



## Key Documents of German-Jewish History

A Digital Source Edition

Ina Lorenz

# Soup Kitchen Collection. The Jewish Winter Relief in Hamburg

## SOURCE DESCRIPTION

These five drawings published in different issues of the Gemeindeblatt [Congregation Newsletter] and the Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt für das Gebiet der Hansestadt Hamburg [Jewish Congregation Newsletter for the Area of the Hanse City of Hamburg] solicited donations for the Jewish Winter Relief in the winter of 1937/38. The signature appearing at the edge reads “Growald,” which indicates that the drawings were the work of Berlin commercial artist Hans Rudolf Growald.

The five titles spelled in capital letters are as follows: “Jeder Kopf denkt an den Eintopf” [“Every head remembers the Soup Kitchen Collection”]—the image shows five laughing heads hovering over a laughing stew pot; “Ein einfaches Exempel: Sonntagsbraten minus Eintopfgericht gleich Winterhilfsspende” [“A simple example: Sunday roast minus stew equals a donation to the Winter Relief”]—this math problem shows a pot as teacher holding a pointer while standing in front of a blackboard; “Helft leere Öfen und Töpfe füllen” [“Help fill empty stoves and pots”]—which shows an empty stove and an empty stew pot crying bitterly; and in the image titled “Eintopfsammlung” [“Soup Kitchen Collection”] a laughing figure 1 stirs a steaming pot of stew, which is a kind of rebus puzzle for the German term “Eintopf.” By contrast, the image showing the lettering “Jewish Winter Relief 1937 / 38” [1] has a more serious character and, appealing to the viewer’s Jewish identity, shows a lit menorah in the background while the Jewish Winter Relief logo, the letters J and W combined below a star of David, can be seen in the foreground.

The congregation newsletter Gemeindeblatt der Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeinde, which had to rename itself Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt in May 1937, published many calls for donations. The drawings by Hans Rudolf Growald are the only examples for attempts to get readers’ attention through images. Little is known about this commercial artist. He was born in Berlin in 1902 and attended the Jewish school for deaf-mute children in Berlin-Wannsee. In October 1941, he and his wife Edith were deported first to Lodz and in May 1942 to Chelmno. The couple managed to send their only son Ernst to Great Britain as a refugee child by means of the Kindertransport, thus saving his life. In 2013, two stumbling stones[2] remembering Edith and Hans Rudolf Growald were embedded in the pavement in the Berlin neighborhood of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf. Growald’s graphic work is considered lost. His only surviving works are seven drawings calling for donations to the Jewish Winter Relief which were published in Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt [The Jewish Newsletter]—the only remaining Jewish print medium in Germany after the November pogrom of 1938—between 1939 and 1941 as well as an advertisement for the Soup Kitchen Collection in 1937 published in both the Monatsblätter des Jüdischen Kulturbundes Hamburg [Hamburg Jewish Cultural Association Monthly] and the Monatsblätter des Berliner Jüdischen Kulturbundes [Berlin Jewish Cultural

Association Monthly]. The five images calling for donations presented here for the first time since their original publication in the Hamburger Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt [Hamburg Jewish Congregation Newsletter] in 1937 and 1938 respectively have thus far not been catalogued anywhere.

The drawings neither seem particularly sad nor trying to arouse sympathy, even if the empty stove and stew pot are depicted as shedding tears. In fact, they seem rather serene and almost happy, the message being: everyone can do good and give joy with a small contribution, and every donation can help feed the hungry.

## **What was the purpose of these images soliciting donations? The origins and mission of the Jewish Winter Relief**

The Winter Relief Agency of the German People<sup>[3]</sup> had been founded on September 13, 1933, in order to ease the burden on the “Third Reich’s” public welfare for the unemployed as well as to promote the propagated idea of a “national community” [Volksgemeinschaft]. During the first two winters of its existence, Jews benefitted from the Winter Relief Agency’s<sup>[4]</sup> work as well. This changed when the discriminatory “Nuremberg Laws” were passed in 1935: from now on, Jews were excluded from the agency’s support. One consequence of Jews’ exclusion from general Winter Relief (administered by the National Socialist National Welfare Agency, NS-Volkswohlfahrt or NSV), for example, was that Jewish schools no longer received subsidies in order to provide a breakfast including milk.

Thus an agreement was struck between the head of the NSV [Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt] and the Central Welfare Office for German Jews <sup>[5]</sup> in September 1935. The agreement put Jewish communities in charge of organizing their own Jewish Winter Relief. Jews were no longer obligated to contribute to the general Winter Relief either but were instead expected to contribute to the Jewish agency. The Jewish Winter Relief<sup>[6]</sup> was responsible for aiding all those in need who were considered Jewish according to the National Socialist definition, including so-called “Jews by race” [Rassejuden: Antisemitic concept in National Socialist racial doctrine, by which persons were considered to be Jews in the sense of the First Regulation to the National Socialist Reich Citizenship Law (November 1935) on the basis of their belonging, and that of their forebears, to the Jewish faith.. In the case of a “mixed marriage” [Mischehe], the government decree stipulated that the individuals in question were the responsibility of the Jewish Winter Relief<sup>[7]</sup> if the head of the household was Jewish as defined by the Reich Citizenship Law <sup>[8]</sup>, and consequently this demographic was expected to contribute to the Jewish relief agency. In the winter of 1935 / 36, Jewish welfare agencies nationwide assisted 83,761 people in need through the Jewish Winter Relief<sup>[9]</sup> service, a figure which represents roughly 20 percent of all Jews still living in Germany at that time.

## **Revenue of the Jewish Winter Relief**

The Jewish Winter Relief<sup>[10]</sup> was generally financed by the local Jewish community’s youth and welfare offices. This was true for Hamburg as well, where the German-Israelite Community (DIG)<sup>[11]</sup> had organized a community-run charity named „Winter Relief” as early as 1933 and continued to participate in the relief effort with remarkable organizational commitment in the following years as well. From late 1935 until the spring of 1939 and then again as of the fall of 1940, the Jewish Winter Relief Agency was headed by the community’s “Finance Commissioner,” Dr. Leo Lippmann, a retired State Councilor. The Jewish Winter Relief’s<sup>[12]</sup> funds came from four different sources, most importantly from monthly tax revenue. Employees

and employers both had to remit a contribution to Hamburg's Jewish Winter Relief<sup>[13]</sup> in the amount that had been determined in a bulletin issued by the "Hamburg Chapter of the Winter Relief Agency of the German People."<sup>[14]</sup> Considering existing working conditions, this model could hardly be called a "voluntary" donation—which was true for the general Winter Relief as well—it rather took on the character of a mandatory solidarity tax. A second source of regular revenue was created by the "Soup Kitchen Sundays" [Eintopfsontage], which had been launched by the National Socialist regime on October 1st, 1933. The Jewish community had adopted this model, thus the drawings announce a Soup Kitchen Collection on February 14, 1937 and a Soup Kitchen Sunday on February 13, 1938. A third source of donations consisted in collecting tin [Büchsensammlungen] at festive events such as the performances organized by the Jewish Cultural Association. This area was not considered particularly productive, however. Collections on special occasions represented the fourth source of revenue. In 1935, for example, the community used the occasion of the upcoming Hanukkah celebrations in order to organize a so-called Hanukkah pound donation, i.e. a food donation drive. The advertisement from the winter of 1937 / 38 also shows a lit menorah, thus establishing a connection between the call for donations and the holiday.

## Tasks of the Jewish Winter Relief

Based on information provided by the German-Israelite Congregation, about 15,000 individuals in Hamburg were required to pay a contribution in 1936/37. According to the same report in the Hamburger Gemeindeblatt, 3,600 persons in need received support in the winter of 1936 / 37. This meant about every fourth Jewish individual in Hamburg. A total of 6,000 food parcels were distributed on the Hanukkah holiday 1936—a remarkable logistical feat. In the winter of the following year 1937 / 38, the number of those relying on support from the agency in the area of Hamburg rose further despite recent emigration. While it initially assumed a number of 3,750 people in need, the Jewish Winter Relief<sup>[15]</sup> in fact supported 4,249 individuals, including in the areas of Altona and Wandsbek. In 1937 / 38, the total Winter Relief revenue was still significant at 102,300 Reichsmark. In relation to the community's budgeted expenses, they only represented a share of about 16%, however. In the following years, revenue shrank continuously due to increasing poverty among Hamburg's Jews and the confiscation orders in accordance with §37a of the Foreign Currency Act <sup>[16]</sup> issued by Hamburg's Head Finance Office President <sup>[17]</sup>. In 1941 / 42, the Jewish Winter Relief revenue amounted to about 67,000 Reichsmark. After that date, all traces are lost.

## Select Bibliography

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## Notes

[1] Jüdische Winterhilfe 1937 / 38

[2] Stolpersteine

[3] Winterhilfswerk des Deutschen Volkes

- [4] Winterhilfswerk
- [5] Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der deutschen Juden
- [6] Jüdische Winterhilfe
- [7] Jüdische Winterhilfe
- [8] Reichsbürgergesetz: Law passed on Sept. 15, 1935 by the National Socialists depriving the Jews of all political rights.
- [9] Jüdische Winterhilfe
- [10] Jüdische Winterhilfe
- [11] Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeinde
- [12] Jüdische Winterhilfe
- [13] Jüdische Winterhilfe
- [14] Winterhilfswerk des Deutschen Volkes
- [15] Jüdische Winterhilfe
- [16] Devisengesetz
- [17] Oberfinanzpräsident

### About the Author

Ina Lorenz (1940), Prof. Dr. phil. habil, deputy research director at the Institute for the History of the German Jews (IGdJ) until 2005 and professor at the Institute for Economic and Social History at Hamburg University. Her work focuses on German-Jewish history in the 19th and 20th century, as well as on social history of the Jewish community during National Socialism. She published several critical source editions on the history of the Jewish congregations in Hamburg, Altona and Wandsbek.

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