



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
AMERICAN JEWISH  
HISTORY  
A Smithsonian Institution Affiliate

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 27, 2016**

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**THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES AWARDS A \$150,000  
GRANT TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY**

**The grant will support the development of *Let My People Go:  
The Movement to Free Soviet Jews*, a pop-up traveling exhibition**

The **Institute of Museum and Library Services** (IMLS) has awarded a \$150,000 grant to the **National Museum of American Jewish History** (NMAJH) to support the development of a pop-up exhibition, ***Let My People Go: The Movement to Free Soviet Jews***. The exhibition will explore the late twentieth century human and civil rights movement led by American activists to free Soviet Jewry. It will be created specifically to travel, giving smaller museums, colleges, synagogues, Jewish Community Centers, libraries, and historical societies the opportunity to revisit this important movement that touches on universal themes of civil rights, religious liberty, and political activism. The exhibition will be ready for travel starting July 2017.

“We are honored to have IMLS’s support to create a content-rich learning experience about an important civil rights campaign in American Jewish history,” said **Ivy Barsky**, NMAJH’s CEO and Gwen Goodman Director. “A pop-up, traveling exhibition will allow

other cultural and educational institutions across the country to join us in highlighting this important movement—one that has compelling connections to modern-day advocacy efforts.”

*Let My People Go: The Movement to Free Soviet Jews* will focus on Americans’ efforts to free *refuseniks*—Jews who lived in the Soviet Union and were denied the rights to live freely, practice Judaism, or leave the country due to their religion. The dramatic, risky, and emotionally-fraught campaign took place from the 1960s through 1990 and consisted of public demonstrations, a massive rally in Washington D.C., Americans traveling to the Soviet Union, and intensive political lobbying. The exhibition will celebrate the struggles and successes of this movement, as well as the experiences of the *refuseniks* who immigrated to America and have contributed in countless ways to American society and culture. Their stories of courage will offer meaningful opportunities for conversations and activism surrounding immigration, the reception of refugees, and the continuing limits on political and religious freedom placed on minorities around the world.

The \$150,000 grant was awarded to NMAJH as part of IMLS’s **Museums for America** program, which backs projects that strengthen the ability of an individual museum to serve its public. IMLS’s mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement through research, policy development, and grant making. The grant will aid NMAJH’s development of the various components of the exhibition, *Let My People Go: The Movement to Free Soviet Jews*—including custom curricula, a programming handbook, and marketing materials—to help increase public understanding of the movement and further stimulate study and programming around this subject nationally. The exhibition itself will consist of panels that use text, imagery, and media to share compelling personal narratives—making the exhibition easy to install and suitable for travel.

Previously, NMAJH has successfully created and toured two other pop-up exhibitions since the Museum’s grand re-opening in 2010. The traveling exhibitions, *Bat Mitzvah*

*Comes of Age* and *Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American*, have been installed in more than a dozen museums, Jewish Community Centers, and synagogues across the country.

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About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. For the run of *Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution*, September 16, 2016 – January 16, 2017, the Museum will stay open until 8 pm on Wednesday evenings. (Please note the Museum will be closed on select Wednesday evenings for High Holidays and private events, including October 27.) Connect with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Pinterest](#). For more information, visit [nmajh.org](http://nmajh.org) or call 215.923.3811.



About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit [www.ims.gov](http://www.ims.gov) and follow IMLS on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).