

Sweet Charity?

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"A magnificent work of engaged scholarship . . .
The most important book on hunger and poverty in America
since Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (1964)."

—Kirkus Reviews

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出版者:Penguin (Non-Classics)

出版时间:1999-08-01

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780140245561

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.

"Demonstrates, convincingly, that the growing emphasis on emergency food for the hungry is a Band-Aid that distracts from the fundamental goal of solving poverty." -- The New York Times Book Review

"A book that reads . . . refreshingly like the work of a bright friend and good listener who knows a lot about an important topic." -- San Francisco Chronicle

"A passionately argued book. . . . Raises difficult questions for [those] who are still outraged by hunger and poverty in the midst of plenty." -- San Jose Mercury News

"Magnificent. . . . The most important book on hunger and poverty in America since Michael Harrington's *The Other America*." -- Kirkus Reviews

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