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## Myths Pertaining to Polish Americans in the Press of Communist Poland<sup>1</sup>

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This article is based on an analysis of about 400 articles published in the Polish press under the communist regime. It shows how communist propaganda addressed existing myths about the Polish diaspora in the United States and created new ones that corresponded with its needs. The following elements of the “Polish American myth” are discussed: the importance and strength of the Polish-American ethnic group, Polish Americans as descendants of the peasant emigration of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American prosperity and the American dream, Polish Americans as Americanized Poles and “Polonia” as “the fourth partition” of Poland, and the myth of the Polish-American left.

This research is based on the content analysis of almost four hundred articles published between 1952 and 1988 in Polish monthlies, bi-weeklies and weeklies addressed to the general public, as well as in selected dailies: *Trybuna Ludu*, *Życie Warszawy* and *Rzeczpospolita*. All of them are indexed in the Bibliography of Contents of Periodicals (Bibliografia Zawartości Czasopism), issued by the National Library in Warsaw. The section “United States” was explored in every issue of the Bibliography (published on a bi-weekly basis) in the analyzed period.

The authors usually presumed that the knowledge of their readers about Polish Americans was minimal or non-existent. Therefore, they repeated basic information about the beginnings of Polish migration to the USA, about the main Polish American centers in the United States, about the migration waves and the personalities of prominent migrants. While doing this, they nolens volens referred to the existing Polish American myths that were rooted in the Polish collective memory, sometimes stretching back as far as to the beginning of mass migration. Sometimes journalists repeated the myths, sometimes they attempted to question or modify them, but they simultaneously created new ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the abundance of footnotes and to ensure greater readability of the article the Harvard style, which is the norm for the “Ad Americam” scientific apparatus, has not been applied in this text.

**The myth of the importance and strength** of the Polish American ethnic group was brought to the attention of readers. It was stressed over and over again that Polish Americans formed the fifth (later eighth) most numerous ethnic group in American society. It was a group whose influence on American civilization could not be questioned. Consequently, this high position should have resulted in the influence of *Polonia* on American society and especially politics.<sup>2</sup> When the reality did not correspond with the logic of this myth, explanations were sought. One pointed out the injustice of the American system<sup>3</sup> (Polish Americans used this argument themselves). Another blamed Polish Americans for their inefficiency.<sup>4</sup> Commentators from communist Poland tended to favor this second explanation as it fit their generally critical attitude towards American *Polonia*.

Subsequently, the Polish press quite willingly supported the **myth of Polish Americans as direct descendants of the peasant migration** from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: simple, **uneducated** people with **no ambitions** (professional, social or cultural) who despised education, lived in self-imposed ghettos and were not able or willing to enter the mainstream of American society, partially because of the language barrier.<sup>5</sup> The new immigrants were also included in this group. It was admitted that the new arrivals were better educated than their predecessors, yet they had no objections to accepting any jobs, even the worst and most primitive ones that

<sup>2</sup> E.g.: Wojnacki, Waclaw. "Polski składnik w amerykańskim tygłu." *Perspektywy* 1969, No. 14: 14-15; Luliński, Daniel. "Spotkania z Polonią." *Trybuna Ludu* 11 October 1970: 3; Dłużak, Florian. "Jaka jest Polonia amerykańska?" *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* 1980, No. 6: 8-9. As references are numerous, I chose to use footnotes instead of bibliography for the sake of clarity of the text on the one hand, and in order to facilitate identifying sources on the other.

<sup>3</sup> Fudali, Mieczysław. "Brzemiona polskich jankesów." *Życie Literackie* 1970, No. 47: 1, 12; Luliński, Daniel. "Wyjście z getta." *Perspektywy* 1971, No. 16: 12, 30-31; Stanek, Adam. "Polacy przed 'Mayflower.'" *Trybuna Ludu* 20 October 1973: 6; Woźniak, Grzegorz. "Czy Polonia może wygrać wybory?" *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* 1976, No. 44: 9; Męclewski, Alojzy. "Chicago w kierpcach." *Czas* 1978, No. 30: 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> Hrabyk, Klaudiusz. "Polonia w wyborach amerykańskich." *Kierunki* 1960, No. 34: 9; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Problemy Polonii chicagowskiej." *Trybuna Ludu* 29 October 1966: 8; Berezowski, Maksymilian. "Wciąż za mało się liczą... Amerykańska Polonia przed wyborami." *Trybuna Ludu* 26 September 1968: 8; Hrabyk, Klaudiusz. "Polonia w wyborach amerykańskich." *Życie Warszawy* 29 May 1968: 3; Luliński, Daniel. "Spotkania z Polonią." *Trybuna Ludu* 11 October 1970: 3; Woźniak, Grzegorz. "8 milionów polonijnych głosów." *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1984, No. 40: 11; "Polonia pragnie więzi z Polską, Rozmowa 'Życia' z Eugeniuszem Kusielewiczem, profesorem historii na Uniwersytecie św. Jana w Nowym Jorku." *Życie Warszawy* 30 July 1986: 1, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Putrament, Jerzy. "Dwa łyki Ameryki. (6) Detroit i Hamtramck." *Przegląd Kulturalny* 1955, No. 50: 3; Weyroch, Jacek. "O naszych wujach z Ameryki." *Orka. Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1960, No. 40: 11; Chiczewski, Andrzej. "Wstydlivy rodowód. Profile amerykańskiej Polonii (3)." *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1966, No. 24: 6; Górnicki, Wiesław. "Wieczorem na Brooklynie." *Kultura* 1968, No. 4: 1, 8-9; Wilhelmi, Janusz. "Pogarda." *Kultura* 1968, No. 6: 1; Luliński, Daniel. "Spotkania z Polonią." *Trybuna Ludu* 11 October 1970: 3; Zukrowski, Wojciech. "Tam mówi się o kraju dobrze." *Życie Warszawy* 8-9 February 1970: 4; Berezowski, Maksymilian. "Operacja polskość." *Trybuna Ludu* 16 April 1972: 6; "Od polki do Polski. Rozmowa z Eugeniuszem Kusielewiczem, prezesem Fundacji Kościuszkowskiej w Stanach Zjednoczonych." *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1974, No. 34: 3.

were avoided not only by Americans, but also by the immigrants themselves when they lived in Poland. The press accused the migrants of having purely material life goals: to earn money and spend it on securing basic needs. They had no other plans, ambitions or interests.<sup>6</sup> Particularly despised were those who sported their alleged wealth upon return (or visit) to Poland.<sup>7</sup>

This image of loutish Polish Americans was also used in order to de-mythologize their well-being, to abolish the general belief that it was easy to become rich once one migrated to America<sup>8</sup> (this belief was for many years the main driving force of Polish migration, later supported by the feeling that life in America corresponded with the idea of a "normal" life much better than life in Poland). Polish Americans' families who lived in Poland were depicted in the articles. They waited for American dollars and other gifts that were not used to fulfill their basic needs, but to provide them with extravagances that the American donors could not afford themselves.<sup>9</sup> In a way, **the myth of American prosperity, of the USA as a country of milk and**

<sup>6</sup> Dębski, Tadeusz. "Gdy przyjedziesz do Chicago." *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1959, No. 22: 5; Hrabyk, Klaudiusz. "Uwagi o emigracji." *Kierunki* 1959, No. 34: 1-2, 7; Kopaliński, Władysław. "Święta pp. Kowalskich." *Życie Warszawy* 27-28 December 1959: 3; Małachowski, Aleksander. "Diaspora." *Współczesność* 1965, No. 34: 6-7; Najduchowska, H. "Praca i emigranci." *Argumenty* 1967, No. 7: 1, 11 (also with a tone of disdain towards prospective emigrants); Kamiński, Ireneusz. "W Greenpoint. Dziennik amerykański (4)." *Kamena* 1980, No. 15: 6; Kamiński, Ireneusz. "I am Polak. Dziennik amerykański (6)." *Kamena* 1980, No. 18: 5; Dłużak, Florian. "Jaka jest Polonia amerykańska?" *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* 1980, No. 6: 8-9; Jackowski, Karol. "Saksy. Kierunek - Ameryka" (a series of articles). *Kultura* 1986, Nos. 16-21: 6; Łuka, Wiesław. "Bez darmowych obiadków." *Prawo i Życie* 1986, No. 11: 16, 15; Łuka, Wiesław. "Wędzenie na zimno. Korespondencja z USA." *Prawo i Życie* 1986, No. 28: 12-13; Berberyusz, Ewa. "Z punktu widzenia sprzątaczk. Korespondencja z Nowego Jorku." *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1986, No. 32: 1, 4; Zielińska, Krystyna. "Zielona karta." *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1987, No. 29: 10-11; Wójcik, Zygmunt. "Zapiski z Dolorado (2)." *Argumenty* 1988, No. 37: 4.

<sup>7</sup> Dębski, Tadeusz. "Gdy przyjedziesz do Chicago." *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1959, No. 22: 5; Włoszczewski, Stefan. "Po co do Ameryki?" *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1967, No. 49: 8; Snopkiewicz, Jacek. "Lipień buduje dom." *Polityka* 1971, No. 42: 5; Kamiński, Ireneusz. "Pronaszko sponiewierany. Dziennik amerykański (8)." *Kamena* 1980, No. 22: 9; Szczukajtyś, Ewa. "Amerykanie zza Buga." *Kontrasty* 1985, No. 8: 7-9; Olbromski, Mieczysław. "Samotność." *Rzeczywistość* 1986, No. 51/52: 18.

<sup>8</sup> Błachut, Władysław. "Wspomnienia nie tylko krakowskie." *Życie Literackie* 1965, No. 26: 6; Krzysztoń, Jerzy. "Pochwała Strzemiecznych." *Życie Literackie* 1965, No. 52: 14-15; Włoszczewski, Stefan. "Po co do Ameryki?" *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1967, No. 49: 8; Włoszczewski, Stefan. "Ameryka. Mit i rzeczywistość." *Litery* 1968, No. 4: 8-9; Włoszczewski, Stefan. "Zwiedzeni mirażem Ameryki." *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1970, No. 49: 9; Żukrowski, Wojciech. "Dziesięć oczek wyżej." *Życie Warszawy* 11-12 January 1970, No. 9: 3; Męclewski, Alojzy. "Chicago w kierpcach." *Czas* 1978, No. 30: 24-25; Szolucha, Elżbieta. "Gra w zielone." *Rzeczywistość* 1986, No. 32: 5; Olbromski, Mieczysław. "Samotność." *Rzeczywistość* 1986, No. 51/52: 18.

<sup>9</sup> Weyroch, Jacek. "O naszych wujach z Ameryki." *Orka. Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1960, No. 40: 11; Weyroch, Jacek. "Mity i rzeczywistość. Rzecz o amerykańskich rodakach." *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* 1960, No. 16: 6-7; Karczewska, Wanda. "Rozmówki polsko-amerykańskie czyli o skowronkach." *Odgłosy* 1962, No. 42: 5; Górnicki, Wiesław. "Moi byli rodacy." *Życie Warszawy* 19 August 1965: 3; Żukrowski, Wojciech. "Inne widzenie Polski." *Życie Warszawy* 15-16 February 1970, No. 39: 3, 7; Grzegorzczak, Stefan. "Potrzeba dialogu." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1971, No. 2: 15; Wójcik, Zygmunt. "Kartki z Dolorado (1)." *Argumenty* 1988, No. 35: 4.

**honey**, was also questioned.<sup>10</sup> This myth existed in Polish society at least since the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Polish American immigrants described in their letters to relatives in Poland how well they were doing and what they could afford (from being able to eat meat on a daily basis to wearing elegant clothes, to owning houses and sponsoring construction of churches – which in their motherland was restricted to the nobility). The multitude and quality of goods available, the quality of services, and the politeness of staff known from stories and movies about the USA supported this myth in Poland under communist rule (where such a situation could only be dreamt of). The persistence of the press in its attempts to de-mythologize American prosperity on the one hand and growing emigration from Poland on the other is proof of the strength of this myth and of the ineffectiveness of the publications.

Polish journalists dared to advise Polish Americans what they should do in order to improve their situation in America. They recommended educating their children, becoming more actively engaged in politics, not neglecting their Polish roots once they succeed and cultivating their Polish traditions in cooperation with the “People’s” Poland. It was argued that contact with Poland was crucial for *Polonia* in order to survive as a group.<sup>11</sup> The achievements of communist Poland were said to help Polish Americans overcome their complexes, feel proud of their heritage, and fight against common anti-Polish stereotypes and jokes.<sup>12</sup> Criticizing Poland under the communist regime was regarded by the regime’s press as a way of marginalizing the position of Polish Americans in American society.<sup>13</sup>

Many authors supported **the myth of Polish Americans as Americanized Poles** rather than as Americans of Polish origin.<sup>14</sup> Such a concept had several further

<sup>10</sup> Wnuk, Włodzimierz. “Nie ma wolnego popołudnia.” *Kierunki* 1962, No. 39: 3; “O Polonii amerykańskiej, rozmowa ze Stefanem Włoszczewskim.” *Litery* 1964, No. 7: 6; Żukrowski, Wojciech. “Tam mówi się o kraju dobrze.” *Życie Warszawy* 8-9 February 1970: 4; Wydmiński, Andrzej. “Dom dla uchodźców.” *Rzeczywistość* 1986, No. 51/52: 19; Wąsewicz, Andrzej. “Ameryka zaulków.” *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1987, No. 31: 15 and No. 32: 15; Jastrun, Tomasz. “Z dziennika amerykańskiego – 1985.” *Res Publica* 1987, No. 5: 10-16.

<sup>11</sup> Broniarek, Zygmunt. “U źródeł kryzysu Polonii amerykańskiej.” *Trybuna Ludu* 19 April 1964: 4; Broniarek, Zygmunt. “Problemy Polonii chicagowskiej.” *Trybuna Ludu* 29 October 1966: 8; Broniarek, Zygmunt. “Polonia amerykańska.” *Trybuna Ludu* 1 January 1969, No. 1: 2; Stefanowicz, Janusz. “Polonia amerykańska – czas przemian.” *Kierunki* 1974, No. 28: 1, 3; Bożychowski, Jan “Więź przez granice i morza.” *Czas* 1975, No. 14: 21.

<sup>12</sup> Chiczewski, Andrzej. “Wstydlivy rodowód. Profile amerykańskiej Polonii (3).” *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1966, No. 24: 6; Żukrowski, Wojciech. “Inne widzenie Polski.” *Życie Warszawy* 15-16 February 1970, No. 39: 3, 7; Zakrzewski, Jan. “Antypolska audycja w amerykańskiej TV.” *Za Wolność i Lud* 1976, No. 1: 15; Chapiński, Bronisław. “Kochać Polskę po angielsku.” *Argumenty* 1978, No. 27: 1, 12-13; Rem, Jan [Urban, Jerzy]. “Rozdarcie.” *Rzeczpospolita* 25-26 May 1985: 5.

<sup>13</sup> Berezowski, Maksymilian. “Poczucie polskości. Notatki z Detroit.” *Trybuna Ludu* 5-7 April 1969: 11; Frankowski, Jan. “Związana z krajem.” *Życie Warszawy* 26 July 1969: 3; Kubiak, Hieronim. “Czy w USA istnieje propaganda antypolska?” *Życie Literackie* 1973, No. 49: 3; Lang, Zenon. “Prasa polonijna w USA. John Kowalski szuka gazety.” *Prasa Polska* 1975, No. 12: 15-16; Orysz, Jerzy. “Amerykańska Polonia i Reagan.” *Za Wolność i Lud* 1986, No. 42: 2; Orysz, Jerzy. “Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej. W niepolskim interesie.” *Za Wolność i Lud* 1986, No. 7: 2; Rem, Jan [Urban, Jerzy]. “Rozdarcie.” *Rzeczpospolita* 25-26 May 1985: 5.

<sup>14</sup> Gebert, Bolesław. “Zaczęło się od Jamestown.” *Życie Warszawy* 1 October 1959: 3; Weyroch, Jacek. “Mity i rzeczywistość. Rzecz o amerykańskich rodakach.” *Tygodnik Demokratyczny*

consequences. Firstly, Polish Americans were accused (more or less severely) of losing their "Polishness." Journalists regretted that the Polish language was disappearing from the Polish American communities, that it was not being used properly, that Polish Americans were changing their names and surnames in order not to be distinguished from the "mainstream" Americans.<sup>15</sup> Even if such decisions were sometimes excused, the tone of regret regarding the Americanization of Poles was noticeable. Sympathy was also expressed towards Polish Americans who might have felt nostalgia for Poland,<sup>16</sup> to which they could not return for various reasons, especially material ones: loans in American banks, lack of funds for travelling, children assimilated into American society.<sup>17</sup> Polonia was sometimes presented as supporters of Poland, proud of its achievements, including, above all, the post-WWII reconstruction, social progress and democratic freedom.<sup>18</sup>

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1960, No. 16: 6-7; Śmiałowski, Waldemar. "Polacy wszędzie jednacy." *Stolica* 1970, No. 27: 4-5; Derecki, Mirosław. "Rzecz w uczuciu a nie w gębie..." *Kamena* 1973, No. 16: 1, 8; Strzelewicz, Konrad. "Reportaż z miasta wiatrów." *Życie Literackie* 1977, No. 18: 8.

<sup>15</sup> Gieysztor, Władysław. "Polacy w Ameryce." *Kierunki* 1957, No. 11: 1; Dębski, Tadeusz. "Gdy przyjedziesz do Chicago." *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1959, No. 22: 5; Woźnicki, Andrzej (ks.) "Aktualne problemy Polonii amerykańskiej." *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1961, No. 17: 5; Wnuk, Włodzimierz. "Spotkania amerykańskie." *Kierunki* 1962, No. 47: 10; Chiczewski, Andrzej. "Pyzy po amerykańsku. Profile amerykańskiej Polonii (2)." *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1966, No. 23: 3, 6; Passendorfer, Jerzy and Wojciech Żukrowski. "55 dni wśród Polonii amerykańskiej." *Trybuna Ludu* 29 January 1970, No. 28: 8; Buchowski, Marian. "Filmu, którego jeszcze nie ma - ciąg dalszy." *Opole* 1972, No. 9: 11-12, 14; Tryfan, Barbara. "Spotkania. Polonia i Polska." *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1973, No. 27: 1, 9; Zabłocki, Janusz. "Z amerykańskiej podróży." *Chrześcijanin w Świecie* 1977, No. 7: 57-67.

<sup>16</sup> "Refleksje na tematy polskie." *Życie Warszawy* 20-21 July 1969: 6; Szejnert, Małgorzata. "Tęsknić do Niej..." *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* 1970, No. 52: 1, 5; Grzegorzczak, Stefan. "Potrzeba dialogu." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1971, No. 2: 15; Wójcik, Zygmunt. "Kartki z Dolorado (5)." *Argumenty* 1988, No. 49: 4; Minkowski, Aleksander. "Temperatura uczuć. Wędrówki amerykańskie (5)." *Trybuna Ludu* 24 January 1977: 6.

<sup>17</sup> Wilkanowicz, Stefan. "Polskie obrazki." *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1958, No. 52: 5; Morawski, Dominik. "'Stara Warszawa' w Teksasie." *Życie Warszawy* 30 October 1959: 3; Rusinek, Michał. "O Polonii amerykańskiej." *Nowa Kultura* 1961, No. 46: 3, 6-7; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Chcą wracać." *Dookoła Świata* 1961, No. 38: 18-19; Małachowski, Aleksander. "Diaspora." *Współczesność* 1965, No. 34: 6-7; Włoszczewski, Stefan. "Po co do Ameryki?" *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1967, No. 49: 8; Głębiński, Stanisław. "Muzeum Polskie w USA." *Życie Warszawy* 1 July 1969: 3.

<sup>18</sup> Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Od Kongresu do stali." *Dookoła Świata* 1961, No. 48: 20; Chiczewski, Andrzej. "Pyzy po amerykańsku. Profile amerykańskiej Polonii (2)." *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1966, No. 23: 3, 6; Luliński, Daniel. "Spotkania z Polonią." *Trybuna Ludu* 11 October 1970: 3; Żukrowski, Wojciech. "Dziesięć oczek wyżej." *Życie Warszawy* 11-12 January 1970: 3; Lang, Zenon. "Nowe spojrzenie na 'stary kraj.'" *Trybuna Ludu* 4 June 1971: 6; "Dumni ze starego kraju. Wywiad z przewodniczącym XVII sesji Zgromadzenia Ogólnego NZ wiceministrem Spraw Zagranicznych PRL Stanisławem Trepczyńskim." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1973, No. 2: 3-4; "Docierać poprzez elitę, z prof. Benedictem Markowskim z Detroit rozmowa nie tylko o wiktoriałach wiedeńskiej." *Prawo i Życie* 1983, No. 48: 11; "To wszystko co mogą zrobić. Rozmowa o stosunkach polsko-amerykańskich z rodziną Kuzmów." *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1986, No. 31: 4; Minkowski, Aleksander. "Temperatura uczuć. Wędrówki amerykańskie (5)." *Trybuna Ludu* 24 January 1977: 6.

One of the articles stated that no other American ethnic group kept such strong ties with its country of origin – which is myth-making.<sup>19</sup> The symptoms of preserving or reviving Polishness were constantly sought.<sup>20</sup>

If Polish Americans were perceived as American Poles, certain duties were ascribed to them. Sometimes Polish Americans were appreciated for their support for the activities of the communist authorities of Poland. But in some publications such support was regarded as their ordinary, patriotic, duty.<sup>21</sup> Support for the post-WWII western boundary of Poland was one of the most unifying factors between Poland and Polonia. On this occasion (and also while discussing the anti-defamation activities of Polish Americans), the agreement between Polonia, Poles in Poland and the Polish authorities was usually stressed.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes, however, Polish Americans were accused of betrayal – particularly when their anti-communist activities somehow coincided or corresponded with ones undertaken by German Americans. The celebrations of the Captive Nations Week served as a good example of the negative results of fierce anti-Communism: collaboration with German revisionists.<sup>23</sup> Any attempts at Polish-American – German-American dialog were also condemned.<sup>24</sup> The press of the 1960s was particularly alarmist in this regard.

Assigning patriotic duties to Polish Americans can be interpreted as a form of cultivation of another old **myth of Polonia as a “fourth partition” of Poland**<sup>25</sup> and

<sup>19</sup> Wernic, Wiesław. “Awans za Atlantykiem.” *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* 1977, No. 52: 8-9.

<sup>20</sup> “Kto pierwszy? Z Bronikiem Chapińskim, studentem Saginaw Valley College z USA, rozmawia Danuta Orszagh.” *Polska* 1972, No. 11: 24-25; Minkowski, Aleksander. “Temperatura uczuć. Wędrówki amerykańskie (5).” *Trybuna Ludu* 24 January 1977, No. 19: 6; Klejn, Zbigniew. “Polonijne korzenie. Po obu stronach Wielkich Jezior.” *Trybuna Ludu* 11 March 1981: 6; Kowalczyk, Jan. “To serce bije po polsku.” *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1985, No. 51/52: 8.

<sup>21</sup> Broniarek, Zygmunt. “Co mówią w USA o stosunkach z Polską.” *Trybuna Ludu* 25 August 1957: 8; Broniarek, Zygmunt. “Próby zwalczania towarów polskich w USA.” *Trybuna Ludu* 28 November 1962: 3; Berezowski, Maksymilian. “Stary balast i przejawy realizmu.” *Trybuna Ludu* 19 October 1968: 8; Klejn, Zbigniew. “Po obu stronach Wielkich Jezior. Duma i troska.” *Trybuna Ludu* 26 January 1981: 7; Bilanow, Kazimierz. “Polonijna akcja ‘bank leków.’” *Życie Warszawy* 26 June 1981: 5.

<sup>22</sup> Wnuk, Włodzimierz. “Wśród Polonii w Trenton.” *Kierunki* 1962, No. 28: 1, 11; Broniarek, Zygmunt. “Granica na Odrze-Nysie a... turystyka.” *Trybuna Ludu* 1962, No. 81: 6; “Polonia amerykańska o granicy na Odrze i Nysie.” *Za Wolność i Lud* 1967, No. 18: 14; Luliński, Daniel. “Wyjście z getta.” *Perspektywy* 1971, No. 16: 12, 30-31; Wieluński, Lech. “Haniebna sprawa. Antypolonizm.” *Perspektywy* 1978, No. 35: 8.

<sup>23</sup> Sołtysiak, M. “Maskarada w Chicago.” *Za Wolność i Lud* 1966, No. 19: 8-9; Berezowski, Maksymilian. “Wciąż za mało się liczą... Amerykańska Polonia przed wyborami.” *Trybuna Ludu* 26 September 1968: 8; Włoszczewski, Stefan. “Racje bytu Polonii amerykańskiej.” *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1968, No. 29: 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> Broniarek, Zygmunt. “Co mówią w USA o stosunkach z Polską.” *Trybuna Ludu* 25 August 1957: 8; Hrabyc, Klaudiusz. “Rewizjonizm za Atlantykiem. Kolporterzy zimnej wojny.” *Kierunki* 1963, No. 6: 1; Broniarek, Zygmunt. “Kulisy ataku p. Korbońskiego.” *Za Wolność i Lud* 1965, No. 15: 5-6; Broniarek, Zygmunt. “Oburzenie Polonii na serię paszkwili na naród polski.” *Trybuna Ludu* 1966, No. 135: 3; M.B. “Głos Polonii w Buffalo.” *Trybuna Ludu* 23 May 1968: 2; Berezowski, Maksymilian. “Poczucie polskości. Notatki z Detroit.” *Trybuna Ludu* 5-7 April 1969: 11.

<sup>25</sup> It originated in the 19th century, when Poland was partitioned between Germany, Austria and Russia. As Poland did not exist on the political map of Europe, all Poles lived in foreign countries, and those in America were not an exception.

of the Polish diaspora as a significant part of the Polish nation, obliged to take care of the common good of all Poles.

The myth of the "fourth partition" was cultivated also by Polish political émigrés after WWII, who decided that the situation of Poland subjugated to the communist regime was similar to the situation of the country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And therefore the role of Poles in diaspora was to lead and support the struggle for the full independence of Poland. In practical terms it meant that the Polish diaspora in the Free World should have reminded global public opinion and decision-makers about the fate of Poland and of the other countries behind the "iron curtain." This interpretation of the myth was systematically denied by the communist press.

Several techniques were used to achieve this goal. One of the basic ones was a propaganda trick of separating Polish American leaders from the masses of Polonia. "The American Polonia has two faces: the distorted grimace of some poor politicians [politykierów] and the cordial smile of millions of Poles [not the Americans of Polish descent!] who enjoy the sound of the Polish language," declared one of the articles.<sup>26</sup> The Polish American masses were mostly presented as politically neutral, interested in Poland as such but not in its political situation, and always impressed in a positive way after a trip to Poland.<sup>27</sup> Another pattern was to present ordinary Polish Americans as naïve and easy to manipulate (here we can see the myth of the peasant origin and the lack of education again).<sup>28</sup> Moreover, most of the leaders, especially on the local level, were presented as only pretending to be anti-Communist in order to secure their positions within the Polish American community and organizations.<sup>29</sup> Only a very small "reactionary leadership" was truly anti-Communist.

<sup>26</sup> The citation comes from: Jaszuński, Grzegorz. "Po powrocie z Ameryki (2). Dwa oblicza Polonii." *Życie Warszawy* 15 December 1956: 4. See also: Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Parada Pułaskiego na 5. Avenue." *Trybuna Ludu* 4 October 1955: 2; Hrabyk, Klaudiusz. "Uwagi o emigracji." *Kierunki* 1959, No. 34: 1-2, 7; Wnuk, Włodzimierz. "Hej, kto Polak, na bankiety." *Spotkania* 1962, No. 50: 7; Berezowski, Maksymilian. "Z Tarnowa do Scranton." *Trybuna Ludu* 21 April 1968: 7; Włoszczewski, Stefan. "Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej." *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1969, No. 2: 6-7; Luliński, Daniel. "Spotkania z Polonią." *Trybuna Ludu* 11 October 1970: 3; "Polonia pragnie więzi z Polską. Rozmowa 'Życia' z Eugeniuszem Kusielewiczem, profesorem historii na Uniwersytecie św. Jana w Nowym Jorku." *Życie Warszawy* 30 July 1986: 1, 2; Rem, Jan [Urban, Jerzy]. "Rozdarcie." *Rzeczpospolita* 25-26 May 1985: 5.

<sup>27</sup> Broniarek, Zygmunt. "To musi być samolot z Polski." *Dookoła Świata* 1961, No. 24: 7-8; Wnuk, Włodzimierz. "Spotkania amerykańskie." *Kierunki* 1962, No. 47: 10; Karczewska, Wanda. "Szkice amerykańskie. Legendy i mity." *Odgłosy* 1962, No. 40: 1, 5; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Wrażenia. Po wycieczce do Polski." *Trybuna Ludu* 30 January 1965: 6; Sołtysiak, Marian. "Maskarada w Chicago." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1966, No. 19: 8-9; Berezowski, Maksymilian. "Stary balast i przejawy realizmu." *Trybuna Ludu* 19 October 1968: 8; Grzełoński, Bohdan. "Amerykanie polskiego pochodzenia." *Trybuna Ludu* 1 August 1970: 6; Passendorfer, Jerzy and Żukrowski, Wojciech. "55 dni wśród Polonii amerykańskiej." *Trybuna Ludu* 29 January 1970: 8; Strzelewicz, Konrad. "Reportaż z miasta wiatrów." *Życie Literackie* 1977, No. 18: 8; Łoziński, Włodzimierz. "Filadelfijska nobilitacja Polonii." *Trybuna Ludu* 27 July 1979: 6.

<sup>28</sup> Broniarek, Zygmunt. "O Polakach w Ameryce. Od Hudsonu do Mississipi (6)." *Trybuna Ludu*, 29 January 1956: 6.

<sup>29</sup> Wnuk, Włodzimierz. "Hej, kto Polak, na bankiety." *Spotkania* 1962, No. 50: 7; Luliński, Daniel. "Wyjście z getta." *Perspektywy* 1971, No. 16: 12, 30-31; Kamiński, Ireneusz. "Dziennik amerykański (5). 1000 spraw na miesiąc." *Kamena* 1980, No. 16: 7; Broniarek, Zygmunt.

This tiny group comprised the activists of the post-WWII political emigration<sup>30</sup> and the leaders of the Polish American Congress: Charles Rozmarek<sup>31</sup> and Aloysius Mazewski (the latter especially in the 1980s).<sup>32</sup> They were usually regarded as particularly responsible for the low position of the Polish ethnic group in the USA as unsophisticated, politically naïve, uncritical and blinded by anti-Communism. Sometimes accusations of them being inspired and/or even paid by hostile foreign centers of power were formulated.<sup>33</sup>

**The myth of the Polish American left** was created and supported by the regime press. Various attempts were undertaken in order to present its strength, if not practical then at least moral. In the early period of the communist era in Poland, the argument was used that if Polish Americans were mostly workers, they must have supported the Progressive Party and joined the Communist Party.<sup>34</sup> Tom Dombrowski and Frank Grodzki, who visited Poland in the early 1950s and were murdered upon their return to America, were turned into martyrs.<sup>35</sup> Usually, how-

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"O czym mówią Polacy w Indiańskim Sadzie." *Trybuna Ludu* 28 July 1987: 4. See also: Weyroch, Jacek. "Mity i rzeczywistość. Rzecz o amerykańskich rodakach." *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* 1960, No. 16: 6-7.

<sup>30</sup> Litauer, Stefan. "Trzeci kongres Polonii amerykańskiej." *Życie Słowiańskie* 1952, No. 8: 12-15; Pawlak, Władysław. "Polacy i Niemcy w USA." *Życie Warszawy* 1-2 October 1961: 6; Karczewska, Wanda. "Szkice amerykańskie. Legendy i mity." *Odgłosy* 1962, No. 40: 1, 5; Górnicki, Wiesław. "Ze świata filmu." *Życie Warszawy* 26-27 February 1967, No. 49: 7; Włoszczewski, Stefan. "Racje bytu Polonii amerykańskiej." *Tygodnik Kulturalny* 1968, No. 29: 6-7; Stefanowicz, Janusz. "Polonia amerykańska - czas przemian." *Kierunki* 1974, No. 28: 1, 3; Klejn, Zbigniew. "Po obu stronach Wielkich Jezior. Duma i troska." *Trybuna Ludu* 26 January 1981: 7.

<sup>31</sup> Broniarek, Zygmunt. "U źródeł kryzysu Polonii amerykańskiej." *Trybuna Ludu* 19 April 1964, No. 108: s. 4; Hrabyk, Klaudiusz. "Zmierch bożka." *Życie Warszawy* 10 October 1967, No. 240: 2; Górnicki, Wiesław. "Wieczorem na Brooklynie." *Kultura* 1968, No. 4: 1, 8-9; Berezowski, Maksymilian. "Wciąż za mało się liczą... Amerykańska Polonia przed wyborami." *Trybuna Ludu* 26 September 1968: 8; Berezowski, Maksymilian "Stary balast i przejawy realizmu." *Trybuna Ludu* 19 October 1968, No. 288: 8.

<sup>32</sup> Orysz, Jerzy. "Amerykańska Polonia i Reagan." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1986, No. 42: 2; Orysz, Jerzy. "Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej. W niepolskim interesie." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1986, No. 7: 2; Woźniak, Grzegorz. "Polskie lobby." *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1986, No. 48: 11.

<sup>33</sup> Litauer, Stefan. "Trzeci kongres Polonii amerykańskiej." *Życie Słowiańskie* 1952, No. 8: 12-15; Putrament, Jerzy. "Dwa lyki Ameryki. (7) Tamci." *Przegląd Kulturalny* 1955, No. 51/52: 3; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "O Polakach w Ameryce. Od Hudsonu do Mississippi (6)." *Trybuna Ludu* 29 January 1956: 6; Wójcicki, B. "Antyrealizm." *Polityka* 1961, No. 19: 9; Berezowski, Maksymilian. "Poczucie polskości. Notatki z Detroit." *Trybuna Ludu* 5-7 April 1969: 11; Budrewicz, Olgierd. "Polska nad Zatoką San Francisco." *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1985, No. 7: 10.

<sup>34</sup> Podolski, Henryk. "Prawda o Polonii Amerykańskiej." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1952, No. 7: 16-17; Nowak, Czesław. "Polonia amerykańska w obliczu wyborów w USA." *Życie Słowiańskie* 1952, No. 9: 38-39; Gebert, Bolesław. "Zaczęło się od Jamestown." *Życie Warszawy* 1 October 1959: 3. See also: "O Polonii amerykańskiej, rozmowa ze Stefanem Włoszczewskim." *Litery*. 1964, No. 7: 6.

<sup>35</sup> Rodziński, Witold. "List do Jima Dąbrowskiego." *Trybuna Ludu* 4 June 1956: 4; Chyła, Euzebiusz. "W rocznicę zamordowania T. Dombrowskiego i F. Grodzkiego." *Trybuna Ludu* 31 May 1957: 2; Hrabyk, Klaudiusz, "Polonia w wyborach amerykańskich." *Kierunki* 1960, No. 34: 9; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Nowojorski klub 'Polonia.'" *Trybuna Ludu* 10 March 1962: 8; Nowak, Stanisław. "Polonia amerykańska z krajem i dla kraju." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1970, No. 3: 7.



ever, the Polish left was presented as a marginal group, persecuted in the USA, but supported by Poles.<sup>36</sup>

The left-wing "Polonia" Club in New York, *Głos Ludowy* [People's Voice] newspaper published in Detroit or, later, the *Post Eagle* weekly edited by Chester Grabowski were often mentioned in the Polish press, always with reverence and kindness, as the most positive, best informed, and most intelligent groups of the American Polonia.<sup>37</sup> Their leaders became true Polish American heroes.

The Polish American Pantheon also included those who supported contact with the "old country" and cultivated their "Polishness." Edward Piszek, a Polish American millionaire who kept contacts with the Polish authorities in order to promote Poland in the United States, served as a good example.<sup>38</sup>

The portrayals of Polish Americans in the Polish press after WWII were highly mythologized for at least two reasons. Firstly, because of the lack of in-depth knowledge about the Polish ethnic group in the United States resulting from a lack of research and available publications. The opinions presented in the articles were very often based on subjective, amateur observations made during the authors' short- or long-term visits to the United States. Secondly, the demands of the communist propaganda must be taken into consideration. Its elements can be easily identified in the texts: the concept of a bi-polar world, two opposing "camps," separation between the leaders and masses, "reactionaries" to be condemned, exaggeration of the communist influence within Polonia on the one hand and of the German threat on the other, and, last but not least, the glorification of Poland under the communist rule. The evolution of the portrait of Polish Americans corresponded with the political changes in Poland, which also confirms its propagandist nature. Obviously, not all Polish press publications were propagandist and not all of them cultivated the above-mentioned stereotypes, yet some patterns can be observed.

<sup>36</sup> Podolski, Henryk. "Z życia Polonii amerykańskiej." *Życie Słowińskie* 1952, No. 2: 27-30; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "O słowniku Liliena i o krzewicielach polskości. Od Hudsonu do Mississippi (7)." *Trybuna Ludu* 2 February 1956: 6; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Nowojorski klub 'Polonia.'" *Trybuna Ludu* 10 March 1962: 8. See also: Okraśniński, Marcei. "Kiedy będziemy mijać Polskę." *Polityka* 1983: 1, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Na 40-lecie 'Głosu Ludowego.'" *Trybuna Ludu* 18 May 1963: 3; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "40 lat klubu 'Polonia' w Nowym Jorku." *Trybuna Ludu* 2 October 1965: 6; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Problemy Polonii chicagowskiej." *Trybuna Ludu* 29 October 1966: 8; Berezowski, Maksymilian. "Poczucie polskości. Notatki z Detroit." *Trybuna Ludu* 5-7 April 1969: 11; Nowak, Stanisław. "Polonia amerykańska o Odrze i Nysie i kwestii niemieckiej." *Za Wolność i Lud* 1970, No. 8: 6; Dłużak, Florian. "Jaka jest Polonia amerykańska?" *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* 1980, No. 6: 8-9; "Polskie sprawy leżą mi na sercu. Rozmowa z działaczem polonijnym z USA - Chesterem Grabowskim." *Rzeczpospolita* 18 November 1982: 7; "W sprawach Polski muszą być na bieżąco. Rozmowa z Chesterem Grabowskim - wydawcą tygodnika 'Post Eagle.'" *Życie Warszawy* 9 August 1984: 5; Broniarek, Zygmunt. "Serce Polonii - w przenośni i dosłownie." *Trybuna Ludu* 19-20 March 1988: 7.

<sup>38</sup> Strzyżewski, Włodzimierz. "Polskość w Orchard Lake." *Kierunki* 1974, No. 14: 3; "Kibicuję Polsce. Rozmowa 'Życia' z Edwardem Piszkiem, prezesem 'Copernicus Society' w Filadelfii." *Życie Warszawy* 16 July 1974: 1, 5; Szymańska, Ewa. "Z lotu orła." *Kultura* 1977, No. 42: 9; Boniecka, Ewa. "Polish split." *Warmia i Mazury* 1978, No. 8: 12; "Żeby się porozumieć - trzeba się odnaleźć. Rozmowa z Edwardem Piszkiem, działaczem polonijnym z USA." *Odrodzenie* 1985, No. 7: 5; Nowak, Leopold. "Project Pole." *Kraków* 1988, No. 1: 53-54.