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NEW YORK *OGNIWO* IN THE YEARS 1879-1881

The source literature does not often mention the magazine *Ogniwo*. A popular booklet on Polish journalism, released in the United States, contained merely several sentences about this weekly magazine written by Henryk Nagiel¹. The most information about the content of the magazine can be found in the article by Józef Skrzypek, who accurately described the first Polish magazines in the United States². The first issue of *Ogniwo* was released on 18 June 1879. The magazine appeared every Wednesday for two years in Brooklyn. A single issue cost 2 cents and a yearly subscription 1,25 cents. European countries had a slightly higher rate. In the Habsburg Monarchy, a yearly subscription cost 5 zł and 50 crowns, in Germany 9 marks, and in France and Switzerland 12 francs. Given the costs of running the publishing house, the price was not high. For comparison, one had to pay 10 cents for a single issue of *Gazeta Nowojorska*, which had been published four years before, and a yearly subscription cost 4 dollars. *Ogniwo* possessed its own printing house, which provided additional services for those who were willing to print visiting cards, circular letters, posters, etc. Initially, it was located at 608 Fulton Street. On 24 March 1880, the editorial office and printing house were moved to 114 Christie Street,³ and then to 133 East Street⁴. The weekly magazine had a circulation of 2,000⁵, which seems to have decreased

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¹ H. NAGIEL, *Dziennikarstwo polskie w Ameryce i jego 30-letnie dzieje (referat przeznaczony na Wystawę Kościuszkowską 1894 r. we Lwowie)*, Chicago 1894, pp. 67-68.

² J. SKRZYPEK, *Początki czasopiśmiennictwa polskiego w Stanach Zjednoczonych A.P.*, "Problemy Polonii Zagranicznej" 1(1960), pp. 180-184.

³ *Zmiana lokalu*, "Ogniwo" 24 III 1880, p. 1.

⁴ *Rozmaitości*, "Ogniwo" 9 III 1881, p. 3.

⁵ *Odezwa redakcji do szanownych pp. Prenumeratorów*, "Ogniwo" 30 VII 1879, p. 1.

to 1.000 in a year⁶. The most readers of the magazine were, apart from the environs of New York, in Philadelphia, Toledo, Shamokin, Pittsburgh and South Bend, where the publishing house installed its agents⁷. *Ogniwo* intended to distribute its copies in two ways: by mail and by “boys who were to deliver this [magazine] to our subscribers’ home”⁸.

There is scarce biographical data on the publisher of the periodical, Teodor D. Janicki, and its editor, Stanisław Artwiński. Janicki was a shoemaker by trade⁹. He had lived in America since at least 1862¹⁰. Two years later *Echo z Polski*, the first Polish-language magazine in the United States, mentioned his surname in the list of the members of the school committee, formed with a view to establishing the first Polish educational institution in New York¹¹. Several years later he probably became a member of a publishing company of *Kurier Nowojorski* with S. Zieliński and Jan Odasz. Six months following the liquidation of the above-mentioned magazine, he began publishing *Ogniwo* on his own¹². At the same time, he became a secretary of the Society ‘Opieka’ in New York¹³. In 1880 he advertised himself as a middleman in the sale of the land of the railway company from Chicago, whose owner was Grzegorz Antoni Klupp, later the publisher of *Gazeta Chicagoska*¹⁴. The editor of *Ogniwo*, Stanisław Artwiński, hailed from Galicia. In 1869 he studied law at the Jagiellonian University¹⁵. Before arriving in America, he had lived in Paris. He met there, among others, Edward Odrowąż, later the editor of *Zgoda*, published from 1881 by the Polish National Alliance. They together travelled to the other part of the world¹⁶. After a few months of working for

⁶ T.D. JANICKI, *Do szanownych czytelników “Ogniwa”*, “Ogniwo” 19 V 1880, p. 3.

⁷ *Rozmaitości*, “Ogniwo” 27 VIII 1879, p. 4; [No title] “Ogniwo” 11 II 1880, p. 3.

⁸ *Odezwa do rodaków*, “Ogniwo” 18 VI 1879, p. 3.

⁹ J. SKRZYPEK, *Początki czasopiśmiennictwa...*, p. 179.

¹⁰ This is confirmed by the fact that Janicki advertised his shoe shop, run from 1862, in *Ogniwo*.

¹¹ *Polacy w Nowym Yorku*, “Echo z Polski” 9 VII 1864, p. 1; cf. K. GRONIEWSKI, *Początki organizacji polonijnych w Stanach Zjednoczonych*, “Kwartalnik Historyczny” 88 (1981), no. 3, p. 669.

¹² A. WALDO, *Sokolstwo przednia straż narodu. Dzieje idei i organizacji w Ameryce*, vol. I, Pittsburgh 1953, p. 140. It is not certain whether *Kurier Nowojorski* was published for so long since its closure was announced in *Gazecie Polskiej w Chicago* in November in 1877, see *Trudności wydania czasopisma polskiego w Ameryce*, “Gazeta Polska w Chicago” 29 XI 1877, p. 4.

¹³ *Rozmaitości*, “Ogniwo” 28 VII 1880, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Uwaga*, “Ogniwo” 22 XII 1880, p. 4; cf. K. GRONIEWSKI, *Grzegorz Antoni Klupp – wydawca „Gazety Chicagoskiej”*, [in:] *Losy Polaków w XIX-XX wieku. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Stefanowi Kieniewiczowi w osiemdziesiątą rocznicę Jego urodzin*, eds. B. Grochulska and J. Skowronek, Warszawa 1987, p. 541.

¹⁵ Archiwum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, S II-514(418), ref. 251; W. NAŁĘCZ, *Polacy w New Yorku*, Toledo 1911, p. 108.

¹⁶ *Edward Odrowąż. Zgoda’s First Editor Was a Man of Mystery*, “Zgoda” 1 I 1981, p. 5.

Ogniwo, he resigned from the post of editor due to his health problems¹⁷. However, he actively participated in the public life of the local Polish community. In 1881 he attended the national commemoration of the January Uprising. The person who wrote about this event in a letter mentioned that Artwiński was still editing *Ogniwo*¹⁸. It was not until 1881 (when Janicki permanently left New York for his new residence in Egg Harbor in New Jersey) that a new editor was appointed; his name, however, was not revealed¹⁹.

It was mentioned that he had had no previous experience in journalism²⁰. Not long after this change, the periodical ceased to be published.

While analyzing the content of the magazine in question, it is worth paying attention to the editorial that outlines the periodical's ideological profile. First of all, it called for a change in the approach to shaping the Polish societies in America and communication between them. The mere enrollment in the organization and participation in regular meetings or anniversary celebrations were not sufficient elements cementing the community. The process of further consolidation could take place only with the possibility of establishing a periodical tying the Polish diaspora into "a strong brotherly knot"²¹. Previously, the activity of Polish national, cultural, paramilitary, loan, self-help or even religious societies had been conducted without mutual agreement. The new journal intended to concentrate these efforts and attempt to coordinate organizational structures, which were frequently chaotically developed. It was the lack of mutual communication between over 15,000 Polish emigrants gathered in New York and its vicinity that the editorial office regarded as the biggest problem and, at the same time, a great challenge for the publishing house. Establishing an appropriate press platform attractive to a very diverse group of readers, ranging from the intelligentsia to working people, was to be the goal of the originators of the new publishing house in the near future. It should be added that the plans outlined above reflected the general development trends of the Polish press in other regions of America. In such magazines as *Gazeta Polska w Chicago*, *Gazeta Katolicka* or *Przyjaciół Ludu* the Polish societies were encouraged to institutionally centralize²².

¹⁷ S. ARTWIŃSKI, *Do Szanownych czytelników „Ogniwa”*, "Ogniwo" 11 II 1880, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Obchód rocznicy powstania w roku 1863 w Nowym Yorku*, "Ogniwo" 26 I 1881, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Rozmaitości*, "Ogniwo" 9 III 1881, p. 3.

²⁰ *Do szanownych czytelników „Ogniwa”*, "Ogniwo" 30 III 1881, p. 1.

²¹ *Odezwa do rodaków*, "Ogniwo" 18 VI 1879, p. 2.

²² See, inter alia, D. KIPER, „*Przyjaciół Ludu*” wobec prób zjednoczenia Polonii amerykańskiej w latach 1880-1881, "Studia Polonijne" 33(2012), pp. 79-90.

The representatives of political emigration observed with concern an inevitable process of assimilation of the new folk emigration, seeing it as a threat to the national community. Artwiński, who belonged to this group, quite clearly expressed his view on these issues in *Ogniwo*:

[...] we are the children of one Mother, but we do not communicate with each other, we are becoming strangers to one another and forget our national customs and native speech; instead of going hand in hand, we are separated into individuals and thus lose our moral strength, all national dignity and we risk being disregarded by other nationalities which, taking all trade and businesses into their hands, exclude us from these, leaving us the most difficult and unfavourable work that we must do for daily bread²³.

At the same time, the harsh reality forced those who fought for their country's independence to adopt a certain pragmatism in imposing obligations towards their homeland. The duty of a Pole in America was to express attachment to his country of origin and at the same time follow the spirit of the times and progress. It was believed that the memory of the glorious past and national disasters should not obscure the future, the shape of which was to be built by the emigrants themselves. Efforts were made to overcome historical fatalism, to show new opportunities that the American civilization had created for the Polish emigration, to instill optimism into the dormant emigration groups and faith in their development possibilities. In everyday life, the task for the Polish immigrants was to work on their own education (rather elementary than higher) and to acquire skills enabling them to significantly improve their living standards. According to the editors, only acquiring American citizenship and active participation in American political life would allow Poles "to ensure our homeland and our persecuted brothers the protection of the United States, which will certainly not be disregarded by European powers"²⁴. The columnists of *Ogniwo* quite easily succumbed to the visions of the American myth tempting poor people with unlimited possibilities of promotion. The immigrants who brought all their belongings to the New World in one suitcase were assured that their persistent work would earn them a fortune. To stimulate their appetites, the periodical showed examples of brilliant careers, which gave the impression that success was at hand. The weekly magazine wrote: "when we look at the owners of these institutions, once poor people, often doing physical work, today financial

²³ *Odezwa do rodaków*, "Ogniwo" 18 VI 1879, p. 2.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

powers, we will learn what the entrepreneurial spirit can create when persistent work is put in place”²⁵. The traditional hierarchies of values of the Polish intelligentsia inevitably clashed here with the values derived from the Protestant ethics, which were dominant among the Anglo-Saxon elites. In this perspective, it was not only the merits given to the national cause that counted but also the material status which was the source of universal respect. The publishers of *Ogniwo* believed that the American socio-economic system is ideal, especially for enterprising and resourceful individuals. This faith was instilled in readers while encouraging them to imitate and compete with other ethnic groups. Taking on the role of a tool of socialization, the magazine approved of the world in which society concentrated on competition, not the pursuit of understanding and solidarity with other social groups. Another dilemma emerging from these demands was the matching of idealistic and materialistic goals. At that time, it was becoming a moral dilemma for individuals various environments functioning in the public space. This issue, however, will not be further discussed in this paper.

The excerpt cited below lists the goals which were needed to achieve the desired profile of a new magazine. They are worth mentioning as they manifest the ways of ideological thinking of the leaders of the Polish ethnic community in the largest American metropolis:

The task and purpose of this magazine will be to vividly remember the principles sucked out of mothers' breasts, as well as national customs and traditions, to exchange our thoughts and beliefs with each other and to analyse them with an inclination towards harmony and unity, to raise our national spirit, to give each other perseverance and energy, to become familiar with the political relations, especially of our nation, concerning the everyday news, not only local but also European, and finally to become acquainted with the history of our nation, literature, fine arts, etc.²⁶

Additionally, there were more down-to-earth goals behind establishing the magazine. After the discontinuation of publishing *Kurier Nowojorski*²⁷, the Polish diaspora in New York and its environs (e.g. Jersey City) had no information medium through which it could communicate about joint actions,

²⁵ *Interes polski*, “*Ogniwo*” 12 I 1881, p. 1.

²⁶ *Odezwa do rodaków*, “*Ogniwo*” 18 VI 1879, p. 2.

²⁷ *Kurier Nowojorski* – a weekly magazine which was published in 1874 by a group of Polish emigrants, such as Aleksander Zadębowski, Jana Odasz and Teodor Janicki. His editors were, among others, Edward Kulikowski and Zbigniew E. Brodowski.

such as national celebrations, picnics, theatre performances or pre-election meetings. Furthermore, the local Polish community was not informed about “[...] the death of his countrymen, the time of the funeral and the funeral service”²⁸. The expansion of the advertising, announcements and obituary sections was, therefore, a less important but necessary condition for the magazine’s success.

In the first months of publishing the weekly magazine, the editorial office released news on the politics of the United States and Europe. The information was taken from Polish newspapers and magazines: *Czas*, *Dziennik Poznański*, *Gazeta Toruńska*, *Gazeta Narodowa*, *Przegląd Tygodniowy* and *Gazeta Lubelska*. The news was presented in the form of several journalistic genres, including article, reportage or feature. Depending on the subject matter, various ways of influencing the readers were employed. Facts in the field of politics were described and interpreted in accordance with the adopted ideological assumptions, which will be discussed below. Another type of political reports was a reprint of sent telegrams, i.e. short pieces of information about political incidents, copied most often from other American magazines. A permanent element of each Polish magazine in America at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was the printing of the news from the Polish lands. It was no different in the case of *Ogniwo*. Initially, the organizational life of the Polish diaspora was not frequently presented. Only after a few months, there were significant changes in this respect. In the first issues, the magazine did not have much to offer the local readers interested in the news from Poland. The periodical’s appeal for help in providing attractive materials met with a feeble response from the editors of domestic magazines, and they might not have known about the existence of the periodical. However, the editors of *Ogniwo* were not discouraged by their failures and looked to the future with optimism. Soon, the first material on Kraszewski’s life and work was sent from Warsaw by Adam Jakubowski²⁹. The first correspondence from Galicia was printed in the September 17 issue³⁰. The regular collaborators of the magazine were joined, among others, by Sygurd Wiśniowski, writer, traveller and correspondent of *Gazeta Narodowa* and Henryk Kałussowski, who provided political accounts from Washington³¹. At the

²⁸ *Odezwa do rodaków*, “*Ogniwo*” 18 VI 1879, p. 3.

²⁹ A. JAKUBOWSKI, *Józef Ignacy Kraszewski. Z powodu pięćdziesięciolecia Jego prac i zasług dla społeczeństwa polskiego*, “*Ogniwo*” 20 VIII 1879, pp. 5-6; “*Ogniwo*” 27 VIII 1879, pp. 5-6.

³⁰ *Korespondencja „Ogniwa”*, “*Ogniwo*” 17 IX 1879, pp. 1-2.

³¹ S. WIŚNIEWSKI, *Polityczne sprawy miejscowe*, “*Ogniwo*” 24 IX 1879, p. 2; H. K[alussowski], *Z Ameryki*, “*Ogniwo*” 10 XII 1879, p. 2.

end of the first year of the publication of *Ogniwo*, the nucleus of a correspondence network had already been established. It was a time when the periodical layout design, which never altered, was created. Only the size of the sheet changed: an initial small, half-sheet format was later significantly enlarged.

The limited spectrum of topics relating to political and social life discussed in *Ogniwo* could not be complete without those related to the issue of independence. At the time, the need to work through the trauma after the January Uprising could find an outlet only in emigration journalism. A word of the emigration disputes also reached the United States, as evidenced by the reflections expressed in the New York periodical on the sense, chances of success and limitations of an armed struggle. In part, they aimed at settling accounts with the past, and in part, they constituted some justification for new ideas, a way out of the difficult international situation. Following the example of most periodicals of the time published in exile, the magazine took advantage of the freedom of speech and asserted Poles' rights to their own state. A time perspective was conducive to attempts to coolly reflect on their position under the rule of the partitioning powers, to develop a survival strategy and to rationalize attitudes towards the lowest classes of society. One of the authors of an extensive dissertation on the social relations of Poles in America, when diagnosing the attitudes of Polish society in the context of the fight for independence, looked more soberly at the inhabitants of the countryside than the journalists of *Echo z Polski*, the first Polish magazine in the USA, which followed the tendencies of glorifying this social class. In *Ogniwo*, opinions on this subject were expressed in the statement below:

Until now, only a small number of the gentry in Poland, the bourgeoisie and the peasant of Greater Poland and Samogitia had fought for the cause of Poland, be it with weapons, with a pen or a word. It was only a smaller part of our nation whereas a larger one (i.e. the rural people in the Kingdom, in Galicia and in Russia), plunged into darkness and therefore not comprehending their own interest, was indifferent to the national cause, did not interfere with it, or worse, sometimes expressed hostility towards it³².

The journal published by the supporters of the Polish irredentism did not hesitate to write that the January Uprising was too expensive an experiment,

³² *Nasze stosunki w Ameryce*, "Ogniwo" 27 VIII 1879, p. 1.

and similar actions should be avoided at all costs in the future. Instead, in their opinion, it was necessary “to raise morality and standard of living, to educate oneself; in a word, to prepare for a great task and wait for a favourable political configuration so that, if it happens, it can be used effectively”³³. It is highly probable that the views on the chances of an armed struggle were written by Stanisław Artwiński, as he expressed an identical position during the celebration of the January Uprising anniversary. During a public speech, he mentioned that in all the national uprisings, including the last one, only the gentry and the bourgeoisie had been ready to shed their blood for the cause of their motherland, while “the rural people behaved passively or, even worse, hostile”³⁴. Despite its critical approach to the decision to initiate the uprising, the magazine clearly adopted the optics of the gentry while looking at national affairs; it saw “the lower classes” as an alien and incomprehensible element. The representatives of this social stratum failed the civic exam, therefore they were perceived as not belonging to the same cultural circle as those of noble birth, despite the fact that they constituted a permanent element of the social landscape of Poland.

The publisher and editor of *Ogniwo* did not limit their horizons only to independence issues, but carefully watched the actions of the main political camps in the USA. The opportunity to “play a serious and decisive political role” arose during the split in the democratic party before the state elections in 1879. The political campaign of that time gave Poles an opportunity to become much more active. According to Sygurd Wiśniowski, Poles living in New York and its environs could gain significant benefits for themselves by taking advantage of the opposing parties³⁵. A well-known writer and traveller argued that *Ogniwo* had favourable conditions to become an important tool in building a unified political force in this region, capable of gaining a strong bargaining position in talks with representatives of major political clubs. “Our magazine” – wrote the periodical – “as the only Polish voice existing in the eastern states will always be ready, as it has been so far, to be the mouth and voice of every collective and serious Polish political organization in New York and its vicinity”³⁶. These goals could not be achieved at the time³⁷. Although the Polish community in New York was not ready to take up this role, it was the first time that the need to overcome the limita-

³³ Ibidem, p. 2.

³⁴ *Rozmaitości*, “Ogniwo” 28 I 1880, p. 3.

³⁵ S. WIŚNIEWSKI, *Polityczne sprawy miejscowe*, “Ogniwo” 24 IX 1879, p. 2.

³⁶ *Do dzieła*, “Ogniwo” 21 VII 1880, p. 1.

³⁷ *Jak Polacy w Nowym Yorku o polityce myślą*, “Ogniwo” 23 VI 1880, p. 1.

tions that had inhibited its active participation in American democracy was clearly articulated. People began to realize the need for greater mobilization in defence of the interests of their ethnic group. There was also an attempt to develop tactics of participating in politics at the state and federal levels.

Observing the political commitment of the New York weekly magazine, it is not difficult to notice its tendency to avoid involvement in supporting any party. This strategy was justified by the need to respect all Poles' freedom of choice. Without diminishing the importance of this approach, it should be emphasized that during this period, probably none of the major political parties took steps to gain *Ogniwo's* support. The efforts of professional American politicians to win favour with the Polish press in the USA were undertaken only at a later stage, which resulted in wider participation of representatives of the Polish ethnic group in the political life of the United States³⁸.

The failure of building a significant political club induced the editors of *Ogniwo* to participate more actively in strengthening organizational ties among their ethnic group. During the discussion on the situation of Poles in America, the necessity to create a national organization was repeatedly demonstrated, and other ethnic groups in the United States served as examples³⁹. The pages of the weekly magazine were open to the reports and announcements of the New York societies, including the Society of the Union of Poles in New York, the society of the amateur theatre Lutnia Polska, the Kościuszko Guard from Nanticoke and the Tadeusz Kościuszko Society of Brotherly Help from Philadelphia⁴⁰. It was the members of the organization mentioned above as the last one that *Ogniwo* focused its attention on while supporting the new project of uniting all Polish organizations in the USA. A clear signal to take steps in this direction was the correspondence from Galicia sent by an unknown author who was keenly interested in the problems of the Polish diaspora in America⁴¹. Referring to patriotic feelings, he appealed to Poles in America to concentrate "all [...] material and moral forces" around one supra-territorial organization gathering all Poles settled in the United

³⁸ A. ŁAWROWSKI, *Reprezentacja polskiej grupy etnicznej w życiu politycznym Stanów Zjednoczonych*, Warszawa 1979, pp. 74-81; 102-109.

³⁹ *Polityczne sprawy miejscowe*, "Ogniwo" 29 X 1879, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Sprawozdanie kwartalne Towarzystwa Zjednoczenia Polaków w Nowym Yorku*, "Ogniwo" 15 X 1879, p. 1; *Rozmaitości*, "Ogniwo" 12 XI 1879, p. 3; *Rozmaitości*, "Ogniwo" 26 XI 1879, p. 3; *Rozmaitości*, "Ogniwo" 3 XII 1879, p. 3; T. GRODZKI, *Raport finansowy Towarzystwa Polskiego Bratniej Pomocy Kościuszko*, "Ogniwo" 12 V 1880, p. 3; *Towarzystwo Opieki*, "Ogniwo" 23 VI 1880, p. 2.

⁴¹ *Korespondencje „Ogniwa” z Galicji*, "Ogniwo" 17 XII 1879, pp. 1-2.

States. Its aim was “to improve the standard of living and education, to develop a strong position in society as well as in internal and political affairs, and finally, to use it all for the good of the motherland”⁴². More frequent than usual meetings of Polish societies took place during contributions for the victims of hunger in Silesia. In the above-mentioned Philadelphia Society of Kościuszko, however, they did not only focus on their purely philanthropic role but decided to establish a new organization called the Polish National Alliance⁴³. *Ogniwo* printed an announcement signed by Jan Nepomucen Popiełiński, Julian Lipiński and Juliusz Andrzejkiewicz, in which Poles living in Philadelphia were invited to the founding meeting of the Polish National Alliance⁴⁴. A month later, the establishment of a new national institution was officially announced⁴⁵. Since that time, the weekly magazine, assuming the role of an unofficial press organ of the Alliance, encouraged readers and Polish societies to expand the new organization⁴⁶. At the time it was not a political club, but a supra-territorial organization that, in the opinion of the editors, was supposed to unite “our national, religious, moral and material forces”⁴⁷. However, the editors of *Ogniwo* promoting the Alliance soon had to fight fierce battles with the opponents of this organization gathered around *Gazeta Katolicka* in Chicago⁴⁸. Thanks to these polemics, we can follow the beginning of the struggle for power over the Polish diaspora between two central organizations, the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America and the Polish National Alliance. This dispute was to divide the Polish diaspora into two conflicting camps in the following years.

Earlier the Polish community in America was not devoid of conflicts either, which essentially influenced the perception of Polish organizations by

⁴² Ibidem, p. 2.

⁴³ D. KIPER, *Geneza i kształt Związku Narodowego Polskiego w Ameryce Północnej w pierwszych latach istnienia*, “Studia Polonijne” 39(2018), p. 92.

⁴⁴ *Polacy!*, “Ogniwo” 11 II 1880, p. 4.

⁴⁵ *Związek Narodowy Polski*, “Ogniwo” 10 III 1880, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁶ *Związek Narodowy Polski*, “Ogniwo” 31 III 1880, p. 2; *Polacy w Ameryce*, “Ogniwo” 28 IV 1880, p. 1; *Odezwa „Ogniwa”*, “Ogniwo” 5 V 1880, p. 1; *Polacy w Filadelfii*, “Ogniwo” 12 V 1880, p. 1; *Z Filadelfii*, “Ogniwo” 19 V 1880, p. 2; *List Agatona Gillera do Komitetu Związku Narodowego Polskiego w Filadelfii*, “Ogniwo” 26 V 1880, p. 1; *Korespondencje „Ogniwa”*, ibidem, p. 2; E. ODRWAŻ, *Korespondencje „Ogniwa”*, “Ogniwo” 2 VI 1880, pp. 1-2; ibidem, 9 VI 1880, pp. 1-2; *Od Komitetu Związku Nar[odowego] Pol[skiego]*, “Ogniwo” 14 VII 1880, p. 2; J. ANDRZEJKOWICZ, *Cenzor Związku Nar[odowego] Pol[skiego] do parafii, gmin i towarzystw polskich w Ameryce*, “Ogniwo” 22 XII 1880, p. 1; *Odezwa*, “Ogniwo” 2 II 1881, p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Związek Narodowy Polski*, “Ogniwo” 17 III 1880, p. 1.

⁴⁸ J. LIPIŃSKI, P. WODZICKI, J. SZAJNERT, J. POPIELIŃSKI, *Korespondencje „Ogniwa”*, “Ogniwo” 2 II 1881, pp. 2-3; *W sprawie „Związku” Nar[odowego] Pol[skiego]*, “Ogniwo” 9 II 1881, pp. 1-2.

Ogniwo. More and more pessimistic forecasts about the future of Polish emigration in the United States appeared in editorials. Criticism was particularly aimed at the local elites, which were accused of demonstrating apathy, laziness, selfishness and envy in mutual relations⁴⁹. This largely contributed to the weakening of the potential brought by the new economic emigration. Sceptical voices relating to the economic exile appeared in, among others, comments on the causes and anticipated effects of the massive overseas migratory movement. The editors of *Ogniwo* seemed to understand the reasons why the villagers left their homeland, but they believed those decisions were not well thought out. Observation of the difficult and sometimes hopeless situation of immigrants in the crowded Castle Garden did not encourage them to change these beliefs. The rapid growth of the Polish population prompted concerns, also expressed by the national newspapers, about immigrants losing national identity. The loss and complete lack of organization of Poles, which was particularly visible in New York, also caused concern. The editors were convinced that since the new immigrants were unable to help one another, they would also not be able to work effectively for the good of their distant homeland⁵⁰.

Ogniwo was particularly active in diagnosing and attempting to resolve difficulties in the everyday life of Polish immigrants. One of the extremely troublesome problems was the disruptions in communication between the new arrivals and the families remaining in Poland. One of the editorials stated that “a lot of letters come to America from Poland, letters more important than gold and silver, letters from our parents, siblings, wives, lovers and neighbours”, and added that “many such letters are at the post office, and the caring authorities tell the press to publish the names of the addressees so that each of us could ask for news from our own people”⁵¹. Polish magazines felt obliged to disclose to the public the names of the addressees of the correspondence that had not been collected. There was, however, a problem as the officials hastily wrote Polish surnames “without sufficient diligence”. “Nobody doubts that we are talking about Poles” – wrote the weekly magazine ironically – “but make mothers born of these names know who it is about! [...] Is there a newspaper which [is] able to extract from such a neglectful register at least half of our surnames?”⁵². In order to rectify these complica-

⁴⁹ *Kilka słów do Polaków w New Yorku*, “*Ogniwo*” 2 VI 1880, p. 1; *Nieco o stosunkach nowojorskich*, “*Ogniwo*” 16 VI 1880, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Polacy w Ameryce*, “*Ogniwo*” 21 IV 1880, p. 1.

⁵¹ *Początek dzieła*, “*Ogniwo*” 3 VIII 1880, p. 1.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

tions, it was decided that *Ogniwo* would publish a petition directed to the main post office in New York to bring this issue to the attention of the officials. As a result of these efforts, a separate list was created there for correspondence coming from Polish and Lithuanian lands. An interested person could go to the post office and ask the clerk for the number of the letter printed in *Ogniwo*, which greatly facilitated communication between families at home and abroad⁵³.

Initially, there was little response from the Polish readers of *Ogniwo* to the appeals of the editors to send correspondence from various regions of the United States. The European correspondents of the magazine also noticed the lack of letters to the editors⁵⁴. The number of texts covering the journalistic genre mentioned above increased only at the turn of 1879 and 1880, which gave publishers grounds for optimism. "If there are more and more such Poles," the weekly magazine wrote, "you will see how you will get to know each other, grow in trust, and grow stronger; because each of you, each of your commune will feel and know tangibly that you are not alone, isolated"⁵⁵. However, it was not possible to curb the tendency of separation, and thus to minimize the feeling of isolation of compatriots scattered over a vast expanse of the continent. Other Polish diaspora magazines of that time, such as *Przyjaciel Ludu* from Milwaukee or *Gazeta Polska Katolicka* from Chicago, faced similar problems. Only *Gazeta Polska w Chicago* was able to motivate its readers to send regular correspondence. In the long run, the lack of reaction from the readers of *Ogniwo* made it impossible for the weekly magazine to collect information about the facts and views of the representatives of the Polish diaspora. Therefore, efforts were made to obtain information in other ways. At the beginning of 1880, the periodical printed an appeal to the Polish press in the United States and to the clergy in Polish parishes, asking them to fill in a questionnaire, which included nine questions concerning, among other things, the size of the Polish diaspora and the way it was organized⁵⁶. It can be assumed that the weakness of the thematic section related to contacts with the readers resulted in the fact that, despite sincere intentions and endeavours, *Ogniwo* never became a mass communication tool, both on the political, ideological and institutional plane.

⁵³ *Rozmaitości*, "Ogniwo" 23 II 1881, p. 3.

⁵⁴ *Korespondencje*, „Ogniwa”, "Ogniwo" 29 X 1879, p. 1.

⁵⁵ *Korespondencje*, „Ogniwa”, "Ogniwo" 4 II 1880, p. 2.

⁵⁶ *Odezwa do Szanownych Rodaków w Stanach Zjednoczonych, a w szczególności do Wielbnych ks. Proboszczów parafii polskich Ob. Nauczycieli szkół, Prezydentów i Sekretarzy Towarzystw polskich*, "Ogniwo" 25 II 1880, p. 1.

For unclear reasons, the literary section of *Ogniwo* was rather a modest part. The first novels in episodes were published only in the second year of its existence, and it seems that Józef Skrzypek was not mistaken when he said that the literature printed in the periodical did not have a major impact on increasing the number of readers and subscribers⁵⁷. The works that were relatively popular were poems sent to the editorial office by poorly skilled authors⁵⁸. The editors of the New York magazine promoted the literary initiatives of the people of the pen whose works were perceived in terms of their patriotic duty. An example is the periodical's support for the publication of a collection of the Polish poetry in English written by Paweł Sobolewski⁵⁹. In July 1880, the journal began publishing in episodes Sygurd Wiśniowski's short story entitled *Pesymista. Nowela z życia polskiego w Ameryce* (Pessimist. A short story from Polish life in America). This work presented literary reminiscences of the author's experience in the refineries in Pennsylvania, including his personal comments and digressions about the people he met and the accompanying events. The magazine *Ogniwo* also released Stanisław Sobieski's novel entitled *Anioł Pański* (Angelus).

The collapse of the publishing house was caused by the decline in popularity and serious financial problems with which the weekly magazine had long struggled. The first signals indicating the insolvency of the publishing house appeared at the end of 1879⁶⁰. In May 1880, Janicki sent a warning to subscribers who were in arrears, appealing to their sense of responsibility and threatening to close the publishing house⁶¹. A month later, the reproaches directed at non-paying readers became harsher, and sometimes even offensive⁶². At that time, the editorial office was looking for various ways to force the readers to pay the dues, and that is why it printed articles "exuding mockery and irony". "So we admit," was written in one of the issues of *Ogniwo*, "that we have taken a different path, we will follow different tracks. Instead of the words of indulgence, we will use the most terrible weapon, the weapon of ridicule"⁶³. It did not bring satisfactory results.

⁵⁷ J. SKRZYPEK, *Początki czasopiśmiennictwa polskiego...*, p. 182.

⁵⁸ MARYA Z RUSIŁOWA, [Nadesłane], "Ogniwo" 31 III 1880, p. 3; IDEM, *Łzy*, "Ogniwo" 17 IX 1879, s. 5; *Polskiej dziewicy*, "Ogniwo" 8 X 1879, p. 3; *Z wieczornych dumek*, "Ogniwo" 26 XI 1879, s. 3; [Nadesłane] "Ogniwo" 12 I 1881, p. 3.

⁵⁹ *Do Polaków w Ameryce i Europie*, "Ogniwo" 17 III 1880, p. 3; *Wydawnictwo Pawła Sobolewskiego „Poetry of Poland”*, "Ogniwo" 19 V 1880, p. 1.

⁶⁰ *Kilka słów Redakcji „Ogniwa” do pp. Prenumeratorów*, "Ogniwo" 3 IX 1879, p. 1.

⁶¹ T.D. JANICKI, *Do szanownych czytelników „Ogniwa”*, "Ogniwo" 19 V 1880, p. 3.

⁶² *Kilka słów od wydawcy*, "Ogniwo" 16 VI 1880, p. 1.

⁶³ *Śmieszni*, "Ogniwo" 23 VI 1880, p. 2.

The last issue of the periodical, which has survived to our times, was published on 30 March 1881.

In conclusion, it can be stated that *Ogniwo* made an attempt to achieve its goals in difficult conditions. The most important of them was to assist in communication between members of the same ethnic community. When publishers began establishing the magazine, they faced the difficult task of maintaining it for a long time with a view to developing permanent reading habits. It must be admitted that of all the magazines that appeared in New York until 1881, it was *Ogniwo* that was published longest. Before the publication of *Kurier Nowojorski i Brooklyński* in 1890 and its subsequent mutations, New York had not been the best place for the development of the Polish press⁶⁴. The journal was clearly addressed to those Poles who decided to stay permanently in the United States and sought to raise their social status. They were often warned against succumbing to the temptation of quick adaptation, as it resulted in the disintegration of the ethnic community and led to individual alienation. At that time, the only way to exceed the limitations was to act in solidarity within one's own national group. Immigrants were encouraged to create a culture of brotherhood, to help each other in situations when somebody was affected by any kind of misfortune⁶⁵. Such a community, built on democratic and utilitarian cultural foundations, was expected to strive to develop simple habits of neighbourly help and mutual trust, and to work in primarily the political, educational and economic fields. The country of the ancestors was not forgotten either. Raising the social and material status was supposed to enable effective actions in the interest of the lost homeland.

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NEW YORK *OGNIWO* IN THE YEARS 1879-1881

Summary

The article discusses the history of the Polish *Ogniwo* weekly published in New York in the years 1879-1881. The magazine was established during a major organisational transformation of the Polish diaspora in the United States. One of the most important initiatives of the then immigrant community in New York and beyond (including New Jersey) was to integrate the public of Polish origin in order to work toward the improvement of the financial and political position of Polish immigrants. This work was carried out by the *Ogniwo* weekly. Its editors tried to mobilise scattered economic immigrants to work towards building an ideologically aligned Polish-American community.

Keywords: *Ogniwo* weekly; Polish diaspora; emigration

Translated by Konrad Szulga

NOWOJORSKI TYGODNIK „OGNIWO” W LATACH 1879-1881

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem rozważań artykułu jest historia tygodnika polskiego „Ogniwo”, ukazującego się w Nowym Jorku w latach 1879-1881. Periodyk powołano do życia w okresie ważkich przemian organizacyjnych Polonii amerykańskiej. Jednym z najważniejszych przejawów fermentu w łonie ówczesnych towarzystw wychodźczych w Nowym Jorku i szeroko pojętych okolicach (m.in. New Jersey) było dążenie do zintegrowania sił społecznych w kierunku poprawy sytuacji materialnej i politycznej polskich emigrantów. Wspomniane tendencje znalazły odzwierciedlenie w tygodniku „Ogniwo”, którego redaktorzy starali się mobilizować rozproszone wychodźstwo „za chlebem” do pracy nad budowaniem jednolitej ideowo wspólnoty polsko-amerykańskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: tygodnik „Ogniwo”; Polonia; emigracja