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Józef Młot-Mróż

The Unusual Story of a Polish American Extremist

Józef Młot-Mróż, a Polish refugee living in Salem, Massachusetts, was an anti-communist, an anti-Semite, and a right-wing extremist. His political activity was frequent and varied, and he is thought to have participated in hundreds of demonstrations and distributed over a million copies of a hate sheet he regularly edited. He considered himself a one-man crusader against communism, and as such was a frequent counter-protester to many progressive and left-wing initiatives. As the founder and only president of the Anti-Communist Confederation of Polish Freedom Fighters, Młot-Mróż often used the organization as a mouthpiece for his own views. His obsession with fighting “Jewish-Communism” was heavily influenced by the notion of the “Jewish conspiracy” and other common anti-Semitic tropes. This made his activity somewhat of a concern for Jewish Americans in New England. Due to the erratic nature of his behavior, he received noticeable press coverage in various parts of the U.S., especially in the Greater Boston area, where he became quite recognizable. He was not recognized by the wider Polish American community, which suggests a lack of support for extremist ideas within that ethnic group during the Cold War.

Keywords: extremism, anti-Semitism, United States, journalism, Polish Americans, Cold War, Józef Młot-Mróż

Introduction and Methodology

Józef Młot-Mróż was an interesting, yet severely understudied character. A Polish refugee who spent much of his adult life in Salem, Massachusetts, he dedicated most of his time to a cause he was willing to protest, fight, and even risk his life for – fighting “Jewish-Communism”. Though he was arguably a recognizable part of the Massachusetts political landscape throughout his life, and despite the existence of many primary sources relating to his biography and activities, he has not received substantial scholarly attention. The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the basic facts of Młot-Mróż’s life based on the available primary sources, and to engage in discourse analysis based on archived examples of the press attention he received. This article will also attempt to evaluate what – if any – impact he had on local Polish American communities.

So far, Młot-Mróż has only been mentioned in two academic papers. In a 2017 article by William Gillis, he served as an example of an anti-Semite insinuating that the media was controlled by Jews (Gillis 269). Two works by Gordon Mantler also briefly deal with the press coverage of a violent incident involving Młot-Mróż (Mantler, *The press did you in...* 41, Mantler, *Power to the Poor...* 134). So far, there does not seem to have been any dedicated scholarship on the topic of this individual, even though the aforementioned articles imply that this character might be of interest to those researching various wider trends in Cold War America. This paper aims to reconstruct the biography of Józef Młot-Mróż based on available digitized primary sources through the use of biographical research methods. As such, it is meant to serve as a jumping-off point for further research on this topic alongside a thesis being introduced. Though Młot-Mróż was a rather niche character, his story might be of interest to other scholars looking for examples of phenomena such as extremist activity in the Greater Boston Area.

Due to his highly erratic behavior, Młot-Mróż attracted the interest of authorities consistently. Thus, the core sources of information about Młot-Mróż include 172 pages-long documentation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as press clippings spread throughout several digitized newspaper archives, or compiled by the FBI as part of the Młot-Mróż file.

Młot-Mróż’s story can be placed in a variety of contexts depending on the chosen research questions. The author decided that focusing on any one of these contexts in such a general exploration of the topic would be detrimental to the quality of the article. However, it is still important to at least briefly describe these contexts and list key works which could serve as the basis for further research.

The first context in which Młot-Mróż’s story can be placed is Polish American history, and more specifically Polish American anti-communism. Though not an exceptionally politically active group, the U.S. Polish diaspora did react strongly to the establishment of a Soviet satellite state in Poland towards the end of the Second World War. When the Western Allies officially recognized the communist-dominated Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland at the Yalta Conference, the Polish government-in-exile ceased to be respected as a meaningful actor in international politics. This was seen as a “Western betrayal” by many in the Polish diaspora community, but it did not stop Polish Americans from attempting to

persuade the U.S. government to support establishing an independent, democratic Poland. Polish Americans engaged in movements and organizations established for the promotion of democratization in Central East Europe, such as the National Committee for a Free Europe and the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN). Relevant works include research by Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, Anna Mazurkiewicz, and John Radzilowski, among others.

Młot-Mróż can also be placed in the context of right-wing extremism in the United States, especially concerning its anti-Semitic and anti-communist strands. Due to the diversity of this phenomenon during the Cold War, it would be difficult to accurately summarize all of it here. However, most right-wing extremist organizations did have at least some anti-communist and racist flare to them. For exploring the history of American anti-Semitism during the Cold War, works by Leonard Dinnerstein are extremely relevant. As a suggested topic of further research on Młot-Mróż, his possible ties to organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, the John Birch Society, and the Christian Nationalist Crusade should be explored (Baylor).

Finally, in the last section of this article (“Placing a Public Crackpot...”), the author will explore the ways in which the Boston area press interacted with Młot-Mróż, and how that press attention affected his recognizability and impact. The goal of the final part of this paper will be to answer two key questions;

- 1) Did Młot-Mróż hold any real positions of power or influence within Polish American communities in Massachusetts? Could he have impacted the actions of Polish Americans or how they were perceived by the public?
- 2) Was Młot-Mróż recognizable enough, at least in the Greater Boston Area, to be a permanent part of the regional political environment? How was he portrayed in the press?

Question 1) will be answered through an analysis of available sources and reports, while question 2) will be answered using the methods of discourse analysis and critical content analysis. The author will argue that Józef Młot-Mróż, an individual with extreme and socially harmful views, was able to receive a level of local notoriety that made him a recognizable part of the Greater Boston Area’s landscape. The reason for this was the erratic (and sometimes violent) nature of his behavior as well as local press attention. Though it is impossible to measure the impact his notoriety may have had on communities such as Polish and Jewish Americans, available primary sources do not show a high level of concern from either group. While some of Młot-Mróż’s activities were of interest to the authorities and the press, Polonia organizations largely ignored him altogether, suggesting that Cold War Polish American communities were not receptive to right-wing extremist views.

Józef Młot-Mróż and the “Polish Freedom Fighters”

Józef Młot-Mróż, a Polish refugee living in the United States from 1952 until his death in 2002, was the leader of an anti-communist, anti-Semitic organization called the Anti-Communist Confederation of Polish Freedom Fighters (henceforth referred to as the ACCPFF or the “Polish Freedom Fighters”). Having been active in the Polish Underground, he immigrated to the U.S., claiming to have been the victim of repressions at the hands of the newly-established communist government. Though

relatively little is known about his life before his entry into the United States, it is important to understand his background in order to contextualize his later activity.

Born Józef Władysław Mróz in Męcinka (near the city of Wrocław, then Breslau) on January 21, 1921, he was reportedly active in the Polish Underground, specifically its armed forces – the Home Army. This activity most likely occurred somewhere closer to the Kraków area. Because both him and his siblings, Jadwiga and Władysław, were members of the Polish Underground, the family was frequently harassed by Nazi authorities, particularly the Gestapo. Due to this, Józef was often forced to hide in nearby villages. “Młot” (meaning “hammer”) was actually his codename in the Home Army, but he seems to have adopted it as part of his last name after leaving Poland (Fundacja im. Elżbiety Zawackiej w Toruniu 4). It is unclear whether he ever changed his name legally.

Though he was imprisoned for three months by the Gestapo during the war, it was the Soviet authorities he always harbored the most hatred for. He claimed to have been imprisoned and tortured by the Russians for twenty-one months beginning in 1945, but continued to serve in the Underground afterwards, even though he was initially arrested due to his activity in the Home Army. Before he could be properly tried for his involvement in the Underground, he managed to flee into Germany, settling in Frankfurt on the Main for a time. According to a 1953 article from the *Salem Evening News*, he began writing for various Polish diaspora newspapers in the U.S., France, and Sweden around this time (*Salem Evening News*, Sep. 23, 1953). He later entered the United States as a displaced person on November 26, 1952 (FBI 65). Virtually all information about his life back in Poland comes from an interview with Józef’s sister, Jadwiga Mróz, and from Młot-Mróz himself. For this reason, it should not necessarily be taken at face value.

Having settled in Salem, Massachusetts, Młot-Mróz was highly politically active in the Greater Boston area, as well as in New York City and Washington, D.C. His organization, the aforementioned Anti-Communist Confederation of Polish Freedom Fighters, was most likely established sometime in 1953, shortly after Młot-Mróz’s entry into the United States. Though it claimed over 1,500 members nationwide, it remained a fringe group with extremist views (*The Boston Globe*, Jun. 29, 1969). While there is no doubt that Młot-Mróz had some dedicated supporters, the organization was little more than a mouthpiece for his own views. It was always listed as being located at 18 Boardman Street in Salem, which was Młot-Mróz’s private residence. He frequently identified himself to the press as the president of the ACCPFF. Described as a “one-man crusader”, he embarked on most of his picketing and counter-protesting efforts by himself, and he was practically the sole author of all the written material published by the “Polish Freedom Fighters” (FBI 66). Though “well over a hundred” local members would show up to the ACCPFF’s annual dinner in Salem, in the minds of most people in the Boston area, the Polish Freedom Fighters were synonymous with Józef Młot-Mróz (Hall, *Who – and What...*).

Młot-Mróz dedicated the majority of his time to demonstrations, especially counter-protesting any cause he considered “communist”, and publishing a hate sheet entitled *S.O.S.!!!, U.S.A., Ship of State*. However, it was anti-Semitism that could most accurately be described as the core of his ideology. Młot-Mróz was one of the many anti-Semites claiming that Jews were in almost complete control of the

world, or that they were at the very least trying to seize said control, and that communism was merely a tool meant to help them achieve this goal.

Descriptions of his occupation are inconsistent. Various sources describe him as a “self-employed [house] painter and paperhanger”, a “leather worker”, or “locksmith” (FBI 132, 141). As a significant portion of his income was dedicated to his political activism, with the most commonly repeated amount being \$35,000, spent over the course of about thirteen years, it is likely that he had to take on different jobs to ease the financial strain created by his activity (Hall, *Who – and What...*). He had also described himself as a freelance writer, and anonymous informers for the FBI claimed that he was a “prolific writer” who published articles in many Polish-language newspapers in the United States and France (FBI 67). The author was unable to verify this claim, and she has only managed to locate one mention of Młot-Mróż in a Polish American newspaper (*Dziennik Dla Wszystkich*, Aug. 13, 1955).¹ Therefore, it is safe to say that this statement was likely false or exaggerated.

Młot-Mróż married Barbara C. Thompson on January 11, 1970. He did not have any known children (*The Salem News – Obituaries*). Though there is reason to believe that Thompson participated in some of Młot-Mróż’s political efforts, it is much more likely that she exerted a moderating influence on his actions, using her refusal to marry him as leverage (FBI 102).² In a June 1969 article in *The Boston Globe*, she was quoted saying: “He knows there will be no marriage until he stays out of the streets for good, but I’ve been waiting seven years and he hasn’t stopped yet” (Hall, *Młot-Mroz Says Goodbye...*). Another article in the same newspaper, dated March 1970, features her stating she did not want her husband to protest out of fear for his safety, but “didn’t rule out picketing” (*The Boston Globe*, Mar. 8, 1970). Młot-Mróż did actually seem to cease at least some of his activities following his marriage to Thompson. After 1970, the majority of his political activism was expressed through the distribution of *S.O.S.!!!* rather than protests or demonstrations. He spent most of his life in the United States in Salem, but moved to Groton, Connecticut with his wife at an unspecified point in time (*The Salem News – Obituaries*). He died on October 31, 2002, aged eighty-one (*Find a Grave*).

“All the News Suppressed by the Daily Press”: *S.O.S.!!!, U.S.A., Ship of State*

The ideological reasoning for much of Józef Młot-Mróż’s activism was expressed in the ACCPFF’s bulletin, *S.O.S.!!!, U.S.A., Ship of State*, which was published through most of his period of activity in the United States, even after he had officially “retired” protesting. While its nature was ostensibly anti-communist, it contained material that was anti-Semitic in nature, as well as numerous attacks on socio-political

¹ In this newspaper, an article authored by Młot-Mróż appears in a section dedicated to texts submitted by the readers. This means that its existence does not necessarily corroborate the claim that he was a “prolific writer” for Polish American newspapers.

² When Młot-Mróż picketed the White House on May 5, 1964, he was “accompanied by four men and one woman” according to FBI documentation. It is quite likely that this woman was Barbara Thompson, which would mean she would have participated in some of Młot-Mróż’s activities.

initiatives considered to be communist ploys by Młot-Mróż (e.g. Civil Rights Movement). Most of the rhetoric used in the publication was reminiscent of the “Jewish conspiracy”, which is an anti-Semitic trope suggesting that Jews are either secretly plotting to take over the world, or have already succeeded in doing so. The bulletin also featured strong elements of ultra-nationalism (pertaining both to the United States and Poland) and Catholic fanaticism. Another hallmark of *S.O.S.!!!* was its incredibly alarmist nature, forever suggesting that the U.S. would succumb to communism and “red slavery” if Młot-Mróż’s warnings were not heeded. It is probably the most valuable resource for exploring Młot-Mróż’s worldview, since the vast majority of the texts in *S.O.S.!!!* were authored by him, with most of the rest being reprinted from other publications (*Anti-Communist Confederation... Item 03 4*).³

An article from *The Boston Globe* published in 1969 (when Młot-Mróż “retired” protesting) claimed that about 1.5 million total copies of *S.O.S.!!!* had been distributed between 1952 and 1969, though this number would likely not have been logistically possible (Hall, *Młot-Mroz Says Goodbye...*). The exact manner in which the hate sheet was distributed is unclear. The most likely option is that Młot-Mróż did it himself by handing out the material to passers-by, without the help of any other parties. It is possible that he also used some sort of subscription format. Copies of *S.O.S.!!!* were also being sent to the U.S. Congress in the early 1970s. This is an incident mentioned in a February 1973 issue of *The Boston Jewish Times*, and it can be confirmed that Senator Edward W. Brooke (R-MA, 1967-1979) asked to be taken off Młot-Mróż’s mailing list in 1974 (FBI 155, *The Boston Jewish Times*, Feb. 22, 1973).

The author analyzed six issues of *S.O.S.!!!*, which seem to represent the majority of the surviving writings of the ACCPFF. They were published between 1967 and 1974, but most come from the 1960s. They have been archived by the FBI and the Hall-Hoag Collection of Dissenting and Extremist Printed Propaganda (held at Brandeis University and Brown University). Due to poor availability of complete issues of *S.O.S.!!!*, a number of other material published by Młot-Mróż was included in the analysis; one petition to “Statesmen, Diplomats, and Makers of American Domestic and Foreign Policy” (1960), an ACCPFF leaflet (1961), an open letter to the United Nations (1964), one petition to “the President and Statesmen of the U.S.A.” (1965), a letter to FBI Director John Edgar Hoover (1965), and one piece of writing that can be best described as an ACCPFF Christmas card (1967). This material was likely distributed alongside *S.O.S.!!!* and is helpful in exploring key aspects of Młot-Mróż’s ideology. In 1966, Młot-Mróż also identified himself as the editor of *The Tribune of Enslaved Nations*, a book which the Polish Freedom Fighters seem to have published in 1959 (FBI 122).⁴ It was not available to the author.

There are several common threads that can be noticed throughout most issues of *S.O.S.!!!*. For example, there are frequent comparisons of communists (or people Młot-Mróż perceived as communists) to Nazis. One page of *S.O.S.!!!* describes

³ In some cases, the reprinting of articles from other newspapers was not concealed in any way. For example, one issue of *S.O.S.!!!* contains a segment of an article from *The Augusta Courier* which has been reprinted along with the entirety of the newspaper’s front page, making it extremely easy to identify.

⁴ *The Tribune of Enslaved Nations* might also be a compilation of *S.O.S.!!!* and other printed material published by the ACCPFF.

Sidney Weinberg, a successful Jewish businessman, as “Today’s Red Hitler”, while another contains the equation “SDS = SS” – likening the Students for a Democratic Society, a New Left activist group, to the *Schutzstaffel*, a Nazi paramilitary organization (FBI 26, 40). This suggests that, despite his extremely anti-Semitic views, Młot-Mróż did not identify as a neo-Nazi. Another common trope is the usage of imagery related to the revolutionary period in American history. Dr. Benjamin Spock, a famous pediatrician and left-wing activist, is described as a “modern Benedict Arnold” and charged with popularizing “cowardice and perversion”. Several pages also contain the wording “This is a Paul Revere message – help sound the alarm”, invoking the famous “Midnight Ride”, which alerted revolutionary American troops of the approach of British forces (FBI 39). These references serve not only to further emphasize the gravity of the situation and the extent of the “Jewish-Communist conspiracy”, but also create a clearly patriotic association with what Młot-Mróż urges his readers to do – fight communism “before it is too late”. Some select issues of *S.O.S.!!!* also include praise of Christianity, specifically Roman Catholicism, and the condemnation of Jews and communists as groups seeking to destroy it. Religion is also frequently placed at the very top of the hierarchy of values, with one page featuring a large white cross with the words “Education Without Christianity Is Worthless” right below it. This overlaps with another common *S.O.S.!!!* trope – racism and anti-integrationism. One headline states, “Charges of ‘white racism’ are the latest effort of the Jews to cover up their attack on Christ” (FBI, 42-43).

Almost every statement, opinion, argument, and call to action in *S.O.S.!!!* is in some way laced with anti-Semitism. Besides the constant conflating of Jews with communists, there are frequent accusations of treason directed at Jewish Americans, which are connected to their alleged communist sympathies. These charges are “backed” by Młot-Mróż’s listing of Soviet spies that happened to have Jewish heritage, with the infamous Ethel and Julius Rosenberg serving as a crowning example (FBI 31).⁵ While Młot-Mróż mentions some individuals actually convicted of treason, most of the accused are targeted seemingly only because of their Jewishness. In fact, their Jewish identity is used as an argument supporting the view that they are traitors.

Młot-Mróż, like many anti-Semites, had a tendency to blame Jews for all perceived ills of society. For example, *S.O.S.!!!* promotes the standard trope of the mass media being controlled by Jews. This specific claim shows up in two ways. Firstly, Młot-Mróż believed that all material he considered immoral and sympathetic to communism was being broadcast by the media because of Jewish influence, writing, for example, that Jews were “polluting American Christian homes with sex and crime programs” (FBI 43). Secondly, he made frequent claims that the ACCPFF did not have a mainstream platform due to some sort of “Jewish-communist” persecution, describing *S.O.S.!!!* as “all the news suppressed by the daily press” (FBI 44).

⁵ In the early 1950s, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, a Jewish couple, were convicted of treason and sentenced to death for providing the Soviet Union with information on the construction details of the American atomic bomb. The Rosenberg trial was part of a series of the court cases of the so-called “atomic spies,” and attracted unprecedented media attention. The fact that the United States had fallen victim to espionage, which in turn allowed the USSR to make a highly dangerous weapon that the Americans no longer had a monopoly on, was one of the causes of the Second Red Scare and caused a lot of anti-communist and attitudes to flare up.

The anti-Semitism is not only connected to anti-communism, but also racism. One headline in *S.O.S.!!!* states that “Jew-Communists” are “behind race-mixing” (FBI 36). A December 1967 issue of *S.O.S.!!!* also reprinted a summary of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, an anti-Semitic hoax claiming to be a detailed report of the Jewish plans to take over the world (FBI 18-20).⁶ It should be noted that almost all of Młot-Mróż’s narration is a collection of common anti-Semitic tropes, from the idea that Jews are controlling the media to their conflation with communism. In that way, none of it is particularly original, and is quite reminiscent of the types of views promoted in other anti-Semitic publications at the time, such as *Instauration* and *The Cross and the Flag*.

Arguably the most original aspect of *S.O.S.!!!* is its crude graphic design. Likely a one-man job by Młot-Mróż himself, the bulletin is put together haphazardly, with many choices appearing completely random. While some pages are more cohesive than others, many are extremely “crowded”, with various graphics seemingly unrelated to the main point of any given page. However, the graphic design of *S.O.S.!!!* may have been an effective tool for repetition-based propaganda, whether it was intentional or not. Certain ideologically-charged imagery can be seen so often that an unsuspecting reader could easily start internalizing the ideas it was meant to communicate without realizing it. Some often-used graphics include a serpent with the words “A.D.L.” and “B’nai B’rith” written on it (sometimes being hunted by an eagle), targeting the Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish non-governmental civil rights law organization, an anti-Semitic caricature labelled “Satan’s Agents – The Rabbis”, and imagery of a hammer and sickle inside of a Star of David (e.g. FBI 20, 28, 45). All of this is meant to represent the idea that Jews are dangerous and inherently connected to communism. The names of the “enemies of America” are often followed by small Stars of David, signifying their alleged Jewish heritage, once again being used as an argument in support of Młot-Mróż’s claims (e.g. FBI 43). Another common feature of *S.O.S.!!!* is the framing of the text on many pages with a graphic stylized to look like barbed wire, with the points being replaced with hammer and sickle symbols in some cases (e.g. FBI 25). This was probably supposed to put the reader in the position of those on the other side of the Iron Curtain or to suggest what America’s future might look like according to Młot-Mróż. The crowded graphic design was also used as a way of creating the image of Młot-Mróż as a martyr for the cause of freedom – photographs of himself during protests or in jail were used liberally, with some pages of *S.O.S.!!!* being little more than a collage of such images (e.g. FBI 21).

It seems that Młot-Mróż’s activity became more intensified after the *détente* period began in U.S.-Soviet relations. In general, after Joseph Stalin died in 1953 and the way was paved for more cordial relations between the two countries, Młot-Mróż seemed to feel betrayed by the United States. In a September 1961 ACCPFF leaflet, he recalls the events of September 1939, namely the Nazi and Soviet invasion of Poland. Stressing the significance of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, he urges Americans to stop negotiating with the USSR until it has freed all Captive Nations and fixed the

⁶ For more details on *The Protocols* and their influence in the United States, see Singerman, Robert. “The American Career of the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion.’” *American Jewish History*, vol. 71, no. 1, 1981, pp. 48-78.

damage it had caused (*Anti-Communist Confederation... Item 04*). A June 28, 1966 issue of *S.O.S.!!!* contains an article entitled "Reminder and Warning". Because it was published on the tenth anniversary of the events of the 1956 Poznań protests, it laments the fact that while the world was initially shocked by them, the plight of Polish workers was quickly forgotten about.⁷ American negotiations with the Soviets are meant to be an expression of that. Młot-Mróż further states that the U.S. should break off all *détente* efforts with the USSR, lest it should risk doing a "criminal injustice" to Poland (*Anti-Communist Confederation... Item 01 1*). It is interesting to note that while similar sentiments (dissatisfaction with the U.S. reaction to human rights violations by the USSR) were not uncommon in Polonia circles at the time, repeating them did not seem to lend Młot-Mróż any additional credibility in Polish American communities.

Some issues of *S.O.S.!!!* tend to err on the side of caution when it comes to criticizing the Civil Rights Movement. It seems that Młot-Mróż wanted to give off the idea that he was not outright opposed to racial integration or African American enfranchisement, but was rather attempting to be "logical" about the topic. For example, one issue of *S.O.S.!!!* is almost entirely dedicated to criticism of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement, containing both covert and more overt attacks, but generally comes off as less reactionary than later statements from Młot-Mróż (*Anti-Communist Confederation... Item 03 3-4*). In other issues of *S.O.S.!!!*, the charges levied against the Civil Rights Movement by Młot-Mróż became much more audacious, with a February 1969 issue outright stating that "Zionists & Reds Lead Racial Movement" and labelling integration as "genocide of all races" (FBI 47). This could suggest Młot-Mróż's views on race becoming more radical over time, but it could also represent an attempt at portraying his politics as more reasonable to the general public in the early 1960s and abandoning such efforts later on.

Młot-Mróż also seemed to be of two minds about the U.S. government. In the vast majority of cases, he supported it fully and considered just about any form of dissent treason (especially when it came from left-wing groups). However, *S.O.S.!!!* features many articles and headlines that seem to portray American politicians as completely helpless in the face of "Jewish-Communist" meddling. Any policy that Młot-Mróż disagreed with, such as racial integration, negotiations with the Soviets, and the Great Society (described as a "usurpation of states' rights"), was framed as proof of this narration (FBI 41). One issue of *S.O.S.!!!* even goes as far as to proclaim to the readers that "Your Enemy is in Washington" (FBI 44). According to the ACCPFF, the American government was controlled by Jews through the media and

⁷ The Polish diaspora in the U.S. reacted quite strongly to events back in Poland, especially the so-called "Polish months" (*polskie miesiące*). This phrase is usually used to refer to several instances in which Polish workers' protests or strikes were met with a violent response from the communist authorities, or turning points in the policy of the regime. The first of these "Polish months" was June of 1956, also referred to in Polish as the *poznański czerwiec* (the June of Poznań). On June 28-30, 1956, several hundred steel workers from the city of Poznań went on strike to protest the poor pay and working conditions, eventually beginning to also shout anti-regime slogans. This event was dealt with brutally by the communist authorities, with over fifty demonstrators ending up dead. *Poznański czerwiec* did contribute to some changes in the Polish government, but was largely swept under the rug, only receiving significant publicity in the West.

organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Council on Foreign Relations. At the same time, this criticism did not seem to apply consistently.

Firstly, Democrats seemed to be far more likely to be targeted, likely because of their more liberal policies, such as Lyndon B. Johnson's aforementioned Great Society and John F. Kennedy's support of the Civil Rights Movement. Democratic presidents, particularly Johnson, were also sometimes portrayed as outright negligent or malicious instead of innocently ignorant. Meanwhile, president Richard Nixon, who Młot-Mróż was clearly fond of, was almost constantly praised and portrayed as a victim of unfair "Jewish-Communist" attacks. In July of 1971, Młot-Mróż would even go as far as to attempt to attack Daniel Ellsberg, the professor responsible for releasing the Pentagon Papers to the press, as he was entering court in Boston (*Chicago Jewish Post & Opinion*, Jul. 30, 1971). This was, no doubt, an attempt at defending the honor of president Nixon and the United States as a whole. Secondly, Młot-Mróż often portrayed "America" as the main defender of freedom and peace in the fight against communism. It is therefore interesting to consider what "America" was supposed to mean in this context. If presidents Johnson and Kennedy were either being manipulated by "Jewish-Communists" or openly malicious, and the American public was "brainwashed by the media" and "confused", perhaps "America" in the mind of Młot-Mróż only constituted "true fighters of communism". This list would certainly include president Nixon, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (Młot-Mróż's personal idol), and organizations like the "Polish Freedom Fighters" and the Christian Nationalist Crusade (another anti-Semitic organization, which was promoted in *S.O.S.!!!*) (FBI 20).

Overall, Młot-Mróż's ideology consisted of fairly standard tropes of anti-Semitism combined with opposition to communism. Those elements existed in the context of his life experiences – his devotion to Poland and Catholicism, and the emphasis he frequently put on liberating East Central European nations were aspects of his worldview that were expressed in the U.S., but were far more typical of Polish anti-communism. As such, Młot-Mróż's ideology was an interesting blend of talking points typical of American right-wing extremists around this time (e.g. opposition to racial integration – a hot topic in the U.S., but hardly a subject of debate in communist-dominated Poland), and his own migration experiences, which sometimes served to "legitimize" the extremity of his views in the eyes of the audiences of his protests, particularly journalists.

The "Anti-Career": Młot-Mróż's Political Activism

Besides the distribution of *S.O.S.!!!*, *U.S.A.*, *Ship of State*, Józef Młot-Mróż did a lot of "in-person" activism. His political activities were labelled as his "anti-career" by Dave Beaton of *The Boston Globe*. This is quite appropriate, considering that Młot-Mróż was not so much a protester as he was a counter-protester. His typical forms of activism included; picketing buildings, counter-demonstrating during already established protests, sometimes interrupting demonstrations and speeches by shouting insults or anti-communist slogans, protest marches, and hunger strikes.

While counter-protesting and picketing, he often carried signs with various anti-communist, anti-Semitic, and racist slogans. On select occasions, he would also walk around with props, such as a large sheet-metal cross or a chain with a hammer and sickle attached to the end of it (Hall, *Who – and What...*). He also liked to show up to protests in a recognizable red, white, and blue suit (FBI 150). The most intense period of his activity that has been documented were certainly the 1960s, though he was also active in the 1950s. In the wake of 1960s social upheaval, Młot-Mróz counter-protested demonstrations of all kinds, from anti-draft and anti-Vietnam War rallies to civil rights protests, and, perhaps most notably, the Poor People's March. Though he officially "retired" protesting in 1969 at the request of his then-fiancée, he was still occasionally seen picketing and demonstrating in the 1970s and even into the 1980s. While most of his political efforts were rather uneventful, a lot of them garnered press attention, usually on the local level, due to the eccentricity of Młot-Mróz's methods. He was arrested quite often and there were a few instances in which his protests turned violent. According to Gordon D. Hall, an accomplished researcher and archivist of extremist movements in the United States, by 1969, Młot-Mróz had participated in nearly 400 demonstrations (Hall, *Młot-Mroz Says Good-bye...*). Since a lot of his protests were quite well documented, either by the press or by FBI Special Agents, it would be impossible to describe every single one of them here. Instead, some select examples will be singled out that are either representative, extreme, or especially notable for their influence on Młot-Mróz's activities.

One quite typical activity for Młot-Mróz would have been picketing various buildings. For example, on September 8, 1959, Młot-Mróz arrived in Washington, D.C. to picket the White House in protest of the visit of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. This particular effort was combined with a hunger strike which was to last from seven to eleven days (FBI 67-69). This incident is of interest for two reasons. Firstly, it seems that hunger strikes were a typical form of activity for Młot-Mróz mostly early on in his "anti-career", in the 1950s and early 1960s. Secondly, this situation, likely due to the shocking nature of the strike, garnered press attention that went far beyond Młot-Mróz's typical mentions in local newspapers. It was reported on in minor periodicals in Washington, but also in *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*.

As has already been stated, Młot-Mróz was especially active in counter-protesting the progressive movements of the 1960s, specifically the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war movement. For example, on March 26, 1965, Młot-Mróz showed up to a Boston march of solidarity with the march on Montgomery, Alabama. It was reported that he repeatedly shouted the words "Communist dupes!" during a speech in the City Hall. He was very persistent despite being told to stop several times, and was eventually struck in the face with the speaker's microphone. He was later choked by a different individual (FBI 115). In October 1967, Młot-Mróz decided to counter-protest an anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C., carrying an anti-communist and anti-Semitic sign. After the protesters knocked down his prop, a short fight broke out (*Daily Illini*, Oct. 28, 1967).

Perhaps the most significant turning point in Młot-Mróz's "anti-career" was an incident that occurred on May 10, 1968. Młot-Mróz showed up to a demonstration in Roxbury, Massachusetts, which was part of the New England segment of the Poor People's March, carrying a sign that said, "I Am Fighting Poverty, I Work!

Have You Tried It... It Works!" (FBI 143). He would later claim that he was attacked twice by some of the protesters and that his sign was broken. He attempted to go back to his car, which was parked a noticeable distance away from the demonstration. He was followed by a group of protesters. Though he managed to get into the car and drive away, his car window was broken and he was stabbed from behind while being stuck in traffic. He was then transported to the Boston City Hospital where he received treatment (FBI 160-161). He recovered fairly quickly, but the incident likely contributed to his "retirement", and may have been Barbara Thompson's main reason for concern over his safety. It also received widespread news coverage, the likes of which was almost unheard of for Młot-Mróż. On May 11, 1968, the stabbing became front-page news in both *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times* (Mantler 41). Both of these extremely influential newspapers only mentioned Młot-Mróż one other time – during the 1959 Khrushchev visit protest. The stabbing was also reported on by many local newspapers, as well as some in Illinois (*Daily Illini*, May 11, 1968). The attackers were never apprehended, partially due to Młot-Mróż's lack of cooperation with the authorities. Though he volunteered a lot of details when he was interviewed while still in hospital, he refused to work with investigators in September of 1968, reasoning that the investigation would interfere with his work, and, perhaps more importantly, his protesting (FBI 162).

On June 29, 1969, Gordon D. Hall wrote an article for *The Boston Globe* about Młot-Mróż's "retirement". The "Polish Freedom Fighter" announced he would cease his protesting and picketing efforts during a banquet with members of the ACCPFF, but maintained he would continue to distribute his bulletin, *S.O.S.!!!*. As has already been explained, this decision was most likely the result of Barbara Thompson's refusal to marry Młot-Mróż if he did not stop picketing. In the article, Anthony Hmura, the Vice-President of the ACCPFF, is quoted saying he would be "very surprised if Joe doesn't get out in the streets again", adding that he himself has "tried to quit [protesting] a number of times but there is something way deep inside you that brings you back again" (Hall, *Młot-Mróż Says Goodbye...*).

Hmura's predictions turned out to be right. Though the level of Młot-Mróż's activity was definitely lower following his marriage to Thompson, he did not stop protesting altogether. In January of 1981, he was seen at a demonstration against draft registration, shouting "God Bless America". He was largely ignored by the protesters (*The Harvard Crimson*, Jan. 12, 1981). One of his last in-person political actions reportedly took place in April 1989. During a commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the anti-Vietnam War protests at Harvard University, Młot-Mróż was reported to have run into the University Hall and attempted to address the audience, carrying an anti-Semitic sign. The sign was destroyed and he was promptly forced out of Harvard Yard (*The Harvard Crimson*, Apr. 18, 1989).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation kept an extensive record of Młot-Mróż's activities. This is quite unsurprising, considering the fact that he was arrested often and that his political activity turned violent a number of times. Still, most of the documentation accumulated by the FBI is relatively low-priority and mostly a collection of newspaper clippings and descriptions of his activities. In general, it seems that the authorities did not see Młot-Mróż as an immediate threat in the vast majority of cases, but considered him suspicious enough to monitor a lot of his behavior.

There were a few instances in which this rather lukewarm interest seemed to change. In February of 1968, Młot-Mróz was arrested and taken to a mental health institution for allegedly threatening to “blow up” the Soviet Embassy in Washington. The FBI advised that he should be considered “armed and dangerous”, and the issue was to receive “immediate and preferred attention”. Not much seems to have come of this besides a recommendation that Młot-Mróz and other members of the Polish Freedom Fighters be interviewed immediately (FBI 135-136).⁸ In September of the same year, the Bureau started a preliminary investigation into the May 1968 stabbing, though it came to naught due to Młot-Mróz’s aforementioned lack of cooperation (FBI 159). In 1988, the Salem Police Department (Salem PD) requested help from the FBI in “dealing with possible demonstrations and violence” before a “Polish Freedom Fighters 35th Anniversary Banquet”. Though a lot of information is redacted, it seems that the Salem PD was concerned that extremists from Butte (Montana), Detroit (Michigan), Little Rock (Arkansas), or New Haven (Connecticut) would travel to Salem and pose a threat to public safety. Authorities claimed to have reason to believe that members of Aryan Nations (an anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi hate group) or the Ku Klux Klan might show up, suggesting that Młot-Mróz may have had connections to one or both of these organizations (FBI 4-6).

Though the FBI seems to have considered Młot-Mróz highly erratic at best and actively dangerous at worst, he himself was extremely fond of the Bureau, especially its first ever director, J. Edgar Hoover. In fact, in 1965, he even sent a letter of appreciation to Hoover, commending him on his “fight against the Red Disease” (FBI 120).

“Placing a Public Crackpot Close to the Top of the News”: Młot-Mróz in the Press and Polish America

In this section of the article, the author will attempt to answer the two research questions posed in the introduction. It is virtually impossible to estimate the importance of Młot-Mróz to the overall political discourse in the U.S. or the societal perceptions of Polish Americans due to a lack of appropriate quantitative data. This section will focus on addressing Młot-Mróz’s apparent lack of influence in local Polish American circles as well as his portrayal by the press in order to come to conclusions about what his activity says about Polonia and mainstream American politics during the Cold War.

Firstly, it should be emphasized that Młot-Mróz was described by an anonymous FBI source as a “highly erratic type” who was “thoroughly disliked by many Poles in the Salem, Mass. area” (FBI 65). Another informer stated that the people appearing with Młot-Mróz at demonstrations were merely his friends, and that he “doesn’t represent any responsible Polish organization” (FBI 108). This, together with the fact that he conducted most of his protests by himself, would suggest that Młot-Mróz did not have many supporters. While several sources have claimed that the ACCPFF had over 1,500 members, it should be kept in mind that this number cannot be verified (as it likely originated from Młot-Mróz himself), and even if it could be, it would

⁸ Who these “other members of the Polish Freedom Fighters” were, the FBI did not specify.

still represent a small fraction of the total Polish American population. There is no doubt that the "Polish Freedom Fighters" were a fringe organization. They most certainly did not represent the larger goals or opinions of the Polish diaspora community in the United States.

In fact, there is a possibility that the ACCPFF was actually merely a one-man show by Młot-Mróz. There is no comprehensive list of members and the only people who can be definitively identified as affiliated with Młot-Mróz are the aforementioned Barbara Thompson and Anthony Hmura (Hall, *Młot-Mroz Says Goodbye...*). There are no reliable claims of the ACCPFF's total membership and Młot-Mróz was usually seen by himself during protests. However, Gordon D. Hall, based on his own research on Młot-Mróz, stated that he boasted a "small, but growing circle of admirers" (Hall, *Młot-Mroz Says Goodbye...*). Ultimately, it is impossible to know for sure how many people may have been members of the ACCPFF. The most likely scenario is similar to what one informer described to the FBI – that those who supported Młot-Mróz and the "Polish Freedom Fighters" were mostly a small group of his own friends (FBI 108).

There is relatively little information on any positions of power Młot-Mróz may have held, but several articles in *The Boston Jewish Times* documented the saga of his involvement with a Salem chapter of the Holy Name Society – a Roman Catholic confraternity meant to incentivize young men to increase their religious participation. In 1987, it was revealed that he had been serving as president of the chapter for "eight to ten years" (*The Boston Jewish Times*, Apr. 30, 1987). While this position may have afforded him some influence, he was promptly condemned and forced to resign by the parish he represented after his anti-Semitic activities came to light (*The Boston Jewish Times*, May 7, 1987).

It is also important to mention that Młot-Mróz seemed to try to make himself appear as a legitimate political actor, though he did so in slightly different ways than his extremist contemporaries. Firstly, the establishment of the ACCPFF and the constant usage of the organization's name (as opposed to simply publishing printed material under Młot-Mróz's own name) was likely an attempt at making himself appear like a member of an organized, respected political movement. He was also extremely fond of identifying himself as a "Polish Freedom Fighter", which both carried a general positive connotation and was reminiscent of the Hungarian freedom fighters (who protested against the Soviet-backed Hungarian government in 1956). Młot-Mróz also frequently used a lot of the vocabulary adopted by legitimate organizations advocating for the democratization and independence of Soviet-controlled countries, especially the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN) and the National Captive Nations Committee (NCNC). The phrase "Captive Nations" was a constant part of Młot-Mróz's protests and writing (e.g. FBI 3, 100). Some American journalists were quite receptive to this image portrayed by him, which will be discussed later. All of these tactics were likely meant to trick the general public into thinking that Młot-Mróz was far more respected than he actually was. In the late 20th century, it was relatively common for extremist groups to try to present themselves as academic authorities by adopting a pseudo-intellectual style of writing and conducting themselves (Berbrier). This is not consistent with Młot-Mróz's behavior, as his style of writing was erratic, and the graphic design of his work – completely unprofessional. He may have tried to emulate his contemporaries, but ultimately

decided – for one reason or another – to use the other tactics that were already discussed to make himself seem more legitimate.

Perhaps the most valuable resources on the topic of Młot-Mróz's recognizability come from the press, as journalists both in New England and other parts of the U.S. were often quick to document his behavior due to its erratic nature. He was mentioned eleven times in *The Los Angeles Times* (from 1959 to 1968), seven times in *The Harvard Crimson* (from 1963 to 1989) and *Washington Evening Star* (from 1959 to 1963), at least three times in *Chicago Jewish Post & Opinion* (from 1968 to 1973), *The Boston Jewish Times* (in 1973 and 1987), and *The New York Times* (in 1959, 1968, and 1971), at least twice in *The Daily Illini* (in 1967 and 1968), 107 times in *The Boston Globe* (from 1959 to 2001), and numerous times in other local newspapers, such as *The Boston Herald Traveler*, *The Salem Evening News*, *Washington Daily News*, etc.⁹ This shows that Młot-Mróz was certainly reported on quite a few times, however, the length of the time period during which the reporting occurred makes it sound much less statistically significant (for example, *The Boston Globe* mentioned Młot-Mróz an average of about 1.7 times per year). What makes this press coverage stand out is its consistency, its geographical diversity (it is especially noteworthy that he received coverage in a Los Angeles newspaper, located on the opposite side of the country from his area of activity), and its tone, all of which seems quite inconsistent with Młot-Mróz's status as a regional phenomenon.

The violence that occurred during some of Młot-Mróz's confrontations with the authorities and other protesters was definitely an aspect of his activity that drew journalists in. By far the point in his "anti-career" that interested the press the most was the May 1968 stabbing. The local journalists' reaction to this incident bordered on enthusiastic. An article in *The Boston Globe* published on May 11, 1968, crowned Młot-Mróz the "King of Protest". The article went on to state that "someone once said that no demonstration's a success unless Jozef Mlot-Mroz shows up to demonstrate against it" (*The Boston Globe*, May 11, 1968). Further, a *Daily Illini* (a newspaper from Illinois) article from the same day described Młot-Mróz as "well known in New England for participating in all kinds of demonstrations" (*Daily Illini*, May 11, 1968). An article about his "retirement" in 1969 opened with the assertion that "Political rallies in Boston just won't be the same any more" (Hall, *Mlot-Mroz Says Goodbye...*). Further, an article describing Młot-Mróz's attempt to counter-protest in 1981 stated that "more experienced protesters" knew better than to give him attention, implying that his reputation still preceded him over a decade after his "retirement" (*The Harvard Crimson*, Jan. 12, 1981). All of these statements certainly suggest that Młot-Mróz was quite recognizable on a local level for his erratic behavior – a fact that is not surprising, considering the sheer amount of protests he participated in.

⁹ It is difficult to estimate the exact amount of articles on the topic of Młot-Mróz in smaller local newspapers due to the fact that they often lack dedicated digital archives. Most of the clippings from newspapers such as *The Boston Herald Traveler* were accessible to the author because of being included in FBI documentation on Młot-Mróz. While many articles were archived by the FBI, the source of most of them was not clearly designated, making it difficult to identify. However, considering the amount of clippings found in FBI documentation and the verifiable coverage he received from *The Boston Globe*, it is safe to say he enjoyed noticeable local press interest. In the case of existing dedicated archives, it is possible that some issues were either not digitized or not archived at all.

In most cases, the press coverage he received was on the slightly sarcastic side, similar to some of the examples mentioned above. In some select cases, it was either completely neutral or even expressing pity for Młot-Mróż. In general, the vast majority was simply not positive, with most newspapers describing him as an extremist, fanatic, anti-Semite, or all three. One major outlier is the white supremacist publication *Instauration Magazine* based in Florida. In a short article in the August 1988 issue, Młot-Mróż's politics are described as "quite reasonable" while the readers are provided his address and urged to "Give the guy a tip of the hat" (*Instauration*, Aug. 1988). It is quite possible that similar praise of Młot-Mróż and his activities could be found in other hate sheets across the United States.

Besides *Instauration*, there is only one periodical whose coverage of Młot-Mróż could be considered consistently positive to any extent, and it is an interesting case study. A local Washington, D.C. publication, *The Washington Evening Star*, reported on Młot-Mróż's activities several times between 1959 and 1963. The first time he was mentioned was in September 1959, during his anti-Khrushchev visit hunger strike, and the tone was mostly neutral (*The Evening Star*, Sept. 9, 1959). Then, in May 1960, he was described as "one of those beaten, grey, pathetic men who picket the White House now and then in behalf [*sic*] of those enslaved nations whose very names are unknown to most Americans", meant to "produce a qualm of guilt in those who pass by" (*The Evening Star*, May 20, 1960). In July of 1960, he became a "freedom-loving Pole", though his quest of picketing the Soviet embassy was described as "propaganda work" (*The Evening Star*, Jul. 1, 1960). In July the following year, he remained a "freedom-loving Pole", but also became a "Red-hater" and his escape from a "Communist concentration camp" was emphasized (*The Evening Star*, Jul. 1, 1961).

This coverage is not exactly enthusiastic, but it is still far more positive than what could be found in many New England newspapers. It seems that *The Evening Star* started out quite neutral, then began to pity Młot-Mróż, and finally gained some level of respect for his determination and claimed difficult history. One might assume that this contrast is the result of little exposure to Młot-Mróż's erratic behavior and his bigotry. None of the instances described by the newspaper contain any overt attacks on identifiable racial, ethnic, or religious groups. The only thing Młot-Mróż seems to be fighting here is communism, which *The Evening Star* does not appear to have any issue with. It is interesting to see how much the perception of Młot-Mróż changes as soon as a key part of his ideology – anti-Semitism – is "removed from the equation" by way of not being immediately obvious to those reporting on his protests.

While the journalists describing Młot-Mróż's activities were most likely simply looking for shocking and perhaps slightly ridiculous stories to report on, the press coverage he received may have had a negative impact on the public's perception of New England Polish Americans. In the vast majority of cases, he is described as a "Polish Freedom Fighter", though, to the journalists' credit, this phrase is often preceded by the specification that he is a "self-styled Polish Freedom Fighter" (e.g. Hall, *Who – and What...*, emphasis added). Młot-Mróż himself seemed fond of reminding journalists of his Polish heritage and his commitment to liberating the communist-dominated Poland. Both of these trends seen in press coverage of his activities linked him quite unmistakably to the Polish ethnic group, risking the conflation of his opinions with those of the Polish American community in the

understanding of New Englanders. Gordon D. Hall, for example, stated in an article for *The Boston Herald Traveler* that Młot-Mróz's activities were not accepted by "the large and responsible organizations serving the Polish-American communities", and that he merely depended on his supporters, who were "spread thinly across the country" (Hall, *Who - and What...*). In a different article, however, he wrote, "regrettably, Mroz does represent a segment of the Polish-American community" (Hall, *Młot-Mroz Says Goodbye...*). Even Hall, who was most likely very aware of Młot-Mróz's status as a member of a fringe extremist group, conceded that his views were representative of the positions held by "a segment" of Polonia. This might imply that his activities may have affected the reputation of Polish Americans in New England to some extent, but this is difficult to verify without access to the appropriate quantitative data.

Considering the frequency with which Młot-Mróz made anti-Semitic remarks, it is no surprise that his activity was a source of concern for local Jewish Americans. The New England Regional Office of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) described him as "the most active anti-Semitic demonstrator in this area" and claimed to have received many complaints regarding his activity. The ADL's Washington, D.C. office also stated his protests were a source of concern for the organization (*The Boston Jewish Times*, Feb. 22, 1973). The New England office also contacted the FBI multiple times, alerting the Bureau of Młot-Mróz's actions and stating that his "anti-Semitic activities are well known to this organization [the ADL]" (FBI 126). The ADL's comments regarding Młot-Mróz would therefore suggest that his activities were a concern for the Jewish communities in the Greater Boston Area and around Washington, D.C. Not much besides this fact can be confirmed in the context of Młot-Mróz's negative effect on the Jewish community.

All of the material gathered by the author paints a picture of an erratic, sometimes violent man with bigoted, extremist views. It also paints a picture of an individual who received some level of local notoriety due to journalists' interest in following his antics. Besides journalists and FBI Special Agents, however, the only people concerned with his activities seemed to be New England Jews (represented by the ADL) – the very targets of his hatred.

In evaluating the significance of Młot-Mróz's story, it is extremely important to remember that despite his incessant attempts at identifying himself as a "Polish Freedom Fighter", Polish Americans did not seem to give him or his views any notable platform. He did not have any confirmed connections with influential members of Polonia. He was largely a one-man crusader, whom Polish Americans either ignored (as evidenced by the fact that he was not mentioned in any Polonia newspapers the author was able to locate) or actively attempted to distance themselves from, as was explained by FBI informers. This lack of interest or acknowledgement suggests that Polish American communities during the Cold War were generally not receptive to extremist ideas, even if those ideas matched some opinions held by the larger community – Polonia was, understandably, a very anti-communist group, but that point of similarity did not afford Młot-Mróz any real influence within it. With that being said, Młot-Mróz's views, especially the idea of "Jewish-Communism", did have some adherents in Poland around the same time. The stereotype of Jews being communists, being responsible for the October Revolution and conspiring to "import" it to Poland functioned as the idea of Żydokomuna ("Jew-Communism").

Though there were political circles in communist-dominated Poland who strongly believed in this idea, similar rhetoric did not find fertile ground among Poles in the United States, as demonstrated by Młot-Mróż's own lack of success. This could be explained by Polonia's general lack of interest in extremism, but it could also hint at a concern with the group's image within mainstream American society.

In light of this, it seems that the party most responsible for Młot-Mróż's notoriety was the American press. Though articles about him were generally not positive in tone, they still managed to put Młot-Mróż's opinions in the spotlight multiple times, which, in the case of individuals with such extreme views, can be socially dangerous in itself. Gordon D. Hall, who authored articles on Młot-Mróż, felt that it was almost shameful to give the "Polish Freedom Fighter" press coverage. In 1971, he wrote, "Writing about such an agitator is often embarrassing because one is then devoting precious space to the irrelevancies of a bigoted mind, or placing a public crackpot close to the top of the news" (Hall, *Who – and What...*).

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