

## THE NEW IMMIGRANT AND THE IMMIGRANT PRESS IN THE NEW YORK AREA

K a t h r y n K o o p

### INTRODUCTION

On November 28, 1990, President Bush signed the Immigration Act of 1990 which raises the number of immigrants coming to the US each year by 40 percent. Immigrants accounted for about one third of the population growth in the US in the 1980's. With approximately one quarter of all immigrants admitted coming through New York, it is still the major port of entry to the US. The largest single group to settle in New York recently are those coming from the Dominican Republic. Based on 1980 figures, it is anticipated that the number of immigrants in the New York area of Hispanic background will be increased by more than 100% by the year 2000. However, the greatest growth is with those coming from Asian backgrounds with an expected increase of almost 200%.<sup>1</sup> In New Jersey alone the 1990 census reports that the Asian population rose roughly 150% in the last ten years.

The immigrant press in the greater New York area continues to serve the immigrant in the process of acculturation and of defining himself/herself in a global society. Supporting a sense of community and connection of the home culture, providing resources for advice and information to aid in adjusting to life in a new culture, offering news and commentary on prevailing issues in the home country, as well as local news from an immigrant perspective and particularly that of concern to the immigrant group are some of its functions. While the immigrant press fosters a certain dependence on it for survival in the new culture, it also plies its captive audience with political views which reinforce for many the reasons why they left their home countries.

## THE CHINESE AMERICAN PRESS

The Chinese are by far the largest of the Asian group. They are very diverse in background coming from HongKong, Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, and "overseas Chinese" coming from Laos, Viet Nam, Cambodia, and other southeast Asian countries. Although there are mainly two languages, Mandarin and Cantonese, there are numerous dialects. They all, however, share the same written language.

The Chinese immigrant press has a long history since the Chinese have been a sizeable immigrant group since the mid-nineteenth century. The largest concentrations are in San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles. In the 1980's New York was the leader in number of publications, eleven dailies, the majority supported by Taiwan but six of the eleven locally owned. Printed in Chinese with sizeable circulation *Chung Kuo Shi Pai* or The China Times and *Hwa Mei Jih Pao* or The China Tribune are known to be anticommunist while *Lin Ho Joh Pao* or The United Journal and *Mei Jo Jih Pao* or The Chinese Journal are considered to be pro-Taiwan. While these include world news from Chinatown, Mainland, Taiwan, HongKong and Southeast Asia, only *Hwa Pao* or Mott Street Journal is listed as a pro-communist newspaper with important news from Mainland China.<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning the Chinese immigrant press was known to be politically slanted but in the last decades the changes in the international situation have brought about a more objective approach to China Politics. Still editorials often focus on the tensions between Taiwan and the Mainland as well as the takeover of HongKong by the PRC in 1997. There are also several publications in English, usually weeklies and often pro-Taiwan. For example *Free China Weekly* has articles on politics, culture, economics, education, etc. but its major objective is to present English readers significant events that happen on Taiwan.<sup>3</sup> *China Daily*, a Mainland newspaper published in English in the PRC and also available in the States does much the same for mainland China.

In the late 1960's nationwide newspapers supported by overseas capital brought significant competition to local publications. Generally they reprint home editions but include regional news and social events along with local advertisements. While *Centre Daily News* from HongKong takes a more neutral stand bet-

ween Taiwan and the PRC, Taipei's *United Daily News* publishes *China Times* and *World Journal* in New York and San Francisco with strong political ties to Taiwan. In 1984 *World Journal* claimed the highest circulation among Chinese American Newspapers.<sup>4</sup> This fact is supported by those interviewed who either have the newspaper delivered to their homes or pick it up at newsstands in Chinatown. Printed in Chinese with some ads in English it provides local and world news directly translated from regional newspapers, information on jobs, rentals, services, and resources for government services. There are special sections for news from Taiwan, HongKong, mainland and other areas, with local news about regional Chinese communities in the US on certain days. Now self-supporting the political focus shifted from a strong bias toward Taiwan to a more subtle political stance. On the other hand *World Journal* provides an opportunity for Chinese Americans to present their own political voice. The Organization of Chinese Americans and the Asian American Association are two groups seeking to promote Asian American interests in the US.

### THE FILIPINO AMERICAN PRESS

Although the largest concentration of Filipino immigrants is located in the western states, a significant group of mostly educated professionals came to the New York area in the second wave of Filipino immigration since 1965. The particular commitment of the Filipino people to help other Filipino people reflects itself in its use of the Filipino immigrant press. This strong sense of community has brought about the formation of clubs and organizations. Along with publishing news of such social events and cultural activities, the press has also played an important part in providing information about community issues and sources for aid in filing necessary documents. Some political issues are also dealt with but the main interest is for a Filipino perspective on what's happening in the Philippines. Many still have family back in their home country and return to visit from time to time. Advertisements continue to furnish the major source of income for such newspapers although many have financial backing in order to exist. Some are distributed nationally but contain regional sections. They are usually published weekly and can

be picked up at the local stores in Filipino American neighbourhoods. For the most part these newspapers are printed in English with perhaps a page or so in a local language such as Tagalog.

*Philippines Mail* is the oldest newspaper and has served as a model for those that have followed.<sup>5</sup> The *Filipine Reporter* is known to provide the most "coverage of international affairs extraneous to the social life of Filipinos here and abroad".<sup>6</sup> The *Philippines News* claims to be the largest Filipino/American newspaper with an estimated 89,043 copies circulated in 1982 (p. 88). In interviewing Filipino Americans the two leading publications noted were the *Filipine Reporter* and the *Philippines News*. These were considered of great importance not only to new immigrants but as one Filipino American said after living in the States for more than twenty years, "I still look forward to going to the store each Friday to pick up the *Filipine Reporter*". One could ask if the distinctive sense of community particularly evidenced by Filipinos extends to other Asian groups. In the area of the immigrant press the *Asian American News* is cited as an attempt at a more "coordinated and unified effort".<sup>7</sup> Although it is considered to be reasonably successful, it is said to be more Filipino than Asian.

## THE KOREAN IMMIGRANT PRESS

Since the Second World War Koreans came to the US first as students and professional people. The American immigration law of 1965 brought many more Koreans and although often educated, most were interested in following entrepreneurial pursuits, especially in the greater New York area. In the newer group, some can be classified as unskilled. More recent immigrants will have studied some English in school, but many cannot speak as the emphasis is on written work. Because language can be a problem many Korean American adults are more comfortable with editions of Korean newspapers printed here than with NY or suburban newspapers. Often the last page of these papers is faxed directly from newspapers in Korea. This information is particularly important to the group of transient executives who come to the US, often with their families, but return to Korea after two to five years. As can be expected from obvi-

ous entrepreneurial interests, almost one third of these newspapers is advertising. The sense of community and ethnicity is very significant for many Koreans and for this reason some Korean men will return to Korea to look for a wife and in some cases place ads in newspapers as part of their search. A common feature is to include stories of Korean Americans who have done something that has merited mention in American newspapers. Often small bits of news are picked up and the people involved are interviewed further. These stories are then featured in the Korean immigrant newspapers. The sense of community causes each reader to share in the pride of that achievement.

Although there are newspapers from Korea available in major cities across the US, *The Encyclopedic Directory of Ethnic Newspapers and Periodicals in the United States* (1976) lists the *Hankook Ilbo* or The Korean Times as the only Korean daily published in the US for immigrants but some articles are reprints coming from Seoul. It provides international, national and local news of interests to the Korean community. *Joong-Ang Il Bo* or The Joong-Ang Daily is published in Korean with its main office in Seoul, but re-edited in California. It covers all news pertinent to Korean interest, both Korean and American, with a special section devoted to events and issues in Korean communities in the US. Of particular note is *Hae Oe Han Min Bo* or Overseas Korean Journal which is published semi-monthly in New York. It has a political focus aiming at the reunification of Korea and promoting a democratic system.

## THE JAPANESE PRESS IN AMERICA

With the growing economic prosperity in Japan the number of Japanese immigrants has diminished considerably and with it the need for a Japanese immigrant press. Although some newspapers still publish in Japanese and English in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Honolulu, Seattle, and New York, also available for the Japanese immigrant are *East/West* and *Asian Week* which were originally aimed at a Chinese audience but now are increasingly more Pan-Asian with articles of interest to all Asians.

A strong Japanese presence is still evidenced, however, in the greater New York area. These people are Japanese executives and their families who come to the US for three to five years. By the mid-1980's one hundred or more Japanese firms were located in New Jersey alone. These companies are linked very closely with Japan and this necessitates a current flow of information on the economy and business trends in Japan. With modern technology major Japanese newspapers such as *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* fax their daily editions directly to publishers in the US. There are also many business related publications, along with *Nippon Keizai*, the Japanese equivalent to the *Wall Street Journal*. Two well known and established newspapers published in the US are *OCS News* (Overseas Courier Service News), a Japanese weekly providing social and cultural news along with information about services necessary for Japanese and Japanese Americans living in the US, and *Nichi-Bei Shinbun*, a daily newspaper written in Japanese and English mostly focused on news and information about Japan. All of these newspapers can be obtained by subscription or at Japanese grocery stores.

### THE INDIAN AMERICAN PRESS

By the end of the 1960's Asian Indians were becoming a recognizable group in the greater New York area. Most were middle class educated with many professionals but there were also those less educated who came to work in factories and in the service sector of the economy. Native languages differed according to the region of India from which they came but those who were educated knew English because it was usually the language of instruction at school. With the complex ethnic and religious makeup of India *India Abroad*, published weekly in English in New York since 1970, has sought to meet the needs of this diverse group. It covers major news events in India and also from the Indian states, events of interest to Indians in America, and issues of Indo-US concern. It offers feature stories on Indian Americans in the news, book and film reviews, sports news, and also a column on immigration questions.

Possibly there are fewer Indian immigrant newspapers because the majority of Indians coming to the US already have a level of fluency in English which enables them to read American

newspapers for necessary acculturation into American society. It would seem then that *India Abroad* mostly serves to keep the immigrant in touch with his home culture.

### THE HISPANIC OR LATINO PRESS

With a large Hispanic population in the greater NY area for several decades, the Hispanic or Latino press does not refer to a particular ethnic press but rather focuses on a more general Spanish reading audience. Initially Hispanic referred to the Puerto Rico community but in the last ten years there has been a large influx of immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Mexico, as well as from countries in Central and South America. *El Diario-La Prensa* or The Daily Press, first published in 1913, is the newspaper most closely related to the Puerto Rican community in New York.<sup>8</sup> Printed in Spanish it has from its inception served as a political voice dealing with issues such as exploitation and discrimination, along with the usual information in most immigrant newspapers. In 1980 *El Diario* was bought by Ganett, a national news chain interested in the Spanish market. It continues to promote political views in support of the poor and the policies of the Democratic Party. *El Diario* attempts to deal with issues of concern to all Hispanic groups with the idea that in unifying these groups they will have a stronger voice for their interests on the state and national level. Also competing for the Hispanic audience is *Noticias Del Mundo*, a Spanish language newspaper established by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church, an international religious group from Korea with more "rightist" views.

Other well established publications are *El Tiempo* or The Times, a daily printed in Spanish with a circulation of 45,000, and *Temas* or Topics, a monthly family magazine in Spanish with a circulation of 78,200. A more recent monthly magazine in Spanish is *El Mundo De Nueva York* or New York World, known to be a more sensational type in content and format. *La Justicia* or Justice is a Spanish monthly published in New York since 1933 and sponsored by the International 'Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. It deals with rights and responsibilities, community involvement, and all aspects of union news.<sup>9</sup> Regional newspapers in Spanish for those of particular ethnic

backgrounds abound in the greater New York area. Some are geared to new immigrants giving advice and information on immigration laws and processes. Others are bi-lingual focusing on political, economic, social and cultural issues. National publications can be particularly useful in promoting the efforts of such groups as the National Association of Latino elected or Appointed Officials, the Hispanic Caucus in congress, and the National Hispanic Council on Aging which are seeking to meet the combined interests of the Hispanic community.

It is said that most Hispanics with a reading knowledge of English read *The Daily News* which has the largest circulation of any New York paper.<sup>10</sup> Newspapers from Columbia, Ecuador, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico reach the newsstands in New York on the same day they are published. Such availability helps preserve for the immigrant a sense of identity with the country of origin.<sup>11</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

As the immigrant press reflects the changes in immigrant groups it also is affected by the technological changes of its times. While air travel allows migration between both countries, communication of information by telephone and fax keeps the immigrant in touch with the home culture and language while acculturating into his/her new environment. Along with the acces to instant information through "fax" technology, perhaps the most significant change noted in the current immigrant press is that whereas it often served as a political voice regarding issues in the home country, now it is becoming more of a political voice enabling groups to exercise a major force on issues regarding their interests in the US. With acculturation and assimilation the need for an immigrant press would seem to eventually fade out, but each new wave of immigrants brings a new lease on life to the immigrants as well as to the immigrant press.



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## POVZETEK

NOVI PRISELJENCI IN PRISELJENSKI TISK NA  
PODROČJU NEW YORKA

K a t h r y n K o o p

ZDA kljub znanim omejitvam priseljevanja še vedno dolguje tretjino rasti prebivalstva v osemdesetih letih novim priseljencem. Približno četrtnina priseljencev še vedno prihaja preko New Yorka. Na podlagi sedanjega stanja lahko domnevamo, da se bo število špansko govorečih priseljencev na področju New Yorka do leta 2000 povečalo za več kot 100 %, število priseljencev azijskega izvora pa kar za 200 %. Samo v New Jerseyu se je po podatkih zadnjega ljudskega štetja število prebivalstva azijskega izvora v zadnjih desetih letih povečalo približno za 150 %. Vsem tem priseljencem na širšem področju New Yorka pomeni njihov tisk pomemben pripomoček tako pri ohranjanju povezav s kulturo matičnih držav kot tudi pri procesu vzivljanja v novo okolje in iskanju njihovega mesta v njem.

Kitajski priseljski tisk ima v ZDA dolgo tradicijo. V osemdesetih letih se je njegovo težišče iz zahodne obale ZDA preneslo v New York, kjer izhaja kar 11 dnevnikov. Večino od njih podpira Taiwan, tako na primer The United Journal and Mei Jo Jih Pao ali The Chinese Journal, lastniki drugih so ameriški Kitajci, samo Hwa Pao or Mott Street Journal ki objavlja pomembne novice iz celinske Kitajske, imajo za prokomunističnega.

Čeprav je največja koncentracija priseljencev iz Filipinov v zahodnem delu ZDA, pa se je v drugem priseljskem valu po letu 1965 na področju New Yorka naselila pomembna filipinska skupnost, sestavljena pretežno iz izobražencev. Najstarejši filipinski časopis, ki je služil kot vzor vsem naslednjim, je Philippines Mail. The Philippine Reporter slovi kot časnik, ki v največji meri pokriva mednarodne zadeve, ne posega pa toliko na področje socialnih vprašanj Filipincev v matični domovini in v izseljenstvu. The Philippines News se ima za največji filipinsko-ameriški časopis z najvišjo naklado preko 89.000 izvodov leta 1982. Asian American News je kljub izraženim prizadevanjem, da bi pokrival širši prostor, še vedno bolj filipinski kot azijski.

V vseh večjih mestih v ZDA je dostopnih mnogo korejskih časopisov, kaže pa, da je Hankook Ilbo (Korejske Novice) edini korejski dnevnik, ki ga tiskajo v ZDA, vendar pa so nekateri članki ponatisi, ki prihajajo iz Seula. Joong-Ang Il Bo (Joong-Ang dnevnik) ima uredništvo v Seulu, tiskajo pa ga v Kaliforniji. Pokriva tako korejske kot ameriške novice, posebna rubrika pa je posvečena dogodkom v korejskih skupnostih v ZDA. Zelo pomemben je štirinajstdnevnik Hae Oe Han Min Bo (Prekomorski korejski časopis), ki poudarja ponovno združitev Koreje in vzpostavitev demokratskega sistema.

Priseljenci iz Japonske so v najnovejšem času predvsem poslovniki, ki ostajajo v ZDA od tri do pet let. Od srede osemdesetih let dalje je samo v New Jerseyu preko sto japonskih podjetij. Zaradi tega je nujen stalen pretok poslovnih in ekonomskih informacij. Z moderno tehnologijo je možno pošiljati po faksih še v istem dnevu celotne številke najpomembnejših japonskih časopisov, dnevnikov Yomiuri in Asahi in japonske različice Wall Street Journal Nippon Keizai. V ZDA tiskajo japonski tednik z informacijami za Japonce na tujem Overseas Courier Service News in v japonščini ter angleščini pisani dnevnik Nichi-Bei Shinbun z informacijami o Japonski.

Zaradi množice indijskih jezikov in dejstva, da je angleščina običajni učni jezik v Indiji, izhaja v New Yorku od sedemdesetih let dalje v angleščini pisani dnevnik India Abroad, ki pokriva glavne dogodke v Indiji in njenih zveznih državah in tudi zadeve ameriško-indijskega pomena.

Špansko govoreči priseljenci v področju New Yorka ne izvira-jo več samo iz Portorika, kot v prajšnjih obdobjih, pač pa tudi iz Dominikanske republike, Kube, Mehike in drugod. Najstarejši španski časopis El Diario-La Prensa, ki je začel izhajati leta 1913, je bil tesno povezan s portoriško skupnostjo. Leta 1980 je El Diario kupila časniška mreža Ganett, ki se je začela zanimati za špansko govoreče bralce. Z njo tekmuje časopis Noticias Del Mundo, ki ga je ustanovil Rev. Sun Myung Moon iz Unification Church, mednarodne verske skupine z desničarskimi pogledi.

Druge uveljavljene publikacije so še dnevnik El Tiempo z naklado 45.000 izvodov in mesečna družinska revija Temas z naklado 78.200. Novejši je mesečnik El Mundo De Nueva York. Večina priseljencev španskega izvora, ki obvlada angleščino, bere The Daily News, ki ima največjo naklado od vseh newyorških časopisov.