

MICHAŁ J. WILCZEWSKI (Chicago, IL, USA)  
orcid.org/0000-0002-3836-4251

REVIEW: ROCZNIK PRZEMYSKI, VOL. 55, NO. 3 (2019):  
“FOR YOUR FREEDOM AND OURS’: POLONIA  
AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE,” EDS.  
TOMASZ PUDŁOCKI AND ANDREW KIER WISE

The text under consideration is Can we change this to „neither” your typical monograph nor edited volume that one typically reviews, but instead a curated special issue of the Przemyśl-based journal, *Rocznik Przemyski*. It features articles by an international group of authors that developed out of a 2018 conference at Daemen College on the topic of Polonia (the Polish diaspora) and Polish independence. The editors, Tomasz Pudłocki of Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland and Andrew Kier Wise of Daemen College in Amherst, New York, intend for this special issue to “present new perspectives and new research on the role of Polonia—especially American Polonia—in the struggle for Polish independence during World War I” (p. 6). Focusing mostly on Polish immigrants’ support of military efforts, the volume will be of particular interest to military and migration scholars. The volume’s geographic focus primarily in Buffalo, New York helps decenter the Chicago-focused historiography of Polonia.

Pudłocki and Wise’s issue is broken into three parts. Part I, about which the majority of this review will focus, consists of individual articles. Part II features several primary sources that may be of use to teachers and scholars. And Part III includes the issue’s book reviews. Part I begins with an article by James Pula on the various ways American Polonia supported and called for Polish independence starting as early as 1905. Various North American Polish-American institutions helped keep the cause of independence alive given Polish-Americans’ relative freedom in the United States versus their national brethren who still lived in the lands of partitioned Poland. In their emigration, Polish American circles could invoke a sense of unified Polishness that was not always possible in the Polish lands, especially when Poles were drafted into opposing imperial armies and forced to fight against one another. Pula makes it a point to argue that though Polish-American organizations did not always see eye-to-eye on every issue, they were all unified in the cause for Polish independence.

Polish-Americans hyphenated identities was of major concern to American political leaders, an issue which Penny Messinger discusses in her article. Whereas the various Polish-American organizations Pula referred to previously sought to Americanize their memberships from the bottom up, Messinger argues that by the end of World War I, American leaders, particularly those from the American Council for Education sought to Americanize Polish immigrants in Buffalo from the top down. Conservative postwar efforts to quash hyphenated immigrant identities represented a reactionary movement targeting the labor unions and immigrant organizations that supported immigrant groups like Polonia in the United States.

Several other articles focus on Polonia in Buffalo including those by Carl Bucki, Andrew Kier Wise, and Joseph Hapak. Bucki explains how Poles in Buffalo joined the para-military organization, the Polish Falcons, in support of Poland, while also raising funds and holding rallies in support of the war effort. Hapak similarly focuses on the role the Polish Falcons played in the Polish Army in France also referred to as Haller's Army. Andrew Kier Wise's focuses his attention on local Buffalo Polish-American activist Dr. Francis Fronczak, the son of Polish immigrants, who worked to "create a positive image of Polish immigrants and promote the Polish national cause to the broader American audience." Most interestingly, Wise argues that Fronczak's activism helped non-Poles develop sympathies toward Poland, demonstrating that the cause for Polish independence extended beyond Polish-American audiences.

In their articles, Rafał Sierchuła and Krzysztof Kaczmarski continue discussions of Polish-American involvement in the Polish Army in France. That the articles in this issue focus so heavily on military aid makes me wonder what other kinds of support Polish-Americans offered to the cause of Polish independence. In this sense, the volume lays bare some of the lacunae in the historiography and suggests that there are many more avenues for research.

The three remaining articles include two on women and one on a group of intellectuals, landowners, and political activists from Kyiv who advocated for the incorporation of Right-Bank Ukraine into the Polish postwar state. In her article, Anitta Maksymowicz focuses on Polish immigrant, Agnes Wisła's (Agnieszka Wisła) experience as a nurse caring for the wounded soldiers of Haller's Army and those who fought in the Polish-Soviet War in 1919-1920. And Tomasz Pudłocki looks at an American—Edith Brahmall Cullis-Williams—whose experience as an American Red Cross Orderly, first in France and then in Poland, helped shape her worldview and ultimately resulted in her becoming an ambassador of Polish culture upon her return to the United States. One of the issue's most interesting articles is Marcel Radosław Garboś's contribution on Polish leaders in Kyiv who wished to keep western Ukrainian lands in Poland after the war. Garboś claims that this group of intellectuals whom he calls a "Southeastern Lobby" argued that Polish historic claims to the lands of southeastern Poland (western Ukraine) included a civilizing mission by which Poland could develop space for colonization and economic expansion.

Overall, the issue brings to light the many Polish-American contributions to the cause for Polish independence during the First World War, though it could have benefitted from some better organization. For example, we are not told why the issue focuses so much on Buffalo (though the fact that the conference took place in upstate New York probably explains this fact). Still, the introduction could have been used to situate Buffalo in the story of American Polonia. Further, throughout the issue we jump from Buffalo to Kyiv to Buffalo to Poland. It would have been helpful for the articles to be more organized—perhaps thematically or geographically. Despite these criticisms, however, this issue of *Rocznik Przemyski*, is a welcome contribution to the historiography of Polonia during the First World War.