during World War II was discovered in northeast Romania. The human remains were found near the village of Popricani, the site of a massacre of Jews carried out by Romanian troops allied with the Nazis.

In 2010, a mass grave containing 16 bodies was found in a forest near Popricani...A team of archeologists now has unearthed the second site, according to the institute, and has discovered the remains of at least 40 people, including 12 children - one as young as two years old, the French news agency AFP reported.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Tbilisi protests continue

By Dominik Istrate

Emerging Europe, July 1, 2019

Protests in Georgia's capital Tbilisi have continued for the 10th consecutive day. Demonstrators are demanding the resignation of the country's interior minister Giorgi Gakharia, who claimed that the use of police force against protesters on the night of June 20, that left around 240 injured, was legitimate.

The protests, which look increasingly to be targeted against the ruling Georgian Dream party, erupted after Russian communist MP Sergei Gavrilov, a vocal supporter of Russia's illegal occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, was allowed to speak from the Georgian parliament's central podium during a conference on June 20.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Archaeological Dig Resumes at Great Synagogue Site in Vilnius Jewish Community of Lithuania, July 1, 2019

The summer archaeological dig at the site of the former Great Synagogue in Vilnius is set to resume this year starting July 1 and running to July 19. The team includes archaeologists from Lithuania, the USA and Israel. The continuing exploration of the site is being supported by the Goodwill Foundation in partnership with the Israeli Antiquities Authority and the Lithuanian Jewish Community.

In 2011 the team discovered the exact boundaries and fragments of the former building. In 2016, 2017 and 2018 they explored the former mikvot, or bathhouses used for ritual purification and located the central bimah of the synagogue.

This year they hope to continue exploring the remains of the building and to locate the aron kodesh, the ark used to house the Torah scroll in synagogues.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Anti-Semitic politician beaten in Ukraine Former Konotop mayor Artem Semenikhin is known for his neo-Nazi views Times of Israel, July 3, 2019

A far-right politician belonging to the anti-Semitic Svoboda party was severely beaten in Ukraine last Thursday in an attack his supporters are blaming on political rivals seeking an advantage ahead of the post-Soviet republic's upcoming parliamentary elections.

According to The Kyiv Post, former Konotop mayor Artem Semenikhin was jumped by several unidentified assailants at 1 a.m. on Thursday and is currently under police guard and in critical condition.

Ilya Aizenshtat, a Ukrainian Jewish communal activist originally from Konotop, told The Times of Israel that he believes the far-right politician, who is doing badly in the polls, was likely exaggerating the extent of his injuries for political gain and that his opponent, who is leading by a wide margin, had little reason to engage in violence.

[Read the full article here.](#)

A Monster to History, Stalin Is a Tourist Magnet in His Hometown By David Segal New York Times, June 30, 2019

Dedicated in 1957, four years after Stalin's death, the museum has an austere exterior in the Socialist Classical style and an interior stuffed with paintings, photographs and personal mementos. To the left of the entrance sits a rail car, the one Stalin rode to the Potsdam Conference in Germany in the summer of 1945, its curtains intact, its bulletproof glass long ago replaced.

Sandwiched between Russia and Turkey, Georgia is a small country with celebrated cuisine, gorgeous landscapes — and a scarcity of world-renowned tourist attractions. One of the few it does have, unfortunately, is the man born Ioseb Besarionis dze Jughashvili, the son of a cobbler who became one of humanity's greatest criminals.

This has presented a quandary for Georgian officials. How, if at all, does a country market a homegrown monster to the rest of the world?

[Read the full article here.](#)

As Putin Pushes a Merger, Belarus Resists With Language, Culture and History By Andrew Higgins New York Times, June 29, 2019

In Belarus, Ukraine and other parts of the defunct Soviet Union, an endless tug-of-war between Moscow and its former dominions has often been defined by quarrels over oil and gas pipelines, military alignments, and geopolitics.

At bedrock, however, are sharp differences over history, culture and language. And it is on this front, [poet and television presenter Gleb] Labadzenka and like-minded Belarusians believe, that their country can best resist pressure from President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia to accelerate moves toward a so-called "union state."

This ill-defined entity comprising Russia and Belarus was first agreed to in the mid-1990s, and after years in abeyance, it is once again on the agenda as Mr. Putin pushes Belarus's authoritarian

president, Aleksandr Lukashenko, to pick up the pace on integrating the two countries.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Polish chief rabbi calls for synagogue to reopen after armed standoff
Times of Israel, July 3, 2019

Poland's chief rabbi lashed out at the Krakow Jewish community on Tuesday, following a standoff between armed men and worshipers outside a local house of worship.

On Monday, guards from a private security firm hired by the Gmina, Krakow's Jewish representative body, physically blocked prayer-goers associated with the Chabad Hasidic movement from entering the city's Izaak Synagogue, in the latest escalation of an ongoing financial dispute.

In a letter to Gmina President Tadeusz Jakubowicz published on Facebook, New York-born Polish Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich castigated the local communal body and its leadership for failing to discharge the "essential responsibility of every Jewish community" to "protect, enhance and deepen Jewish life."

[Read the full article here.](#)

Judenrein Europe: For millennia Europe was the center of diaspora life but as Jews continue fleeing, by the end of this century all that's left will be a Jewish graveyard
By Joel Kotkin
Tablet, June 26, 2019

Last month the German commissioner for "Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight Against Antisemitism" used his impressively titled office to advise German Jews against wearing kippahs in public. The commissioner's response to a surge of anti-Semitic violence in his country was a sheepish acknowledgment that Germany is once again a dangerous country for Jews. And as Germany goes, so goes Europe.

For millennia, following the destruction of the Second Temple and the beginning of the diaspora, Europe was home to the majority of the world's Jews. That chapter of history is over. The continent is fast becoming a land of Jewish ghost towns and graveyards where the few remaining Jews must either accept an embattled existence or else are preparing to leave.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Poisoned Gefilte Fish, Broken Heart
By Allan Nadler
Jewish Review of Books, Summer 2019

The Soviets' initial promise, in 1928, of some form of Jewish autonomy in an isolated, forbidding, eastern corner of the republic, bordering on Japanese-occupied Manchuria, ignited the first flowering of hope in Soviet Jewish national autonomy. This hope was crushed by Stalin's Great Purges less than a decade later, by the end of which there remained almost nothing distinctively Jewish about the farcical "Jewish Autonomous Region."

Already well before the purges, more than half of the original Jewish settlers had long abandoned Birobidzhan and returned to their homes, in Moscow and Minsk, and—incredibly—Los Angeles, New York, Montreal, Buenos Aires, Haifa, and Tel Aviv. The intense, much briefer revival of the initiative after the Holocaust lasted less than two years, culminating in the show trials of Jewish literary, cultural, and political leaders, Emiot and his friend the great novelist known as Der Nister among them, and their exile to the Siberian Gulag.

[Read the full article here.](#)

[Read full articles here](#)

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

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.

 [JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST](#)

 [FORWARD THIS EMAIL](#)

