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Letters from Readers in the Polish American Press, 1902-1969: A Corner for Everybody

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A Corner for Everybody is a unique collection of close to five hundred letters from Polish American readers, which were published in the Polish-language weekly *Ameryka-Echo* between 1902 and 1969. In these letters, Polish immigrants speak in their own words about their American experience, and vigorously debate religion, organization of their community, ethnic identity, American politics and society, and ties to the homeland. The translated letters are annotated and divided into thematic chapters with informative introductions.

Polish Americans formed one of the largest European immigrant groups in the United States and their community (Polonia) developed a vibrant Polish-language press, which tied together networks of readers in the entire Polish immigrant Diaspora. Newspaper editors encouraged their readers to write to the press and provided them with public space to exchange their views and opinions, and share thoughts and reflections. *Ameryka-Echo*, a weekly published from Toledo, Ohio, was one of the most popular and long-lasting newspapers with international circulation.

For seven decades, *Ameryka-Echo* sustained a number of sections based on readers' correspondence, but the most popular of them was a "Corner for Everybody," which featured thousands of letters on a variety of topics. The readers eagerly discussed everything from occurrences in local communities, to issues paramount to the formation of their ethnic identity and assimilation, church, religion, gender, politics, relations with new immigrant waves, and other ethnic groups. The letter-writers debated the American labor movement and strikes, described hardships of the Great Depression and World War II, and argued about American domestic politics, and foreign policy. They also keenly followed changes in their homeland and called for work on behalf of the Polish nation.

The *Ameryka-Echo* letters are a rich source of information on the history of Polish Americans, which can serve as primary sources for students and scholars. They also provide a new, fascinating, and lively look into the passions and experiences of individuals who created the larger American historical experience.

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