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Exhibiting Jewish Culture in Post-War Britain: Glasgow's 1951 Festival of Jewish Arts

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Bio:

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Abstract

The Festival of Jewish Arts in Glasgow was the first and largest Jewish festival in Britain, conceived as a response to, and timed to coincide with, the Festival of Britain in 1951. Held at Glasgow's McLellan Galleries on Sauchiehall Street from 4-25 February 1951, the event showcased works from over fifty internationally renowned Jewish artists, antiquities dating back from the 13th century, musical performances, films, lectures, a book display and a run of sell-out performances of S. An-sky's, *The Dybbuk*. In this essay, I offer the first sustained account of the festival by bringing together available documentation and analysing the "performance of display" and perspectives on Jewish culture the festival offered. As this essay argues, when looking at the material and tangible elements of the festival alongside the social and cultural ideals of its organisers, one can discern a complex negotiation between the historical place and space of the festival, the concerns of the community, and the tensions between minority and mainstream Scottish and British culture. The Festival of Jewish Arts thus provides a rare window through which to view a Jewish community grappling with issues of loss and reconstructing identity in the aftermath of Nazi atrocities while at the same time trying to transcend the perception of their Otherness and respond to British anxieties about Jewish refugees and the founding of the State of Israel.

Key words: Jewish identity, Holocaust and memory, ethnic festivals, modern Jewish art, the *Dybbuk*, S. Ansky, Jewish Institute Players, Glasgow Jews, performance, Festival of Britain, Britishness, post-war pluralism, Zionism.

“*Ikh bin an arkhev*,” Ida Schuster said to me with a knowing look and impish smile, her arms spread wide, welcoming me to delve into the pages of her life.¹ Indeed, I had come to visit Ida, who was soon to celebrate her 100th birthday, to guide me through her personal archive as a theatre actor, director, and key cultural figure in the Glasgow community. I sat having tea at her dining table, enjoying the colourful descriptions of Glasgow’s Jewish theatre – both gaffes and successes — her reflections on her career as well as theatrical pieces and famous theatre personalities. It was certainly more entertaining than any archive to which I had ever been. But I had come to her home not only to find out about her life in Jewish theatre; I was also there to gain insight into one very grand festival of Jewish art that took place in Glasgow in 1951. Ida and I were to give a joint talk on the festival for a Jewish Book Week event being held in April 2018. Undoubtedly, Ida was to be the draw of the event – it is rare enough to find someone who can recall a century of life with such vivid detail, but she is also an engaging speaker and performer, a well-known personality, and an experienced and thoughtful interviewee. For me, the talk was a good opportunity to explore some of the wider theoretical issues that concerned my research and scholarship.

The Festival of Jewish Arts in Glasgow, Britain’s second city at the time, was conceived as a response to, and timed to coincide with, the Festival of Britain in 1951. Held at Glasgow’s McLellan Galleries on Sauchiehall Street from 4-25 February 1951, the event showcased works from over fifty internationally renowned Jewish artists, including Marc Chagall, Camille Pissaro, Amedeo Modigliani, Chaim Soutine, Joseph Herman, and Yankel Adler. On display as well were antiquities dating back from the 13th century; there were films, musical performances, a display of 2,000 books, and lectures by artist Joseph Herman and renowned philosopher Martin Buber. There was also a run of sell-out performances of S. An-sky’s, *The Dybbuk* by the Jewish Institute Players— in which Ida Schuster, a well-established actor in her thirties at the time, played the lead role of Leah to rave reviews.

From a wider Jewish cultural studies perspective, I was curious about the ideological motivations behind the event as whole. I had many questions for Ida that afternoon: Why an art festival, who was it aimed at, what kind of art, why then, and why in Glasgow? And what does it tell us about what was important to the leaders of the Jewish community at the time? Admittedly, I also had an ulterior motive. And perhaps some of my questions for Ida were more leading than I had intended. I wondered if she felt that the festival—much like the wedding in the famed theatrical piece *The Dybbuk*—was haunted by the “undead” spirit of Jewish life cut short by devastation in the Shoah. Ida was quick to reject this tentative theory:

“Academics like to put things into neat little boxes,” she admonished, softening her criticism with a wry smile. “That’s not how it was.”

How was it then? Like any historical event, it would be difficult to know exactly how the Festival of Arts was, and for whom. There is some evidence of its nature and influence: a programme in the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre,² one copy of the exhibition guide and art catalogue at the National Library of Scotland, opening speeches and reviews in Glasgow’s Jewish newspaper, the *Jewish Echo*,³ and brief mentions in a couple of other Scottish newspapers of the time. There are no critical analyses of the festival, not much historical information, no extant record of attendance (although the newspaper does refer to one), no floor plans, and few people alive who remember the event, aside from Ida. In this essay, I offer the first sustained account of the 1951 Festival of Jewish Arts in Glasgow by bringing together all the available documentation and analysing the perspectives it offers, as well as recording the testimony of one of the very few active participants who are still alive. As I will argue, when looking at the material and tangible elements of the festival alongside the social and cultural ideals of its organisers, one can discern a complex negotiation between the historical place and space of the festival, the concerns of the community, and the tensions between minority and mainstream Scottish and British culture. The Festival of Jewish Arts provides a rare window through which to view a Jewish community grappling with issues of loss and reconstructing identity in the aftermath of Nazi atrocities while at the same time trying to transcend the perception of their Otherness and respond to British anxieties about Jewish refugees and the founding of the State of Israel.

To be sure, large Jewish art exhibitions had been held in Britain before. An important section of the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition in 1887 featured artworks and, ten years later, the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London held the first major Jewish exhibition dedicated solely to art in 1906, *Jewish Art and Antiquities* (2000 works).⁴ The 1951 event was, however, the first and largest Jewish cultural festival held in Britain. Key to my analysis of its content and focus event is the distinction between “exhibition” and “festival.” Jewish cultural performances at festivals are often sites that highlight how ideas about Jewish culture and identity, what can be called “Jewishness” are mediated and adjudged within social and cultural moments. Especially in the context of 1950s post-war cultural pluralism, between artist, curator/organiser, and audience lies a network of ideologies about issues such the performance and construction of ethnic identification, national ideals, and the place of art and culture as mediator of local and global concerns due to its supposedly transcendent nature. This makes a festival of Jewish art differ from, for example, a museum exhibition.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, interprets the ethnic festival as “a display genre” “governed by an aesthetic of pure theatricality.” In other words, festivals “depend on the performative” to synthesise and encapsulate an idea of ethnicity that is rather complex.⁵ While the term “festival” implies a carnival-like atmosphere (from the Latin words *festum* “public joy” and *feria* “abstinence from work in honour of the gods), ethnic celebrations are intensely political moments of display.⁶ Examining the performance and Jewish displays at Glasgow’s Festival of Jewish Arts not only illuminates the ways in which local performances of Jewishness are rooted in a social and political moment; more importantly, it broadens our understandings of the ideologies behind “exhibiting Jewishness” and how these performances respond to historically fraught issues such as migration, war, nationalism, Otherness, and minority self-construction in respect to mainstream culture. With these issues in mind, in this essay I examine the “performance of display” at the festival within a post-World War II social and political context to interrogate what organisers and key performers constructed as “Jewish” and what we can learn from this process. I first look at the social and political context of Glasgow’s Jewish Festival of Arts – why 1951 and why Glasgow? I then take Ida Schuster’s testimony into consideration as I closely analyse the media coverage, the Festival Guides, and the performance of a Jewish past in *The Dybbuk* to probe how social and political anxieties about antisemitism, the Holocaust, and the recent establishment of the State of Israel influenced Glasgow organisers’ performance of Jewish culture.

1951: Britain’s Festival Madness

The time had been considered ripe for Jews to take stock of their cultural achievements and to see where they stood in relation to the general stream of culture, for the benefit of themselves and their children.⁷

With this reported statement, well-known sculptor Benno Schotz, RSA [Royal Scottish Academy], chair and organizer, and himself an important part of Jewish cultural achievements in the arts, opened the Festival of Jewish Arts on 9 February 1951. Why was that time ripe? For one thing, the Festival of Britain was to take place that summer; Glasgow’s Jewish cultural festival was meant, in part, to respond to the British festivities, whose goal was to highlight “the nation and its peoples.”⁸ In his opening speech to the Festival of Britain on 3 May 1951, King George stressed that the purpose of the Festival of Britain was to both raise morale and also reinvigorate the arts, culture and industrial power of the country. The Festival of Britain, which used £11 million of public funds at a time of near-

national bankruptcy,⁹ was clearly, like other festivals of its day, enmeshed in post-war concerns. Held to mark the centenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851, it was described by its director, Sir Gerald Barry as a “tonic to the nation,” an attempt to revive the spirit of the British people and reward it after years of rationing and deprivations during the war.¹⁰ King George’s speech at the opening of the festival makes this point very clear:

Two world wars have brought us grievous loss of life and treasure; and though the nation has made a splendid effort towards recovery new burdens have fallen upon it and dark clouds still overhand the whole world. Yet this is no time for despondency; for I see this Festival as a symbol of Britain’s abiding courage and vitality.¹¹

The Festival of Britain opened on the 4th May 1951 and ran until September that year, with thousands of events held all over the country under the Festival banner. More than eight million people visited the main Festival site in London on the South Bank of the Thames River, and it is still remembered with much nostalgia. Yet, as Becky Conekin argues, in its essence the Festival of Britain did not merely reflect or promote British identity; it presented a “reconstruction” of that identity. The timing – just a few years following the Second World War – as well as the focus of the festival displays and activities revealed a people and a government’s attempt to create new meanings for the terms “Britain” and Britishness, which included ideas such as social harmony, democracy, and a culture that was future-oriented.¹²

Aside from the Festival of Britain, the more general “stream” of post-war culture was thriving. In the immediate decade following World War II, Britain saw a surge in support for arts festivals and cultural events as a way to invigorate the economy, raise morale, and shore up national identity. As Ida Schuster reminisced about the period, Glasgow’s Festival of Jewish Arts was only one part of a post-war zeitgeist of celebrations of art and culture: “People were festival mad,” she recalled. The Edinburgh International Festival, founded in 1947 by Austrian-born Jew, Sir Rudolph Bing, was but one example. Other cultural projects enjoyed an increase in funding for music, theatre, and social clubs, formalised with the establishment of the government-funded Arts Council by Liberal politician Lord Maynard Keynes. In his statement in the first annual report of the Council in the summer of 1945, Keynes noted: “We look forward to a time when the theatre and concert hall and art gallery will be a living element in everybody’s upbringing”.¹³ Included in this idea of the importance of art and culture was that “freeing” the individual spirit in such a manner would be a fitting and proper memorial to war and loss. To quote Keynes’ closing words in his address to the first meeting of the newly-established Arts Council:

The purpose of the Arts Council of Great Britain is to create an environment to breed a spirit, to culture an opinion, to offer a stimulus to such purpose that the artist and the public can each sustain and liven the other in that union which has occasionally existed in the past at the great ages of a communal civilised life.¹⁴

If art and culture could enliven the spirit and transcend the decidedly “uncivilised” life of war, then so could the attainment of new knowledge. Aside from arts funding, the drive for public education rose more generally as well. In the period between 1947-1951 in Britain, “evening institutes” aimed at adult education more than doubled (from 5000 to 11,000) and registrations increased from 825,000 to 1.250,000.¹⁵ Public lectures, study groups, and educational books aimed at the general public all enjoyed increased support.

Evidence that Glasgow’s Jewish community was part of that cultural zeitgeist is clear from the records and pamphlets held in the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Glasgow. Although not the largest of Jewish populations in Britain (est. 15,000-17,000) it was certainly one of the most active.¹⁶ There were weekly study groups, book clubs, lectures, an active theatre group, as well as men’s and women’s clubs, dances and socials. Glasgow held the first Jewish Book Week in 1937, well before London’s more renowned event in 1952. It was also home to a widely successful and award-winning Jewish theatre group, the Jewish Institute Players, led by Avrom Greenbaum, playwright, director, and actor.¹⁷ It held its first staging in 1936 and by the time of the Jewish Festival of Arts had its own building (the Jewish Institute’s Joseph Bloch Little Theatre, on South Portland Street). The players had already won the 1946 championship of the Scottish Community Drama Association, among other awards. Greenbaum was also a key figure in Glasgow’s Unity Theatre, a “working-class theatre” formed during World War II, active in political and refugee themes.¹⁸ Ida Schuster, a key member of both theatre troupes, attests to the influence and capability that Greenberg had as a writer and director: “Avrom, in his understated way, drew out the best in actors, sometimes staying up all night with a person to get the best performance.”

For a city with only 3 per cent of Britain’s Jewish population of 450,000 (itself only 0.5 per cent of the entire population), there was an extraordinary number of Jewish artists who lived and worked in Glasgow.¹⁹ Aside from sculptor Benno Schotz, who came to Glasgow from Estonia in 1912 and was Head of Sculpture and Ceramic at the Glasgow School of Art (he became a member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1937), there were also a number of influential painters who either lived in Glasgow or came as refugees to escape Nazi persecution in the 1930-40s, such as Josef Herman and Yankel Adler (both left the city

in 1943).²⁰ Schotz and Adler had even held a successful earlier exhibition at the Jewish Institute in Glasgow in 1942, entitled *Jewish Art*. Ben Braber notably argues that these refugee artists fleeing Nazi persecution had a significant effect on Glasgow's wider artistic and cultural scene, introducing experimental, modernist aesthetics with influences of Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism, along with "a particular Jewish style" influenced by Jewish history and their experience as Jews.²¹ Other significant Scottish Jewish artists active in Glasgow included those who have only recently been given the attention they deserve, such as Hannah Frank, Hilda Goldwag, Marianne Grant, and sculptor Paul Zunterstein, among others associated with Glasgow's School of Art.²²

In considering the cultural activity of Glasgow's Jewish community and the openness with which refugee artists were accepted, it is perhaps understandable why Glasgow would be the ideal place for such an event. Nevertheless, Glasgow's Festival of Jewish Arts aimed to be part of the larger conversation about post-war culture in Britain and to outline very clearly how Jews could contribute to the culture of public education and knowledge formation. Privately funded by the Jewish community rather than a government body,²³ it nevertheless presented a reconstruction of what organisers wished to portray as Jewish culture and heritage in a way that elaborated on the political concerns of the Jewish community of that period. After all, to say it was a time of major change and focus for Jewish communities in Europe and around the world would be an understatement. The impact of WWII, the recent murder of European Jews in the Holocaust, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 undoubtedly affected the discourses around Jewish identity and culture in mid-twentieth century Britain.

In many ways, the Jewish Festival of Arts was not simply representing Jewish culture, but rather it was launching an intervention into already well-established, and often conflicting, stereotypes of Jews in the public sphere. These included impressions that Jews were, on the one hand, wandering refugees and victims and, on the other, economic powerhouses and political agitators, whether for Communism, Capitalism or Zionism.²⁴ As early as the 1890s, Jews in Britain were one of the predominant topics of interest in literature and media, and this continued throughout World War II and after. The arrival of 60,000 Jewish refugees from Germany during the late 1930s increased British consciousness of Jewish issues.²⁵ The *Times Literary Supplement*, for example, between 1918 and 1939 published "roughly 200 short book notes and longer review articles about Jewish topics, with the number of longer articles (as well as the total number of articles) increasing as the time period proceeded."²⁶ "Jews" as Tony Kushner observes, "'were news' and antisemitism

was common in daily discourse, literature and the press.”²⁷ Constructing an idea of Jewish culture and a past in Europe that could resist the impression that Jews were nationally Other was an important task for leaders of both the British and Scottish Jewish communities. As Braber observes: “there was an anxiety about the position of the Jews in Scottish society in general and a Jewish reluctance to stand out.”²⁸

The art world could provide an entry point to “explain” Jewishness in a way that was palatable to the public. The self-consciousness of Schotz’s comment to “take stock...in relation to the general stream of culture” is telling of that post-war ambivalence that was looking both inward and outward to recreate an image of Jewishness that was future-oriented, a focus on creation rather than destruction. The attempt to instil a sense of dignity and honour with a celebration of their cultural achievements would undoubtedly be no less of “a tonic” for the Jewish community than the Festival of Britain was for the general British population. Even so, the opportunity to influence how Jewishness was constructed by non-Jews was undoubtedly a key motivation. As Schotz recalls in his autobiography, “It [the festival]... attracted the attention of the non-Jewish public to the cultural contribution of the Jews to the world, at a time when it was needed.”²⁹ This “need” to explain Jewish culture to non-Jews was expressed in a variety of ways. The rationales for the importance of Glasgow’s Festival of Jewish Arts in the Jewish press, as well as the announcements, speeches, and letters that accompanied its promotion are especially revealing of the way in which anxieties about “insider” and “outsider” images of Jewish culture were negotiated at the time. The announcement in the *Jewish Echo* about the upcoming Arts Festival (2 February, 1951) is a case in point:

[A]lthough the occasion is designed primarily as an artistic event—and we are assured that the artistic merit has been the only criterion—let us not underestimate the effect that such a magnificent exhibition will have... The interest shown in non-Jewish circles regarding the Festival has been great, so that the promoters are under the heavy responsibility of presenting the best of the Jewish nation’s creative effort; on their choice many less knowledgeable people will base their judgement on the Jewish contribution.³⁰

The worried tone about the effect and impact of the festival on non-Jews – as well as the fear of how the Jewish contribution will be judged – undoubtedly put a heavy burden on the festival organisers. After all, the results of negative stereotyping were still fresh and newspapers continued to be filled with the ugly results of Nazi persecution. Even at a

government level, migration policies for refugees and support for the State of Israel depended on the Jewish community being ever vigilant of public opinion.

At the same time, the celebration was noticeably not only meant to improve interfaith relations. It is clear from the letters of support printed in the *Jewish Echo* that Jewish leaders saw the festival as an important endeavour to salvage and preserve Jewish culture for Jews—or more particularly, young Jews. Letters from British Jewish luminaries such as Rev Dr. Abraham Cohen, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, make patent the anxiety that leaders of the community felt about the continuity of Jewish culture due to the perceived disinterest of Jewish youth: “I hope that the younger element of Glasgow Jewry will be drawn to the Festival. What they will see and hear should deepen their pride and stimulate their interest in products of Jewish genius.”³¹ Likewise, renowned scholar of Jewish art and history Cecil Roth proclaimed in his letter: “the younger generation has begun to regard Judaism and Art as almost antipodal. If your Festival serves to correct this impression it will perform a great service in our own community as well as to cultural life in its wider sense.”³² The tone of apprehension in these letters reveals much about the fragile state that Jewish leaders perceived Jewish art and culture to be in. If Jewish art was to be preserved and regenerated by a future generation, that generation had to know its past. With these uneasy sentiments so clear, and the stakes of the Festival so high, how did Glasgow’s festival organizers endeavour to create a sense of good art and to invest meaning in a cultural life with which its youth could identify? What symbols did the Festival of Art use – or not use – to present what was Jewish?

The 1951 Festival’s Performance of Jewishness: “not Zionist propaganda”

Remarkably, one of the symbols of Jewishness the festival purportedly tried to avoid was that of Zionism. The *Scotsman* reported that at a press conference, organiser Benno Schotz “said that the Festival of Jewish Arts was not intended to present Zionist propaganda. It was to be judged on its own merits, as it was purely a cultural enterprise.”³³ The comment, whether quoted exactly or not, belies a sense of trepidation that perhaps highlighting the Glasgow Jewish community’s strong allegiances to Zionism would probably not serve the objectives of the festival. This type of statement appearing in the media so soon after the establishment of the State of Israel, and from an openly Zionist supporter such as Schotz, might be surprising. Yet, in the context of a celebration in line with the Festival of Britain, it also shows a concern by organisers that global politics might influence the appreciation or

“celebration” of both Judaism and its artworks. After all, according to many understandings of a festival, it is an event meant to unite communities. As Durkheim defines the festival it is “a collective excitement that frees society from its everyday ups and downs, engaging the social substance in its sacred substrate.”³⁴ The Festival of Jewish Arts’ programme nevertheless makes the claim for neutrality of art difficult to support. Clearly, the lack of blatant Zionist content in Glasgow’s festival did not mean that Israel, as well as other post-war Jewish concerns, did not enter the content or discourse surrounding the Festival events. After all, Glasgow’s Jewish community’s pride in and support for the State of Israel was not only clearly manifested by the fundraising and activism of the community, but also by the selection and focus of the exhibitions.³⁵

What was good art, then, according to the organisers? And how were these selections Jewish (but not Zionist)? In works and essays of the time, scholars such as Cecil Roth and Edward Roditi, as well as modern artists highlighted in the festival’s exhibition, like Josef Herman and Marc Chagall, were all concerned with this same question: “what is Jewish art.” Indeed, art historians are still grappling with ways to understand the boundaries of Jewishness in art today.³⁶ What is clearly more important here is what the organisers wanted others to think of as good Jewish art. To quote Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett: “Exhibitions, whether of objects or people, are ... exhibits of those who make them, no matter what their ostensible subject.”³⁷ By looking at what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls “the conventions guiding ethnographic display” in a close examination of the Exhibition Guide, media coverage, and reviews of the performances, one can uncover an ambivalent, self-conscious presentation of Jewish cultural heritage by Glasgow organisers that combined a refined Central European high culture with the ancient Jewish past and a somewhat hesitant embrace of Old World *Yiddishkeit*.³⁸ This is understandable taking into consideration the realities of post-war Jewish history. While the festival was clearly meant to be an occasion which, like other ethnic festivals, tried to fascinate viewers with the special, exotic and vibrant construction of Jewish culture, there was at the same time a resistance toward making Jewish culture appear too “strange” thus reinforcing stereotypes that Jews were outsiders to British culture. Moreover, while some may have had qualms about highlighting issues around Jewish victimhood at a celebration of culture, neither could one evade the recent murder of Jews by the Nazis without disrespecting the memory of the victims.

The obvious place to begin when examining how the festival negotiated these conflicting tensions around Jewish culture is to examine the published Exhibition Guide and the Art Catalogue. The printed material and explanatory notes were intended to give an

informative, concise and appealing version of Jewish history and culture. The explanatory texts themselves, written by eminent Jewish intellectuals and cultural elites, nevertheless reaffirm that there was indeed an uneasy relationship between the celebratory aim of a “festival” and the recent loss of Jewish material culture in Europe. Nor does it take much close analysis to uncover what is at stake for the writers of the Exhibition Guide when presenting Jewish art in a post-war reality: art lost, music silenced, synagogues destroyed, publishing houses burned, and the lives of a new generation of producers of Jewish culture cut short.

Exhibition Guides

I would speculate that Ida Schuster was not the only one who did not recall any overt focus on the Holocaust, revealed in her comment: “that’s not how it was.” Without a doubt, the tragedy of the Jews in Europe was one aspect of Jewish concern, but there was also a living and thriving culture on which to focus. Nevertheless, constant reminders of the Holocaust and the devastation it had wrought is evident in virtually every section of the program booklet and explanatory notes of the Exhibition Guides, even if subtly. If one reads the Festival of Jewish Arts exhibition as an ideological and political text, then the guides can be seen as textual practices meant to condense a message about Jewish culture and identity in a limited space. Moreover, whereas the keys to analysing what that message of Jewish culture might be are contained within the performances and displays themselves (i.e., “how it was”), the guides, program booklets and reviews of the festival provide the sole trace we can examine. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett identifies the distinct character of festivals and the importance of their program booklets. As she posits:

Festivals are generally less didactic and less textual [than museum exhibits]. They depend more on the performative, reserving extended textual analysis, to the degree that it is offered, for the program booklet, in this way avoiding the awkwardness of discoursing about living people in their very presence.”³⁹

In Glasgow’s Festival of Jewish Arts, the exhibition guides were separated into three booklets, printed by the University Press in Glasgow (Rupert MacLehose & Co): a) *The Festival of Art Exhibition Guide*; b) *1951 Art Exhibition Catalogue: Painting, Sculpture, Water Colours, Drawing, Etchings*, and c) *The Dybbuk* theatre programme booklet. *The Festival of Art Exhibition Guide* contained information about organisers, contributors, the

programme of events, including two live musical performances, two film viewings, one theatre performance (*The Dybbuk*) and lectures by Martin Buber on “The Biblical Dialogue,” celebrated artist Josef Herman on “Jewish Art’ and well-known writer and translator of Yiddish literature Joseph Leftwich on “Yiddish Literature.” As well, there were informative yet culturally sensitive explanatory notes and lists of items on display in the exhibits for Antiquities, Jewish Music, and Jewish Books -- separated into Hebrew literature, Yiddish literature and Jewish literature. The *1951 Art Exhibition Catalogue: Painting, Sculpture, Water Colours, Drawing, Etchings* listed a truly impressive array of works by significant European such as Max Liebermann, Isaac Israels, Mark Gertler, David Bomberg, Marc Chagall, Camille Pissaro, Amedeo Modigliani, Chana Orloff, aside from the work of those connected to Glasgow like Schotz, Herman and Adler. The booklet also included “the first fully illustrated catalogue of Jewish Artists’ work ever to be produced.”⁴⁰ This was to be reproduced in part, and then added to, the art catalogue of the Festival of Britain’s Anglo-Jewish Exhibition at the Ben Uri Gallery on Portman Street, London, held 9 July-3 August 1951 (although, the latter exhibit included only Jewish artists with a connection to Britain).⁴¹ Lastly, there was a separate booklet that accompanied the theatre production of *The Dybbuk*, with a reprint of “A Note on Chasidism” by renowned Jewish thinker Chaim Zhitlovsky that appeared in the 1926 edition of the play translated and adapted into English.⁴²

The explanatory notes about Jewish history and culture in the Exhibition Guide, the formal lectures and films, the music and theatrical performances were all very typical of post-war ethnographic festivals.⁴³ They encapsulated a unified message about Judaism and its culture in a way that could synthesise rather complex material as well as educate. But they also created a dividing line within the Jewish community between: “those who are licensed to do and those who are mandated to watch.”⁴⁴ All of the essays in the guides were written by celebrated and distinguished Jewish intellectuals of the time. In the case of the Art Catalogue foreword, written by Benno Schotz, it is clear that the aim is to highlight that Jews have a respectable and elite culture and their artists show variety as well as “coherence and unity in temperament and treatment.”⁴⁵ It is difficult to ascertain exactly what is meant by this comment in the Art Catalogue—perhaps one can discern a sense of melancholy in a number of the works, or interpret certain of the pieces as reactions to persecution, evoking themes of displacement or mourning in response to modern Jewish experience.⁴⁶ Many works, however, appear to be included simply because the artist was of Jewish heritage. Even so, Jewish heritage, as the writers of the foreword mention, was reason enough for there to be “considerable omissions” in the display. If the curators meant to have the art speak for itself,

the text of the Art Catalogue nevertheless intimates that there is also room to consider the art that cannot speak for itself, namely, those pieces that have disappeared during the war.⁴⁷ (Curiously, this detail is left out altogether in the booklet accompanying the British Festival's Anglo-Jewish Exhibit in London that took place in the summer of 1951). These omissions due to the persecution of Jewish artists in Europe are made even more prominent in other parts of the exhibition.

A more blatant reference to art pieces missing due to war accompanies other texts in the Exhibition Guide. In the case of the display of antiquities, the focus was on ancient heritage and "the creative and artistic forces of early Jewish life" as the author of the explanatory note on antiquities tells the reader. With objects dating back to the 13th century from London's famed Mocatta collection of Jewish manuscripts and artefacts (acquired by the Jewish Historical Society in 1905) which had not been displayed in over a decade, since before World War II. This too was a remarkable display, made more poignant since so much of the valuable material had been destroyed in 1940 during enemy action, aside from those items stored at the National Library of Wales for safety.⁴⁸ Spice boxes, Kiddush goblets, military medals of prominent Jews, scrolls, pointers, keys to synagogues, prayer books, Chanukah lamps, amulets, circumcision tools, manuscripts, all pointed to the rich religious and cultural heritage of the Jewish community of the time and the significant array of artefacts produced by Jewish goldsmiths, metalworkers, and scribes. Even so, also part of its legacy, as the author of the explanatory text reminds its readers, are the artefacts lost: "Unfortunately, only fragments of the art which abounded in medieval times remain with us today. In recent times the holocaust wreaked by the Nazis in Europe destroyed hundreds of Jewish libraries, museums, and private collections."⁴⁹ Similar statements accompany the text that explained the history and cultural context for the book exhibit, with over 1000 books in Yiddish, 500 in Hebrew and others in English, with some manuscripts dating back to the eighteenth century (such as a rare translation into Yiddish of the *Romance of King Arthur and his Knights*, 1699). In this section too, readers are reminded of an unrecoverable void in the literature display, left in the wake of the Nazi terror and vandalism that destroyed libraries and publishing houses. To this end, there was a display of "new" literature in the book exhibit: writings of the "churban" (destruction). It included books, documents, diaries, statistics and "eye witness accounts of survivors of ghettos, death camps, and underground and resistance movements," collected under the editorship of Mark Turkov in Argentina.⁵⁰ As the author of the foreword emphasises, this display was meant to be a "monument in their memory." Only in the music section, oddly enough, did the author of the explanatory note,

Mosco Carner, a well-known musicologist, conductor and critic, appear to eschew any longing or loss for the Jewish past by completely and unapologetically rejecting the relevance of “Jewish” music such as synagogue compositions, klezmer, *piyutim*, or folk songs since they “cannot be considered art-music” and do not contain “typically Jewish traits.” The music exhibit, which included both live performances and gramophone concerts, therefore only included a selection from Mahler, Schonberg, Bloch and Mendelssohn, the latter being the only one that Carner, rather narrowly, considered “near real greatness.”⁵¹

Reflecting what was important to the leaders of the Glasgow Jewish community at the time, the Festival of Art thus presented a Jewish identity that contained a pastiche of, on the one hand, the image of a beautiful and authentic past and, on the other, a modern multicultural cosmopolitanism that was both distinct in its Jewishness and unified with British identity. But there was also reluctance to omit altogether what was a main concern for Jewish communities all over Europe: how to be Jewish in the wake of the Holocaust, and how to express support for the new Jewish State while still embracing Scottish and British identities. At the same time as being conscious of the recent loss, the book displays, films, and even the theatrical performance highlighted works created in Israel or by Israelis with much pride. The Hebrew literature section featured great writers such as Chaim Nachman Bialik and Shaul Tchernichovsky, as well other recent works in *belles lettres* and lexicography coming out of Israel. It also featured books on Zionism, where the author of the booklet tellingly inserts his praise for the establishment of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as “one of the greatest events in modern Jewish history.” Otherwise, even the two titles of film showings exhibit the dichotomy of presenting post-World War II Jewish culture at a turning point: “The Last Chance” (1945), a Swiss film about refugees from Nazi Germany and “Tomorrow is a Wonderful Day” (1948) a semi-documentary about war orphans being rehabilitated in Israel.

More than any other performance of Jewishness at the festival, however, the Jewish Institute’s performance of An-sky’s *The Dybbuk* conveys an ambiguous relationship with the Old World past and the manner in which its symbolic meanings fit with the community’s vision of contemporary Jewish culture. Because of its centrality to the festival, and as a key to understanding the performance of Jewishness, a more in-depth analysis of this performance is warranted.

Performing the Jewish Past: The Dybbuk.

“Why did the Jewish Institute players choose *The Dybbuk* for the festival?” I asked Ida Schuster at one of our first meetings. “It was the obvious choice of play,” she declared. And, to be sure, *The Dybbuk* was, on one level, an obvious choice. *The Dybbuk* or *Between Two Worlds*, written in 1912-14 by S. An-sky (Shloyme Zanol Rapoport),⁵² was first performed in Yiddish by the Vilna Troupe in 1920, although it was Moscow’s Habima Theatre’s Hebrew production of the play in 1922, translated by Chaim Nachman Bialik, that put the company on the map.⁵³ It was, and still remains, one of the most popular plays in the history of both Yiddish and Hebrew theatre, with well over 2000 productions to date.

To summarise the plot, *The Dybbuk* relates a story of tragic love. Its setting is a small *shtetl* in southern Russia in the mid-nineteenth century. In an old synagogue, Khonen, a promising young scholar, realizes that the girl whom he loves, Leah, is going to be married off by her wealthy father, Sender, to the son of a rich merchant. In actuality Leah and Khonen were promised to one another by their fathers who were friends, a promise Sender has forgotten. Khonen, who dabbles in Kabbalah, tries to win Leah with the help of evil powers, which proves to be fatal. On the day of her wedding, Leah visits her mother’s grave and makes a short detour to visit Khonen’s grave as well. As she is being led to the wedding canopy, suddenly, in Khonen’s voice, Leah rejects the bridegroom –the wedding stops since everyone realizes she has been possessed by a dybbuk. Her father Sender rushes Leah to the court of the great rabbi to perform an exorcism. The dybbuk is exorcised (and excommunicated) and leaves Leah’s body, and her wedding is about to proceed. But Leah left alone, hears a voice. It is her beloved. She decides to leave her body and join him so their souls can be together.

On the surface, the play would seem to be a simple enough story of unrequited love. In An-sky’s letter to his friend Chaim Zhitlovsky (author of the “Note on Chasidism” in the Jewish Institute Player’s festival playbook), he reveals a much deeper significance for modern Jewish culture. As An-sky writes:

[T]hroughout the play there is a battle between... the individual’s striving for happiness and the survival of the nation, Khonen and Leah struggle for their personal happiness, while the tsaddik’s only worry is that ‘a living branch will wither on the eternal tree of the people of Israel.’ Which side is right?⁵⁴

Thus An-sky, an ethnographer, captured one of the essential dilemmas of modernity and unwittingly dramatized the conflict that Jewish communities faced for decades to come – the

question of how to grapple with the haunting and very “undead” spirit of a Jewish cultural life in the wake of modernity, assimilation, as well as oppression, pogroms, forced migrations, and the Holocaust. By using the dybbuk trope Ansky exploits the paradoxical nature of the figure for the way it links seemingly opposing concepts into one voice and body: life and death, past and present, female and male, good and evil, individual desire and tradition, and even the shtetl and the modern socialist state. It was the struggle of the Jewish modernist artist who left his traditional home to fulfil aesthetic ambitions, and of the children who left their parents and homes for a future in America, Western Europe – and Britain.⁵⁵

It was a highly ambitious play to perform for a small company like the Jewish Institute players – the script called for modernist high drama, crowd scenes, phantasmagorical effects, and complicated choreography. They already had success putting on parts of the play in 1946 for the Scottish Community Theatre’s final festival, and it is clear from reviews that director Avrom Greenbaum’s adaptation of the play in English was a success.⁵⁶ It not only showed off the local talent of Glasgow’s Jewish theatre, but the production succeeded in embodying the multiple, duelling objectives of the Festival itself. The play was “high art,” demonstrating cutting edge avant-garde strategies such as Expressionist acting and set design by Scottish artist Tom MacDonald, but it also appealed to a wider contemporary audience with its easily recognisable themes of love and loss. The historical context of the production in both Yiddish and Hebrew provided an example of Jewish art that could instil pride in modernist Yiddish culture, while still harkening back to an Old World “Jewish” and the folklore and mystical traditions of days of old. At the same time, its links to Israel’s Habima theatre could also portray aspects of Zionist revivalism and highlight Israeli achievements in the arts.

The play, however, was not without its problems in terms of representing Jewish culture. Gad Kaynar, for example, convincingly argues that rather than representing anything positive about the world of Judaism, the *Dybbuk* was very critical of Jewish traditions, to the point of denigrating Orthodox Jewish culture. As he posits, “in spite of its Jewish plot and milieu, the play’s Jewish discourse is at odds with itself.”⁵⁷ An-sky, after all, presents an illicit relationship between Khonen and Leah as a more positive alternative to the culture of the rabbis and arranged marriages. Moreover, it is “the phantasmagoric world of Judaism that threatens to deprive [the couple] of their love, and failing to do so, kills them, even going as far as preparing to expel Hannan’s [sic] spirit from the Jewish other world.”⁵⁸ Habima’s director Yevgeny Vakhtangov’s grotesque depiction of the characters and negative portraiture of shtetl life in the Hebrew version even caused a number of critics of the time to condemn

the play for denigrating Jewish culture and reinforcing antisemitism.⁵⁹ The well-known Leningrad critic Homo Novus (Alexander Kugel), a staunch Communist (and one would assume anti-religious), notably attacked *The Dybbuk* for [its] “deviation from the Jewish spirit.”⁶⁰

Quite likely, Avrom Greenbaum’s adaptation of the play, based on Alsberg and Katsin’s English translation from Yiddish, was far more sympathetic to Jewish tradition than Vakhtangov’s production with Habima. According to Ida Schuster, Avrom Greenbaum had never seen Habima’s production but would have likely seen the play performed in Yiddish on stage and was most certainly influenced by the very popular 1937 film adaptation, *Der Dibuk*, directed by Michal Waszynski (Poland). An-sky’s evocative and poetic rendition of Jewish folklore moved Greenbaum, as it did others. It also represented a dynamic and living Yiddish culture that had resonances for Jewish audience members, many of whom were Yiddish-speaking immigrants and refugees.⁶¹ Moreover, as Ida insisted, non-Jewish audiences “loved it” as many found affinity to Scottish folklore and mystical traditions of the Highlands, the theme echoing other well-known plays such as J. M. Barrie’s *Mary Rose*.⁶² If the reviews are any indication, few interpreted the play as anti-Jewish. A review of *The Dybbuk* in the *Herald* with the headline “Jewish Play Staged” gave it fair praise, mentioning “good acting in *The Dybbuk*” and especially noting the exciting performance of Ida Schuster as Leah, “a girl possessed,” (a role which obviously carried the play), and the “thoughtful study of the wronged student” by, notably, a female lead, Tessie Davidson.”⁶³ The reviews in the *Jewish Echo* were of course filled with pride that their own community theatre had carried out such an ambitious feat of stage direction, acting and choreography.⁶⁴ While it is difficult to know exact numbers or who attended, it appears that shows were sold out and the production’s run extended due to popularity. All the same, performing *The Dybbuk* in a post-war context, and for a celebratory festival, and a potentially non-Jewish audience was a risky choice. While it had already been tried and tested by Avrom Greenbaum and the players, and it was certainly unmatched as a theatre production, it is difficult to escape the fact that the play is a sombre one and its overall message and outlook gloomy about the future of Judaism and its cultural practices. Key elements of the play centre on death and the dissolution of the shtetl, with key settings at graveyards, and the central climax a *toytentanz*, the macabre “dance of death” at Leah’s wedding. The play script calls for a joint gravestone as a backdrop, that of a bride and groom murdered in the anti-Jewish riots, the Khmielnitsky massacres (1648-49), which killed thousands.⁶⁵ The play also ends in Leah’s death, rather than a successful exorcism. This makes us wonder who it is that is haunted and possessed: the girl or the Jewish community.

From the point of view of exhibiting Jewishness in Glasgow in 1951, one must ask questions about how the production of the play contributed to the re-creation of Jewish identity and questions about “authentic” Jewish culture more widely. As a cultural (rather than dramatic) spectacle, the play presented the bygone Eastern European shtetl as dark, mystical and magical. *The Dybbuk* as a cultural artefact thus displayed a type of Jewishness that was both contiguous and at the same time at odds with the overarching ideologies behind the art exhibit, antiquities, book display, and musical performances. It was high art, dramatic and striking, but as a display geared toward a non-Jewish audience, it could also be seen as reinforcing a rather narrow image of Judaism, or what Ruth Ellen Gruber calls “virtually Jewish” – a representation of ethnicity that is nostalgic, wistful, haunting... and perhaps a bit *kitsch*. As Gruber identifies it, virtually Jewish is a “reconstruction of what is meant or signified by ‘Jewish’” that is often performed at Jewish cultural festivals today.⁶⁶ It is a similar concept to what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls “imagined communities” and “invented traditions,” of the ethnic festival, expanding on Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm’s theoretical constructs.⁶⁷ As she argues, in ethnic festivals, organisers, performers and participants “participate in the discourse of pluralism, of unity in diversity,” but at the same time “risk what might be termed the ‘banality of difference.’”⁶⁸ In other words, by presenting a spectacle that highlights an *excess* of difference, actual differences and conflicting viewpoints within that community become neutralised. Thus, “these events have a tendency to reinforce the status quo even as enlightened organizers and performers struggle to use them to voice oppositional values.”⁶⁹

The Dybbuk, as Ida Schuster confirmed, was performed by the Glasgow Jewish Institute Players to intrigue audiences with a relatable folk tale and high art aesthetics—and the players, as reflected in the newspaper reviews, impressed viewers with their dramatization and skill. On the other hand, if one considers the two target audiences for the festival—non-Jews and a new generation of Jewish youth—one still wonders how the play was viewed. Immigrants performing exotic traditions of the Diaspora? After all, spectators coming to the festival to learn more about Judaism would be faced with a symbolic representation of Jewish otherness in this play that was not unfamiliar, as it fell into rather well-known typecasting of old rabbis with beards and outmoded religious practices.⁷⁰ The nostalgic construction of a “virtually Jewish” shtetl was enhanced by the evocative interpretation of Jewish-looking spaces and dress in the Expressionist set designs by Glasgow artist Tom MacDonald and sketches of the actors and set by his wife Bet Low [see image 1].

Interestingly, while it was canonised as one of the greatest works of Jewish theatre, other post-war performances of *The Dybbuk* in America and in England received a lukewarm reception. Perhaps the melancholic evocation of the Yiddish past and the spectacle of the superstitious world of Jewish mysticism was not the image of Jewishness theatregoers wished to see in this period of history. According to Emmanuel Levy, who chronicled Habima's history from 1917-1970s, in the post-World War II period, the public did not want theatre that focused on the shtetl or dealt with the problems of "maintaining Jewishness in the Diaspora."⁷¹ Theatregoers in New York in 1948 were unenthused by Habima's performance of the play when it opened on Broadway on 1 May, two weeks before Israel's independence was proclaimed at the UN. The play did not attract the audience numbers that it expected.⁷² A similarly sparse audience accompanied a UK adaptation in 1952, Rudolph Cartier's BBC televised version of *The Dybbuk*, although for seemingly different reasons. In his analysis of the BBC production James Jordan notes that while it was the first time that Jewish life in the shtetl was depicted on the small screen, non-Jewish audiences found the supernatural drama of the Dybbuk "alien."⁷³ While it was praised by Jewish audiences in the *Jewish Chronicle*, it had a low viewership and a "very low" rating.⁷⁴ The *Birmingham Mail* describing the play as "gloomy" and the *Daily Telegraph* critic claimed: "This superstitious, alien play was a long time making my flesh creep with its Black Magic but at last succeeded."⁷⁵

If Glasgow's audiences felt differently about Avrom Greenbaum's adaptation, records show that before World War II, Glasgow's Jewish audiences were not eager to be reminded of the shtetl or a Jewish past filled with death and superstition. When the famous Vilna troupe came to Glasgow in the 1920s to perform the play in Yiddish, one non-Jewish reviewer was somewhat surprised at the dismal attendance: "I had expected to see a large part of the Jewish section of Glasgow to come and see their national players perform a national play, but the vast majority of seats were empty." He quotes one of the Jewish audience members sitting in front of him as saying, "Yes ... they're far too good for Glasgow. You should have seen the reception they got in London and Manchester." In the end, while the reviewer is impressed with the acting, elocution, and set design, he finds the Yiddish "didn't sound so well" and the "dark scenes" and bearded Jews "too strange. He sums it up as a "crude melodrama. It made me feel uncomfortable. There was a world, a race, and civilisation different from ours, something depressing, mysterious, abysmal and isolated. But nobody seemed to feel it."⁷⁶ One wonders if any of the non-Jewish audience members at the Jewish Institute's Little Theatre felt the same.

Conclusion

From the perspective of ethnographic display as well as Jewish cultural history, Glasgow's Festival of Jewish Arts presents an enigmatic case study of a community's struggle to register hope, loss, pride and support a national homeland, while still stressing its importance as a significant cultural asset to Scottish and British national life. And was Glasgow's Festival of Jewish Arts as a whole haunted by a dybbuk, the spirit of the undead Jewish culture, the loss, the whisper of souls of Jewish artists and writers dead and unborn, hovering in the sidelines of the theatrical performances, displays, exhibitions, and music? As I had thought when first meeting with Ida Schuster to share her reminiscences of the event, perhaps it was and perhaps "that's not how it was." Ethnic festivals, after all, provide access. They can be very joyful, as Glasgow's Festival of Jewish Arts certainly was. Yet, they also provide "the illusion of cultural transparency in the face of undeciphered complexity," to quote Kirshenblatt-Gimblett.⁷⁷ As a metaphor, the dybbuk does provide a provocative way to describe this complexity, the opposing, conflicting, often contradictory voices of Jewishness that were performed by the organisers and key players.

Glasgow's Festival of Jewish Arts closed on Sunday, 2 March at 6pm with the singing of Israel's national anthem, *Hatikvah*, the song of hope. The festival was a tremendous success. With over 10,000 registered visitors, the organisers could in fact claim that they had shared an important aspect of Jewish contributions to the arts with the Scottish public. As the editor of the *Jewish Echo* reported:

The Exhibition was designed purely as an artistic event, yet, we cannot but be impressed by the great value of such a display in our relations with our non-Jewish neighbours. Praise has been showered on the organisers by non-Jewish notabilities and newspapers, with the result that the non-Jewish attendance at the exhibition has been very large. In this artistic atmosphere, divorced from all questions of dogma, can best be furthered that amicable relationship which is so much to be desired between faiths.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, the "so much to be desired" discloses the precarious state of those same relations between Scotland's Jews and other faiths in the post-war period. The value placed on the festival's capacity to smooth those same relations at the same time belies a sense of vulnerability felt by members of the Glasgow populace as they stood at a turning point in their self-construction as Scottish and British Jews. The proud reviews of the festival in the

Echo, were interspersed with other news of the time: Nazis being released and admitted to Australia, a Neo-fascist conference taking place in London, the announcement of the Genocide Convention which took place just a few weeks beforehand (12 January 1951).⁷⁹ Perhaps when we look back, then, the important question that hung over the festival was the one asked by the eminent speaker Martin Buber in his talk at the McLellan Galleries: “How is Jewish life possible after Auschwitz, Treblinka, and other camps? Or how is life with God still possible at a time when Auschwitz exists. The strangeness is too cruel; the bitterness too deep.”⁸⁰

NOTES

¹ A special thanks goes to Ida Schuster for the permission to quote her as well as her generosity and the time she took to enlighten me with her views on the 1951 Festival. Ida Schuster was born in Glasgow in 1918 to immigrant parents and became a member of the Jewish Institute Players at the age of 16. She was a key figure in the Scottish community theatre scene, playing leading roles in both Jewish Institute Players and Unity Theatre troupes as well as directing community theatre before entering into professional acting in the 1950s.

² The Scottish Jewish Archives centre holds much of the valuable resources and materials regarding the history and heritage of Jews in Scotland dating back 200 years. The Centre documents, preserves, exhibits, and publishes aspects of the collections and makes the collections available for education, academic research, and visitors. I am especially grateful for their time and assistance in finding the archival resources for this article. See <https://www.sjac.org.uk/> for more details. A very special thanks also goes to Caleigh Gumbiner, whose research and work locating, collecting, and collating newspaper material on the 1951 Jewish Festival of Arts was invaluable.

³ The *Jewish Echo*, established in 1928 was published weekly, finally ending its run in 1992. It is archived at the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, Glasgow.

⁴ For more on both of the 1887 and 1906 Anglo-Jewish exhibits, see Kathrin Pieren, "Negotiating Jewish Identity," 281-96.

⁵ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett "Objects of Ethnography", 417. In a further study, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett also provides a close look at Jewish displays at international festivals from 1851-1940, such as the World's Fair (1939/40), Exposition of the Jewish of Many Lands, Cincinnati (1913), or Chicago World Fair (1893). See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, as well as "Performing the State: The Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, 1939/40."

⁶ Falassi, "Festival: Definition and Morphology" 1-10. Quoted in Roda, "Jewish Performance" 108. In her analysis of Jewish music as world music in festivals, Roda brings forth a useful analysis other definitions of festivals in recent scholarship. See especially "Jewish Performance," 107-9.

⁷ "Arts Festival Opens" *Jewish Echo*, 9 Feb 1951, 7.

⁸ In his autobiography, Schotz reflects on the decision: "Why not embrace the whole gamut of Jewish culture in a Festival of Jewish Art as part of the Festival of Britain? This was a bold

idea...I discussed the project with a few friends, and found great enthusiasm.” *Bronze in My Blood*, 180.

⁹ Conekin, *The Autobiography of a Nation*, 7. See also Leventhal, ““A Tonic to the Nation.””

¹⁰ Director of the Festival of Britain, Sir Gerald Barry, famously announced in a Press release that 1951 was to be filled with “fun, fantasy and colour” and “a tonic to the nation.” Barry, “Press Conference,” 14 October 1948. Quoted in Leventhal, “A Tonice,” 453.

¹¹ Conekin, *The Autobiography of a Nation*, 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, 8.

¹³ Keynes, “1st Annual Report 1945: Appendix A,” 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Fieldhouse, “Adults Learning - for Leisure, Recreation, and Democracy,” 264. Qtd. Conekin, 10.

¹⁶ On the eve of WWII, there were an estimated 15,000 Jews in Glasgow and around 2000 in Edinburgh. For more on Scottish Jewish history and culture, see Braber, *Jews in Glasgow:1879-1939*; Collins, *Second City Jewry*; Collins et al. *Two Hundred Years of Scottish Jewry*.

¹⁷ For more on the influence of Avrom Greenbaum and the Jewish Institute Players on Scottish community theatre, see Maloney and Scullion, “From the Gorbals to the Lower East Side”.

¹⁸ See Maloney and Scullion, “From the Gorbals to the Lower East Side,” as well as Braber, “Open Windows” 181–82.

¹⁹ The population of England was 50.6 million in 1951. Statistics drawn from Shapiro, *The American Jewish Year Book*, 195-200.

²⁰ See also Phyllis Lassner’s article. See also Schotz, *Bronze in My Blood*; Herman, Joseph. ‘Memory of Memories’: *The Glasgow Drawings 1940-43. Jankel Ader and Josef Herman: Paintings, Drawings, Watercolours. Glasgow, Compass Gallery*, 1990 (Exhibition Catalogue); Monica Bohm-Duchen, *The Art and Life of Josef Herman: In Labour My Spirit Finds Itself*.

²¹ Braber, “Open Windows,” 185. Schotz also reflects on the influences of refugee artists and such as Adler and Herman in his autobiography, *Bronze in My Blood*, 161-69.

²² See Fiona Frank, *Hannah Frank, A Glasgow Artist*; and Frank, “Hannah Frank’s Glasgow Jewish Journey” in *Jewish Journeys*, 216-30. A number of retrospective exhibits on these artists have brought renewed attention to their works. For example, *Hannah Frank, Drawings & Sculptures* 27th July –22nd September 2014 in Ayr, and Hannah Frank 110th Anniversary Exhibition, 19 November 2018- 6 February 2019 at the University of Glasgow; *Hilda*

Goldwag's Glasgow, 1940-2005, at Collins Gallery, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Nov 2005, among others.

²³ Schotz, *Bronze in My Blood*, 180. A list of the main donors accompanied the *Festival of Jewish Arts: Exhibition Guide*, p. 21.

²⁴ According to Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of 'the Jew' in modern public sphere, the very conception of Jews was that they "were not just unlike any other nation; they were unlike any other foreigners." Jews were not outsiders to the nation because they came from somewhere else but because "they undermined the very difference between hosts and guests, the native and the foreign". Bauman, *Modernity*, 52.

²⁵ Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, 10. See also Kushner, "The Paradox of Prejudice."

²⁶ Linett, *Modernism, Feminism, and Jewishness*, 25.

²⁷ Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, 12. Kushner refers to a number of Mass Observation and opinion polls in 1939–42 that indicate that perceptions of Jews and refugees were linked with money and power: "In an opinion poll carried out in 1940, 38% of the comments on money-mindedness were connected to Jews. Exactly the same percentage of the sample saw Jews as predatory." The image of the refugees was also not as positive or sympathetic as one might think; it rather confirmed the "alien Jew stereotype." See also *Persistence* 112, 115.

²⁸ Braber, "Open Windows," 183.

²⁹ Schotz, *Bronze in My Blood*, 180.

³⁰ "Forthcoming Festival in Glasgow," *Jewish Echo* 2 February, 7.

³¹ "International Messages of Support." *Jewish Echo* 2 February, 7.

³² Ibid.

³³ "Forthcoming Festival in Glasgow." *Jewish Echo* 2 February, p.7.

³⁴ Quoted by Roda, "Jewish Performance", 108. Roda indeed analyses Jewish festivals of contact where Jews and non-Jews form a meeting place to perform "living together."

³⁵ See also [Gavin's Schaffer's article](#). Schotz himself was an unabashed supporter of Israeli institutions--he was a founder of the first Glasgow Friends of Hebrew University and is buried in Israel.

³⁶ Roth, *Jewish Art: An Illustrated History*; Roditi, "The Jewish Artist in the Modern World," in Cecil Roth, ed. 797-859; Herman, "What is Jewish Art." Chagall, "What is a Jewish Artist." More recent scholars have also explored this question, among others Baigell and Heyd, eds. *Complex Identities*, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Karp eds. *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*; Zemel, *Looking Jewish*, among others.

³⁷ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography," 343.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography" 417.

⁴⁰ *Art Exhibition: Festival of Jewish Arts*, 3.

⁴¹ See *Festival of Britain: Anglo-Jewish Exhibition 1851-1951*.

⁴² Zhitlovsky (1865-1943) was a lifelong friend of An-sky's and a key proponent of Diaspora nationalism. He advocated for a socialist Jewish secularism and national identity based on Yiddish language. His original 'Note on Hasidism' appeared in the play's first translation from Yiddish into English by Henry G. Alsberg and Winifred Katzin in 1926.

⁴³ See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography", 430.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 431.

⁴⁵ *Art Exhibition*, 3

⁴⁶ A number of scholars have analysed the influence of exile and the refugee experience on Jewish artists. A few examples include (among others), Carol Zemel, *Looking Jewish*; MacDougall and Dickson, *Forced Journeys: Artists in Exile in Britain, c. 1933-1945*; Behr and Malet, eds. *Arts in Exile in Britain 1933-1945*; Cohen, "The Wandering Jew".

⁴⁷ *Art Exhibition*, 3

⁴⁸ The Mocatta collection contains what remains of the library collection of Frederic David Mocatta (1828-1905), British philanthropist and scholar, who left his vast collection of manuscripts, rare books, and artefacts to the Jewish Historical Society in 1905. Added to the collection were the libraries of Sir Moses Montefiore, Moses Gaster, Hermann Gollancz, Israel Abrahams and Lucien Wolf. Much of the collection was destroyed in 1940, but for the objects sent to Wales during World War II for safe storage. It is now held at the University College London.

⁴⁹ *Festival of Jewish Arts*, 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 21. Mark Turkov was from Poland and had emigrated to Buenos Aires in 1939. He was editor and co-founder of a Polish Yiddish press, as well as director of HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) for South America.

⁵¹ Carner, "Judaism in Music," *Festival of Jewish Arts*, 16-17.

⁵² For spelling of S. An-sky's name, I have primarily followed the guidance of Gabriella Safran and Steven Zipperstein (eds), *The Worlds of S. An-sky*. Although other sources quoted in this article have used the more common spelling of the author's pseudonym that leaves out the hyphen, "Ansky," according to Safran and Zipperstein, "for the most part he wrote in

Russian under S.A. or Semyon Akimovich An-sky (Anskii) and in Yiddish as Sh. An-ski.” Preface, *Worlds of An-sky*, xii.

⁵³ Habima settled in Israel on one of its tours in 1931, and became Israel’s national theatre in 1958. Arguably, it was *The Dybbuk* that launched Habima’s career when the play opened in Hebrew in Moscow on January 31, 1922, under the direction of Yevgeny Vakhtangov (a disciple of Konstantin Stanislavsky). It continued to stage the play—along with other well-known plays, such as H. Leivick’s *The Golem* and David Pinski’s *The Eternal Jew*—in numerous international productions throughout the 20s-40s. For an excellent overview of Habima’s positioning as National Theatre and the place of *The Dybbuk* in that construction, see Kaynar, “National Theatre as Colonised Theatre,” especially 13-18.

⁵⁴ An-sky, “From a letter to Khaim Zhitlovsky” in Neugroschel ed. and trans. *The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination*, 7.

⁵⁵ For more on S. An-sky and *The Dybbuk*, see Neugroschel, *The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination*; Safran, *Wandering Soul*; Roskies, Introduction, *Dybbuk and Other Writings*.

⁵⁶ “Jewish Play Staged in Glasgow,” *Glasgow Herald*, 19 February 1951, 6; “The Dybbuk” *Jewish Echo*, 23 February 1951, 6.

⁵⁷ Kaynar, ‘National Theatre a Colonized Theatre’, 14. The spelling in English reflects a modern Hebrew rather than Yiddish pronunciation of the name, as transliterated above.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Yevgeny Vakhtangov (1883-1922) was a disciple of Konstantin Stanislavsky and contemporary of Chekhov. He played a key role in the Russian avant-garde theatre movement.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Kaynar, “National Theatre a Colonized Theatre,” 16.

⁶¹ In considering the rise in Jewish demographics in Glasgow from 1911-1951 (11,500 to 15,000) which included immigrants from Russia, Poland, one can assume that a fair per cent of Jewish audiences were native Yiddish speakers, including Greenbaum. See Jan Schwarz’s *Survivors and Exiles: Yiddish Culture after the Holocaust* for more on the meaning of Yiddish culture, which *The Dybbuk* represented, for Jewish communities after the Holocaust. See also, Braber, *Jews in Glasgow*, 4 and 13.

⁶² J.M. Barrie was the Scottish novelist and playwright best known as the creator of Peter Pan. His supernatural drama, *Mary Rose*, was first staged in 1920, about a girl who mysteriously vanishes twice on a remote Scottish Island, only to reappear as if no time has passed.

⁶³ “Jewish Play Staged in Glasgow,” *Glasgow Herald*, 19 February 1951, 6.

⁶⁴ “The Dybbuk” *Jewish Echo*, 23 February 1951, 6

⁶⁵ The joint gravestone was not part of the set design at the Festival’s production of the play.

⁶⁶ Ruth Ellen Gruber, “Beyond Virtually Jewish” 490. Gruber more specifically refers to the construction of Jewishness in contemporary, site specific festivals such as the Jewish Culture Festival in Kazimierz, Poland and The Yiddish Summer Festival in Weimar, Germany (both of which she fittingly analyses in comparison to reconstructions of the Wild West in the United States). Unlike the 1951 festival, the virtual nature of the image is because there are no (or few) living Jews involved to challenge it.

⁶⁷ Anderson *Imagined Communities*, Hobsbawm, *Invented Traditions*

⁶⁸ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Objects of Ethnography”, 433.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*.

⁷¹ Levy, *The Habima*, 192.

⁷² *The New York Times* review, for example, called the play “rich and passionate,” while another critic claimed it “as timeless as the universe.” Quoted in Levy, *The Habima--Israel’s National Theater 1917-1977*, 183-84.

⁷³ Jordan, “Rudolph Cartier,” 188.

⁷⁴ Only 10 per cent gave the BBC adaptation of *The Dybbuk* an A rating. Ibid., 192.

⁷⁵ Both reviews are from 27 October, 1952. Quoted in Jordon, “Rudolph Cartier,” 193.

⁷⁶ “Yiddish Plays: Jewish Actors from Vilna at the Lyric Theatre” In a review by “A.W.” Having found only the clipping in the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre without a date or publication, I have not yet been able to find the exact source for this review. I can only assume that this review was from January 1922, shortly after the Vilna Troupe played in Manchester (A review of *The Dybbuk* appears in the *Manchester Guardian* on 29 December, 1922) and speculate it comes from *The Glasgow Evening Times*. The Vilna Troupe’s international travels are examined more closely in Debra Caplan, “Nomadic Chutzpah”.

⁷⁷ Kaynar, “National Theatre a Colonized Theatre,” 419.

⁷⁸ “The Festival Ends,” *Jewish Echo*, 2 March, 1951, 3.

⁷⁹ “The Genocide Convention,” *Jewish Echo*, 9 Feb 1951, 3.

⁸⁰ “The Biblical Dialogue” *Jewish Echo*, 23 February, 3

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