

Weekly Top 10

WASHINGTON, D.C. February 28, 2020

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 weekly stories.

Sincerely,



Mark B. Levin
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO

NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10 **Washington, D.C. February 28, 2020**

Poland names new head of Jewish museum as tensions rise

Joanna Plucinska

Reuters | February 27, 2020

WARSAW (Reuters) - Poland's government appointed a new director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews on Thursday, as the ruling nationalists face accusations of politicizing museums to reflect their view of history. POLIN, which opened its main exhibition in 2014, is one of the largest Jewish museums in the world and has been the subject of a squabble between the government and the museum's former director, Dariusz Stola, over everything from the use of grant funding, to exhibitions and conferences at the museum.

[Read the full article here.](#)

I went to Poland to research my family's history. I found a new generation to tell it to.

Judith Greenberg

Forward | February 27, 2020

The house at No. 3 ul Azsa in the Polish city of Siedlce is mustard-and-peach stucco with a flower-lined balcony and the date 1811 marked under the roof. A nail salon fills the first floor; when my cousins lived there, before the Nazis occupied this city about a two-hour drive from Warsaw, it was their grocery store. Azsa is Polish for Ash — the street was named for Sholem Ash, the 19th century Yiddish writer, back when half of Siedlce was Jewish. There are no Jews in the city today.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Righteous Among the Nations medals awarded in Warsaw

The First News | February 26, 2020

Ten Poles and Polish families who helped rescue Jews during World War Two were posthumously awarded with Righteous Among the Nations medals at a ceremony at Warsaw's POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews on Wednesday.

Three Poles were presented with honorary citizenship of Israel, two were given posthumously and one

was awarded in person to Irena Senderska-Rzonca, who at the award ceremony said that she was "honoured and moved" by receiving the distinction.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Polish Bernese group may have tried to save thousands of Jews in Holocaust

Jeremy Sharon

The Jerusalem Post | February 27, 2020

New research suggests that Polish diplomats who worked during the Second World War to rescue Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe attempted to save several thousand Jewish people through their efforts. The so-called "Bernese group" of six Polish diplomats working out of the Swiss capital Bern sought to provide Jews in Poland with forged South American passports, mostly from Paraguay. Holders of which were in some cases allowed to live outside the Jewish ghettos or were sent to internment camps instead of the Nazi death camps.

Until recently it was thought that the group helped save several hundred Jews, but research conducted by the Pilecki Institute, together with the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum and the Polish Institute of National Remembrance suggest that the Bernese group produced many thousands of forged passports which may have helped save 2,000-3,000 Jews.

According to Dr. Jakub Kumoch, Polish ambassador to Switzerland and the editor of the new study, between 26% and 46% of the 3,253 Jews who received the Polish-forged documents are confirmed to have survived the Holocaust.

"We estimate that the Ładoś group contributed to the rescue of between 2,000 and 3,000 people," Kumoch said.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Russia Sends Warships to Syria, Blames Ankara for Killing of 33 Turkish Troops

Haaretz | February 28, 2020

Russia on Friday said it was sending two warships armed with cruise missiles to waters off the Syrian coast and blamed Ankara for the killing of 33 Turkish soldiers in Syria's Idlib region the previous day.

The killing of the Turkish soldiers on Thursday and the wounding of 32 others, announced by the governor in Turkey's Hatay province bordering Syria, raised the Turkish military death toll in the region to 54 this month.

NATO's secretary-general called on Russia and Syria on Friday to halt the offensive in Idlib and said, after a meeting of the alliance's ambassadors, that NATO stood in solidarity with Turkey.

"We call on Russia and the Syria regime to stop the attacks, to stop the indiscriminate air attacks ... we also call on Russia and Syria to fully respect the international law," Jens Stoltenberg told a news conference. "We call on Syria and Russia to fully engage in UN-led efforts to find a peaceful solution for the conflict in Syria."

[Read the full article here.](#)

Jewish groups hail Bulgaria for preventing annual neo-Nazi march

Jewish News Syndicate | February 26, 2020

Jewish organizations commended the Bulgarian government for preventing an annual neo-Nazi march in the country's capital of Sofia from taking place last weekend.

The annual torch-lit Lukov march is named after Bulgarian Gen. Hristo Lukov, founder of the pro-Nazi Union of Bulgarian National Legions movement, which supported the deportation to Treblinka of more than 11,000 Jews from territories controlled by Bulgaria in Macedonia, northern Greece and eastern Serbia.

Lukov was responsible for a Bulgarian law, based on the 1935 Nuremberg Laws in Germany, that stripped Jews of their civil rights. He was assassinated in 1943 by Communist partisans.

The Lukov demonstration draws thousands of neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Belarus leader says nation being forced to merge with Russia

Click2Houston | February 27, 2020

MINSK – The president of Belarus said Thursday that his country is "being forced into integration" with Russia and insisted that real integration of the two countries' economies implied "sovereignty and independence" for Belarus.

"We remain committed, as always, to real integration without being forced into integration," President Alexander Lukashenko said at a meeting with Mikhail Myasnikov, chair of the Eurasian Economic Commission.

His statement comes as tensions are running high between the neighboring ex-Soviet states. Negotiations on closer economic ties have stalled, Russia halted oil supplies to Belarus and Lukashenko has repeatedly accused the Kremlin of pushing for a merger of the two countries.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Envoy: Israel stands "shoulder to shoulder" with Azerbaijani people

Trend

Azernews | February 26, 2020

Israel stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of Azerbaijan, Israeli ambassador to Azerbaijan George Deek tweeted, Trend reports.

"Israel stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of Azerbaijan both in happy days and in sad ones," Deek wrote. "Today I attended the event dedicated to the 28th anniversary of Khojaly tragedy to commemorate the victims."

The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, in 1992 Armenian armed forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding regions.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Bernie Sanders and Soviet Jewry

Jonathan S. Tobin

Algemeiner | February 27, 2020

Now that he's the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, Senator Bernie Sanders is finally being asked some tough questions about what it means to be a Socialist in 2020. But a key part of that query is not just a matter of economics. It also involves understanding his views about the world — which is what led him to engage in some heavy-duty rationalizing for the Communist dictatorship in Cuba when asked about the subject in an interview this past week on 60 Minutes.

His unwillingness to unequivocally condemn the Castro regime is hardly surprising. Sanders has been a fan of the Communist government of that tortured island since he was a young man. His support for left-wing, revolutionary anti-American regimes around the globe was a hallmark of his activist past.

[Read the full article here.](#)

The British housewife who took on the Soviet Union

Editorial

The Jerusalem Post | February 18, 2020

Once she got married at 23 and began to settle down to housekeeping and motherhood in London, Barbara Oberman thought her days in the spotlight were over.

She had done some fashion modeling following six difficult years during World War II when her family endured bombings, evacuations, a scarcity of food and the death of her beloved mother.

But 10 years later, "I started hearing from friends in Israel that there was this issue of Soviet Jewry. I thought the British establishment would do something about it."

That did not happen. The plight of Jews behind the Iron Curtain was nobody's priority in the early 1970s. So Oberman made it hers. "I was forceful and passionate and a bit bossy, which was unusual for a British woman in those days," she says.

[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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