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Janet Poppendieck

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Janet Poppendieck : Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Author's preconceived ideas ends up making a poor conclusionBy

Jane Liles While there were a couple of good points made in the book overall it was extremely biased based upon the author's intent on writing it in the first place. While the author interviewed a lot of people she cherry picked comments and facts to support her position and I did not think that she made a good case for them even if some of what she argued for might be correct. The more telling fact is that it appears that while she is against charity and food pantries none of the people that she interviewed appear to be changing their operations to fit her vision. Two books that address food pantries and government programs and are much better are "Toxic Charity" and "The Vision of the Anointed". 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Slightly dated but damning By P. Troutman This book on charitable efforts to end hunger in the US could use a second edition. That is, it's quite good, if not prescient in many ways, but it is starting to show a little around the edges because of political changes that have taken place in the fourteen years since its publication as well as the continued growth of a consortium of food banks called Second Harvest (now Feeding America). The central ideas of the book, a damning indictment of a giving approach to ending hunger, are as timely as ever, and the last three chapters, starting with the one on the "seven deadly in's" of charitable giving (inefficiency, indignity, inappropriateness, etc.), sting as much as they ever did. Part of what prompted me to read this was listening to a state legislator baldly justify his hostility toward government programs by his annual donation of some turkeys. The ridiculousness and condescension of his position are exactly the kind of thing this book targets. The book concentrates largely on the 1980s and the rise of the notion of hunger in the US (and to a much lesser extent, around the world). How did it come about that whenever you decided you wanted to volunteer to 'help end hunger', that there would be someone in need? That was, indeed, a new phenomenon of a sort in the 1980s. What begs to be told now is how little attention the issue received during the Great Recession relative to what statistics demonstrate has been happening and how we can have discussions of budget cuts with so little awareness of what that would actually mean to people. The book is, on the whole, vivid and is animated by the awareness -- shared by many people involved in food distribution efforts -- that there's a chasm between the intentions of (most of) the people involved and the results of their efforts. They know that they're trying to fill a black hole but also that stopping would result in profound suffering. If you like this book, two others to consider are Poppendieck's *Free for All: Fixing School Food in America* (California Studies in Food and Culture) and then a book called *A People's History of Poverty in America* (The New Press People's History Series). The latter is, as its title suggests, on poverty in general, but it does a great job of putting the behaviors of hungry people into context. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Re-thinking old opinions By Dawn McIntyre I found *Sweet Charity?* to be intriguing, well-written and thought provoking. I'm looking at emergency food in America in a whole new way.

In this era of eroding commitment to government sponsored welfare programs, voluntarism and private charity have become the popular, optimistic solutions to poverty and hunger. The resurgence of charity has to be a good thing, doesn't it? No, says sociologist Janet Poppendieck, not when stopgap charitable efforts replace consistent public policy, and poverty continues to grow. In *Sweet Charity?*, Poppendieck travels the country to work in soup kitchens and "gleaning" centers, reporting from the frontlines of America's hunger relief programs to assess the effectiveness of these homegrown efforts. We hear from the "clients" who receive meals too small to feed their families; from the enthusiastic volunteers; and from the directors, who wonder if their "successful" programs are in some way perpetuating the problem they are struggling to solve. Hailed as the most significant book on hunger to appear in decades, *Sweet Charity?* shows how the drive to end poverty has taken a wrong turn with thousands of well-meaning volunteers on board.

From Publishers Weekly Tens of thousands of programs across the U.S. distribute free food to the hungry, a type of charity, according to the author, that "comes with a price tag." In a hard-hitting, radical analysis of a national crisis, Poppendieck, director of Hunter College's Center for the Study of Family Policy in New York City, calls the food programs a Band-Aid approach to deepening poverty, which counterproductively relieves pressure for more fundamental solutions by enabling government to shed its responsibility for the poor. Poppendieck, who has participated in or observed food distribution programs in nine states across the country, meticulously investigates the factors she cites as driving people to the soup kitchen or food pantry: low wages, unemployment, high housing costs, homelessness, disability and shrinking public-assistance benefits. She calls for a nationwide political movement to pursue an antipoverty, antihunger agenda vigorously through a reformed tax system, affordable housing, a stronger federal safety net and vastly improved public education and training. This is a book to prick the nation's conscience. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Poppendieck (director of the Ctr. for the Study of Family Policy, Hunter Coll., CUNY) examines whether volunteerism, food pantries, and soup lines do more harm than good in this thought-provoking work. (Poppendieck dealt earlier with hunger during the Great Depression in *Breadlines Knee Deep in Wheat*, LJ 3/1/86.) Here she explores the bitterness and frustration on both sides of the charity business of keeping people fed. During a bad economy, people "did the right thing" by pulling together to help each other. In the current strong economic times, she reports, people question the number of homeless and hungry and wonder why things haven't improved. The author investigates whether our present system of volunteerism? however

charitable?is actually contributing to the problem instead of solving it by letting the government off the hook. This timely book is highly recommended for public and academic libraries.?Sandra Isaacson, U.S. EPA Region VII Lib., Las VegasCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Booklist"Fighting hunger has become a national pastime," notes Poppendieck, a sociology professor and head of the Center for the Study of Family Policy at Hunter College. Experienced in antipoverty work, Poppendieck wondered how enormous growth in antihunger charities since the early '80s had affected efforts to deal with root causes of poverty. She spent seven years on this question, using participant observation at food banks, pantries, and kitchens; interviews with clients, administrators, and volunteers; and historical research. Many interviewees shared Poppendieck's conclusion that, with entitlements under attack and increasing inequality accepted, hunger activism hurts poor Americans by acting as a "moral safety valve," convincing well-intentioned folk that no one's starving and distracting advocates from vital public policy issues. Poppendieck respected her interviewees and their effort to avoid stigmatizing their clients but feels they must organize their stakeholders to lobby for restoration of the safety net. Emergency food, she insists, should be a supplement to sound public policy, not a short-sighted society's only response to "welfare reform" and globalization. Mary Carroll