



Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann. *The Polish Hearst: Ameryka-Echo and the Public Role of the Immigrant Press*

Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann. *The Polish Hearst: Ameryka-Echo and the Public Role of the Immigrant Press*. University of Illinois Press, 2015. 304 p. ISBN 9780252039096. US \$60.

In 1936, Pawel Maloposki published a letter in the “Corner for Everybody” section of his local Polish-language newspaper, writing: “if you once drop by this ‘Corner,’ it is not easy to leave it—so it is not surprising that I too made my home here, and since I did, I want to contribute to its benefit” (151). These lines illustrate Maloposki’s sense of loyalty to a discourse community located within the pages of the newspaper *Ameryka-Echo*, which is the primary focus of Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann’s groundbreaking book, *The Polish Hearst: Ameryka-Echo and the Public Role of the Immigrant Press*. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann places letters like Maloposki’s in a series of broad contexts, alternately focusing on such letter writing’s significance to individual readers and writers, on *Ameryka-Echo*’s rhetorical function as a site for epistolary communication in American Polonia, on the newspaper’s role within the larger ethnic press, and on its status as the business venture of one particularly ambitious Polish immigrant.

The book’s early chapters offer a fine-grained biography of Antoni A. Paryski, founder and owner of *Ameryka-Echo*, giving particular attention to his rise to prominence in the American publishing world. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann points out that the editorial, political, and personal pressures Paryski faced at the helm of *Ameryka-Echo* shaped his desire to maintain the newspaper’s separation from the “immigrant fraternal organizations” on the one hand, and the “religious or nationalist Polonia press” on the other hand, which required him to chart a delicate course between competing alliances (39). This was a highly unusual path that put him at odds with other publications within the larger ethnic press of the period, which is a dynamic Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann outlines with clarity and precision.

In later chapters, Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann shifts her attention to the social, cultural, and political functions of *Ameryka-Echo*, and particularly to what she calls the “community of readers-writers” who were active in the newspaper’s “Corner for Everybody” over the course of the newspaper’s 72-year run. In fact, a particular strength of this book is its treatment of these reader-produced pages not as merely a record of public sentiment, but also as a negotiation of meaning and power between editors and readers. Arguing that the uniquely “participatory character of the Polish-language press” in the United States was founded on the practice of publishing reader-produced materials, Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann traces the contours of a print-based public sphere in which individuals variously debated social issues,



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shared personal memories, dispensed advice, articulated a sense of shared diasporic identity, and positioned themselves both within and against a larger American community (139). In fact, Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann's argument that *Ameryka-Echo's* promotion of a wide range of reader-writer activities resulted in a "bond between the newspaper and its readers [that] made the relationship appear more personal," forms the heart of this study's contributions to existing scholarship on the ethnic press, American immigration, and early twentieth-century print culture.

Finally, it is crucial to note that *The Polish Hearst* constitutes a massive scholarly undertaking. More than a decade's worth of painstaking archival research is represented in the pages of this book, and Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann's analysis relies on the translation of thousands of letters and articles from their original Polish into English. This translation project opens up the potential for substantial new scholarship in the future, as five hundred of the letters are reproduced in their entirety in a companion volume, *Letters from Readers in the Polish American Press, 1902-1969: A Corner for Everybody*.

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