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Glasgow's Jewish Institute Players and their narratives of Scottish-Jewish identity

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Abstract:

The Glasgow Jewish Institute Players was an innovative community theatre group whose work explored the many facets of Jewish identity in inter- and post-war Britain. This essay provides an overview of the company's production history and repertoire, including plays by its inspirational founder, the playwright and director Avrom Greenbaum (1903-1963). It argues that the group's output reflected the identities and self-image of a Glasgow Jewish community that was seeking to consolidate and rationalise its place in Scottish and British society in the inter- and post-war periods.

Keywords:

Jewish theatre; Scottish theatre, Jewish diaspora; non-professional theatre; Avrom Greenbaum

The Glasgow Jewish Institute Players (GJIP) was a remarkable community theatre group active in Glasgow from the mid-1930s until the early 1960s. In its heyday the group established an ambitious new model for non-professional theatre in Scotland, played a key role in the dissemination of new works by American-Jewish writers through a series of important Scottish, British and European premieres and redefined the identities and self-image of Jewish immigrant communities in British and Scottish society during the inter- and post-war periods. This essay introduces and describes the GJIP. It provides an overview of the company's activities and achievements and, by exploring the diversity of the group's repertoire and the range of different registers and voices it adopted, reflects on the representations and the identities being used by the Jewish immigrant community in Scotland in the inter-war and immediate post-war periods.

The essay is in three parts: the first is an introduction to the story of GJIP, when and why it began, what it did, who was involved and when and why it ended; the second provides an overview of its repertoire and production history; the third focuses on some specific elements of the repertoire, written by key group member Avrom Greenbaum, that actively think about Jewishness and, most specifically, Jewishness in Scotland. In navigating these elements, we present a new narrative of an over-looked and deeply significant group of committed theatre makers active in Glasgow and beyond in the turbulent middle decades of the twentieth century.

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Introducing the Glasgow Jewish Institute Players

Glasgow's small Jewish community had expanded with the Russian pogroms of the 1880s and, after further waves of twentieth-century immigration, was around 14,000 strong by the interwar years.¹ The GJIP was part of that community: a politically aware, broadly left-leaning group of Jewish non-professional theatre makers founded in 1936 by Avrom Greenbaum (1903-1963).² As the group's artistic director and guiding light, Greenbaum is the key figure in the Players' story. Born in Izbica in Poland, he was one of five children of a family who came to Scotland when he was 15 months old. His was a family of tailors that valued the making and understanding of culture, music and literature. Greenbaum founded the GJIP as an outlet for his own consuming passion for the theatre and he brought to it emergent skills as a writer and director. But he also gave the group its particular cosmopolitanism, in that Greenbaum's own enthusiasms reflected a creative life that, while open to a range of influences from wider artistic and popular culture, evolved largely within the Jewish community's own social institutions and reflected its shared and essentially transnational experiences.

Although the GJIP always performed in English, Yiddish theatre was a strong influence. Most of the group had Yiddish-speaking parents and grandparents and, although they were the generation that discarded the language, they had also grown up in the highly cosmopolitan Gorbals, a working-class area on the south side of Glasgow that was full of migrant populations, during the 1920s and 1930s where Yiddish culture was everywhere. Theatre groups and organisations, including the British Legion (Glasgow Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Branch) Yiddish Amateur Players and other Yiddish variety entertainers, gave regular concerts in the community well into the 1930s. Visiting professional companies gave annual seasons of Yiddish theatre at the Princess's Theatre in the same Gorbals area of Glasgow. Indeed, Greenbaum claimed that his attempts to found a Jewish theatre group had been inspired by the visit of Maurice Schwartz's Yiddish Art Theatre of New York which "kindled a new flame of ambition in the hearts of the small group who were now meeting at the Institute for weekly play meetings".³

This mixture of influences, which was to prove the hallmark of the GJIP's approach, was evident from Greenbaum's childhood. As an 11-year-old, and as one of the few Jews in his school, Greenbaum had produced his annual school concert party and wrote songs and sketches for backcourt entertainments. When his family's straitened circumstances required that he leave school at 14 to work in its tailoring business, he continued to read voraciously and to study languages.⁴ Taken to see both Shakespeare at Glasgow's Theatre Royal and the famous Vilna Theatre troupe performing *The Dybbuk* in Yiddish on tour to the city, he continued to be inspired to write and perform, increasingly channelling his creativity into activities centred on the Jewish community. In the early 1920s, he wrote and produced an unnamed one-act play for the Glasgow Young Zionists' Literary Circle at the Talmud Torah in Turriff Street, directing and taking the leading role, even playing the violin in the small orchestra during the overture, Boieldieu's "The Caliph of Baghdad", before rushing back behind the curtain to appear on stage.⁵

The GJIP was important to the cultural identity of Glasgow's Jewish community. Determined to establish a dramatic club for and within the Jewish community, Greenbaum realised that he needed the imprimatur of a proven organisation to lend the venture credibility: as he later recalled, "No creative artistic venture could hope to gain a foothold in the interest of the community except as an

integral part of some one of the larger established communal activities.”⁶ From the mid-1930s much of the community’s social life centred on the Jewish Institute, a large, recently acquired building located next to the synagogue in South Portland Street in the Gorbals. The Institute had a cafeteria and rooms that were used by a wide range of clubs and societies, as well as a ballroom for dances and functions. Basing his nascent theatre group at the Institute affirmed a commitment for it to be for and of Jewish audiences and participants, and it provided a strong cultural and social hub for this relatively newly arrived community. From this base Greenbaum began producing short, one-act dramas, initially featuring his own plays, that ranged from short comic pieces with a bit of a contemporary edge to them, such as *Kultur* (1936), to *The Bread of Affliction* (1936), an intense, heart-felt drama depicting a family caught up in a pogrom in the Ukraine in 1920. It was the critical attention this play attracted, and the resulting suggestion that it should be entered into competition, that prompted the group’s formal constitution.

The Jewish Institute was a key context for the Players’ productions, but so too were the festivals and competitions organised under the aegis of the Scottish Community Drama Association (SCDA).⁷ In the interwar period non-professional, amateur, theatre was a hugely popular phenomenon in the UK and indeed in Scotland where its reach was geographical (spreading across the whole of the country) and socioeconomic (drawing on a wide range of types of communities and companies, some with rather explicit, generally left, political ideologies). For the GJIP, the SCDA competitions and festivals were important in giving a legitimacy to the group: prizes for the quality of its work, audiences from a wide range of Scottish cities, towns and villages and press coverage highlighting its achievements, all expanded the reach and significance of the work of this small, nascent group. The SCDA competitions for one-act plays were the high point of the amateur theatre year and it was remarkable that, in its first year of operation, Greenbaum’s production of his own play *The Bread of Affliction* reached the national final, coming second only to the leading light of SCDA new writing, Joe Corrie and his Fife-set slice-of-life drama *Hewers of Coal*.⁸ Early in its history, and in the competitive context of the SCDA, the GJIP declared itself firmly at the heart of the contemporary Scottish theatre scene, sharing its new stories and representations with as diverse an audience as Scottish theatre could at that time deliver.

Now formally established as the Glasgow Jewish Institute Dramatic Club, Greenbaum’s amateur theatre makers quickly built on this early success. After a period of fund raising, in September 1938 they opened their own 200-seat Bloch Little Theatre at the Jewish Institute with a gala performance of Ibsen’s *Ghosts* and, in the same year, were invited to perform at the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow, a recognition that was, like the successes at the SCDA festivals, keenly appreciated by the Jewish community.⁹ In 1939, following the competition success of *The Bread of Affliction* and its publication in a volume of the best new plays of the year¹⁰, Greenbaum was honoured by the Glasgow Lodge of B’nai Brith. In proposing the toast, the chairman stated that, “The Jewish Institute was a powerful factor in the life of the community, and the dramatic section its most important activity.”¹¹ In this way, therefore, the use of culture (here theatre) at the very heart of the immigrant community’s presence was understood as a useful and, indeed, essential tool in its self-affirmation and in its wider social integration, too – the play’s success beyond the Jewish community an indication of the effectiveness of the drama and its broad-based thematic interest. [Figure 1].

With these initial repertoire successes, the Glasgow Jewish Institute Players, as they became known, went on to produce a wide range of plays, from anti-fascist dramas to plays celebrating Jewish

history and heritage, from European classic plays to contemporary work by new American Jewish writers. They also established a reputation for high production standards that was very largely attributable to Greenbaum's working methods that, amongst the non-professional, community-based drama groups of the time, were recognised as highly innovative – long rehearsal periods focusing on the needs of (non-professional) actors, collaboration with designers to create bold stage pictures and the use of music, both from the established repertoire and new compositions, too. These methods consisted of: extensive rehearsal periods that built up detailed character-based work, eliciting strong performances from previously inexperienced actors; an intense focus on the importance of stage design, developed through close working collaborations with fine artists such as Joseph Ancill and Tom Macdonald, and with choreographers such as Margaret Morris; and the integral use of carefully chosen music to set the psychological dimension of productions. All these are familiar features of theatre making today but their deployment in this non-professional context represented a new benchmark in the 1930s and 1940s.

Greenbaum's innovations in respect of the craft of theatre making – and, in particular, theatre directing – were developed further in the context of Glasgow Unity Theatre. In December 1940, and facing the increasing stringencies of wartime, the Players was one of five broadly left-leaning non-professional theatre groups that combined their resources to form Glasgow Unity Theatre.¹² Greenbaum, along with Robert Mitchell from the Glasgow Players and Donald McBean from Glasgow Transport Players, formed the new company's guiding triumvirate, with Greenbaum's commitment to and vision for a robust technique in theatre making being central to the project: Glasgow Unity's first production, in January 1941, was a revival of his production of Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing*, which GJIP had presented itself just a month earlier.

While the Players were firmly committed to the Glasgow Unity project for the duration of the War, its members continued to perform as GJIP in the Bloch Little Theatre and in SCDA competitions. Alongside the short, one-act plays on which most SCDA groups focused, Greenbaum expanded his range to direct ambitious full-length dramas and demanding contemporary classics that included Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* (1942) and Lope de Vega's *Fuente Ovejuna* (1944), Lorca's *Blood Wedding* (1952) and two new classics of Jewish literature, Sylvia Regan's *Morning Star* (1945) and Ansky's *The Dybbuk* (1951).¹³ The ambition to pursue larger scale work arguably developed out of Greenbaum's experiences with Glasgow Unity which offered expanded resources – including people – and, crucially, brought about his meeting and collaboration with the stage designer Tom Macdonald, whose striking, modernist designs became a hallmark of Greenbaum's productions.¹⁴ [Figure 2].

As the Unity project faltered and, in 1951, ended, the Players forged ahead independently with a programme of modern classics by J. M. Barrie, Bernard Shaw, Tennessee Williams and others, and with a series of plays (often European, British or Scottish premieres) by American Jewish writers including Clifford Odets, Irwin Shaw, Arthur Laurents, Sylvia Regan, Norman Krasna and Arthur Miller. The 1950s, then, saw the consolidation of the GJIP's reputation as a leading producer of new writing. They enjoyed critical success with *The Dybbuk* and national competition success with AJ Talbot's *Lucretia Borgia's Little Party*, which won the SCDA National Final in 1952. In addition, the group and this range of work delivered a talented cohort of actors to Scottish theatre, a number of whom – Ida Schuster, Bonita Beach, Joe Boyers, Monty Landis and Kalman Glass – were establishing careers in Scotland's expanding professional theatre industry.

But the 1950s also brought significant social change. Glasgow's Jewish community began a migration from the Gorbals out to suburban areas on the city's south side, leaving the Jewish Institute a declining influence. While Greenbaum himself retained a high reputation within Scottish (amateur) theatre, the focus of his creative work shifted: having largely sacrificed his earlier aspirations to write to the need to direct and produce for the GJIP and for Unity, he was increasingly sought after as a teacher, lecturer and adjudicator in the still-extensive amateur and community drama networks. Following his death in 1963, the Players were renamed the Avrom Greenbaum Players and operated along more conventional amateur theatre lines until around 1988.¹⁵

While this story of the GJIP is, arguably, interesting enough in and of itself, in reality left of centre, non-professional theatre groups were, if not quite ten-a-penny in interwar Scotland, then certainly common enough to generate a wide range of theatre troupes, trends and techniques, some of which were just as innovative, expansive and influential as the work of the GJIP.¹⁶ What makes the GJIP worthy of particular attention is the wide and distinctive range of plays it chose to produce for audiences in Scotland and beyond. The range of the Players' repertoire was not random but selected with culturally-aware deliberation to speak to the cultural preoccupations and concerns of Greenbaum and the other group members: indeed, in many ways it stands for the cultural preoccupations of members of first- and second-generation Jewish communities finding new narratives and new identities in the UK in the mid-twentieth century.

Repertoire and representations

A question about these new narratives and representations is what the repertoire of the GJIP tells us about the aspirations and cultural identity and self-image of these first- and second-generation immigrants to Scotland in the interwar period?

Without pushing an overly simplistic taxonomy, we have identified three sometimes overlapping groupings of plays.¹⁷ First, the repertoire included plays, often new plays, that drew on the group's Jewishness, a complex and multifaceted identity that: faced back to the mainland Europe of earlier generations; reflected on the deep lived experience of being Jewish in contemporary Glasgow, drawing on the group's Scottishness, which was similarly multiple, with different, nuanced class identities in play alongside religious and ethnic intersections; and, then also looked to other contemporary migrant experiences, especially migration to the USA. Second, literary plays of the international art theatre and plays of European cosmopolitanism. This was a repertoire of established and modern classics, challenging dramas by writers such as Federico Garcia Lorca, Lope de Vega and Sean O'Casey, as well as Shaw and Barrie. That the Jewish Institute Players presented this demanding repertoire was in stark contrast to the fixed menu of conventional one-act plays put on by many of the other groups contemporaneously active in the SCDA and signalled the Players' clear aspiration to a different level of creative and artistic endeavour. And, third, they presented plays of the New World. In this category were many Scottish or British premieres of new American plays, very often by American Jewish authors. This is a crucially important subset of plays for the Players because it mobilises, often in very personal ways, the Jewish migrant community's transatlantic diasporic links.¹⁸ Moreover, and cutting across all of these permeable categories, is a sustained commitment to the political, as broadly conceived: strongly anti-fascist plays in the late 1930s; propagandist and socialist plays presented in the context of Unity; and, internationalist and social democratic plays in the post-war decade.

These categories were far from mutually exclusive and often overlapped, perhaps representing a similar set of intersectional identities amongst the members, repeatedly trying on and testing a range of experiences of and responses to being both Jewish immigrants specifically living in Scotland and also as being a generation in transit, facing both backwards to an Eastern European past, and the recent traumas that often attached to it, and forwards to the potential for a new life in America. And, in this look forward to America, is a sense of a young country holding out the promise of a new, more egalitarian society which had been built by immigrants and where the only barrier to success was hard work. Somewhere in the middle of this look back to Europe and this look forward to America was the British- or Scottish- or Glasgow-Jewish identity which offered the potential for an assimilated life within a local society. It is these plays – those of our first grouping of plays and narratives of Jewish identities – that we explore further in the final section of this essay considering what narratives of Jewishness the plays presented by GJIP described.

Ellen Schiff, writing on American Jewish theatre, and arguing for its inclusion in the Jewish literary tradition, has strongly made the case for the authenticity of Jewish writing in non-exclusively Jewish languages, suggesting that to question its contribution “undervalues the very symbiosis that animates Diaspora creativity”. She sees these works as “reflections of every dimension of Jewish identity and Jewish life in pluralistic societies”. She adds: “What more appropriate medium can there be to express the dominant theme of modern Jewish creativity – the imperatives and challenges of dual identity – than the idiom of those countries where Jews live?”¹⁹ The range of the Players’ repertoire is distilled in Greenbaum’s own writing, which saw him experimenting with – or trying on for size – a number of different voices ranging from: a group of plays predicated on increasingly unconvincing borrowing from the West End popular theatre of the day; a small number of visibly heartfelt plays authentically telling stories of a Jewish past and present; and, some fragments of revue sketches and Robert Burns inspired parodies that combine a heady mix of Yiddish theatre tropes and Scottish music hall trends.

Adapting the mainstream

In the first category of texts influenced by popular plays of the modern, commercial West End is *Kultur*, a light comedy from 1936 that disparages artistic pretentiousness.²⁰ Perhaps somewhat incongruously for the Gorbals-based GJIP, *Kultur* concerns a wealthy Mayfair couple, Charles and Elise Ludgate, who are taken in by a preposterous avant-garde artist with the preposterous avant-garde name of Prometheus Bronsky. Bronsky is, in fact, Sid, the real artist’s chauffeur, who is acting in cahoots with the couple’s maid, Marianne, to rob them. In the denouement, the plot is foiled when the real artist arrives and proves to be none other than the husband’s old fishing companion. In seeming to affirm Charles’ bluff scepticism about the arts, in the face of his wife’s insistence on cultivating modish pretensions as a means of keeping up with her fashionable friends, the play reflects a very English, very contemporary and very familiar sort of middle-brow philistinism of the time.

Yet, if this all seems rather a predictable, if effective, vehicle for a barnstorming comic performance by the actor cast as Sid, the play may not be quite what it seems. The cover page of the surviving manuscript, held in the Scottish Theatre Archive, states the title as “CULTURE”. Yet the original title was the German and Yiddish word “Kultur”. Despite the manuscript’s shift to the anglicised title in a manuscript fair copy that was probably intended for publication, at both its initial performances in

February 1936 and when it was revived by Glasgow Unity Theatre in December 1942, the play was presented as *Kultur*.²¹

For Greenbaum, GJIP and for Glasgow Unity, the retention of “Kultur” as the play’s title in performance was deliberate, and evidently important enough in communicating something of the play’s meaning to offset the possible provocation of a politically-aware, Jewish writer presenting a play, indeed an otherwise innocuous domestic comedy, with a German title in wartime Britain. What might make it more explicable would be if “Kultur” was deployed to connote a Yiddish rather than a German heritage and that, perhaps, it acted as an ironic signifier, and “in joke”, to Glasgow’s Jewish audiences.²²

While *Kultur* lampooned middle-class philistinism, *The Children of Dreams*, produced in November 1936, offered an impassioned defence of the value of art and artists.²³ In this play, Jonathan Blyth is trying to write a play but finds himself badly blocked. Living in the depths of the country with his wife Stella, the couple is fast running out of money and Stella is urging Blyth to return to the more reliable work of journalism when a wealthy industrialist, Filbuster, arrives offering him lucrative copywriting work. Conventional work, and the unfeeling brutalism of industry, is embodied in the figure of Filbuster, the stock northern businessman who believes that all art is rubbish. His job offer provides Blyth a financial lifeline but will take him away from his own creative writing and art. Conflicted over the decision, he falls asleep at his desk and, as he dreams, two characters from his play appear in the moonlight. Berating Blyth for not finishing their story, they discuss the imaginative world of the play. In the dream, Blyth goes to tear up the manuscript which, he decided, is not true to real life. But the spirits tell him that the world of the imagination is also “life” and that people need art to make them appreciate the beauty and truth that surround them. Awaking with new artistic determination, Blyth sets about finishing his play [Figure 3].

The play reflects several characteristics of Greenbaum’s writing. One is an idealised, and perhaps over earnest, preoccupation with the role and responsibilities of the artist and the valorisation of (true) art and the (feeling) artist: these ideas, which are very much of their time but which now seem very naïve, are discussed at length. A second trait of Greenbaum’s writing is a lyrical and mystical view of nature, with the countryside cast as a magical, moonlit landscape, rather like Barrie’s *unheimlich* woods and islands and, indeed, explored further in another Greenbaum playscript, the probably unperformed *Nocturne in Midsummers*.²⁴ In addition, the fantasy of *The Children of Dreams* demonstrates a third feature of Greenbaum’s writing in this vein: a playful tendency to be self-consciously literary. As his dreamt characters discuss the shortcomings of the play in which they themselves feature, Lisa, the imagined dancery ingénue, complains that it is boring to be beautiful and always happy: “Sometimes I wish that Ibsen or Strindberg had written me. I should like to be one of those tragic and gloomy women and thinking always of death – and things.” She tells Blyth that one of her fellow characters had “said you copied us from Pirandello”.²⁵

These early attempts at fashionable comedies – *Kultur*, *The Children of Dreams*, *Nocturne in Midsummers* – involved a very conventionally, utterly westernised view of art and culture and show Greenbaum, consciously or not, imitating the full range of writers he admired – Barrie, Shakespeare, Pirandello. The plays certainly added to the repertoire of GJIP, and entertained its local audience, but their arch tone and self-conscious content were limited in their reach and significance and

certainly gave little indication that his breakthrough play, *The Bread of Affliction*, produced in June 1936, only four months after *Kultur*, would be intensely personal.

Retelling a shared history

The Bread of Affliction is set in a Ukrainian village in 1920 – and, therefore, very much within the lived experience of many of Greenbaum’s Jewish audiences and their families – during a time of political unrest. It concerns a Jewish family, the Kolanskys, who have previously been forced to flee a pogrom. It is the eve of Passover in a Jewish home. Two White Russian officers enter looking for Reva in connection with her links to a Jewish organisation. The more sympathetic of the two soldiers, Peter, is immediately taken with Leah, Reva’s 15-year-old daughter. The two share talk of books and ideas, and the potential for communion based on culture is suggested. But when Reva returns, she and the officer recognise one another: during the previous pogrom Peter had raped Reva and Leah is his daughter. Reva confronts him, revealing that her mother and brother were amongst those killed at that time, and denounces the senselessness and inhumanity of the persecution that Jews have suffered. It is a strong speech and in it Reva is clear that she refuses to give in to the hatred that could so easily consume her. When Peter begs for her forgiveness, she replies: “Forgive you? Is there anything to forgive? You were only part of it. It had gone on for so long. I suppose it will keep on. Now it’s begun again! The old terror – with new excuses.” Desperate to atone, Peter gives her money and insists the family leave immediately and go to Germany before Reva is arrested for her resistance activities. Reva’s father, Yosel, returns from synagogue and is dismayed at the prospect of having to leave, as an old man, to start all over again. Worn down by the seemingly perpetual cycle of persecution, he cries out the last line of the play: “It’s Passover again. Will it always be Passover?” The irony of Germany being portrayed, in Greenbaum’s 1936 play, as a reliable place of resort for the Jewish family – Peter states, “The Germans are cultured, sensible. Your people will always be free there” – further underlines Yosel’s anguished comments at the end. And the play’s underlying (Zionist) inference is that this cycle of persecution will continue until Jews have a land of their own.

The Bread of Affliction is certainly Greenbaum’s best play: dramatic, historical, deeply felt and highly political, it raised parallels with contemporary events in Scotland and the acute anxiety that Jewish communities felt at the rise of Mosley’s Blackshirts. Greenbaum’s theme of compassion and tolerance is reflected in other plays produced by the Players, for example Noah Elstein’s *Israel in the Kitchen* (produced by GJIP in 1937), which similarly approached questions of Jewish identity through the need to promote wider understanding of the community, but across his repertoire context made the works political.²⁶ Overall Greenbaum was unequivocal on the need for artists to speak up on political and moral grounds. In a lecture to a community drama club on propaganda and art, it was reported that Greenbaum, described as “Glasgow’s Jewish playwright”, “confessed himself all on the side of the propagandist. His view was that the playwright was an observer of life and as such could not escape from examining moral, cultural and economic problems.”²⁷

The influence of popular theatre

But, while *The Bread of Affliction* addressed historic persecution of the Jews, revealing Greenbaum’s talent at its most politically and culturally engaged, his writing also drew on the two distinctive popular theatre traditions that shaped his creative perspective as much as his reading of playwrights such as Shaw, Barrie and O’Casey. Yiddish theatre and Scottish variety theatre influenced the GJIP’s

performing culture being mobilised through Greenbaum's sequence of sketches and one-act plays. As previously indicated, members of GJIP were part of an interwar generation whose memories of theatre-going were inextricably bound-up and easily combined with experiences of Scottish music hall and variety, and Greenbaum's version of popular theatre *combined* the Scottish and the Yiddish. Overall, the Players' communicated a self-conscious awareness of Jewish theatre history, the importance of the Yiddish theatre tradition (storytelling and social inclusivity, scatological humour and wordplay) alongside the pawky irreverence and rich vernacular Scots of the Glasgow music hall.

The Yiddish theatre influence combined with the Scottish popular tradition were perhaps most evident in the GJIP's irreverent topical revues, including Michael Goldberg's *Sweet and Sour*, and sketches satirising figures in the Jewish community and, sometimes, even their own productions, as in a skit lampooning Greenbaum's stylised direction of *The Dybbuk*. Greenbaum delighted in this sort of sketch. In his *New Order Comes to Paradise*, undated but probably written for an SCDA summer school at St Andrews, Hitler dies and presents himself at the gates of heaven, only to find his entry barred by a gruff Guardian Angel who speaks a broad Glaswegian. The references are to Jewish comedy and Scottish music hall, with exuberant comic wordplay, rich vernacular and patter, but also hints at broader popular culture references including the Marx brothers.²⁸ Noting that Yiddish, "the language which fed the whole movement of Jewish culture [...] had many qualities akin to Lallans"²⁹, the lowland Scots dialect, Greenbaum's use of the two complementary traditions found expression in his sketches and skits, his Yiddish-Scots versions of Burns³⁰ and, in particular, in his popular wartime hit, the Scots comedy *The Watch on the Clyde*.³¹ [Figure 4].

First performed in 1940 as *The Fifth Line*, *The Watch on the Clyde* was Greenbaum's most produced play and became a huge favourite with SCDA groups. A raucous comedy set against the backdrop of the Clydebank blitz, it involves two Glasgow men, pitifully fending for themselves while their wives are respectively away on war work or evacuated. They are confronted by an escaped German airman who holds them at gunpoint, demanding first their trousers, or "breeks", and then, the last straw, a pie that is being cooked for their supper. Unfortunately, Hughie has mistakenly used a bottle of laundry fluid as a cooking ingredient and, in a comic payoff surely relished by wartime audiences, the German eats the pie and promptly falls writhing to the ground. As a review stated, the short play is "really a music hall sketch"³², an effect likely heightened by the casting and acting style of two of the cast members, Sam and Harry Hankin, who had experience of professional variety, the latter with the hugely popular Glasgow comic Tommy Morgan.

Avrom Greenbaum's career and reputation

Although he continued to write plays, with *The Dumb Wife's Tale* (1953) adapted from Rabelais, and *The Prey*, produced posthumously, Greenbaum's early promise as a playwright was unfulfilled. Arguably, the loss of momentum of his writing in the 1940s reflected not only competing pressures of other aspects of his theatre career – his directing, producing, and co-leadership of Glasgow Unity – but also a decision to prioritise the values of community-based theatre making over those of a professional career. If this focus emerged over time, rather than being a conscious decision, there were, in retrospect, several points where Greenbaum had what seem to be golden opportunities at least to explore the possibility of a professional career.

One came in 1949 when, following his successful GJIP production of *Morning Star*, the author Sylvia Regan, with whom he had struck up a warm correspondence, wrote from New York urging him to go

to London to direct a professional production of the play she was planning at the Embassy Theatre.³³ Greenbaum's response does not survive, but letters to him from the London producer suggest his initial refusal or prevarication, taken at face value, saw him quickly bypassed in the more decisive processes of professional theatre³⁴: it was certainly the case that he chose to forego the opportunity and remained in Glasgow, working in his family tailoring business.³⁵

Another opportunity, a decade earlier, might have driven forward his writing career. Set in biblical Jerusalem, his play *Ecce Homo* explores the impact of the coming of Jesus, referred to as "The Nazarene", from a Jewish perspective. It was performed by the Glasgow Transport Players at a SCDA festival in 1938.³⁶ In a 1939 letter to Greenbaum, Constance Martin, an editor preparing a play anthology for the publishers Gollancz, who had evidently been corresponding with Greenbaum about the play, reluctantly declined to include it in the collection because he was unwilling to accept her suggested editorial changes.³⁷ However, in declining the play, Martin suggested that she could pass it on to a friend editing a new series for another publisher that would be aimed at the amateur market which, she notes, could generate performances and royalties from sales of acting copies.³⁸ As a result of not working with editorial input, Greenbaum missed out on this international context and *Ecce Homo* was eventually issued as an acting copy by Pinker's Play Bureau, possibly the company Martin was suggesting.³⁹

In hindsight, Greenbaum's decision not to work with Martin as an editor may have marked a crossroads. It is certainly no mean feat to see *The Bread of Affliction* published in the *Best One-Act Plays of 1937* but to have been published by Victor Gollancz, a leading imprint, and in a volume including dramatists whose work he greatly admired – the resulting anthology included plays by Bridie, Chekhov, Dreiser, Housman, Maeterlinck, O'Casey, O'Neill, Pirandello, Schnitzler, Wilde and Yeats – was an opportunity that would have guaranteed wider exposure for anyone aspiring to a career as a dramatist. Greenbaum's publication in the less editorially interventionist world of amateur theatre demonstrates either considerable integrity and/or an aversion to penetrating criticism.

The decision, or circumstances, that led him to concentrate on writing for the non-professional theatre of amateur groups and societies, probably explains, as much as competing family and professional pressures, Greenbaum's failure to progress beyond a handful of one-act dramas to the larger canvas of full length plays that might better allow for the exploration of more complex and challenging themes and which were usually the preserve of professional theatre. It was a problem – or even fate – he shared with the Scottish miner playwright Joe Corrie whose career was similarly restricted by the limitations of writing for the amateur market, which could sometimes be parochial and could certainly direct the ambition and scope of a writer towards the form, tone and scope of non-professional practice. In a 1944 letter to Greenbaum, Corrie railed against the difficulty of getting people in "country places" to tackle new subjects, remarking, "These little places are still so much laird-ridden, and the people are still so cringing."⁴⁰ It is a fairly mean-spirited view from a writer who is so much identified with the positive values of community and potential for politics in mid-century amateur theatre, but it also rings of a deeply felt frustration and creative truth.

Certainly Greenbaum's creativity was diverted into other areas of theatre making: in his wartime artistic role with Glasgow Unity Theatre he was soon exploring the challenges of full-length dramas, albeit as a director rather than a writer of highly successful productions of Odets' *Awake and Sing!*,

O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, and de Vega's *Fuente Ovejuna*. Moreover, his skills as a director, dramaturg and teacher meant that he was particularly suited to the creative demands of community-centred theatre making, which allowed him to work with an ensemble company over long rehearsal periods in a context that understood in deep ways the values of participant and audience alike.⁴¹ Greenbaum's practice resolved into an approach to theatre which felt collegiate, inclusive and community-based, in a way that was sufficiently fulfilling in and of itself. In this respect, it may be wrong to evaluate Greenbaum's contribution in relation to a professional career to which he probably never aspired – and it is important not to negate the major influence he made on non-professional theatre in Scotland over many, many years.

In this light Greenbaum was an amateur in the best, truest sense of the word. His friend and close collaborator, the designer Tom Macdonald, wrote that he “was an artist to his fingertips... whatever he did he did with an artist's eye, and his whole drive was to increase his effectiveness as an artist”.⁴² The fact that his theatre work was firmly rooted in his family and in the wider Jewish community was something which gave it an extra social and cultural dimension that transcended the limitations of professional theatre. On his death, among appreciations in the *Jewish Echo*, was an editorial which put his achievements in a broader social context and as a proxy for the achievements of the immigrant Jewish community by stating that “he undoubtedly made one of the few original artistic contributions we have seen in our community and brought credit upon us all from a wider field.”⁴³

Conclusion

The plays produced by the GJIP mirrored and explored the multiple strands of Scottish-Jewish identity. They celebrated Jewish culture and history and brought out into the open the persecutions of the recent past. After the War, the group's move to explore challenging European classic plays represented a statement of the seriousness with which the Players' approached their art form, embracing a cosmopolitanism and ambition which marked them out from other community theatre groups and which lent Greenbaum in particular a continuing kudos within Scottish theatre. Yet, on a more functional, institutional level, Glasgow's Jewish community took enormous pride in the group's achievements. Its invitation to perform at the Glasgow International Exhibition, its success in SCDA and British Drama League competitions, and Greenbaum's own career as a published playwright were fully recognised and celebrated. Reflecting this, Greenbaum's two best plays, *The Bread of Affliction* and *The Watch on the Clyde*, demonstrate the polar extremes of the Glasgow-Jewish experience within a lifetime: first, the persecution of the Eastern European pogroms; and second, the shared deprivations, wartime comradeship and black humour of the Clydebank blitz and working-class Glasgow. Greenbaum's ability to write a rich vernacular dialogue, alongside his popular Scots-Yiddish Burns parodies, showed a deeply-felt Glaswegian and Scottish and Jewish identity.

Whilst Greenbaum's early promise as a playwright was not fulfilled, with his writing sacrificed to pressure of his family business and his theatre work as a producer and administrator, it may be wrong to confuse this with a “failure” to turn professional. His decision to remain an amateur, working on ambitious and challenging projects with ensemble casts over extended rehearsal periods, may have provided an alternative path that was creatively fulfilling and sustainable on its own terms. The idea of this as a viable new model of community theatre making, one that

challenged existing protocols and assumptions, including the old professional/amateur binaries on which Scottish theatre was based, contrasts with the example of Glasgow Unity Theatre, which began with strong community precepts as a socialist group but lost its way when it tried to transform itself into a professional company and quickly lost its sense of purpose and direction. In remaining within his community and retaining artistic control of his output on his own terms, Greenbaum kept the integrity of his work and its close identity with his community.

The story of GJIP and Greenbaum is an important modifier in respect of scholarly orthodoxies around class as the key trope shaping Scottish theatre, certainly in the mid-twentieth century. Whilst it is certainly the case that the members of GJIP were working class, their identity as Jewish and, indeed, as first and second-generation immigrants was just as important and recognising that prioritisation not only pushes back on previous scholarship but also, perhaps, goes a small way to challenge contemporary social and cultural fears of immigration and immigrants' engagement with indigenous, migrant and hybrid culture. Not only did the GJIP make an important artistic contribution by expanding the repertoires of Scottish theatre, but its functioning and objectives as a proudly-felt community company also tells an important story about the evolution and assimilation of the Jewish community in Glasgow, as it progressed across several generations.

The members of GJIP used culture, specifically theatre, to share an understanding of cultural diversity for a new wider Glaswegian and Scottish community. Their work represents an important story of a distinctive moment in the cultural life of one city – how one group of its new citizens used theatre to confront local social and economic issues and to raise awareness of international politics including the rise of fascism – that may contain important truths of more recent migrations. Through theatre, these first- and second-generation immigrants found creative and radical ways to make visible their own lived experience and the experience of oppressed and marginalised communities here, elsewhere in Europe and beyond. In the context of our society's contemporary fear and mistrust of immigrants, this story begins to suggest an important lesson about the place of culture and cultural production in driving social integration and influence.

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¹ For the history of the Glasgow Jewish community see: Ben Braber, *Jews in Glasgow 1879-1939: Immigration and Integration* (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007); Kenneth E. Collins, *Second City Jewry: The Jews of Glasgow in the Age of Expansion, 1790-1919* (Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, 1990) and *The Jewish Experience in Scotland from Immigration to Integration* (Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, 2007); Kenneth E. Collins, Aubrey Newman and Bernard Wasserstein, eds, *Two Hundred Years of Scottish Jewry* (Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, 2018); Harvey L. Kaplan, *The Gorbals Jewish Community in 1901* (Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, 2006). First-hand accounts of Jewish life in Scotland include: Ralph Glasser, *Growing Up in The Gorbals* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1986); Murdoch Rogers, "Glasgow Jewry: The History of the City's Jewish Community" in Billy Kay, ed., *The Complete Odyssey: Voices from Scotland's Recent Past* (Second edition. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), 227-235; Evelyn Cowan, *Spring Remembered: A Scottish Jewish Childhood* (Glasgow: Southside, 1974; London: Corgi, 1990); and, David Daiches, *Two Worlds: An Edinburgh Jewish Childhood* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1956; Edinburgh: Canongate, 1987) and *Was: A Pastime from Time Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975; and, Glasgow: Richard Drew, 1990).

² A wide collection of primary materials relating to the Glasgow Jewish Institute Players, including programmes, cuttings, photographs, costume designs and posters, as well as Greenbaum's papers, correspondence and play scripts, is held in the Scottish Theatre Archive (STA) in the University of Glasgow Library. The Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Glasgow also holds material on the GJIP and its successor group, the Avrom Greenbaum Players. For some secondary work on GJIP and Greenbaum see: Ada D. Slater, "The Glasgow Jewish Institute Players," *The Jewish Quarterly*, autumn 1956, 35-7; Morris Linden, "Avrom Greenbaum: A Tribute by Morris Linden," *Jewish Echo*, October 9, 1963, 5; Evelyn Cowan, "On Stage, Everybody!" *The Scots Magazine*, November 1980, 158-66; Cowan, "50th Anniversary of Avrom Greenbaum Players," *SCDA Scene Magazine* [1986?], 6-7, Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, Avrom Greenbaum Players, Archival Box; Paul Maloney and Adrienne Scullion, "From the Gorbals to the Lower East Side: the Cosmopolitanism of the Glasgow Jewish Institute Players," *New Theatre Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2018): 58-73; and, Linda Mackenney, *The Activities of Popular Dramatists and Drama Groups in Scotland, 1900-1952* (Lewiston, NY; Queenston, Ont; Lampeter, UK: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000). GJIP founder member Ida Schuster also wrote and produced a video documentary, *A Short History of the Glasgow Jewish Institute Players* (Scottish Jewish Archives Centre Audio Visual Library. VID-DVD-0020 1996).

³ Greenbaum, "New Stages" in *Hashanah: The Scottish Jewish Yearbook 1955-6*: 117-20, 118.

⁴ In these biographical elements Greenbaum's experience parallels that of the rather better-known Scottish Jewish intellectual Ralph Glasser (1916-2002), who also left school at the age of 14 in order to start work: see Glasser, *Growing Up in The Gorbals* (1986). His autobiographical writing continued with: *Gorbals Boy at Oxford* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988); *Gorbals Voices, Siren Songs* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1990); and, *A Gorbals Legacy* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2000).

⁵ Morris Linden, "Avrom Greenbaum: A tribute," *Jewish Echo* October 9, 1963, 5.

⁶ Avrom Greenbaum, "New Stages" in *Hashanah: The Scottish Jewish Yearbook 1955-6* (Glasgow: The Hashanah Committee of the Glasgow Commission of the Jewish National Fund, 1956; held in the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre), 117-20.

⁷ See Linda Mackenney, *The Activities of Popular Dramatists and Drama Groups in Scotland, 1900-1952* (Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 70-110.

⁸ Anthologised in Linda Mackenney, ed., *Joe Corrie: Plays, Poems and Theatre Writings* (Edinburgh: 7:84 Publications, 1985).

⁹ The Empire Exhibition was a hugely popular international exposition held in Bellahouston Park in Glasgow in 1938. It hosted pavilions celebrating the industry, culture and sport of Scotland and the British Empire and attracted some 12 million visitors.

¹⁰ J. W. Marriott, ed., *The Best One-Act Plays of 1937* (London: Harrap, 1938).

¹¹ Press cutting. "Four Glasgow Jews Honoured: Services to Community recognised," *Jewish Echo* January 27, 1939. (STA A.k.4).

¹² The five constituent companies were the Clarion Players, the Glasgow Players, the Glasgow Transport Players, the Glasgow Workers' Theatre Group and the GJIP. An extensive literature on Glasgow Unity Theatre includes: John Hill, "Towards a Scottish People's Theatre: the Rise and Fall of Glasgow Unity," *Theatre Quarterly* 7, no. 27 (1977): 61–70 and "Glasgow Unity Theatre: the Search for a 'Scottish People's Theatre'", *New Edinburgh Review* 40 (1978): 27–31; Adrienne Scullion, "Glasgow Unity Theatre: the Necessary Contradictions of Scottish Political Theatre," *Twentieth Century British History* 13, no. 3 (2002): 215–52; and, Bill Findlay, ed., *Scottish People's Theatre: Plays by Glasgow Unity Writers* (Glasgow: Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 2008).

¹³ *The Dybbuk; or, Between Two Worlds* was written by S. Ansky between 1913 and 1916, originally in Russian and then in Yiddish, in which language it received its stage premiere in Warsaw in 1920. The play is about a young woman who is possessed by the malicious spirit of her dead lover, the dybbuk of the title. The play was picked up by theatre makers and internationally and became canonical in both Yiddish and Hebrew theatre – for example, it was first produced by Habima in 1922.

¹⁴ For Macdonald's involvement with Glasgow Unity, Avrom Greenbaum and the GJIP see contributions by Cordelia Oliver, Ida Schuster and Russell Hunter in *Tom Macdonald, 1914-1985: Paintings, Drawings and Theatre Designs* (Glasgow: Third Eye Centre, 1986): 5-14, 29-30 and 34-7 respectively.

¹⁵ When a production of Rattigan's *The Deep Blue Sea* was presented.

¹⁶ Mackenney, *The Activities of Popular Dramatists and Drama Groups in Scotland* (2000).

¹⁷ The GJIP repertoire includes the following, with * indicating productions directed by Avrom Greenbaum for Glasgow Unity Theatre:

Plays on Jewish subject and identity: Avrom Greenbaum, *Kultur* (1936), *The Bread of Affliction* (1936), *The Fifth Line/Watch on the Clyde* (1942/1947), *The Dumb Wife's Tale* (after Rabelais) (1953); *New Order Comes to Paradise* (nd); Bertram Jacobs, *The Man with the Puckel* (1936); Noah Elstein, *Israel in the Kitchen* (1937); Michael Goldberg and Avrom Greenbaum, *Hymn Without Praise* (1939); Sandros Martinescu, *The Jews of Hodos* (1939); Ben Hecht, *The Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto* (1944); S. Ansky's *The Dybbuk* (1946/1951); Wolf Mankowitz, *The Bespoke Overcoat* (1954); A. L. Zimmermann, *The Dream* (1954); George Tabori, *Flight Into Egypt* (1956); Thomas Cruden, *The Faithful Wife of Ephesus* (1958); Bernard Kops, *The Hamlet of Stepney Green* (1959).

International/classic plays: Henrik Ibsen, *Ghosts* (1938); Sean O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock* (1942*/1954); Lope de Vega, *Fuente Ovejuna* (1944*); Bernard Shaw, *Arms and the Man* (1947); Jean Giraudoux, *The Madwoman of Chailot* (1957); J. M. Barrie, *Dear Brutus* (1957).

American Jewish writers: Clifford Odets, *Till the Day I Die* (1939), *Awake and Sing!* (1940/1941*), *Golden Boy* (1943*), *Rocket to the Moon* (1946*), *Winter Journey*, UK title for *The Country Girl* (1955); Sylvia Regan, *Morning Star* (1945, 1945*, 1959), *The Fifth Season* (1955); Arthur Laurents, *Home of the Brave* (1947); Irwin Shaw, *The Gentle People* (1948); Norman Krasna, *Dear Ruth* (1948); Elma Ehrlich Levinger, *The Tenth Man* (1950); Fay Elhert, *The Undercurrent* (1950); Hy Kraft, *Café Crown* (1951); Arthur Miller, *All My Sons* (1953), *Death of a Salesman* (1957).

¹⁸ See Maloney and Scullion, "From the Gorbals to the Lower East Side," *New Theatre Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2018): 58-73.

¹⁹ Ellen Schiff, 'Introduction', *Awake and Singing! Six Great American Jewish Plays* (Second edition. New York: Applause, 2004): 18.

²⁰ Avrom Greenbaum, *Kultur* (STA A.k.23-30).

²¹ For this wartime revival Greenbaum himself played Sid.

²² Could the play’s mocking of the aesthetic pretensions and gullibility of the well-to-do have been given an added twist if, in performance, the wealthy couple targeted for the comic deception were depicted as Anglo-Jewish? The Jewish community was acutely alive to the nuances of social climbing and pretentiousness, which featured prominently in the GJIP’s post-war satirical revues. Several factors, including the play’s fantasised Mayfair setting, the Eastern European name of the bohemian artist (Prometheus Bronsky) and the couple’s own surname (Ludgate), redolent of the kind of portmanteau Anglicisation adopted by many immigrants, hint at a cosmopolitan Jewish milieu. Is it possible that in this context “Kultur” served to signify a play within a play taking place within its otherwise conventional social comedy? In such a reading “Kultur” may be seen to flag in teasing mode the multiple identities deployed by Jewish immigrants in mid-century Britain.

²³ Avrom Greenbaum, *The Children of Dreams in Twelve One-Act Plays: New Comedies and Festival Plays* (London: Pinker’s Play Bureau, 1938): 107-37 (STA A.k.22).

²⁴ Avrom Greenbaum, *Nocturne in Midsummers* (STA A.k.32).

²⁵ Greenbaum, *The Children of Dreams in Twelve One-Act Plays*: 130.

²⁶ For example, in notes written in support of his production of Noah Elstein’s *Israel in the Kitchen*, Greenbaum proposes that showing Jewish characters in realistic, everyday situations, offers an explicit exploration of the economic and social basis of their situation in a way that “not only brings the urgency of their problem home to the Jews, but to everyone – Jew and non-Jew – who earnestly desires to make an end to conditions which perpetuate this ever-recurrent tragedy”. Producer’s Note by Avrom Greenbaum, programme, *Israel in the Kitchen*, week commencing 6 December 1937 (Scottish Jewish Archives Centre CUL.AGP0001).

²⁷ Press cutting. “Playwright Talks on His Craft,” *Evening News*, January 17, 1939 (STA A.k.4).

²⁸ The extracts below parallel Bernard Jacobs’ *The Man With The Puckel*, a Jewish comedy also produced by GJIP in 1936, and Greenbaum’s undated *New Order Comes to Paradise*, suggesting something of the broad and bold word play of the contemporary Jewish comedy.

Bernard Jacobs, <i>The Man With The Puckel</i> (STA A.k.38)	Avrom Greenbaum, <i>New Order Comes to Paradise</i> (STA A.k. Box 62)
<p>Cohen: [...] it’s all dark and Galinsky won’t have a light. And the place is filled up with rats – and such rats – big like elephants.</p> <p>Sarah: That’ll do. Abe’s got to have his supper. So be off please.</p> <p>Cohen: And the black beetles – they make like a carpet. You sleep on them, they go squash, squash. And Galinsky make you go about in your feet so the burglars don’t hear you and run away.</p> <p>Sarah: Will you go?</p> <p>Cohen: And the skins got the anthrax. You touch them and get it.</p> <p>Sarah: Get out!</p> <p>Cohen: The last man commit susancide. He hang himself in a cupboard. At the inkvitch they said it was self-defence – oi yoi!</p> <p>Sarah: Out you get.</p> <p>Cohen (<i>as he is being propelled along</i>): I tell you it will kill you in no time – or quicker.</p>	<p>Angel (<i>opens door</i>): Crivens! There’s that face again. Can ye no’ leave the door alone?</p> <p>Hitler: Zis is an absolute disgrace. You haf insult ze Aryan race. Hitler you order in ze queue, – ze gate you open for ze Jew. I warn you zere is nothing surer, as sure as I’m ze German Fueerer Mein spirit you insulted haf vere I get in, I blitz, – I strafe !!</p> <p>Angel: Awa’ ye go, ye make me laugh ye nebbitt, sonsie, daur wee n’yaff !</p> <p>Hitler: You haf no right to keep me from my claim to heavenly Lebensraum. I claim ze sun, ze moon, ze stars.</p> <p>Angel: If a’d ma way, a’d kick your... backside. Ye’d think the blessed place wis his tae hear him. Even as it is heaven’s chock-a-block wi’ narks frae Rabbie Burns tae Karl Marx, turnin’ the angels intae sceptics wi’ chancey rhymes an’ dialectics.</p>

²⁹ Press cutting. “The Jewish Theatre,” *Jewish Echo* 27 March 27, 1959 (Scottish Jewish Archives Centre).

³⁰ See F. W. Freeman, 'The Scots-Yiddish Poems of Avrom Greenbaum', *Cencrastus* (spring/summer 1995): 17-18.

³¹ Avrom Greenbaum, *The Watch on the Clyde* in *Seagull Plays: Second Collection* (Glasgow: A. & J. Donaldson, [195?]) (STA H.k. Box 2/1).

³² Unidentified press cutting. "Jewish Dramatic Club" (STA A.k.4). The writer, "Jingle", suggests that, in the leading roles, "Jack Brill and the author played a couple of Scotch comics to the life."

³³ Regan, who had long assured Greenbaum that he "belonged to the theatre", wrote: "Now, Avrom, when first this was broached to me it occurred to me that you would be the only one in Great Britain to stage the play for them. Who knows this play better than you?" Batting aside prevarications she suggests: "You say you could not get away, but certainly three or four weeks is not such a very long time, is it? Could not arrangements be made to make this possible?" Letter to Greenbaum from Sylvia Regan, July 29, 1949 (STA A.j. Box 7/5).

³⁴ See Oscar Lewenstein's letters to Greenbaum, May 23, June 10 and August 2, 1949 (STA A.r. Box 2/14a-c).

³⁵ Ironically, it was Greenbaum's Glasgow Unity co-producer Robert Mitchell who directed the successful British professional premiere of *Morning Star*, now retitled *The Golden Door*, in September 1949.

³⁶ See Greenbaum, "New Stages," *Hashanah: The Scottish Jewish Yearbook 1955-66*: 117-20, 119.

³⁷ Martin's correspondence indicates that she had found the play too wordy, full of repetitions and clichés, and also wished to cut some dialogue involving two women characters that she felt too crude and, in the case of a sensual scene, too sexually explicit

³⁸ Martin's letter conveys a sense of what might have been: writing at length, and with sensitivity, to explain her critical position, she had clearly found Greenbaum a demanding, if not exasperating, correspondent. Although Greenbaum's correspondence and defence of his creative choices does not survive, Martin's reasoned criticisms emphasise the fine line between integrity and intractability in such editor/author relationships. Refuting the charge of attempting to dilute his writing, she notes that, "If you should ever read a FIFTY [the collection *Fifty One-Act Plays*], or study Mr Gollancz's output in general, you will surely admit there is nothing narrow or conservative in it. He has given the first English publication of Clifford Odets, Kozlenko, and *Bury the Dead*, quite unexpurgated." Martin mentions that the new collection will include work by world authors "including plays by such writers as Paul Green, O'Neill, Pirandello, Schnitzler, the Quintero Brothers, Evreinov, Rabindranath Tagore, and others of international prestige, in addition to the representative work of our own dramatists, within the amateur movement or outside it." The "FIFTY" to which Martin refers is her collection *Fifty One-Act Plays* (London: Gollancz, 1934). Letter from Constance M. Martin to Greenbaum, June 21, 1939 (STA A.k.31).

³⁹ Avrom Greenbaum, *Ecce Homo. A Drama in One Act, Acting Copy* (London: Pinker's Play Bureau, [no date]. No ISBN.) (STA A.k.31).

⁴⁰ Letter from Joe Corrie to Greenbaum, January 7, 1944 (STA A.j. Box 7/8).

⁴¹ One reason for this understanding may have been that his closest collaborators in the GJIP included a number of family members: Ida Schuster, the group's leading actress, was his sister-in-law; and, Greenbaum's own sister Hilda was married to Sam (later known as Samm) Hankin, one of the company's leading actors, whose brother Harry also acted with the group. In addition, Ida Schuster's brother Leon Schuster was stage and production manager for both GJIP and Glasgow Unity and Greenbaum's own brother, Ben Greenbaum, was a gifted musician who provided piano accompaniment at performances of *Bread of Affliction* and composed ballads for Greenbaum's production of *Fuente Ovejuna*.

⁴² *Tom Macdonald 1914-1985*: 5-6.

⁴³ *The Jewish Echo*, October 9, 1963, 5.