

## Weekly Top 10

**WASHINGTON, D.C. May 5, 2022**

**TO: NCSEJ Leadership and Interested Parties**

**FROM: James Schiller, Chairman;  
Mark B. Levin, Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO**

Dear Friend,

Below are articles highlighting events from the past week.

Shabbat Shalom.

Sincerely,  
Mark B. Levin  
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO

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## **NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10** **Washington, D.C. May 5, 2022**

### **Lavrov's 'Jewish Hitler' comments are latest manifestation of an old, dangerous myth**

**Lazar Berman**

**Times of Israel | May 4, 2022**

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov enraged Israeli and Jewish leaders this week with his claim that "Hitler also had Jewish blood."

The head of the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial called the remarks a "blood libel"; Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said the comments were "unforgivable and scandalous"; and Israel summoned Russia's ambassador for clarification.

Lavrov made the claim on Sunday in an interview with Italian television, arguing that the fact that Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky is Jewish does not contradict Moscow's claims that it had launched its invasion of the country to "de-Nazify" it.

The stubbornly persistent — and dangerous — idea of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler having Jewish ancestry dates back as far as the 1920s, focusing on the origins of Hitler's paternal grandfather.

Hitler's father, Alois, was born in 1837, the illegitimate child of 42-year-old Maria Anna Schicklgruber. No father is recorded on his baptism certificate, which became the source of the speculation that Hitler's grandfather was actually Jewish.

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## **Putin apologizes for Russian envoy's 'Jewish Hitler' comments, Bennett's office says**

**TOI Staff**

**Times of Israel | May 5, 2022**

In a phone call Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin apologized to Prime Minister Naftali Bennett for incendiary comments made by the Kremlin's top envoy earlier this week, the prime minister's office said.

The comments by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claiming that Adolf Hitler had "Jewish blood," and the following back-and-forth between Israel and Russia, marked the worst flare-up between the countries since Russia invaded Ukraine.

"The prime minister accepted the apology of President Putin for comments by Lavrov and thanked him for clarifying the president's view of the Jewish people and the memory of the Holocaust," Bennett's office said.

The Kremlin said Putin spoke with Bennett about "historic memory," the Holocaust and the situation in Ukraine, without mentioning an apology.

Bennett also requested Putin "examine humanitarian options" for evacuating the Ukrainian city of Mariupol. "The request came following Bennett's conversation with the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, yesterday," Bennett's office said.

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## **In 1968, Poland's communist government forced Jews to leave. Today, the country embraces refugees.**

**Dana Bash and Abbie Sharpe**

**CNN | March 31, 2022**

Because SS soldiers used the Nożyk Synagogue as a warehouse and horse stable during World War II, it was the only major Jewish synagogue the Nazis did not destroy in Poland's capital city of Warsaw.

Now, it is once again a house of worship, led by the chief rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich.

He says it is unclear how many Jews are in Poland today. Before World War II, Poland had a robust Jewish community of about 3.5 million. The Nazis killed almost 90% of them, and many of those who survived and stayed in Poland stopped identifying as Jewish.

"They simply didn't tell. It was too painful. The survivors were too traumatized. They made a decision that it's no longer safe to be Jewish," said Schudrich.

But Poland's tiny Jewish population diminished even further in 1968, when the communist government forced thousands to leave the country in an anti-Semitic purge. This dark chapter in Polish history stands in contrast to the generosity and compassion the country is showing Ukrainian refugees - some of it a lesson learned, perhaps, from its own past.

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## **Russia's Antisemitic Waltz**

**Jacksaon Richman**

**Washington Examiner | May 4, 2022**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is an antisemite. On Sunday, he called Ukrainian Jews antisemites amid Russia's so-

called "de-Nazification" campaign in Ukraine. "When they say, 'What sort of Nazification is this if we are Jews,' well, I think that Hitler also had Jewish origins, so it means nothing," Lavrov said. "For a long time now, we've been hearing the wise Jewish people say that the biggest antisemites are the Jews themselves," he added.

The Russian Foreign Ministry on Tuesday stood by Lavrov's comments. It claimed that "history, unfortunately, knows tragic examples of cooperation between Jews and the Nazis." For one, Hitler did not have Jewish roots.

Second, while Jews themselves can be antisemitic — Noam Chomsky is one such example — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is Jewish, is not. It is Russia's Vladimir Putin, not Zelensky, who has acted like a Nazi in Ukraine. The Russians, not the Ukrainians, have been committing genocide, indiscriminately bombing civilian targets and raping women. As I wrote last week, this is happening in the country where Jews were targeted during the pinnacle of the history of antisemitism, the Holocaust. Jews were forced by the Nazis to work for them or else face death. While it can be debated whether those Jews should've ever consented to work, the Jews never willfully aided and abetted their oppressors.

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### **US has helped Ukraine target Russian generals: report Used to Store Arms** **Olafimihan Oshin** **The Hill | May 4, 2022**

Senior administration officials told The New York Times on Wednesday that the U.S has provided intelligence to Ukraine's armed forces and that it has been used to help kill Russian generals who have died during the country's ongoing war.

While not specifying how many Russian generals have been killed thanks to U.S. assistances, sources told the Times the information was part of a classified program that aims to help Ukrainians provide real-time intel. Ukraine maintains that it has killed 12 Russian generals.

The Times reported that Ukrainian officials have combined location details from the U.S. plus their own intelligence to conduct strikes that have helped kill members of the Russian forces.

Asked about the report, National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson acknowledged that the U.S. does provide battlefield intelligence to Ukraine but disputed the way The Times framed its story.

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### **The former dissident who heads Ukraine's Jewish community wants his country to 'learn to live during this war'** **Ben Sales** **Jewish Insider | May 5, 2022**

When Josef Zissels talks about how he's fared during the war in Ukraine, he doesn't begin with the Russian bombardment that started in late February. Instead, he starts by talking about 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and began funding separatists in Ukraine's east. That's when Zissels began sounding the alarm about an invasion and, he says, not enough people listened.

Nor does Zissels, who has served for three decades as chairman of the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of

Ukraine, anticipate that the war will be over soon. Rather, in a conversation lasting more than an hour with *eJewishPhilanthropy*, the former Soviet dissident and political prisoner described an unvarnished vision of the future in which he hopes Ukraine and its Jewish community can both support themselves, even while under constant attack by Russian forces.

"I don't like it, but I was right in saying that this war would last for a long time," Zissels told eJP via an interpreter on Wednesday. "So we need to adapt. We need to learn how to live during this war, like Israel, although we have a more powerful enemy. So we need to learn how to develop our country in these circumstances."

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## **Romania Plans to Export Black Sea Gas to Moldova, Region**

**Madalin Necsutu**

**Balkan Insight | May 5, 2022**

Romania's Energy Minister, Virgil Popescu, on Wednesday said Romania will produce more natural gas than it needs once it starts extracting gas from the Black Sea area – and will then be in a position to export to countries in the region, with Moldova a priority.

"Romania will produce more gas than it consumes [and ]... will export natural gas to Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, but first of all to Moldova," Popescu said.

Moldova currently relies 100 per cent on gas from Russia's Gazprom and is seeking to escape this dependency, especially since Russia invaded its neighbour Ukraine and cut off gas to Poland and Bulgaria. The Iasi-Chisinau pipeline was built in October 2021 to link Moldova to the energetic European system.

The first Romanian extractions from the Black Sea are not expected for some years. Romanian Prime Minister Nicolae Ciuca said the first gas from the Neptune Deep field would arrive "no later than 2026".

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## **Situation In Yerevan Tense After Another Day Of Armenian Anti-Government Protests**

**RFE/ Armenian Service**

**Radio Free Europe | May 4, 2022**

YEREVAN -- Protesters in Armenia's capital scuffled with police on May 4 during another demonstration to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian over his handling of negotiations with Azerbaijan over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The **situation near the parliament building** remained tense on the evening of May 4 after protesters and police jostled and bottles were launched toward security forces in Yerevan, resulting in dozens of arrests.

Authorities warned protesters chanting "Armenia without Nikol" against trying to seize the parliament building, which was cordoned off by hundreds of police in riot gear. Earlier in the day truckers briefly blocked a bridge in central Yerevan, telling authorities their vehicles had broken down.

"The opposition hopes to achieve success by imitating what we have done," Pashinian told lawmakers in a speech to the National Assembly, referring to mass street protests that propelled him to power in 2018. He warned opposition parties against "crossing red lines."

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## **Can Azerbaijan Help Europe Kick Its Russian Gas Habit As Kremlin Threatens To Shut The Taps?**

**Tony Wesolowsky**

**Radio Free Europe | May 5, 2022**

Russia may be using missiles and bombs in its invasion of Ukraine, but it has another weapon, less lethal but nevertheless threatening, pointed at the rest of Europe -- energy.

Amid international outrage over its unprovoked aggression, Moscow finds itself facing a raft of rising sanctions. As it supplies the EU with 40 percent of its natural gas, Russia has fired back. President Vladimir Putin announced that "unfriendly" countries would have to pay for such deliveries in rubles.

The Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom on April 26 announced it had suspended gas deliveries to Poland and Bulgaria and would not restart them until payments were made in the Russian currency, triggering outrage in the EU and accusations of "blackmail."

Warsaw, which imports some 45 percent of its natural gas from Russia, said it could "manage" with the Russian taps shut. But Sofia, which imports about 73 percent of its gas from Russia, indicated it would face problems.

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## **Russia's war may halve Ukraine's economy, increasing budget deficit by billions**

**Natalia Datskevych**

**Kyiv Independent | May 5, 2022**

After Ukraine ended 2021 with a historically high gross domestic product (GDP) of \$195 billion, top officials issued optimistic forecasts for the coming year.

Then the war began, killing all of the country's economic plans.

As of late April, the Russian military has destroyed 30% of Ukraine's infrastructure, causing \$100 billion worth of damage.

Total losses to the economy, both direct and indirect, have already reached over \$560 billion, according to the head of President Volodymyr Zelensky's office, Andriy Yermak.

Russia's full-scale invasion has forced more than five million people to flee Ukraine. Around 60% of small- and medium-sized businesses are currently closed or suspended.

According to World Bank estimates, Ukraine's economy will contract by 45% in 2022.

"This is already terrifying," said Deputy Director at the Center for Economic Strategy Maria Repko. "This means that we no longer have a third of our economy."

According to Ukraine's State Statistics Service, inflation in Ukraine may quadruple to 15-20% by the end of the year.

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