



Advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia,
Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia

NCSJ WEEKLY NEWS BRIEF
Washington, D.C. Friday, January 26, 2007

-----INDEX OF ARTICLES-----

1. *Documenting the Campaign To Rescue Soviet Jews*
BY Gary Shapiro
NY Sun, January 23, 2007
2. *International Day of Commemoration
In Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust*
Statement by President George W. Bush
Press Release, January 26, 2007
3. *Statement on Adoption of the Resolution on Holocaust Denial*
Statement by Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff, Acting U.S. Permanent Representative
USUN Press Release, January 26, 2007
4. *Russia sentences anti-Semitic editor; JAFI employee murdered in Russia; Russia: Iran missile deal
kosher; Article: Jews enacting genocide against Russians*
JTA Brief, January 24-26, 2007
5. *Earlier Russian immigrants to U.S. started activism with fund raising*
By Sue Fishkoff
JTA, January 21, 2007
6. *Young, Russian-born U.S. Jews assert their identity on both coasts*
By Sue Fishkoff
JTA, January 21, 2006
7. *Belarus vows to up military cooperation with Iran*
AP, January 24, 2007
8. *Resolving Russia's Paradox*
By Masha Lipman
Washington Post, January 21, 2007
9. *Tallinn Journal*
Debate Renewed: Did Moscow Free Estonia or Occupy It?
By Steven Lee Myers
New York Times January 25, 2007
10. *Ukraine proposing to introduce criminal prosecution for Holocaust denial*
Interfax, January 24, 2007

11. *Ukraine Pipeline Plan Promises to Diversify EU's Oil Supply*
By Marc Champion
Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2007

12. *Post-Soviet Petrostates Repressive and Unstable*
RFE/RL, January 26, 2007

#1

Documenting the Campaign To Rescue Soviet Jews
BY Gary Shapiro
NY Sun, January 23, 2007

Letters, money, and matzo were smuggled into the former Soviet Union between the 1960s and the 1980s in an effort to support oppressed Jews and help their efforts to leave. About 1.5 million Jews left the Soviet Union during that time, many when Boris Yeltsin was president.

An effort has now been launched to gather the nation's most comprehensive collection of materials documenting the campaign to rescue Soviet Jews.

The American Jewish Historical Society is hosting a reception tomorrow at the Neue Galerie to celebrate the launch of the Archive of the American Soviet Jewry Movement, located at the Center for Jewish History. The AJHS already has more than a quarter of a million documents relating to the movement. More than five times that amount is expected to be added, as well as an oral history component.

The movement brought together a diverse coalition for global human rights. "It worked. They got out," the director of development at the American Jewish Historical Society, Cathy Krugman, said.

A founder of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, Rabbi David Hill, said the movement drew Catholics, Jews, and Protestants and was one of the great moments for human rights. The movement, he said, made it official that discrimination in any part of the world would be part of the right of Americans to object.

The Soviet Jewry Movement crossed party lines. It burst into public awareness through its most notable addition to the English language — "Refusenik" — a word that came from the Russian *otkaznik*, meaning one refused permission to leave.

"There is a danger that the collective grass-roots effort will simply slip into the dustbin of history," the chairman of the American Jewish Historical Society, Kenneth Bialkin, an owner of The New York Sun, said.

The founding director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, Jerry Goodman, said many people continue to call the Soviet Jewry Movement a seminal event in American Jewish history and in American history, and certainly for Jews in the former Soviet Union. It is important, he said, that future generations understand what happened. Enough time has passed that one can have an objective look at the movement, he said.

The archive will contain documents from the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the more decentralized Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, as well as others from a myriad of groups involved. While members of the far-flung movement agreed on the basic goal of getting Jews to freely emigrate from the former Soviet Union, they argued over just about everything else, including methods and means, such as whether one should one break the law and handcuff oneself to the Soviet Embassy, and whether the Jews should go to Israel or America.

Mr. Goodman recalled how Jewish visitors to the Soviet Union were encouraged to carry a Hebrew newspaper such as Ha'aretz or in the summer to wear a T-shirt with the star of David to help identify themselves to Jews in need of help. Mr. Bialkin said the title of Elie Wiesel's book "The Jews of Silence" did not refer to Jews in the Soviet Union but to those who failed to speak out and fight for them.

The height of the movement came on a cold December day in 1987, when a quarter of a million people descended on Washington when President Gorbachev was meeting with President Reagan. The crowd will be smaller tomorrow at the launch, when a 10-minute film clip from "Refusenik," a documentary being made by Laura Bialis, will be shown.

#2

International Day of Commemoration In Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust Statement by President George W. Bush Press Release, January 26, 2007

On the second International Day of Commemoration, we remember and mourn the victims of the Holocaust.

Sixty-two years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must continue to educate ourselves about the lessons of the Holocaust, and honor those whose lives were taken as a result of a racist ideology that embraced a national policy of violent hatred and bigotry. It is also our responsibility to honor the survivors and those courageous souls who refused to be bystanders, and instead risked their lives to try and save the Nazis' intended victims.

Remembering the victims, heroes, and lessons of the Holocaust is particularly important today as Holocaust denial continues, urged on by the Iranian regime, which perversely seeks to call into question the historical fact of the Nazis' campaign of mass murder. We must continue to condemn the resurgence of anti-Semitism, that same virulent intolerance that led to the Holocaust, and we must combat bigotry and hatred in all their forms, in America and abroad.

May God bless the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. And may we never forget.

#3

Statement on Adoption of the Resolution on Holocaust Denial Statement by Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff, Acting U.S. Permanent Representative USUN Press Release, January 26, 2007

The United States strongly supports this Resolution that condemns without reservation any denial of the Holocaust. This Assembly should be proud of adopting today's Resolution by consensus. It is shameful that one country decided to reject that consensus.

Tomorrow will be the 62nd anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, a Nazi death camp where over 1 million people were murdered. To this day, Auschwitz serves as a powerful symbol of what can happen when tyranny and oppression go unchecked. As we mourn those who lost their lives, we must, as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted, "reassert our commitment to human rights" which was "desecrated at Auschwitz and by genocides and atrocities since."

The United States introduced and sponsored this important Resolution, not as a rhetorical exercise, but because of the implications of Holocaust denial in the world today. Some experts on the topic have noted that, "Every genocide is followed by denial." Despite the undeniable truth about the Holocaust, we are now witnessing so-called scholars, even world leaders, attempting to revise history, masking a more dangerous agenda.

This Resolution is not about countering free speech or intellectual thought; it is about avoiding future disasters. One observer put it simply and powerfully when he stated that "The black hole of forgetting is the negative force that results in future genocides."

A little over a month ago, people around the world marked International Human Rights Week and renewed the solemn pledge of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which was drafted in the wake of the atrocities of World War II.

We take note that this esteemed body adopted by consensus in 2005 a Resolution unequivocally rejecting the denial of the Holocaust as an historical event. We call upon all Member States to follow through on that and today's Resolution to include measures in their educational systems that underscore the importance of never denying the Holocaust. As Kofi Annan remarked at the end of his tenure, "some of the rhetoric used in connection with the issue implies a refusal to concede the very legitimacy of Israel's existence, let alone the validity of its security concerns....Today, Israeli's are often confronted with words and action that seem to confirm their fear that the goal of their adversaries is to extinguish their existence as a state, and as a people."

Indeed, the words and actions of some, in direct violation of the UN Charter, underscore why this Resolution is so important. Just last month, the Iranian regime sponsored a conference questioning the historical fact of the atrocities of the Holocaust. Iranian President Ahmadi-Nejad has also called for the state of Israel to be "wiped off the map." That same regime is under UN Security Council sanctions right now to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons, in direct violation of its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The confluence of these three forces cannot be viewed abstractly or in isolation of each other. They create a cauldron of conflict that cannot be ignored.

Some will cloak their hatred and hidden agenda by invoking the right to free speech and academic freedom. There is a categorical difference between free speech and speech which willfully and maliciously ignores recognized historical facts in order to advance an ulterior agenda. Conferences like those sponsored by Iran are designed solely to polarize and incite hatred. If successful, they can then use that hatred as a catalyst to justify genocide. It is also specious to diminish the Holocaust by making false comparisons -- as we heard earlier this morning by some delegations. As Kofi Annan powerfully noted, "What was done to Jews and others by the Nazis remains an undeniable tragedy, unique in human history."

The United States stands firmly opposed to any attempts to deny the Holocaust. This Resolution reinforces that message and we encourage all Member States to take concrete steps to make that message heard. To deny the events of the Holocaust is tantamount to the approval of genocide in all its forms. Today we stand together saying to the world that we will not allow that to happen.

#4a

Russia sentences anti-Semitic editor JTA Brief, January 24, 2006

The editor of a fringe anti-Semitic newspaper in northwestern Russia was sentenced to more than two years in prison for inciting ethnic hatred. Russian news agencies reported that a court in Novgorod ruled last week that Pavel Ivanov, editor of Russkoe Veche, also was guilty of inciting extremist activity through his newspaper.

It was unclear whether Ivanov, 57, who has beaten similar charges several times in the past, will appeal the sentence.

#4b

JAFI employee murdered in Russia JTA Brief, January 25, 2007

An employee of the Jewish Agency for Israel was murdered in Russia. Konstantin Borovko, 25, died of injuries from a severe beating.

He was attacked as he left a nightclub in Vladivostok in Russia's Far East early Saturday, the Jewish Agency said, quoting local police.

Borovko also had a journalism job with a local television station.

Police said the murder was not related to his religion or either of his jobs.

Borovko, a native of Khabarovsk, also in the Russian Far East, immigrated to Israel in 2002.

He returned to Russia after a few years because of family circumstances, JAFI said.

He had various responsibilities at the local JAFI office, first as a youth coordinator and later as an event coordinator.

#4c

Russia: Iran missile deal kosher JTA Brief, January 26, 2007

Russia says its sale of air-defense missiles to Iran was legal. Russian Foreign Ministry officials said Friday that Iran had accepted delivery of 29 Tor-M1 missiles in December, before the U.N. Security Council approved sanctions against Iran on Dec. 23. The missiles, part of a 2005 deal, will be used to protect Iranian military installations, including nuclear plants, Russian news agencies said.

The U.N. sanctions are aimed at forcing Iran to make its nuclear activities transparent and inhibiting the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

#4d

Article: Jews enacting genocide against Russians JTA Brief, January 26, 2007

Jews are attempting to commit genocide against ethnic Russians, a Russian lawmaker claims in a recent article. Nikolai Kolomyitsev, a former State Parliament deputy and member of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee, wrote the article, which was posted on the party's Web site, according to a Jan. 18 report on antisemitizmu.net.

The article accuses Jews of causing unemployment and promulgating drug addiction and alcoholism in an attempt to undermine the naturally "collectivist" nature of Slavic peoples, thus hastening their extinction.

The party, which has a history of anti-Semitic statements, is popular with voters in some Russian provinces, though it lost much of its influence to the Kremlin-backed United Russia Party that took control of Parliament after Putin became president seven years ago.

#5

Earlier Russian immigrants to U.S. started activism with fund raising By Sue Fishkoff JTA, January 21, 2007

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 21 (JTA) — The 79ers and RJeneration represent a young, post-Soviet Jewish population eager to explore its identity and find its place in the American Jewish community. But as early as 1988, at the very tip of the post-Soviet Jewish immigration of the 1990s, efforts were being made to encourage immigrants already in the United States to become activists and help support those about to arrive.

With New York's large Russian-speaking population, UJA-Federation of New York created a Russian division. Former division chairwoman Lilly Wajnberg recalls that in 1988, American-born supporters of what was then the United Jewish Appeal approached her husband, editor of the city's oldest Russian-language newspaper, and asked him to appeal to the more settled Russian-born Jews to help fund the new arrivals.

"We wrote about it, reminding them that this was the organization that helped them when they came," Wajnberg recalls. "People responded."

That first year the Russian appeal raised \$34,000, most of it in donations of \$100, \$10, even \$5.

To celebrate its success, the group held a gala in 1989 at a Russian restaurant in Brighton Beach, the Brooklyn neighborhood known as Little Odessa. Mayor Ed Koch attended. Participants raised \$150,000 that night.

"It was the beginning of the awareness," Wajnberg says. "In the Soviet Union there was no tradition of tzedakah," or charity.

Since then the Russian division of UJA-Federation of New York has raised more than \$18 million. Reaching out to the younger generation has been more difficult. The New York federation created a young leadership section for its Russian division in 1995, "but we're still cultivating them," Wajnberg says.

Two things help draw the younger post-Soviet Jews: gala events and Israel advocacy.

Many of them passed through Israel on their way to the United States, and still have friends and family there. On this year's federation mission to Israel, the Russian young leadership division will have its own bus, with a separate itinerary focusing on projects it has helped fund.

Galas are a draw because so many of these young Jews share with their elders a love of dancing, Russian music and Russian cuisine.

"These are lawyers, they work on Wall Street, they like these black-tie events," Wajnberg says. "This younger generation understands donations. It's good for tax deductions, something my generation didn't understand."

Federations in several other major cities, including Los Angeles and Atlanta, have also made fund-raising appeals specifically to their Russian-speaking Jewish communities, who typically turn out in strong numbers for Israel emergency campaigns.

The Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago used to run events for Russian-speaking Jews but stopped in the late 1990s.

"They've become part of the community," senior development vice-president Jeffrey Cohen says.

Some cities with large immigrant populations are beginning to think more creatively about how to bring these people into the larger Jewish community.

Cultural events are one tool. Since 2004, San Francisco's Jewish Community Federation group hosts literary and political speakers about four times a year for the community.

Political activism is another method. The American Jewish Committee created the Russian Jewish Leadership Program in 1997. This 10-week program teaches Russian-speaking Jews about the structure of the organized American Jewish community and includes a trip to Washington to see Israel advocacy in action.

Program director Sam Kliger says the New York program has more than 200 graduates, with another 50 from similar programs in Boston and Chicago. Some graduates hold leadership positions in the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds, such as recently elected New York State Assembly member Alec Brook-Krasny.

"This is a sizable community that is still separated from the mainstream," Kliger says. "We are trying to close that gap."

#6

Young, Russian-born U.S. Jews assert their identity on both coasts

By Sue Fishkoff

JTA, January 21, 2006

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 21 (JTA) -- When the smoked fish is the first plate to disappear from the buffet table, it's clear this is not your typical American dinner party. The smattering of Russian conversation is another clue, as is the fact that the young men are dressed just a little better than the average post-college American male.

This gathering of some four dozen young people in their 20s and 30s is the monthly Shabbat dinner of the 79ers, a 3-year-old San Francisco-based organization that brings together Jews born in the former Soviet Union for cultural, social, educational and religious activities.

They go to Russian movies together, hear speakers, celebrate the Jewish holidays, even take part in the Purim Follies put on each spring by the local federation's Young Adult Division.

A similar group called RJeneration, founded a year ago in New York, draws the same demographic on the East Coast. Other groups may soon form in Washington, Boston, Philadelphia and Seattle.

Although several Jewish federations have "Russian divisions" created mainly to raise funds within the immigrant community, and other long-established American Jewish organizations have created Russian-speaking cultural groups, the 79ers and RJeneration represent initiatives organized by this population to serve its own needs.

Highly educated and ambitious, speaking Russian at home and English with their friends, this is a new generation of post-Soviet Jewish immigrants that is finally asserting itself, its members asking who they are, what their Judaism means to them and how they fit into the American Jewish landscape.

"We're different from American Jews, but we're not Russians," says Angela Previn, 35, program director for the 79ers. "It's a very specific culture."

"We live in a double world, American on the outside but Russian deep inside," adds Igor Sinyak, a 36-year-old software engineer who emigrated from Kiev when he was 9.

Some call themselves "RuJews," or Russian Jews -- a play on JewBus, or Buddhist Jews, another Bay Area-bred mixed-culture phenomenon.

"For many of us, this is the first time we're getting together with people who had the same life experience," says Previn, who arrived from Kharkov, Ukraine, at the age of 5. "As a child, to see your parents go from being doctors to cleaning houses, from having it together to having nothing, is an experience few people share. Everybody in this room knows what everyone else has gone through. It's about being completely understood."

That understanding can go deep, to personal knowledge of Soviet oppression, a love of classical Russian literature and a conflicted relationship to Judaism.

Or it can be much simpler but equally telling.

"Most of us have stashes of plastic bags in the kitchen," Sinyak says. "Maybe because our parents did that back in the Soviet Union. And we reuse tea bags. These are things you can't explain to your American friends."

The 79ers, besides being a pun on the Gold Rush of 1849 and the eponymous San Francisco football team, refers to 1979, the height of that decade's Soviet Jewish emigration and the year most of the group's founders arrived. Immigrating as children and growing up in this country, they are now more comfortable in English than Russian, but spent years keeping their Judaism and their Russian heritage under wraps as they and their families tried to fit in.

"I avoided everything Russian when I came," Sinyak says. "It was not a cool thing to be. It was the middle of the Cold War, we got a lot of teasing about being communists. Early on I learned to disassociate myself as much as possible."

Now confident in their American shoes, these young adults are investigating their Russian and Jewish roots.

Like most of their peers, Karina Ioffe's parents grew up secular in the Soviet Union and felt no more comfortable in synagogue after their arrival in America. They didn't know the rituals, they spoke little English and no Hebrew. So Ioffe, who was 10 when the family left Riga, Latvia, in 1990, started going on her own.

Coming to the 79ers has given her a safe place to learn about Judaism.

"I still feel like a fool at temple," she admits. "But now I read Jewish books, I read Torah, I light candles. I want a Jewish life, a Jewish spouse, to raise my children in a Jewish way, and this group brings me in proximity to that."

Not everyone wants Jewish observance shoved at them, Previn points out.

"Spirituality is a touchy subject," she says, especially with this group. "We try to create a comfortable place for people who wouldn't go to temple to all do Jewish stuff together."

Sinyak founded the 79ers in late 2003 with Lenny Gusel, who moved to New York a year ago and created RJeneration with Yael Kalcheim, a former American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee staffer. Jewish organizations that help fund these groups see it as the logical extension of the Soviet Jewry movement.

"We were responsible for welcoming and assisting more than 40,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union since 1979," says Anita Friedman, executive director of San Francisco's Jewish Family Children's Services, which provides funding to the 79ers.

RJeneration receives support from the 92nd Street Y and private donors, as well as fees for services.

"These people were children when they came," Friedman says. "We watched them grow up and start to think, we've learned English, we have good jobs, now what else? We think it's important to create opportunities for them to get involved in the Jewish community."

As the 79ers and RJeneration mature, they are moving beyond social networking -- although that will always be an important role -- to encouraging young Russian-American Jews to flex their political and financial muscle.

At January's Shabbat dinner, an AIPAC representative spoke about lobbying for Israel on Capitol Hill and how this group -- almost all of whom have friends or family in Israel -- could influence American aid for the Jewish state.

It was the 79ers' first conscious foray into the world of political activism, and a precursor of more, Gusel promises.

"I see us as a bridge into the established Jewish community," he says. "I want us to be 'used' as much as possible."

Now that both groups are growing, with hundreds of people on their mailing lists, the original group of '79 arrivals has been eclipsed by the much larger group that arrived in the 1990s. There are differences -- the recent arrivals speak more Russian, don't remember the Soviet Union and were less ideologically motivated in their decision to emigrate.

For some '79 veterans, that's problematic. They look askance at plans for the 79ers to take on the RJeneration name later this year, saying the new arrivals don't share their particular immigration experience. But Gusel says the common thread is coming from the former Soviet Union and spending formative years in this country.

"My interest is for as many people in their 20s and 30s from the former Soviet Union to plug in and develop a community where we can look at who we are," he says. "We are the first young adult, post-Soviet population that is free to ask who we are, what is our Judaism to us, what do we want to do in the world?"

#7

Belarus vows to up military cooperation with Iran
AP, January 24, 2007

Belarus pledged to increase military ties and cooperation with Iran on Wednesday, in a rebuff to United Nations sanctions passed last month.

The Belarusian Defense Ministry said Defense Minister Leonid Maltsev, on a visit to Teheran, had met with his Iranian counterpart, Mostafa Mohammad Najjar, as well as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The two defense ministers on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding that paves the way for visits by expert delegations, military and technical cooperation, staff training and other consultations, the ministry said in a statement.

"The development of bilateral contacts with Iran in the military sphere is being realized by the Belarusian side on the basis of its national interests and in strict accordance with the current norms of international law," the ministry said.

The agreement is likely to renew fears about potential weapons sales to Iran, and fears that Belarus could serve as a conduit for Russian weapons.

#8

Resolving Russia's Paradox
By Masha Lipman
Washington Post, January 21, 2007

Moscow, Russia - Since the beginning of Russian economic reforms 15 years ago, liberal scholars and experts inside and outside Russia have talked about a democratic polity, rule of law, liberal political freedoms and civic liberties as necessary prerequisites for stable economic development.

But after fifteen years the country can't boast about achieving any of these things. All political institutions except the presidency have been emasculated. All political power has been concentrated in the Kremlin. Decision-making is hidden from the public eye. Public political competition is non-existent and the mass media tightly controlled so Kremlin policy-makers do not have to worry about accountability. The judicial branch is effectively controlled by the executive, so in sensitive cases any court decision may be bent in order to further the interests of the ruling elite. The state has steadily increased control over the public space - autonomous public activism is unwelcome. Activist groups and figures are either co-opted, or, if they don't submit to the Kremlin's control, they are marginalized, neutralized and discredited. The most recalcitrant are intimidated and harassed.

Meanwhile, the GDP has steadily grown, amounting to about one trillion U.S. dollars in 2006, and the macroeconomic indices are quite impressive. Russia has radically reduced its foreign debt. The stabilization fund where excessive revenues (the fund is financed by export duties and the royalty on oil) from high oil prices have been accumulated since 2004 is close to 100 billion U.S. dollars. Moreover, it may be argued that never in Russia's history has the proportion of those who enjoy reasonably decent living standards been as high as it is today. Though the disparity of income is huge and growing, the number of those below the poverty line has decreased from about one-third to about one-quarter of the population. Substantial increase in people's salaries and pensions has resulted in a consumer boom which is registered in national statistics, and may also be observed in any of the country's shopping malls whose number is also growing. People not only buy more, they also feel better. At the end of 2006 the country's leading independent polling agency reported a noticeable improvement of general sentiments and expectations.

So has Russia defied the liberal logic? Of course what lies beneath Russia's economic success is the high prices of oil and gas, rather than improved economic policies. As a major exporter of both commodities, Russia has benefited tremendously. The question is what use Russia has made of this amazing stroke of luck.

It is increasingly evident that the opportunity created by the high energy prices has been largely squandered. Rather than taking advantage of this blessed spell in order to intensify the urgently needed reforms (the monumental distortions of the 70-year old Communist economy call for long-term and persistent reform effort), the Russian government has suspended or frozen nearly all structural change. In contrast to its macroeconomic records, in labor efficiency, transparency, and competitiveness, Russia's ratings are disgracefully low.

Diversification of the economy remains a distant dream. About 60 percent of the Russian budget's income is generated by oil and gas revenues, making Russia vulnerable to the fluctuation of the world prices on energy, metals, and a few other commodities.

The best assets are increasingly concentrated in the companies that either state-owned or controlled by the state. As a result, power and property are closely entangled. Economic and business decisions are politicized, and political decisions driven by narrow economic interests. The empowered state bureaucracy is driven by self-seeking interests and an anxiety about losing the perks of power, rather than by modernization and national development.

As in any area, in governance the lack of competition leads to a deterioration of quality. Indeed, the quality of governance is quite low. Decisions are frequently ad-hoc and not adequately prepared. But in the absence of public accountability nobody is held responsible and poor performance is not improved.

As a result, Russia faces everything from inefficient law-enforcement to inefficient health care (in Russia average life expectancy for men is barely 60, which is the official retirement age). The income-generating industries are not in good shape either.

As the government has radically expanded its role in the most lucrative areas of the economy, the growth of oil production has slowed down and the production of gas is barely growing at all. The government has strongly limited the participation of foreign companies in Russia's strategic industries, but in order to explore new deposits Russia needs large investment and technology that it does not seem to have. There is serious reason to doubt whether Russian can go it alone.

Increasingly, Russia's economic success looks temporary rather than sustainable. The paradox of the country's bad politics and good economy is thus resolved by the time factor. In the longer run, bad politics leads to economic deterioration.

The economists warn that Russia has exhausted the potential of the oil growth and point out the need to limit the involvement of the state in the economy, to counteract the anti-liberal trend of centralization and creeping nationalization and to push for modernization.

Switching to non-economic language, Russia needs to unleash public energies and initiatives rather than expand state control, and to encourage active public participation rather than passive compliance. This is impossible without a political improvement, and this is the only way to improve economic policies.

#9

Tallinn Journal

Debate Renewed: Did Moscow Free Estonia or Occupy It?

By Steven Lee Myers

New York Times January 25, 2007

TALLINN, Estonia, Jan. 23 The Bronze Soldier stands in a small park near Tallinn's lovely Old Town, staring mournfully at the snow-covered earth, helmet in hand. An inscription in Russian and Estonian says simply, "To the fallen of the Second World War." It is far less conspicuous, as war monuments go, than the furor its fate has caused.

Estonia's Parliament, led by Prime Minister Andrus Ansip, laid the legal foundation this month to dismantle the Bronze Soldier and relocate it to a military cemetery or a memorial park on the nearby Gulf of Finland. The monument, supporters said, has become a source of tension, not remembrance, which has proved to be the case.

The move, though not yet final, has provoked indignation and even threats of sanctions in Russia, this country's ever-looming neighbor, which claims historic dominion, if not political sovereignty, over the fate of the Bronze Soldier.

Russia's foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, denounced Estonia's decision as a blasphemy against the soldiers who defeated Nazi Germany. The lower house of the Russian Parliament went further, accusing the Estonian government of "representing Nazism in a heroic light," while the chairman of the upper house, Sergei M. Mironov, said Tuesday that Estonia had taken "the first step towards legalizing fascism and neo-Nazism in the 21st century."

To the Estonians, the Russian reaction reflects the glorification of another totalitarian state, the Soviet Union, which occupied independent Estonia, as well as Lithuania and Latvia, on the eve of World War II and again in 1944 after having driven out the Nazi armies.

"The propaganda that the official Russian media uses reminds me of Germany in the 1930s," Justice Minister Rein Lang, a member of the Reform Party, which has pushed for the monument's removal, said in an interview in his office not far from the monument.

Ostensibly the motive behind the legislation is to protect the sanctity of the Bronze Soldier, and possibly the remains of 13 soldiers buried beneath it. But even supporters acknowledge that the issue has become part of Estonia's unfinished effort not only to sever the legacy of its Soviet past but to break free of Russia's influence today.

Mr. Lang said the monument was built in 1947 "to symbolize the superiority of Russia and Russian rule" and therefore had no place in independent Estonia, now a committed member of the European Union and NATO.

But Estonia remains a divided country, despite a free and thriving economy. Of its 1.4 million people, about 25 percent are ethnic Russians, who according to Andrei A. Zarenkov, an ethnic Russian and chairman of the Constitution Party, live as "untouchables" in a political caste system.

He said Estonia's government was fighting to remove the monument because "Estonia never had its own heroes."

Only weeks before elections scheduled for March 4, Parliament passed a bill bringing Estonian law into line with the Geneva Conventions. The measure, signed into law by President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, requires honoring war dead. Both sides see the law as a necessary first step to moving the monument, and it has become a central campaign issue.

In an interview in his office, part of a palace complex built for another conqueror of Estonia, Peter the Great, Mr. Ilves emphasized that no final decision had been made about the monument. [On Wednesday, Parliament postponed debate on another bill, which would ban monuments to occupying forces, including the Nazis or the Soviet Union.]

But the president said the planned move had become a rallying point for protests by ethnic Russians aimed at undermining the country's political course with "considerable support, assistance and encouragement" from the Russian Embassy here.

The protests boiled over last May 9 the day the Soviet Union commemorated the victory over Nazi Germany, and Russia still does when Russians waving Soviet flags clashed with Estonian nationalists.

Until then the Bronze Soldier was a largely uncontroversial place of mourning, saved from the dismantling of all other Soviet monuments in 1991. The main monument to Lenin came down four days after the start of the failed coup against the last Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

The clash gave impetus to the wishes of those who viewed the Bronze Soldier not as a war memorial but as a symbol of Soviet occupation. "We don't want to be weighed down by the past," Mr. Ilves said. "We want to think about where we are going, what we are doing, but all of that sort of comes back when you have, basically, a very provocative demonstration glorifying the Soviet Union and Soviet power."

He added, "When you see red flags and hammers and sickles, people get upset."

Russia has said disinterring the remains believed to rest beneath the monument would violate the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of war dead. Mr. Lang said the evidence was not clear. Anyone buried there, he said, would have died elsewhere and could be lawfully removed to another place. He added that a trolley bus stop made the site inappropriate. No one is talking about removing it, though.

Kadri Liik, director of the International Center for Defense Studies here, said Russia's reaction fit a pattern of quarreling with its neighbors over history, which she said was personally important to President Vladimir V. Putin as he sought to rebuild a national identity based on a Soviet foundation that, at least in the case of World War II, was unassailable.

"They feel so offended by anyone who challenges their view of history," she said, referring to Russians' refusal to recognize Soviet rule in Estonia as an occupation. "They should be discussing the other side of the coin."

For others, though, the Bronze Soldier represents something less political.

Yelena B. Borisova came to the monument the other day bearing carnations, which she put in the sculpture's hand and at its feet. She propped a candle in the snow at the monument's base and lighted it, crossing herself in the fashion of Russian Orthodoxy. She said she had lost her father and two brothers in the war.

"Sixty years have gone by," she said. "Why do they need to change it?" She pointed to the trees in the park that had grown around the monument and added: "You cannot fight these soldiers. They already died."

#10

Ukraine proposing to introduce criminal prosecution for Holocaust denial Interfax, January 24, 2007

Moscow, January 24, Interfax - Head of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress Vadim Rabinovich has proposed to introduce criminal prosecution for the denial of the Holocaust.

In a letter to the Verkhovna Rada Speaker, deputies and the Prime Minister, the text of which was obtained by Interfax on Wednesday, he said, in particular, that "this is crucial today, when attempts are being made to re-write the history of the Second World War, during which hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian Jews were massacred."

Rabinovich said the introduction of criminal prosecution for the denial of the mass destruction of Jews "will serve as a warning against any attempts at reviving fascism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, interethnic and inter-religious hatred and will demonstrate once again Ukraine's steady, uncompromising stance in its refusal to accept and condemnation of such phenomena, as well as its adherence to the principles of tolerance, democracy and human moral values."

#11

Ukraine Pipeline Plan Promises to Diversify EU's Oil Supply By Marc Champion Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2007

DAVOS, Switzerland -- In a move that would help to diversify Europe's energy supplies, Ukraine's prime minister said he is working to complete a pipeline to carry Caspian-region oil directly to the European Union.

Completion of the pipeline would bring an additional 12 million metric tons of oil a year to the EU from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia, Ukrainian Premier Viktor Yanukovych said in an interview at the World Economic Forum. That would help to diversify supplies at a time of mounting concern over EU dependence on Russian energy. The EU consumed 700 million tons of oil in 2005, according to the BP Statistical Review of World Energy.

EU concerns again came to the fore this month when Russia, without warning, shut down a pipeline that crosses Belarus during a dispute over duties. The move cut off refineries in Germany, Poland and other Central European countries, causing fury in the EU.

The pipeline proposal would appear to be at odds with the perception of Mr. Yanukovych as a Russian puppet. "I consider myself pro-Ukrainian," not pro-Russian, he said.

Currently, the pipeline from Odessa stops in western Ukraine, near the Polish border. There it connects to the main Russian export lines from Siberia. Since 2004, it has carried only Russian oil south to Odessa. From there it is shipped through Turkey's overcrowded Bosphorus.

Mr. Yanukovych said Russia is on board with the plan to complete the pipeline -- which would enable oil to flow in the other direction.

"We believe Russia will decide quite soon how big their interest will be, in terms of the amount of oil they put in the pipeline," said Mr. Yanukovych, adding that Russian oil could be shipped from Novorossisk on the Black Sea and fed into the pipeline.

Two years ago, Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko came to the annual World Economic Forum meeting in Davos as a political star. Just weeks earlier he had beaten Mr. Yanukovich in a rerun of a presidential poll forced by weeks of massive street protests known as the country's Orange Revolution. His face had been disfigured by poisoning during the campaign.

At the time, Mr. Yanukovich appeared to be hurt badly politically, along with Russian influence in Ukraine: Russian President Vladimir Putin had publicly backed Mr. Yanukovich for the job. Mr. Yanukovich allowed Russia to start sending oil south through the pipeline to Odessa before the election, a move widely cited at the time as evidence of his dependence on Moscow.

The pro-Western coalition that elected Mr. Yushchenko soon fell apart. Economic growth and investment collapsed over fears the new government might seize back thousands of companies privatized in allegedly rigged privatizations. Last spring, Mr. Yanukovich's Party of the Regions won parliamentary elections. In August, he was appointed prime minister.

This time it is Mr. Yanukovich who has come to Davos. Ukraine's economy has bounced back: Capital investment rose 16% in the second half of last year, compared with the same period in 2005.

According to Mr. Yanukovich, the reality of the Odessa pipeline story wasn't one of allegiance to Russia over the West. It was about the simple availability of oil. He noted that the pipeline had stood empty for years, bringing no revenue, because the links to Poland and Slovakia hadn't been built.

"The fact is that there wasn't enough oil coming out of the Caspian basin to fill the Odessa pipeline then," he said. Next year, he added, there will for the first time be enough surplus oil flowing out of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to make completion of the pipeline commercially viable. How long it takes to build the Western links and start pumping oil to the EU depends on Slovakia and Poland, he said, declining to put a date on completion.

Mr. Yanukovich said he is building a consortium with Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia to operate the pipeline. Poland in the past has said it would like to see the pipeline finished and working.

The Belarus cutoff may have helped to persuade Russia that the project is a good idea, as it would provide them with an additional route for oil that circumvents Belarus. "Russia has an interest in securing more ways to move its oil in this direction too," Mr. Yanukovich said.

The pipeline is one of few issues on which Messrs. Yushchenko and Yanukovich agree. They are locked in a bitter power struggle that Mr. Yanukovich is winning. The two men are divided over whether Ukraine should join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, for example. One of Mr. Yanukovich's first acts in office was to put those efforts, which Russia strongly opposes, on hold.

The change of Ukraine's direction under Mr. Yanukovich enabled him to negotiate a relatively small increase in the price it pays Russia for gas this year, keeping the price substantially lower than that charged other former Soviet countries. He denies allegations he traded anything for that, saying the benefit to Russia was a stabilized relationship with a neighbor of 50 million people.

#12

Post-Soviet Petrostates Repressive and Unstable RFE/RL, January 26, 2007

(Washington, DC--January 26, 2007) The petrostates that have arisen on the territory of the former Soviet Union are becoming increasingly repressive and unstable, according to two experts on the region. Christopher Walker, Director of Studies at Freedom House, and Daniel Kimmage, Regional Analyst for RFE/RL described for an RFE/RL audience how increased wealth from oil and gas extraction had increased repression and political instability in Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.

Walker said the problems faced by these countries with resource-led economies resemble to the problems of earlier petrostates such as Saudi Arabia and the energy rich states of Africa. In these countries, Walker said, the "resource curse" has fueled the growth of unresponsive state bureaucracies, a small group of elites controls the wealth, and little economic reform has been carried out because the political opposition can be co-opted using the resource as "fiscal pacification." Walker questioned whether Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan can "escape" this pattern, where "energy-led development" retards economic growth, economic diversification, and fails to lower poverty levels because the financial windfall from oil and gas exports arrives before the countries have developed democratic institutions of governance. Lacking "democratic accountability," Walker said "repression is taking root" in these states, adding that "the democratic states [of Europe] need a coordinated approach" in dealing with Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to counter-act such tendencies.

Kimmage addressed the implications for regime stability in these petrostates, pointing out that "baggage from the Soviet experience" also affects their development. Because of the "perverse incentive structure [of petrostates]," Kimmage said, history shows that "both boom and bust cycles" for energy exports "can be destabilizing to petrostates." Although earlier studies have identified the existence of a "durable authoritarianism" in a number of petrostates, Kimmage said one should "look at the prior politics" of a country -- before its oil wealth boom -- as a more accurate way of predicting the stability of a regime.

Kimmage noted that the "crackdown" on alternative voices started in Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan before their oil boom began, and has only strengthened with their increased wealth. At the same time, Kimmage said, "crises are looming that could de-stabilize" these regimes -- for example, the current succession crisis in Turkmenistan; questions surrounding the 2008 Russian presidential election; and lingering conflicts among the Kazakh elite, which surfaced unexpectedly last summer after the apparent political murder of Altynbek Sarsenbayev, a former Minister of Information.