

***More Than Parcels:
Wartime Aid for Jews in Nazi-Era Camps and Ghettos***
By Jan Láníček (Editor) and Jan Lambertz (Editor).
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This edited volume explores the organisation, delivery, and impact of aid (food, clothing, medicine) for Jews across Europe during the Holocaust. One of the stated aims of the collection is the refocusing of attention on the mass starvation of Jews during the Holocaust, which has garnered much less attention than the murder of Jews in death camps and mass shootings. The chapters demonstrate that despite significant obstacles resulting in delays, theft, and an uneven distribution, aid packages for Jews continued to be delivered throughout the war years. The chapters aim to address the subject of how much was known about the Holocaust while it was in process. This subject has been fairly well explored at this point. However, the focus on smaller aid organisations across Europe, and beyond, does a valuable job in highlighting localised knowledge and the influence of said information on the decision-making processes of organisations and individuals working to deliver aid to desperate Jews throughout Europe.

The collection is comprised of contributions from 12 scholars, all of whom are specialists on Jewish history and the Holocaust. The chapters are based, largely, on archival research, and primary sources are consulted in a variety of languages in keeping with the multinational perspective of the volume. The chapters do an excellent job of approaching the subject of aid, much of which was carried out by Jews themselves, without painting a romanticised portrait of the process. Each of the chapters is well written and readable, while the structure of the collection is logical and organised into three geographical sections. Part 1 focuses on the organisation of aid efforts by organisations and individuals in areas of Europe under Allied control. Major aid organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the World Jewish Congress are highlighted. Jan Láníček's chapter provides very illuminating details on Allied responses to aid organisations. The chapter is particularly strong in detailing the complexity and variety of geopolitical and military policies, in particular the British blockade of Germany, which posed major obstacles to the effective delivery of aid to Jews in Europe. Pontus Rudberg likewise provides a compelling analysis of the decision-making process of Swedish Jewish aid organisers and the difficult decisions with which they were faced. However, one of the valuable contributions of the volume is the attention paid to smaller and less celebrated aid organisations. Anne Lepper's contribution

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draws attention to the often localised and fluid nature of the organisation of aid and delivery to Jews in need.

Part 2 focuses on the organisation of aid from nations allied with Germany. Organisations operating within said nations were still able to deliver aid to Jews in need throughout the war years. The extent to which aid had a material impact on the survival chances of Jews in peril is a theme that runs throughout the volume. Eliyana R. Adler indicates that aid did at times provide essential support to vulnerable and starving Jews (29). Laurie A. Drake's chapter, 'Jewish Food Aid in Vichy's Internment Camps, June 1940-November 1942', shows how said aid contributed to the prevention of famine within internment camps, thus making a genuine impact on survival chances. However, other chapters suggest that the emotional and psychological benefits of aid were of greater value. Part 3 deals with attempts to deliver aid to those Jews under Nazi occupation. Katarzyna Person's fine contribution on 'Relief in the Warsaw Ghetto' is the standout contribution to the section. Person's chapter contains fascinating insights into how channels of aid became a complex information network between the organisers of aid and the recipients.

The emphasis on the obstacles to aid is a major theme of the collection. Though valuable and containing much nuance, as most of the chapters address the issue, it does become somewhat repetitive. As a result, the volume does feel slightly apologetic at times. Nonetheless, the political and logistical complexities of the delivery of aid to Jews across Europe are demonstrated quite compellingly. Allied knowledge of the Holocaust and starvation conditions in camps and ghettos has been demonstrated in other works, and is again emphasised here. Of particular interest, however, is the decision-making processes of governments and aid organisations. Historians such as Nikolaus Wachsmann have emphasised the contingent and ever-changing conditions inside the camps. These chapters do an excellent job of demonstrating that the organisation and delivery of aid was likewise a fluid enterprise with many political, local, and temporal specificities.

Katarzyna Person's contribution situates Jewish aid and support networks operating in and out of the Warsaw Ghetto as forms of resistance. Material aid, though it did reach the ghetto, was insufficient in volume to cover the basic needs of the majority. Therefore, Jewish refugees turned to their social networks in order to try to source aid from influential contacts. Stefan Cristian Ionescu also cites aid as a form of 'humanitarian resistance' in his chapter on 'Jewish Humanitarian Aid for Transnistrian Deportees, 1941-1944'. The incorporation of aid provision into discussions of resistance is thought-provoking. However, there is little discussion of the historiography of resistance and the Holocaust, or of the methodological challenges involved in the evaluation of the subject. Therefore, though aid and resistance is a promising line of research, one is left feeling that much more could be said on the subject.

The emotional impact and importance of aid is one of the more striking threads that runs through several of the chapters. Eliyana R. Adler's chapter provides fascinating insight into the emotional responses of recipients of aid. Based on the study of survivor testimonies, Adler argues that Polish Jewish refugees often minimised or referred only in passing to aid received from large organisations such as the ICRC or JDC. Yet, aid received from friends and family members was, due to its emotional impact, often recorded with great warmth 'while occupying a central place in postwar narratives of survival' (42). Láníček's chapter also highlights the emotional impact of receiving aid parcels, which many recipients viewed as evidence that they were loved. The emotionally distinct responses of recipients of aid from different sources offer up a wealth of potential avenues for investigation and are one of the highlights of the volume. Perhaps some space could have been found for the inclusion of a discussion of the methodological challenges involved in assessing emotions in survivor ego documents. Moreover, the role of gender in aid provision is not explored in any real detail in the volume. While recognising spatial constraints, the subject of emotional responses to aid seems an ideal and opportune moment for consideration of gender. Did male and female recipients react differently to the support they received? This seems a pertinent question in the context. Nonetheless, the emotional reactions of the persecuted is a promising line of research which raises as many questions as it answers, and for that, the authors deserve credit.

Overall, this is a fascinating and highly recommendable addition to the literature on the organisation and distribution of aid, the Holocaust, Nazi detention sites, and inmate survival strategies. The chapters which touch upon the emotional responses of inmates to aid may be of note to historians of emotions. The book contains a great deal of insight on a subject that has received comparatively little attention while raising plenty of questions which ought to encourage further research. Therefore the book should be on the reading lists of specialists and students alike.