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TEORIE

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Letters to the JDC as Autobiographical Sources of Jewish Holocaust Survivors

Summary

After the Holocaust, Jewish survivors in Poland relied on external help, including that of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the Joint, JDC). They wrote letters to JDC both to request and to thank the American-based Jewish organization for i.a. food, clothes, medicine, and assistance with emigration from Poland. Many of those letters also contain autobiographical information about the authors, themselves Holocaust survivors and their families. The descriptions of wartime experiences and survival strategies as well as of immediate postwar life (1945–1949) entail details and snippets of historical and genealogical value. Therefore, the letters examined in this article offer both individual histories and a collective portrait of the Jewish population in postwar Poland. The epistolary material also captures JDC's activities and their importance for reviving and sustaining Jewish life after the Holocaust.

Keywords

Jewish survivors, Holocaust, postwar, correspondence, JDC, ego-documents

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“It’s more than difficult for me. Therefore, the remittance from you – which I completely did not expect – I accepted from Dr. Szymańska¹ with tenderness because this is the first helpful hand extended to a survivor [*rozbitek życiowy*].”² With these words, Henryka Hekselmanowa thanked William Bein, the director of the Warsaw Office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, in March 1948 for money allocated to her for buying clothes for her three children and for two food packages. “I never expected so much goodness,” she continued. In a one-page letter handwritten in Polish, Hekselmanowa provided a fragmentary description of what happened to her family during the Holocaust and depicted her situation in the immediate postwar years. Her relatives were murdered. Her husband was sent to the Majdanek camp in April 1943 from which he did not return. She did not explain how she and her three children, Mieciu (Mieczysław), Basia (Barbara) and Grześ (Grzegorz), who were 14, 12, and 5 years old respectively in 1948 survived the war. At the time of writing her letter, Hekselmanowa and her children lived in Warsaw, and she, the sole breadwinner, worked in an office, barely able to support her family. “I am alone in this world (I’m 36 years old),” she deplored. Loneliness and helplessness permeate her letter. She explained that she did not seek help from any charity. Perhaps it was Dr. Szymańska who learned about the Hekselsmans’ dire situation and initiated assistance. That package and money showed Hekselmanowa that her difficult existence was acknowledged by a Jewish philanthropic organization, which, more broadly, was active in both assisting the surviving remnant of Polish Jewry and rebuilding a Jewish community in post-Holocaust Poland.

Henryka Hekselmanowa’s letter of gratitude to the Warsaw outpost of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee is one of many such letters sent by Jewish survivors in Poland. Alongside thank you notes are letters of request that survivors sent to the organization. They differ in content, length, and language. Most are, by design, short and succinct. The majority are written in Polish, with Yiddish assuming second place; a few are in English. The choice of language and the style of narration convey a survivor’s social and educational background, gender, age, the ease of communicating in one tongue over another, and self-identity. Much of the correspondence contains descriptions of the beneficiaries’ lives. As autobiographical texts, and fragmentary as they are for pragmatic reasons, some of the letters encompass the only documentary traces of one’s life before and during the Holocaust, and of efforts to reconstitute one’s life in the immediate postwar period. Together with other sources by and about the same person, the letters offer information that has not been captured elsewhere.

¹ The reference may be to Hanna Szymańska from the JDC Society of Polish-Soviet Friendship.

² JDC Archives, Warsaw Collection, 1945–1949 [thereafter JDC], item 2318959, Letter from Henryka Hekselmanowa, 26.03.1948.

They render individual stories of destruction and survival, as well as histories of families and communities that were obliterated. In this way, the thank you and request letters paint a collective portrait of survivors and of the Jewish population in postwar Poland. Who wrote the letters? What did the authors write about? What role did the letters hold for their authors? What historical and genealogical information can be gleaned from the texts? These are some questions that guide my exploration of these epistolary sources.

The correspondence that I explore in this article is drawn from a digitized archive of the addressee of the letters, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC, the Joint). The Joint was created in 1914 as an American arm of the Jewish community to provide rescue, relief, and rehabilitation to Jews affected by World War I. Its efforts in Poland extended to World War II, formally until December 1941 when the United States entered the war and American organizations were forced to cease their activities in German-occupied territories. The Joint returned to Poland in July 1945, but in December 1949, after pressure from the communist authorities in Poland, JDC's office was closed.³ Thank you letters, and letters of request sent during this time are at the center of this article. They illuminate the types of activities that JDC was engaged in and thus construe JDC's institutional history.

Survivors began to register with Jewish committees in the liberated areas of Poland in 1944 and with branches of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (CKŻP) from 1945. The numbers of registered Jewish survivors fluctuated, from nearly 59,000 in 1945 according to CKŻP, reaching about 220,000 in fall 1946 according to JDC. Overall, about 300,000 Jews had registered between 1945 and 1950 based on CKŻP statistics.⁴ The increase in number reflected the arrival of Jews repatriated from the Soviet Union. They joined those who had survived in German-occupied Poland. More men (53 percent) than women (47 percent) registered with CKŻP. Among those whose modes of persecution and survival were recorded, the majority (72 percent) listed flight to the Soviet Union. This was followed by incarceration in a camp (11 percent), life on the "Aryan side" (9 percent), being in the army and incarceration in a ghetto (3 percent in each category), and joining the partisans and employing other forms of survival (1 percent, respectively). This population sketch provides context for understanding

³ For a description of JDC's activities in Poland and the fate of its archives, see: Jeffrey Edelstein, "Reconnecting with a fugitive collection: a case study of the records of JDC's Warsaw Office, 1945–1949," *Jewish Culture and History* 18 (2017), 1: 109–117. For a history of JDC in Poland in 1945–1949, see: Anna Sommer Schneider, *Sze'erit hapleta. Ocaleni z Zagłady. Działalność American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee w Polsce w latach 1945–1989* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2014), 37–167.

⁴ Anna M. Rosner, *Obraz społeczności ocalałych w Centralnej Kartotece Wydziału Ewidencji i Statystyki CKŻP* (Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2018), 20, 28, 96–152; Sommer Schneider, *Sze'erit*, 67–68. Not all survivors registered, so these numbers are only an approximation.

who were the people that made up the Jewish minority in Poland in the first years after the war and who were the authors of the letters sent to JDC.

Confronted with human losses and material destruction, surviving Jews had little means of their own to reestablish their lives. Nearly all letters convey the aid recipients' dire financial and living circumstances, various hardships, and health issues. Survivors and their families relied on direct assistance from JDC in the form of food, clothes, medicine, goods, and social welfare. In addition, American-based groups, among them the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), with which JDC collaborated, and the Cooperative for American Remittances in Europe (CARE), of which JDC was a member, made concerted efforts to bring relief to Jewish survivors in Poland.

Writing to a Mr. Chiles in the United States, a CARE donor, Michał Kalmowicki attempted to establish a personal connection. "I would like for my letter not to be treated by you as an ordinary, stereotypical thank you letter for the package," Kalmowicki stated, and clarified, "but first and foremost as an expression of sincere gratitude to a person I now know lives very far away from me, across the ocean, a human being who is dear to me for his noble and selfless help."⁵ "Please allow me to introduce my humble self," Kalmowicki offered in Polish. Letter writers shared their histories voluntarily. If for some their accounts were meant to familiarize their benefactors with the aid recipient and justify his or her needs, for others elaborating on their lives afforded a way to foster a bond with a hope for further help. Presenting their individual stories reinforced, even restored, the letter writers' humanity after years of oppression and allowed them to mourn as individuals. The act of letter writing served a therapeutic value by granting an outlet to tell about persecution, survival, and postwar struggles. For some, these letters would be the only record of their experiences. Not everyone decided, or had the opportunity, to leave their testimonials with Jewish historical commissions in Poland.⁶

The authors chose what and how they wished to highlight, what they considered key for the reader to know, and what they thought would help their benefactor understand their situation. The Holocaust is often referred to indirectly, as if the tragedy that befell the author was self-evident. The persecution of loved ones is mentioned in passing. The letter writers sometimes revealed how they were able to survive, but rarely described the circumstances in detail. Few deemed it relevant to discuss their background. Michał Kalmowicki was 34

⁵ JDC, item 2319310, Letter from Michał Kalmowicki, 18.05.1948.

⁶ For a study on efforts to collect survivor accounts immediately after the war, see: Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

years old in 1948. His family was religious with modest means, of either middle or working class. He lost his parents and many family members in the Warsaw ghetto. "I remained totally alone," Kalmowicki stated. He had survived while in the military, first in the Polish Army, and from 1943 in the Red Army. Upon his return to Poland, he attempted to rebuild his life away from Warsaw, in Gliwice in the newly recovered lands in western Poland, by establishing a family and working. "Currently, I am a small modest clerk, I have a wife and a 7-month-old adorable son and I lead an indignant life," he explained.⁷

Piecing together the shreds of autobiographical clues in the correspondence to JDC illuminates a collective portrait of Jews in Poland soon after the war. The fragmentary information conveys the paths of and reasons for return to Poland from camps outside Poland and from flight to and expulsion from the Soviet Union. The timing of return tells about the waves of repatriated Jews, the chronology of emerging from camps and hiding places. Addresses give leads as to where, in which regions in Poland, cities, and even streets, survivors settled. Gliwice, Legnica, Łódź, Kraków, Wrocław, Szczecin, and Warsaw are the cities most often mentioned. Snippets of information indicate the Jews' prewar and postwar occupations.

The letters offer a glimpse into the ways in which survivors were rebuilding their personal and professional lives amidst postwar chaos and continued antisemitism. Scarcity and poverty defined survivors' lives, but these did not deter non-Jewish Poles from continuing to see Jews as wealthy or associate them with wealth. The phenomenon of and justification for the plunder of Jews' belongings carried over from the wartime. Then too, looting by organized bands and individuals was common especially in western Poland that had belonged to Germany. It is unclear if the robbers targeted Henryk Brautman's apartment randomly or because it belonged to a Jew. A chronicle in *Trybuna Dolnośląska* newspaper that accompanies Brautman's letter to JDC places the robbery between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. when all neighbors were home.⁸ Just three years prior to the assault on his home, Brautman had returned from the Brännlitz concentration camp and settled in Wałbrzych where he worked in state industry. "It is self-understood that from my salary I am unable to complement the missing pieces of clothing and underclothes," Brautman lamented in his letter.⁹ He asked JDC to help him and his wife replenish the lost items. Having been displaced from his prewar home elsewhere in Poland and returned from a camp, he had few things of his own.

During the war, Jews were expropriated, their possessions confiscated, and those left for safekeeping with non-Jewish Poles were rarely returned. Janina Gołębiowska recounted

⁷ JDC, item 2319310, Letter from Michał Kalmowicki, 18.05.1948.

⁸ JDC, item 2331825, Excerpt from *Trybuna Dolnośląska*, 27.07.1948.

⁹ JDC, item 2331824, Letter from Henryk Brautman, 27.07.1948.

that she lost her three-room apartment in Lublin when the German authorities expelled her from it and that she was deprived of all her movable property when she and her Jewish mother (Gołębiowska's father was a non-Jewish Pole) went into hiding during the war. Writing her letter to JDC (which she called the "American Government") in August 1948, Gołębiowska outlined her situation as an elderly, single, and impoverished woman, forced to live in a basement of a building. She appealed to JDC for material assistance, referring to the memory of her maternal uncle, Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmidt), the Polish Jewish child activist who had accompanied children from his orphanage during deportation from the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka in August 1942.¹⁰

If Jews lost their homes and belongings, they also faced the plunder of their places of work and creative output. "Before the war, I studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Warsaw, and afterwards I worked independently and exhibited my works," Natan Gutman from Warsaw reported in his letter. He survived the war in the Soviet Union. "Having returned to Poland, I found no one from my family and nothing from my former studio and works," he described his circumstances.¹¹ In an effort to reconstitute his artistic career, Gutman joined the Association of Polish Artists (*Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków*) and appealed to the Jewish Society for Promoting Fine Arts (*Żydowskie Towarzystwo Krzewienia Sztuk Pięknych*, ŻTKSP) by CKŻP to receive assistance from JDC. Stipends, painting materials, and art competitions constituted forms of help. The ŻTKSP also initiated other activities related to the advancement of Jewish artists and their work, reclaiming looted art, collecting Jewish art, and educating young people.¹²

Other Jewish survivors relayed the daily hardships that their families struggled with. Zysła Frydel, forced to raise her two-year-old child on her own in Łódź while her husband was being held in the Soviet Union, commented on her situation: "[the child] is often sick and weak because of malnourishment and bad living conditions because I live on the first floor in a cold apartment that should actually be a store."¹³ Her toddler's frequent gallstone attacks prohibited the mother from working. Families with children like the Frydels required immediate and ongoing assistance. "I don't know how to express my gratitude and thanks

¹⁰ JDC, item 2331893, Letter from Janina Gołębiowska, 3.08.1948.

¹¹ JDC, item 2331902, Letter of application from Natan Gutman, 20.07.1948.

¹² For more information about ŻTKSP, see: Agnieszka Żółkiewska, *Inwentarz Żydowskiego Towarzystwa Krzewienia Sztuk Pięknych 1946–1950. Sygn. 361* (Warszawa: Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego im. E. Ringelbluma, 2009), dostęp 20.11.2020, https://www.jhi.pl/uploads/inventory/file/140/Z_ydowskie_Towarzystwo_Krzewienia_Sztuk_Pie_knych.pdf.

¹³ JDC, item 2331865, Letter from Zysła Frydel, 30.06.1948.

for the care package that I received for my daughter,” Noel Szwarcberg wrote in his letter.¹⁴ The Szwarcbergs were among the many Jewish parents who received packages for their newborns, a crucial form of help when supplies were low and demand for baby care items high. The CKŻP noted an increase in the number of births in 1944–1945, mainly among Jews repatriated from the Soviet Union. The numbers of registered births reached 6,954 children (as opposed to the registered 10,321 child survivors born during a five-year period, 1939–1943), and grew in 1946–1950, with 10,214 registered newborn children.¹⁵

About 5,000 Jewish children lived in Poland in 1945. That number increased to 25,000 in the wake of repatriations from the Soviet Union. Approximately one third of all Jewish children living in Poland as of early 1948 were full and half orphans.¹⁶ Thus the notion of family changed. If some survivor families were new, others were reestablished. Still other families, especially those whose members survived in Central and Far Asia were a continuation from the wartime, and sometimes from the prewar. But they, too were affected by wartime events and postwar politics. Sixty-year-old Liza Holcman from Warsaw wrote about her granddaughter for whom she alone cared since the girl’s father had died in Siberia and her mother was unable to secure permission to leave the Soviet Union.¹⁷

With their parents murdered and missing, children entered patchwork families. Szyja Fabian wrote about Lusja, a child who had been with the Fabians since 1942 and who arrived to Poland with them from the Soviet Union.¹⁸ Also, children who had been sheltered by non-Jewish single women or by families during the war sometimes continued to stay with them. In rare cases, a parent or relative returned for the child. Some rescuers heeded the call and the sense of obligation to return the Jewish child to a local Jewish committee. Still others did so after they had received payment from a Jewish organization or were threatened by Jewish activists reclaiming children from their wartime helpers. Other aid givers steadfastly held on to their Jewish charge, refusing to give up the child, often withholding information from the child about his or her Jewish identity. The Joint provided material support to known children who lived with their wartime rescuers. Stanisława Jaworska, a non-Jewish Polish woman, thanked JDC on behalf of her foster child. Anita (also referred to as Anna)

¹⁴ JDC, item 2318947, Letter from Noel Szwarcberg, 2.07.1948, p. 1.

¹⁵ Rosner, *Obraz*, 108–109.

¹⁶ Sommer Schneider, *Sze’erit*, 107, 109. See also: Noemi Bażanowska, *To był mój dom. Żydowski Dom Dziecka w Krakowie 1945–1957* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka–Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2011), 29–54.

¹⁷ JDC, item 2319304, Letter from Liza Holcman, 31.05.1948.

¹⁸ JDC, item 2331853, Letter from Szyja Fabian, 3.09.1948.

Wróblewska was nine years old in 1948. Her parents were murdered in 1942, and the girl remained with Jaworska in Warsaw.¹⁹

The Joint was among the Polish and international organizations and institutions that cooperated with CKŻP and its Child Care Department created in 1946 in tracing surviving Jewish children who had been hidden in Catholic institutions and in private homes. The JDC estimated that between 500 and 600 Jewish children remained with non-Jews as of 1947.²⁰ If tracing Jewish children and returning them to the Jewish fold assumed urgency, so did reconnecting survivors with their relatives. Eljiasz Bulc received a message from JDC in October 1947 through the Jewish Committee in Zgorzelec that his two brothers, Saul and Fajwl, were in Canada. “I don’t know how to repay you for the favor,” Bulc wrote. Feeling indebted, he wanted to reciprocate JDC’s efforts so that others could benefit from the service. “I am ready to offer a certain amount, as you specify, for the victims of Hitlerism, because I myself am this victim. I lost everything dear to me – parents, wife, and four children. Only my two brothers remained. Please imagine how happy I was at the news that my brothers are alive,” Bulc explained.²¹ The JDC Department of Tracing Services (also known as the Search Department) began its work in 1945. In November 1947, the closest month to that when Bulc had received his response and for which there is a detailed report, the JDC Search Department had received 725 letters about 1,564 individuals, placed 2,624 advertisements in newspapers, and located 57 survivors and 58 relatives. In addition, out of 753 individuals sought abroad, JDC had received responses about 526 of them.²² The correspondence testifies to the staunch efforts of both survivors and JDC to locate missing persons and to reunite relatives.

If reunification and return to Poland in general, and, in some cases, to prewar hometowns, occupy important aspects in the epistolary material examined in this article, so does departure from Poland. Support for Jewish emigrants came from HIAS (founded as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in 1881) beginning in 1945, the CKŻP’s Emigration Department, and the Jewish Agency from February 1946. The Joint’s Emigration Service Department assisted the neediest prospective emigrants with preparation of documents and money beginning on May 15, 1946. “I kindly ask for providing me with clothes, shoes, a blanket, and foodstuffs for my trip abroad,” Dawid Aufgang appealed to JDC in his letter of 1948.²³ “I am going to

¹⁹ JDC, item 2319299, Letter from Stanisława Jaworska, 4.07.1948.

²⁰ Bażanowska, *To był*, 39. On the process of finding and reclaiming Jewish children, see: Emunah Nachmany Gafny, *Dividing Hearts: The Removal of Jewish Children from Gentile Families in Poland in the Immediate Post-Holocaust Years* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009).

²¹ JDC, item 2318976, Letter from Eljiasz Bulc, 16.10.1947.

²² JDC, item 2217665, Statistical Report for November 1947, 10.12.1947.

²³ JDC, item 2331802, Letter from Dawid Aufgang, 6.07.1948.

Paraguay and will be in transit for a longer time,” he explained. The unwillingness of many countries to accept Jewish refugees and the existence of communal and family support networks turned the Jews’ attention to countries in South America as places to start their lives anew. Most Jewish emigrants transited through countries such as France and Belgium before reaching their final destinations. Aufgang was among the applicants whom the Joint was determined to help. “I am a war invalid, I was in German camps, and returned very sick,” Aufgang explained. Despite the hardships, he struggled to regain his health and rebuild his life, stating, “I was in the infirmary, where I began to work as a janitor after my return to health and where I work until now. My wages were very modest and I am unable to provide for the trip on my own.”

If South and North America, and Australia consisted of popular directions for Polish Jewish emigrants, so did Palestine. Jews aiming to go to Palestine prepared for emigration in *kibbutzim* in Poland. These communal settlements also served to safeguard Jews from danger that their non-Jewish neighbors continued to pose. Josel Abramowski explained in his letter that he, together with his wife and children lived in kibbutz “Ichud” in Łódź as they trained for departure from Poland.²⁴ The Ichud movement maintained 36 kibbutzim (out of 173 kibbutzim) and cared for 2,320 Jews (out of 13,429 overall) as of September 1946. By 1948, the Zionist kibbutzim in particular, such as those organized by Ichud, offered educational and vocational training. They were gradually dissolved as Zionist leaders, and survivors and their families left Poland.²⁵

Among the major reasons for emigration was continued violence against Jews. The pogrom in Kielce of July 4, 1946 sent shock waves across Jewish communities and prompted many Jews to flee. Even as many as 140,000 Jews had left Poland in 1944–1947 through *Bricha*, a Zionist movement that organized the departure of Jews to British Mandate Palestine, and which was supported by the Joint.²⁶ The negative message that the Polish government believed organized flight of Jews conveyed to the world combined with the issues that the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948 posed for a Communist regime, contributed to the changes in how the Polish authorities addressed the emigration of Jews from Poland after 1947.

²⁴ JDC, item 2331791, Letter from Josel Abramowski, 10.08.1948. For a discussion of kibbutzim and youth Zionist movements in postwar Poland, see: Natalia Aleksion, *Dokąd dalej? Ruch syjonistyczny w Polsce (1944–1950)* (Warsaw: Trio, 2002); Avinoam J. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2009), 68–103.

²⁵ Sommer Schneider, *Sze'erit*, 105–106.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 148–150.

The desire to reunite with loved ones, attempting to reestablish one's life elsewhere, leaving the place of wartime persecution, as well as ongoing terror, discrimination, and lack of professional and economic opportunities pushed Jews to emigrate. By 1947, the dissolution of ŻTKSP was imminent (CKŻP closed it in 1949). Writing his letter in 1948, Natan Gutman must have been aware of the pressure that CKŻP members aligned with the Communist Party in Poland exerted on ŻTKSP, encroaching on its independence, aiming to create a new umbrella organization for all Jewish cultural activities, and thus affecting the creative autonomy of the artists. These developments could have added to Gutman's decision to leave Poland. Since help for emigrants was on the Joint's agenda, Gutman turned to the organization to cover his expenses associated with procuring travel documents. He had received a visa to France, as he explained, to deepen his artistic horizons. He offered to give a few of his works in return.

In fact, the authors of the letters that I explore here not only requested assistance and expressed gratitude when they received it, but also often offered something in return. Providing money, food, medicine, clothes, and other goods, as well as helping with tracing survivors and with arranging emigration were among the wide-ranging services that JDC engaged in on behalf of Jewish survivors in the first five years after the war in Poland. But the Joint's help, as the survivors consistently explained in their correspondence, gave more than sustenance to its recipients. It facilitated religious practice for those who desired it, fostered continuity, and instilled hope for the future. "It is not only material and financial help which we, religious people, so badly need, but also moral support. It encourages us to further our work and strengthens our faith," Rabbi Natan Trzaskala from Gdańsk wrote about the importance of the assistance streaming from JDC.²⁷ "In such difficult situation the help cheered me up spiritually and morally, because it is very hard to constantly write and cry about one's circumstances," Noel Szwarcberg relayed in his letter thanking JDC for items for his baby daughter. "[B]ut let's hope that [our situation] will improve, and maybe this child will bring us luck. I once again thank you on behalf of my little daughter and wife for the invaluable gift and ask that you do not forget us," Szwarcberg continued.²⁸

The letters considered in this article express not only gratitude for vital forms of immediate help, but also thankfulness for being remembered and acknowledged when the overwhelming feeling among the letter writers was utter desolation. Referring to oneself as "the only one alive," "the sole survivor," or as Henryka Hekselmanowa, whose story opened this article, called herself in the literal translation from the Polish – "a life wreck," survivors conveyed their experiences, emotions, fears, and the situations they faced. Both men and

²⁷ JDC, item 2319323, Letter from Rabbi Natan Trzaskala, 24.02.1948.

²⁸ JDC, item 2318947, Letter from Noel Szwarcberg, 2.07.1948, p. 1.

women wrote in similar terms about the losses of their loved ones, of being the only survivors of their families, and often, too, of their communities. For them, their benefactors – JDC and the individuals and groups that supported the survivors through the Joint – emerged as an extension of a family.

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Listy do Jointu jako autobiograficzne źródła Żydów ocalałych z Zagłady

Streszczenie

Żydzi, którzy ocalili z Zagłady, polegali na pomocy spoza Polski, w tym od Amerykańsko-Żydowskiego Wspólnego Komitetu Rozdzielczego, znanego w Polsce jako Joint. Pisali do niego listy zarówno, by prosić o wsparcie, jak i w podziękowaniu dla tej mieszczącej się w Stanach Zjednoczonych organizacji żydowskiej za produkty żywnościowe, ubrania, leki oraz za pomoc w opuszczeniu



Polski. Wiele z tych listów zawiera również dane autobiograficzne o ocalałych z Zagłady i ich rodzinach. Opisy ich wojennych przeżyć i strategii przetrwania, a także powojennego życia w latach 1945–1949 zawierają szczegóły o wartości historycznej i genealogicznej. Dlatego też korespondencja, która jest głównym źródłem tego artykułu, ukazuje osobiste historie ludzi, jak też zbiorczy portret ludności żydowskiej w powojennej Polsce. Ten materiał korespondencyjny pokazuje również zakres działalności Jointu oraz jak ważne były te starania dla odbudowy i utrzymania życia żydowskiego po Zagładzie.

Słowa kluczowe

ocalali Żydzi, Zagłada, czas powojenny, korespondencja, Joint, ego-dokumenty

PROSIMY O CYTOWANIE TEGO ARTYKUŁU JAKO:

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