



The Soviet Jewry Heritage Center

<<<<Provisional Outline >>>>





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18.03.2014

Soviet Jewry Heritage Center

לשכת יו"ר ההנהלה
Office of the Chairman
of the Executive

I welcome the initiative to establish a center for Soviet Jewish heritage in Israel. The complex and dramatic story of Soviet Jewry represents a significant aspect of the history of the Jewish people, and is a global symbol of the struggle for human dignity and liberty.

It is therefore of enormous importance that there should be a heritage center presenting to the general public the rich history and many achievements of this group, a center that will also serve as a living symbol of the importance of maintaining Jewish identity for the generations to come.

For decades, the Jews of the Soviet Union suffered under the heavy burden of institutionalized anti-Semitism, manifested in the form of cruel discrimination against them. There was no way of hiding from this discrimination: it was applied both to those who wanted to maintain their national identity, and to those who chose the path of assimilation. Nonetheless, Soviet Jews survived and continued to be a part of the Jewish people. They were encouraged by their connection with the state of Israel, which grew even stronger after the Six Day War. Along with many others of my age, I felt proud after that enormous victory of so few against so many. We felt that we belonged to an ancient people with an amazing history, to a people that had returned to its true homeland. We understood that this homeland is ours, and that the state of Israel is ours, and that we should be proud of our splendid past and of our country.

I see the establishment of a center for Soviet Jewish heritage in Israel itself as being of great significance. The aliya of the 1990's was the largest in the country's history. The visitor's center will demonstrate the great importance of the Jews of the former Soviet Union for Israel's development in all spheres, and will serve as an inspiration to everyone who comes to the center.

I support Mr. David Schechter, my old friend, to lead this important venture, and I congratulate the professional teams and volunteers contributing to the project, and wish them success.

May we be privileged to inaugurate this center very soon.



Natan Sharansky
Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive



יושב ראש הכנסת
Speaker of the Knesset

בס"ד

Jerusalem, 28 July, 2014
1 Av, 5774

Soviet Jewry Heritage Center

I was delighted to hear of the initiative to establish a Soviet Jewry heritage center, and I would like to congratulate my friend David Schechter on his action as initiator of the project.

The fascinating story of the Jews of the Soviet Union has many implications for our lives in the state of Israel today.

This story allows us to learn the lessons of history, discover the origins and roots of a large part of the Jewish people, and understand the significance of the state of Israel in the struggle to maintain human dignity and freedom, from a historic perspective that directs a discerning look at the future.

This is the duty of every Jew and Israeli, and every man or woman.

As an active participant in the struggle of Russian Jewry to maintain its identity and its right to self-definition, I regret that there is not a single place in the state of Israel today that appropriately tells this part of the history of our people. I consider the establishment of a place that will be a center of attraction for those coming from the Soviet Union and their descendants, and will tell their story to the Jewish people, to be an essential part of the process of shaping our identity as a nation returning to Zion.

The large wave of immigration of the 1990s changed the face of our country, bringing with it not only a historical story, but also considerable activity in the present time, making an enormous contribution to the country and its social fabric. The journey of discovery of the cultural sources of Soviet Jewry is, to a large degree, the journey of discovery of the people of Israel today.

It is my great hope that we will be able to set out on this journey in the near future.

I would like to wish all those involved in the project every success.

Sincerely,

M.K. Yuli Yoel Edelstein
Speaker of the Knesset

Letter from MK Yuli Edelstein



Minister of Environmental Protection

May 25, 2017

The Soviet Jewry Heritage Center

I would like to congratulate Ma'alot on the initiative to establish the Center for the Heritage of Soviet Jewry in Israel.

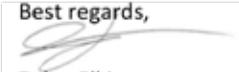
Beyond being fascinating in its own right, the story of Soviet Jewry bears an important universal lesson - there is no freedom without identity. The history of the struggle, which took place behind the Iron Curtain, for the sake of individual freedom and self-determination, remain highly relevant in our time. The dilemmas faced by the Jews during the Revolution, the Gulag, the Second World War, and in the Zionist underground - are more applicable than ever, at a time when Jewish identity is so fiercely disputed.

The contribution of the immigrants from the Soviet Union in shaping the State of Israel is incalculable. Every day we bear witness to the tremendous consequences of the wonderful momentum brought to our country by their *Aliyah* at the end of the twentieth century. It is my belief that the preservation of history, heritage and lessons derived from the story of one of the largest communities in Israel is a task of national importance for all citizens of Israel, and not only for immigrants from the USSR and their descendants. I believe that Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, is the right place to house this center, which is designed to function as a bridge between all parts of the population.

It is our duty to pass on their history to future generations of Israelis and to ensure that the lessons learned from that tremendous experience of the Jewish people will never be forgotten.

I congratulate the people behind the project and look forward to its realization as soon as possible.

Best regards,


Ze'ev Elkin

Minister of Environmental Protection; Jerusalem and Heritage

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“Behold days are coming, says the Lord, and it shall no longer be said, ‘As the Lord lives, who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ But, ‘As the Lord lives, who brought up the children of Israel from the northland and from all the lands where He had driven them’ and I will restore them to their land”.

Jeremiah 16:14-15

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1

Background: Soviet Jewry



They surround us, everywhere we go. On the stage at the theater, behind the hospital reception desk, wearing the Israeli colors with pride at the Olympics, in the IDF in the middle of a night ambush, and in the corridors of the Knesset. According to the Israeli national Central Bureau of Statistics, every fifth Israeli is of Soviet Union extraction. They comprise a quarter of all lecturers and scientists in academic institutions, and became a synonym for responsibility, precision, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. For years they have been central to Israeli society – but we haven't yet heard their full story. These people, their parents and grandparents, share a remarkable history and heritage which affects each and every one of us.

The story of Soviet Jewry has profoundly impacted the rebirth of the Jewish state and affected the definitions of freedom, self-determination and identity for the entire world. Consequently, their story deserves to be documented and kept alive for future generations. This will be the purpose of the museum at the heart of the complex: The Soviet Jewry Heritage Center.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Russia was the scene of major developments within the Zionist enterprise, notably the formation of the Hovevei Zion movement and the recruitment of pioneers willing to work the desolate soil of the Holy Land. Russian Jewry formed the bedrock from which prominent Zionist leaders arose, and their cultural contribution to the construction of the renewed Jewish home in Eretz Yisrael was immense by any measure.

Following the Soviet revolution, the Soviet Union became a laboratory in which a vast social experiment was conducted on entire peoples, an experiment which was frequently extremely cruel. The Soviet regime attempted to crush and remove all trace of national identity, and assimilate it with "the new Soviet man". Many Jews joined in and became leading figures in the Soviet cultural, political, science and arts scenes. Despite this, many succeeded in retaining



their identities. They managed to do so in a number of ways, but all shared one thing in common; even in the direst of straits, a Jewish spark continued to burn fiercely in their hearts. This glowing ember ignited the stubborn struggle of the few against the many in the 1970s and 1980s – the dissident movement and the Zionist underground. The unapologetic stance of the Prisoners of Zion, the freedom fighters and the Aliyah activists who fought for immigration to Israel contributed not only to shaping the character of the State of Israel and Zionism; they defined terms such as identity, equality and freedom afresh for the Jewish people and the entire world.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain, over a million Jews immigrated to Israel from the USSR. The wave of immigration generated fresh energy and potential, and changed Israel's social fabric beyond recognition. The fresh immigrants brought with them values, an extensive heritage of activism and, not least, masses of people. These people deeply influenced the Israeli experience in a vast array of fields. From arts, sports and culture to science, economics and politics, almost no area of Israeli life has been left unaffected by the great Russian immigration.



2

Cultural and Historical Center

The Russian Jewry Cultural and Heritage Center is the missing jigsaw piece on the map of museums and visitor centers in Israel. Throughout the country, there are numerous centers dedicated to preserving the heritages of various communities from all around the world. Now, for the first time, a center dedicated to the story of the largest community will be built, a community whose culture and history profoundly affected the nascent State of Israel in a way totally unparalleled throughout its history.

Located in an impressive building in the heart of modern Jerusalem, the Heritage Center will serve as a historical and community center for anyone seeking to learn about the fascinating story of Russian Jewry. Led and established by leaders of the Israeli-Russian community, the Soviet Jewry Heritage Center will appeal not only to Russian immigrants and their descendants, but to people from all walks of life. The multi-disciplinary center equipped with state-



of-the-art facilities will allow visitors learn about the unique history of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union and its contribution to Israel and the entire world and examine in depth the clash between national-particularistic values and general-universalistic ideals. The experience will help Soviet Union emigrants and their descendants to discover their roots, as well as enable other ethnic groups to grapple with the thorny dilemmas faced by Soviet Jewry. Moreover, it will enable visitors to learn about an important chapter in the struggle for basic human respect, freedom and identity.

In addition to being an active museum and a research center dedicated to the history of Soviet Jewry, in time the site will become the cultural nerve center of Israel's largest ethnic community and function as a bustling hub for shows, exhibitions, seminars, lectures and other events. In so doing, the center will fulfill another purpose, to act as a bridge between different generations, between various ethnicities, and between the Jewish people's past and its future.



3

Soviet Jewry as a universal symbol

The Russian Jewish community is a living testament to 70 years of cruel oppression and stubborn attempts to eradicate Jewish identity. This struggle between systems and diametrically opposed perspectives over the concept of the self reflects in many ways the story of the Jewish people in exile. The delicate balance between integration within society and retaining one's own individuality; the contrast between our innate striving for 'Tikkun Olam' (making the world a better place) and the utopian communist vision; the attempts to reach the right balance between cultures – all these make the story of Russian Jewry fertile ground for discussing contemporary dilemmas and questions.

The same clash is erupting once again as questions of identity arise from tensions between multiculturalism and nationalism. They threaten to intensify one of the most prominent rifts in Israeli society. Consequently, the debate is of great importance for national education. With the help of advanced museum technology and a fully integrated, ground-breaking visitor experience, the Soviet Jewry Center will be especially attractive for younger generations, including high school pupils, soldiers and university students. Nevertheless, the dilemmas raised will be relevant to people of all ages who are interested in better understanding the central social issues of our time.





Thanks to its universal story and cutting edge technology, the museum will be attractive and accessible to all kinds of people. It is aimed at people from Israel and overseas, for pupils and educators, students, soldiers, researchers and historians, tourists, Birthright and Masa groups, families and individuals. The center will encourage dialogue between different parts of Israeli society and serve as a meeting place between generations, perspectives and cultures. Word will spread of the exciting and enriching educational visitor experience, and in time the museum will find its proper place on Israel's cultural map.

4

Intended Audiences



***“No Iron Curtain,
no prison, no dungeon;
none of these are able
to stop man’s quest for
freedom.”***

Natan Sharansky



COMPONENTS

Museum and Heritage Center

5

The Soviet Jewry Heritage Center will take pride of place at the complex's center. Visitors will be treated to a moving educational experience, which will be amplified through a range of cutting edge technologies – personal and group interactive displays, kinetic décor, 360 degree projection exhibits and lighting, immersive time-warp experience, and a mix of physical and virtual exhibits.

The museum's narrative as a whole will be chronological, but each area will have license to jump around in time, dependent on the subject being presented.

As the tour continues, visitors will encounter a range of interactive classrooms in which meetings, discussions and seminars will be held on issues related to heritage and the history of Soviet Jewry. Emphasis will be put on the teaching of universal values and educational processes related to the formation of identity in the modern world.







Research Center

The History of Soviet Jewry Research Center will be established adjacent to the museum, under the academic supervision of the Hebrew University. The Center will be a magnet for academic researchers interested in the history of Soviet Jewry, Jewish history and modern society.

The Center will host an archive hosting a plethora of original documents, thousands of papers and studies, and a rich digital database. These will be complemented by world's largest Russian-language library outside of Russia. The spectacular collection, including the most comprehensive documentation of the events of the Russian Aliyah (immigration) to Israel, will become an integral part of the Center, per an agreement in principle with the Jerusalem Municipality.

Cultural Center

Beyond its daily operations, the Center will hold a wide array of cultural activities. The restaurant will serve authentic cuisine, and the concert hall will host various events, transforming the venue into a thriving cultural complex.

One of the major themes of the museum is the mutual influence between Russian and Israeli culture. Since the dawn of the Jewish state's resurrection - from Russian-influenced Israeli songs and the tunes of the Nahal bands in the IDF, through the great Hebrew poets from Russia such as Bialik, Alterman and Tchernichovsky, to the Geshen Theater and its performances of Vladimir Vysotsky's and Arkadi Duchin's songs

- it is hard to overstate the magnitude of the Russian influence on Israeli cultural development.

The Soviet immigrant cultural sphere in Israel is lively and dynamic, and the Heritage Center will serve as a home and focal point in which to host the community's cultural events in Israel. Seminars, performances, cultural events and lectures will be held in the large auditorium, designed to accommodate approximately 300 guests, and in adjacent spaces. Ongoing cultural activities will attract public attention to the Center and position it as not only a museum, but a significant landmark on the Israeli cultural map.

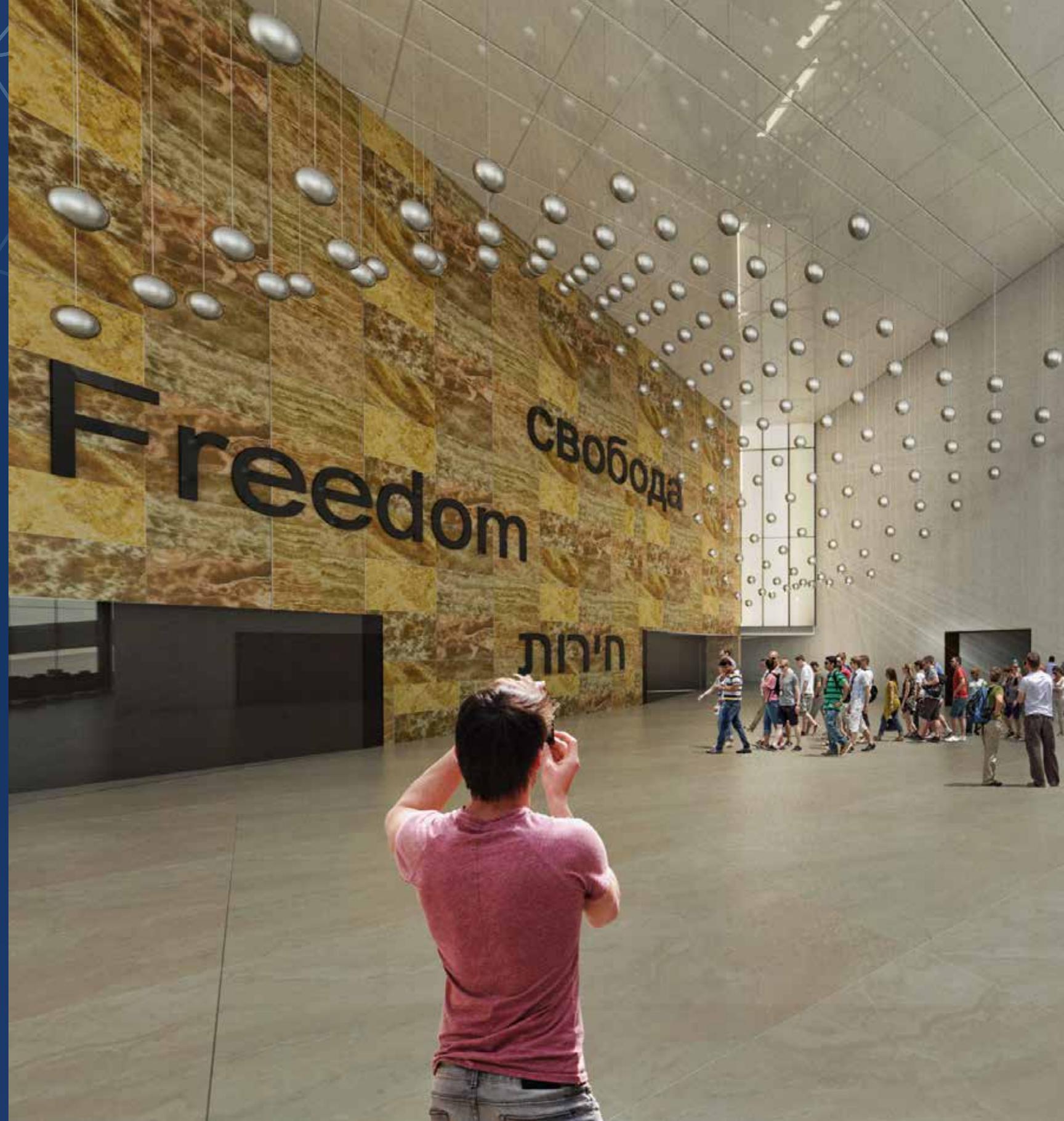
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“The objective justifies the means so long as something justifies the objective.”

Leon Trotsky

Entrance lobby

All visitors arriving at the center start from the lobby. An impressive kinetic sculpture artistically expressing the museum’s core values and messages will be erected here, and will welcome visitors at the entrance to the center. In the lobby, visitors will receive a special audio-visual device which doubles up as a unique monitoring system. The device will accompany visitors around the center during the tour and collect information about each individual, including the various places where they stopped, the issues they were interested in, and which interactive exhibits attracted the most attention.









“We Jews have a duty to offer the world our thousands-of-years-old experience and, while loyal to our moral tradition - to be soldiers in the struggle for peace.”

Albert Einstein

Special Exhibitions

Jewish communities in the post-Soviet era

The temporary exhibition area will be devoted to the experience of contemporary Jewish life in post-Soviet-era Russia. It will host a variety of exhibits on the history, culture and art of the Soviet Jewish community. Visitors will be able to acquaint themselves with the history and present-day situation of over 500 communities all over the former Soviet bloc, learn about the various Jewish organizations, and discover the individuals who helped develop Jewish communal and cultural life.

6

The Museum's Concept

The museum tour is a journey through time: Visitors experience the story by proceeding from period to period in rooms where dramatic scenes from history are re-enacted. The array of 360 degree projection exhibits, kinetic scenery and lighting all bring to life the dramatic, historic upheavals from the history of the Soviet Union while the museum's "walk-through experience" vividly recreates the atmosphere in place and time.

Identity dilemmas

The story of the mass immigration from the Soviet Union in the late 20th century is similar in many ways to the biblical exodus story. Decades of suppression of all individual freedoms for the sake of building the communist structure were unable to erase the Jewish people's national and individual consciousness. Deep down, the Jewish heart continued to beat. Russian Jews were faced with acute identity dilemmas, forced to choose between totally giving up their Judaism in order to fully integrate into Soviet society, or having

to struggle endlessly against the empire's repressive machine. They paid a heavy price – the snowy Siberian wilderness, gulag camps, the killing fields of World War II, the valleys of death of the Holocaust, half of which were located in Soviet territory. They survived, they integrated, and they struggled. In the underground, in academia, in the massive factories and between the daunting grey walls of the dungeon, they won their struggle for the freedom of self-determination, defeated the formidable Soviet empire, triumphed and oversaw its downfall. With the fall of the Iron Curtain, a million Jews immigrated to Israel, but dilemmas regarding identity continued to challenge them even here, in the Promised Land. The new immigrants were forced to make a choice once again: to attempt to balance assimilation into Israeli culture with the preservation of their Russian heritage, to find their place on the scale between Jewish and Israeli identity, to fight social stigma and shape their destiny in their old-new homeland. What does one do when the ideas of the ruling majority contradict one's own beliefs? How much can individuals give up their roots for the sake of integrating into society? Does erasing borders and attaining freedom come at the expense of personal identity and beliefs?

Visitors to the museum will experience these dilemmas interactively through engaging with various exhibits. The messages and questions that arise from the stories will be universal and applicable to all people at all times: The boundaries of one's identity, human dignity and freedom, and the victory of spirit and belief over an oppressive regime.

Personal Monitoring System

A cutting-edge visitor tracking system will be used in the museum which will make every visit an emotional, personal experience. At the museum entrance, visitors will take a handheld device connected to a tracking system which will collect data about each person's activity in the museum: what answers they gave, which exhibits they visited, which topics they were interested in, and more. With the help of a sophisticated mobile application, the system will analyze the data in real time and enable the museum's exhibits to handle each visitor individually. Thus, for example, if in the first section a visitor showed particular interest in the Zionist movement, the second section will adjust accordingly and confront the visitor with a dilemma: Would they dare risk their family for the Zionist dream, at a time when the Soviet regime ruthlessly pursued any manifestation of underground nationalism?

In the museum's final section, visitors will be able to delve deeper into the complex dilemmas mentioned during the tour and explore their relevance to their own lives with the help of virtual reality technology. This system of constructing personalized individual visits will be a novelty for museums around the world and make the Center a first-class tourist attraction.

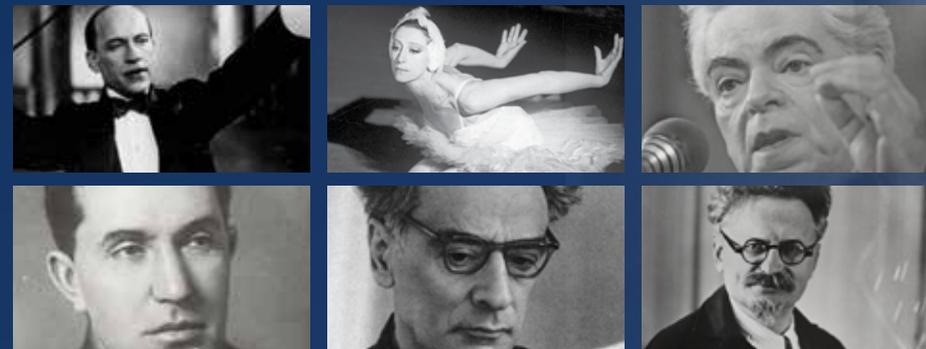
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Themes

The tour is constructed around three main thematic chapters in the history of Soviet Jewry

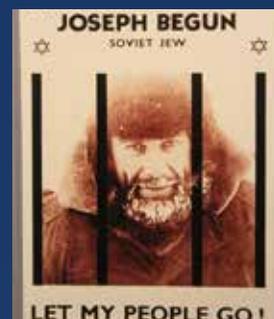
Survival and Enterprise

The first chapter will explore Jewish life in Russia in the pre-Soviet era, the history of the communist revolution, its effects and the story of the Jews who took part in its development. It also covers the contribution of Jews to the rise of the Soviet Union in the period from the beginning of the twentieth century until the end of World War II.



The Struggle to Preserve Jewish Identity and Immigration to Israel

The second chapter focuses on the struggle of the Jews to preserve their national identity in the shadow of the regime's persecution and its anti-Zionist policies. The stories of freedom fighters, dissidents, and advocates of immigration and religious freedom from the period between the Six Day War to the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Soviet Union will be retold here.



Renewal and Identity Building

The third chapter tells the story of Soviet Jewry after the breakup of the Soviet empire, the difficulties of integrating into the various countries they arrived in, the identity dilemmas which confronted immigrants in Israel, their successful integration into the social fabric and contribution to the cultural sphere and the economic center of the State of Israel and the entire world.



8

Rooms and Content

Visitors will pass through a series of display rooms which combine to present the collective and individual experiences of Soviet Jewry.



1 Building Entrance



5 Iron Curtain Installation



2 Contemporary Art Gallery



6 Aliyah Media Room



3 USSR Street Gallery



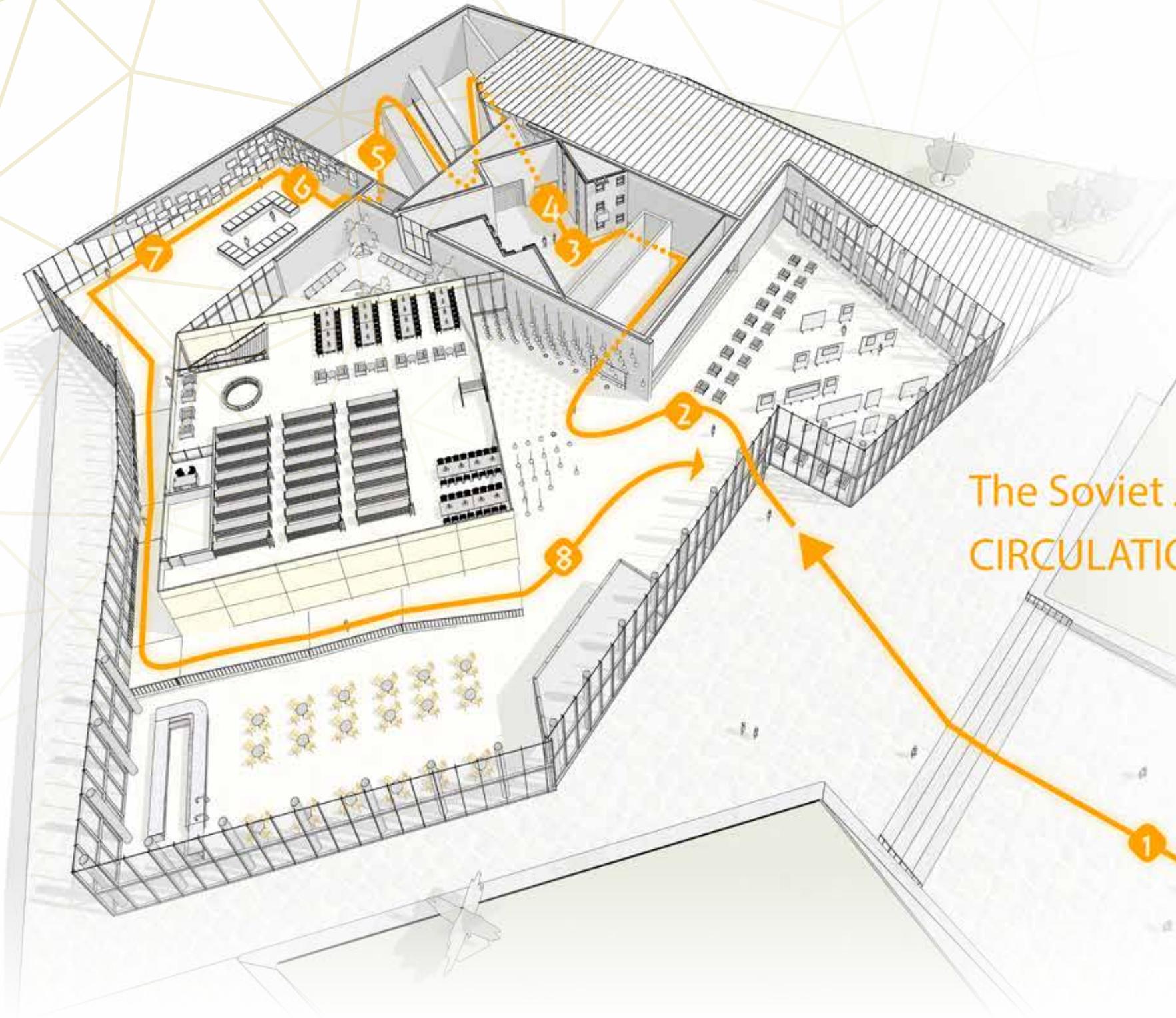
7 Light Patio



4 Yiddish Theatre Installation



8 Freedom Lobby



The Soviet Jewry Heritage Center
CIRCULATION

Chapter 1

A Street in the Pale of Settlement



Jewish life in pre-Revolutionary Russia

A visitor enters a typical alley in one of the Jewish towns in the Pale. Enclosed within narrow borders, subject to the laws of a brutal regime, and surrounded by a hostile environment, the Jews of 19th century Russia were forced to withdraw into themselves. Despite this, the social fabric of the community at the time was highly diverse and encompassed various political, religious, and economic ideologies. Two rooms on each side of the alley will reconstruct the zeitgeist, the daily life of the Jews, and the ideas that they grappled with. Inside the rooms, advanced projection technologies will perform a theatrical show depicting the simple life of hardship and frequent shortages, a life clinging to the faith and traditions of our ancestors, and

yet a life which was bustling and colorful. Visitors will find a Hasidic synagogue next to a Lithuanian synagogue, and a room with a dramatized depiction of the Socialist Bund near a basement housing a Hovevei Zion ("Lovers of Zion") meeting.

Workshops will send the visitors back in time and surround them with the sights and sounds of the period. Workshops will show Jewish artisans, the home of a family just as it is packing up to move to America, a Cantonese returning home 20 years after being conscripted to the army as a boy, and a bleak memorial sign announcing the victims of the most recent pogrom in the town.

Opening the Gates of the Pale of Settlement

After wandering freely between the installations in the alley, the lighting in the room will turn red and an exhibit about the communist revolution and the accompanying radical change will commence. The revolution toppled the walls behind which the Jews had confined themselves, for better or worse. On the one hand, the restrictions were removed and Jews could now be fully reintegrated into Soviet life. On the other hand, the old community structure crumbled and ideological diversity gave way to one -and only one - dominant ideology.

An impressive show will be displayed on the alley's walls and ceiling to highlight the



revolution's intensity and drama. Gates will then open at the end of the Pale of Settlement exhibition area and visitors will proceed through the opening to a room designed in the style of a Soviet worker city.

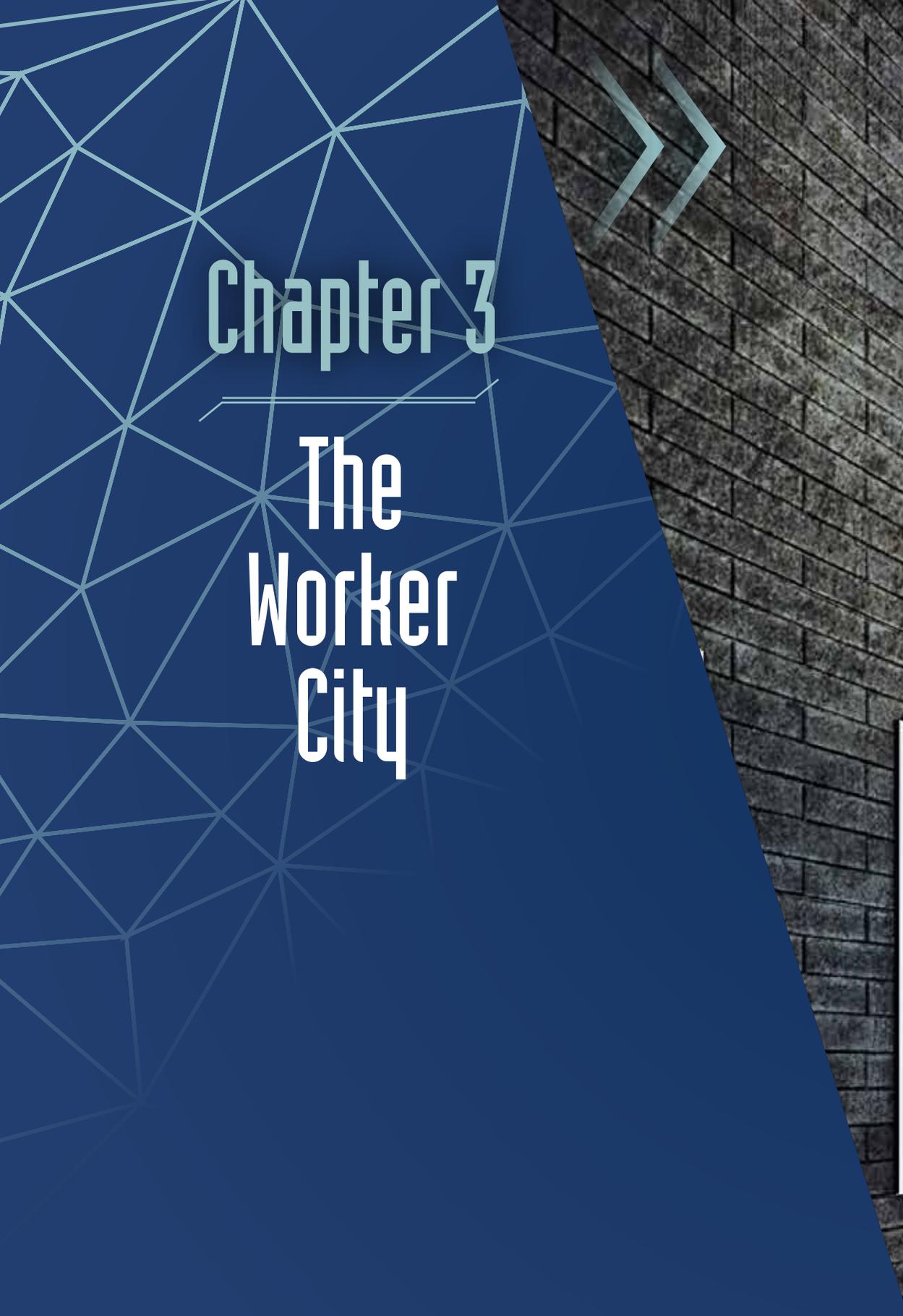
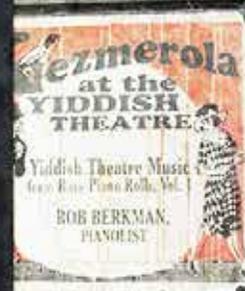


Chapter 2

After the Pale of Settlement: The Soviet Era

Chapter 3

The Worker City



Survival and Enterprise

Visitors now enter a spacious room designed in the industrial style of Soviet workers' housing. Through the use of various projections and holograms, periodic images and physical exhibits taken from everyday life in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s will be shown on the stark grey walls. The dimensions of the room will contribute to the sense of the power wielded by the Soviet regime. The exhibits will deal with the relationship between the Jews and the new establishment in the first decades of the nascent Soviet Union: The role played by Jews in forming the regime; the repression of Jewish identity; Jewish influence on Soviet social life; and their universal contribution to the entire world.

Various display areas will tell the story of prominent Jews who became an integral part of social and cultural life in the Soviet Union (such as the revolutionary Leon Trotsky, ballet dancer Maya Plisetskaya and comedian Arkady Raikin.) Interactive stands and an array of hi-tech displays will bring to life the struggle waged between the government and Jewish nationalism. Exhibits include a synagogue which transforms into a propaganda hall; a Yiddish theater compelled to host socialist shows, a Jewish workplace which is closed when private trade is banned; Yevseksiya, a special division of the secret services devoted to the suppression of Jewish identity; and the Birobidzhan plan - Stalin's initiative for the mass exile of the Jews to the Far East.



From Unity to Isolation

Chapter 4

The 2nd World War Exhibit

After more time wandering freely between the exhibits, German aircraft will appear in the skies above and signal the beginning of the exhibit on World War 2. During the war, half a million Jews were drafted to the Red Army. They were extremely motivated to defend their Soviet homeland, their passions ignited by stirring shows of national unity in the face of the Nazi enemy. The display will tell of the Holocaust of Soviet Jewry, the destruction of the traditional Jewish population centers, the Jews who fought on all fronts of World War 2, and finally

about the end of the war and the establishment of the communist regime in Eastern Europe - the rise of the Iron Curtain.

The ambience of the entire section changes dramatically to reflect the war and the exhibits transform accordingly: posters with communist slogans communist are replaced by recruitment posters, Jews (with different characters in each exhibit) join the army, and the Yiddish theater which falls into Nazis hands is set on fire.

By the end, the worker city looks completely different. Buildings

are wrecked, posters calling for war against the enemies of the people, including Jewish doctors and artists, a newspaper cutting about the murder of the actor and director Solomon Mikhoels, and the Yiddish theater is closed as part of the persecution of Yiddish culture. The sense of unity evaporates, and now the Jews feel that the doors of Soviet society are being closed in their faces. The preservation of Jewish identity becomes a particularly arduous task. After taking in this oppressive atmosphere, visitors pass into the next room: The Soviet Gulag.





The Struggle to Preserve Jewish identity and the Emigration to Israel

Visitors enter a space reminiscent of the Soviet Gulag; dim lighting, snow, stark walls and a row of prison cells. Here, strength of spirit will be demonstrated – of the few who stood against a huge, bleak system – and won despite all odds. Their struggle has become a symbol for the entire world: a symbol of the struggle for freedom, freedom of movement, faith and self-determination. While moving between the Prisoners of Zion's cells, visitors are introduced to the history of the Zionist underground's struggle in the Soviet Union for individual freedom and the right to emigrate to Israel. Using interactive holograms, visitors to the museum will be able to see the freedom fighters "face to face" and hear their stories first-hand. For example:

"One day, my neighbor from the adjacent cell, Yosef Mendelevich, told us that Independence Day was tomorrow. We decided, Zionist geniuses that we were, that there is no place more suitable to hold an Independence Day ceremony than in a Soviet prison, and in Hebrew, naturally. On the appointed day, and at the agreed time, we both removed the water from the toilet, pushed our heads inside and held a joyous ceremony. We gave passionate speeches full of pathos, Yosef in his beautiful Hebrew; I in my broken Hebrew, about the redemption of Israel and the return of the people to its land. Since then, I have attended ceremonies in honor of Independence Day in my capacity as a minister in the Israeli government, but this ceremony, with my head stuck in a toilet, was the most significant." (From Natan Sharansky's autobiography, *Fear No Evil*)

In this vein, stories will be shown about those who kept their Jewish religion a secret, the activities of the Chabad movement which managed to survive underground for the entire period of Soviet rule, the organization of illicit Hebrew classes, the Zionist activities conducted in secret, the major events in the struggle for the right to emigrate such as "Operation Wedding", and the influence of the Six Day War on the process of national awakening among Soviet Jewry.

On the wall opposite the cells, a display will show events beyond the Iron Curtain in the free world at the same time: The demonstrations on behalf of Soviet Jewry; freedom movements around the world; the revolution of the sixties; and the struggle for Soviet Jewry in Israel.

Chapter 5

A Visit to the Gulag

Chapter 6

The Fall of the Iron Curtain Exhibit

After leaving the Gulag, visitors arrive at a room with a giant iron wall in the middle blocking the way. There, they will experience a surround display which will tell of the Soviet Union's fall and the Jews' victory in the fight for liberty and freedom to emigrate to Israel. After the show, in a dramatic flourish accompanied by theatrical shifts in scenery and lighting, the Iron Curtain will be lifted and an exit will be revealed, leading to the tour's final section: The Immigration to Israel.





Chapter 7

Renewal and Identity Building

The section dedicated to the integration of new immigrants in Israel will be the technological pinnacle of the tour. Visitors will enter a room full of state-of-the-art exhibits: virtual reality glasses, touch-screen tables, sophisticated interactive stands and the world's most advanced display technologies.

In this room, visitors will learn about the mass immigration to Israel at the end of the 20th century and the absorption of a million immigrants in their historic homeland, the integration of immigrants from the USSR into Israeli society, and about the development of their unique culture and their contribution to Israel's development in all fields.







Here visitors to the museum will fully comprehend the complex questions of identity

raised during the course of the visit so far, dilemmas pertaining to multiculturalism and the clash between Jewish, Soviet and Israeli identities. Furthermore, a comparison will be made between Soviet Jewry's integration in Israel and elsewhere, including America, Germany, and post-Soviet era Russia. Dedicated display areas will be allocated to the different types of influxes of immigration, the immigrants' social movements, the preservation of their culture and most importantly, to discussing the dilemmas of identity which immigrants were forced to face.

Using virtual reality goggles and interactive table-top touchscreen displays, visitors will be able to delve into and expand their knowledge of issues that piqued their interest during the tour. The personal tracking system will know which exhibits are best suited to each visitor in order to cultivate their understanding of the complexity and importance of the issues and to point out their relevance to ongoing processes occurring in our time.



“It’s as if America would absorb 50 million people. 70 percent with high school and higher education. 100,000 engineers, 23,000 doctors, about 2,000 lawyers, 50,000 teachers, 21,000 artists ... this is not an evolution, this is a revolution.”

Cabinet Secretary Zvi Hauser at an event marking 20 years since “The Russian Aliyah” wave of immigration.



Soviet Jewry as a Symbol

The final group experience at the end of the visit will bring the museum's key messages to the fore. The exhibit will pose questions regarding the balance between individual liberty and national identity, the contemporary conflict over the question of self-determination, the danger of racism and xenophobia, the importance of the difference between merging and integration, and of our need to protect individual freedoms, at all times and at any price.



Chapter 8

Final Exhibit

9

Technology

The museum will make use of a variety of cutting-edge technologies in order to create an intense experience and make the contents accessible to youth,

while ensuring the selection of effects and visual elements will enhance the experience and not overshadow it. The visit will combine exhibit areas and media platforms, presented both physically and virtually, including individual and group exhibits, interactive experience stands, and 360 degree projection shows. Alongside representations of historical events from the history of Soviet Jewry, visitors will be confronted with dilemmas and questions of a more universal nature, relevant to people of all ages and nationalities.

Advanced display showcases

Kinetic decor

Video Mapping

Interactive stands

3D projection

Traditional displays







360° Projection

Immersive 360° projection technologies combined with sophisticated sound and lighting systems will enable rooms to radically transform ambiance to reflect the dramatic historical events being retold. The creation of powerful, immersive experiences will make visitors feel personally involved in what is happening.



Virtual Reality

The use of virtual reality goggles will compel visitors to confront the dilemmas discussed face-on by delving into an immersive environment. This mesmeric experience connecting the historical story to the present marks the final stage of the interactive museum's narrative, and will take place in the final visiting room.





The Kinetic Sculpture

The focal point of the museum's main entrance area will be the first kinetic sculpture of its kind in Israel. The sculpture will immediately set the tone for visitors entering the center. Connected to intelligent computer-controlled motors operating in perfect synchronization with projection and lighting equipment, the sculpture will turn waiting in the lobby area into a spectacular visual experience.



Holograms

The combination of sophisticated technologies will provide a personalized experience, including through holograms that allow visitors to talk "in person" with key historical figures from the struggle for identity and freedom.

The App

The personal tracking app is the foundation of each visitor's interactive experience. Sophisticated software will analyze the data obtained from the monitoring system, and intelligently adjust the exhibits so that they will react differently according to each visitor. The tracking system will transform each visit into a unique experience and contribute significantly to implementing the center messages personally for each of the visitors.

10 Our Partners

The Establishment of the Soviet Jewry Heritage Center NGO



In order to realize the vision of the establishment of the Center, a not-for-profit charitable organization was founded. Its members are distinguished intellectuals, academics and cultural figures from the Russian immigrant community in Israel. They include the author David Markish, actress Natalia Manor, journalists David Shechter and Victoria Dolinsky, musician Slava Ganelin and Professor Wolf Moskovich from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The project has received the blessing of prominent representatives of immigration from the Soviet Union, including Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky and Knesset Chairman Yuli Edelstein.

The Hebrew University



The charity's senior software partner is the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Guided by the Melton School of Education, and led by Professor Gabriel Horenczyk, an expert team of senior researchers and historians is dedicated to writing, supervising and ratifying all the museum's contents. The team of academic experts will carefully construct the educational aspect of the visitor experience and structure the debates on ethical dilemmas. Furthermore, the Hebrew University will develop the plan for the establishment of the research center, which will benefit from the university's academic sponsorship.

The Jerusalem Municipality



The Establishment of the Soviet Jewry Heritage Center NGO is in advanced negotiations with the Jerusalem Municipality, through City Council member Ms. Marina Kontzevaya regarding the proper location in which to establish the building as well as the transfer of the archives and the Russian-language library to the Heritage Center.

Board of Experts

- Dorit Golender, former Israeli ambassador to Russia
- Iosif Begun, former prisoner of Zion
- Efraim Holmiansky, former prisoner of Zion
- Alexander Shpikelman, CEO of Bate properties, Russia
- Arkady Mayofis, president of Yoffi Ltd., Israel
- Yuri Zelvensky, part-owner of OCSIAL
- Michael Lutzky, businessman
- Alla Alchova, public relations manager
- Marina Ben Arie, CEO
- Ela Dembo, North America donor relations



10 Our Partners

The Staff



The Center's program planning was entrusted to one of Israel's leading museum design and construction companies, CompuGraphic. The company has over 20 years' experience in designing and constructing visitor centers, museums, conceptual spaces and producing unique films and exhibits for leading clients in Israel. CompuGraphic's most prominent visitor centers include: Castel National Park, Tel Shilo, the Old Train Station in Tel Aviv, the Bank of Israel, the Israeli Children's Museum in Holon, Timna Park, Ancient Susiya, the tomb of David Ben Gurion and many others.

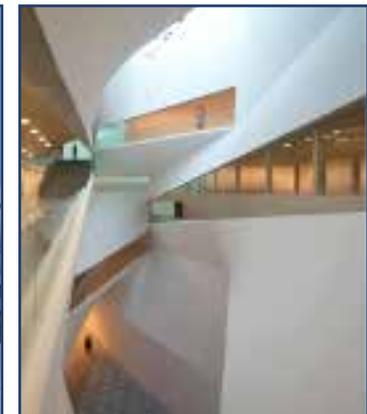
The building, architectural rationale and the interiors were designed by world-renowned architect, Amit Namlich. His office specializes in designing public projects in Israel and abroad. Namlich's involvement from the initial stages of architectural planning and until the completion of the construction site. He will lead planning while aiming to turn original architecture into a feasible reality within the constraints of the budget. His works include the new wing of the Tel Aviv Museum, the Israeli Police's memorial compound, the Lod Mosaic Museum, the Taiyuan Art Museum and Nanjing University student center in China.



Student Center at the University of Nanjing, China



Tai Yuan Art Museum, China



The New Wing, Tel Aviv Museum

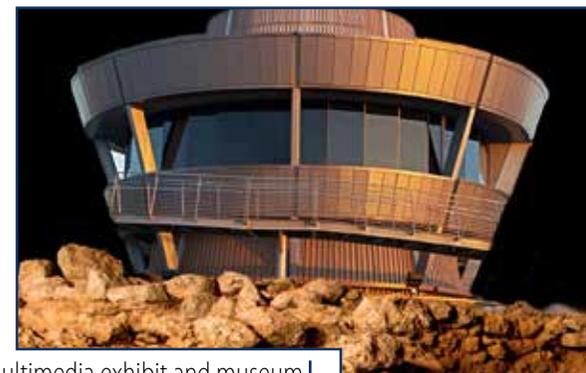
Projects overseen by CG Compugraphic:



| Ancient Susiya Cave Experience Exhibition |



| Ancient Shilo Viewing Tower, multimedia exhibit and museum |



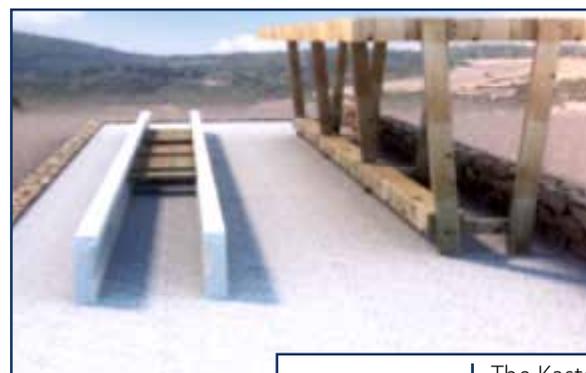
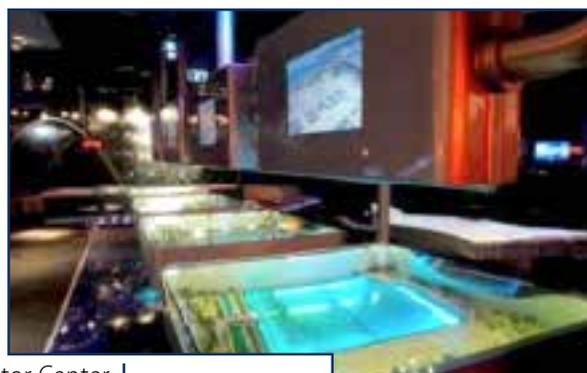
| Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael tree visitor center |



| Timna Park Museum |



| Mekorot Visitor Center |



| The Kastel National Park |



Presented by:

CG Compugraphic



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