

Though strongly connected with the history of Poland, the Bund is the subject of only a few Polish publications: the classic book is *The Jewish Workers' Bund in Poland (1915–1939)* by Emanuel Nowogródzki (1891–1967), General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bund in Poland in 1921–1939. The latest edition of this book was issued in 2005 in Warsaw by the Jewish Historical Institute.¹ In 2007, the Institute issued yet another book entitled *The Jews and the Left. A Collection of Historical Studies*,² which is dedicated to the presence of Jews in the progressive movement in the first half of the twentieth century. In 2000, a collective work entitled *The Bund. A Hundred Years of Its History, 1897–1997* was published.³ Not only does Trębacz's book present the figure of Lichtenstein, but it also addresses the scarcity of Polish literature on the history of the Bund, offering a good introduction to the analysis of the role of the Bund in the history of progressive movements in Poland, including complementary considerations about the Bund at the supranational level.⁴

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Hunger and War. Food Provisioning in the Soviet Union during World War II. Ed. by Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer. Indiana University Press, Bloomington (IN) [etc.] 2015. xvii, 371 pp. Ill. \$85.00. (Paper: \$35.00; E-book \$34.99.)

The terrible ordeal of World War II in the Soviet Union was accompanied by almost universal food shortages. Due, above all, to the loss of the most important agricultural regions to the German invader, food shortages complicated the Soviet war effort at and behind the military front. Meanwhile, in the occupied territories and in besieged Leningrad, Hitler's "war of annihilation" condemned millions of Soviet citizens to death by starvation. *Hunger and War* analyses several aspects of food shortages, starvation, and food provisioning in the Soviet Union. Although parts of this picture are familiar from previous scholarship, co-editors Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer have assembled a coherent and informative volume that adds substantially to existing knowledge about

1. Emanuel Nowogródzki, *Żydowska Partia Robotnicza Bund w Polsce 1915–1939* [The Jewish Workers' Bund Party in Poland, 1915–1939] (Warsaw, 2005).

2. August Grabski, *Żydzi a lewica. Zbiór studiów historycznych* [The Jews and the Left. A Collection of Historical Studies] (Warsaw, 2007).

3. Feliks Tych and Jürgen Hensl (eds), *Bund. 100 lat historii 1897–1997* [The Bund. A Hundred Years of Its History, 1897–1997] (Warsaw, 2000).

4. Cf. Frank Wolff, "Eastern Europe Abroad: Exploring Actor-Networks in Transnational Movements and Migration History, The Case of the Bund", *International Review of Social History*, 57:2 (2012), pp. 229–255.

Soviet food supply, military and civilian rationing, and starvation during the “Great Patriotic War”.

The volume opens with an introductory overview of the politics of food, co-authored by Goldman and Filtzer, followed by Goldman’s chapter on provisioning urban workers. Drawing on U.G. Cherniavskii’s valuable 1964 study as well as on the authors’ archival research, these opening chapters underscore the positive role of the Soviet state in organizing food supplies. While some commentators have argued that Soviet food rationing was designed to privilege the highest-priority consumers, Goldman and Filtzer suggest that food allocations corresponded to energy needs. To be sure, almost no one received the recommended caloric quota from rations alone, and the authors do not deny the state’s interest in marshaling food supplies in support of production. Still, the authors infer from the data that highly differentiated rations were based on biology more than productivism, reflecting an effort to calibrate food supplies to the different biological requirements of manual laborers and other demographic groups.

The benign view of the Soviet state articulated in the volume’s introduction yields to outright endorsement by Wendy Z. Goldman. Historians have long affirmed the regime’s success in converting the Soviet economy to wartime production. Goldman would have us recognize a similar success in wartime food policy. In contrast to the way that food shortages undermined the legitimacy of the Russian autocracy in 1917, the Soviet state’s wartime policy “proved remarkably effective in organizing scarce resources and promoting popular support”, Goldman avers (p. 45). With its focus on the urban working class, this chapter covers more familiar ground than other parts of the book. Goldman describes the challenges facing workplace canteens, such as perennial shortcomings of proteins and utensils, the logic of the rationing system, and the search for supplements to the centralized allotment. Even with respect to supplementary foods sources, such as urban gardens and farmers’ markets, Goldman celebrates state structures over independent societal initiative. In conclusion, she reiterates that “at no time were workers abandoned by the state to a ‘free’ market in which the most aggressive profit seekers triumphed over the most vulnerable. The great victory of the war belonged to ‘the people’, but it was realized through the state’s vast array of creative organizational efforts that enabled individuals to convert their energies into collective action” (p. 97).

Brandon Schechter’s chapter on soldiers’ rations takes us into truly unfamiliar territory of considerable comparative interest. Given the oft-cited maxim, “an army marches on its stomach”, it should not come as a surprise that the victorious Soviet army had a well-functioning system of provisioning; yet, this fact has been overshadowed by civilian starvation. Food supplies were channeled to the army at the expense of civilian consumers. Although we might expect that soldiers ate mostly centralized food stocks, Schechter observes that local requisitioning fed the Red Army no less than the Wehrmacht, though without the latter’s murderous intent. The Red Army was served by mobile bakeries and field kitchens, located close behind the lines, and the army even traveled with herds of livestock for feeding the troops. Hot meals of soup and *kasha*, prepared in bulk in the field kitchens and delivered to units in twelve-liter thermoses, contrasted sharply with the prepackaged, ready-to-eat individual rations provided by the US Army in Normandy. The food was nourishing, and generally met established norms for protein, fats, and caloric intake, but the specific source of protein could vary enormously from powdered egg to any kind of meat, fish, poultry, or game. No special arrangements were made for Jews or Muslims who did not eat pork. Over the course of the war, food preparation improved, and publicity began to be directed at excellent cooking and its shameful, poor-quality counterpart. An intriguing side of Soviet military provisioning was the neglect of water, which

soldiers had to forage for themselves; the difficulty of obtaining safe drinking water reconfirmed the premium placed on the two social beverages in the soldier's ration, vodka and tea. Schechter's chapter also explores social and cultural aspects of food consumption in the military, from the cultural semiotics of spoons and mess pots to the sense of communality versus hierarchy fostered by food.

The next two chapters thematize food and hunger during the Leningrad blockade. Utilizing blockade diaries, Alexis Peri explores Leningraders' perceptions of the food crisis in relation to two key points of distribution, the queue and the canteen. Rather than blaming the Germans, Leningraders fixated on the perceived inequities in the rationing system, which rested on a tension between a universal entitlement to food and unequal rations for manual laborers, other employees, and dependents. Whereas this inequality may have originally had its basis in biology, at the height of the Leningrad famine, factories ceased operating, and workers, like everyone else, conserved their energy for survival. Diarists thus perceived the three-tiered rationing system not as reflecting class stratification but as constituting it. Suspicions of foul play and the sense of participating in a competition for survival undermined communal solidarity. Queues figure in the diaries as a battle zone, food service workers as a "new elite", and attractive, healthy-looking people as prostitutes, though, on the other hand, hunger and death inured the public to the starvation of others. Peri interprets this mixture of attitudes through the lens of the later 1930s, when Soviet citizens were taught to ferret out "wreckers" and other internal enemies without either questioning the ideological project of communism or acting out their discontent.

Also centered on Leningrad, Rebecca Manley's illuminating chapter on "nutritional dystrophy", the term adopted by Soviet physicians for starvation, opens up another new angle on the Soviet wartime experience. Faced with increasing numbers of starving people, doctors conceptualized starvation as a disease. Doctors tried to establish the clinical characteristics and pathogenesis of this "disease" by observing what Leningrad's chief pathologist described as "an experiment, formulated by life itself". Unlike previous famine episodes in Russian history, Leningrad's starvation was clinically "pure"; that is, starvation itself emerged as the primary killer rather than accompanying outbreaks of infectious disease. Doctors puzzled over the marked gender gap in mortality from "nutritional dystrophy" (men died far sooner and in far greater numbers than women), the systemic effects of starvation on the endocrine and metabolic systems, and the impact on psychology and personality. They also tried to develop therapies to bring the starvation victim back to health. Manley suggests that the study of "nutritional dystrophy" gave doctors a sense of purpose during the blockade, while the medical terminology entered into popular consciousness. Leningraders universally adopted the term *distrofiika* for an emaciated, starving person. Interestingly, this term evoked less compassion than contempt as time went on, highlighting the perception that famine victims' humanity was degraded by hunger.

The final chapter of the volume, by Donald Filtzer, assesses the demographic impact of starvation on cities in the Soviet rear. Filtzer has painstakingly compiled data from regional mortality registers to track changing rates and causes of death from 1940 to 1944. The wartime mortality crisis had two distinct phases. The first, running from late 1941 through 1942, featured skyrocketing rates of infant mortality and heightened mortality among the elderly and infirm. Although food shortage was certainly part of the picture, this phase was caused by the interconnected ordeals of evacuation, hunger, and measles and typhus epidemics among vulnerable demographic groups. The second phase, peaking in 1943 and 1944, centered on middle-aged men, aged thirty to fifty-nine, and was caused by starvation, often overlaid with tuberculosis. One of Filtzer's claims is that wartime starvation is best analysed as part of

a “starvation-tuberculosis complex”, which became the dominant cause of excess deaths (over the 1940 figures) in every home-front region except Moscow in 1943 and 1944. Filtzer’s analysis will be essential reading for anyone interested in historical demography and the war.

The chapters in this volume are lengthy, ranging from forty-nine to seventy-four pages, and are hence unlikely to be read by non-specialists. For specialists, though, the sustained treatment and tight focus make *Hunger and War* a compelling addition to the historiography of the Soviet Union at war.

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