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Between negation and engagement. European integration in Mieczysław F. Rakowski's journalism and political activity in 1958–1990

From the moment he became the editor-in-chief for “Polityka” until he took positions in the communist government of the Polish People’s Republic, Mieczysław Rakowski vigorously commented on international affairs. He was mainly interested in German affairs and ideological struggle between communism and capitalism. In his publications, he criticised American imperialism and West German revisionism. He also commented on the multifaceted process of West European integration that developed after the Second World War. According to Rakowski, the process was initially stimulated by the US and used by Washington as a pressure instrument on people’s democracies. Moreover, he believed that unification movements on the Old Continent were an indirect way to establish the German hegemony.

Being a promoter of socialism, supporter of the military alliance with the USSR in the Warsaw Pact, and the advocate of economic cooperation within the Comecon, he believed that European integration was just a veil hiding the true intentions of the West. In his opinion, animated by the US, the West used all means, including ideology, economic, and political and military measures, to disturb the post-war order and weaken the cooperation between socialist states. Over time, during consecutive phases of the EEC enlargement, e.g. Great Britain (1973) and Spain (1986), Rakowski saw a threat to trade relations between Poland and London and Madrid. For this reason, changes that aimed at the membership of the two countries in the Communities were a threat to the interests of Comecon countries. The primary goal of this article is to discuss M. F. Rakowski’s views on the multifaceted process of European integration in 1959–1990.

Editor-in-chief for “Polityka” in 1959–1982

Early in 1957, the government of the Polish People’s Republic launched a new weekly magazine “Polityka.” Stefan Żółkiewski became its first editor-in-chief, and Mieczysław Rakowski assumed the position of his deputy. Initially, the content was provided by writers, such as Jerzy Putrament, Leon Kruczkowski, Władysław Broniewski, and researchers linked to the communist party, e.g. Adam Schaff, Oscar Lange. It took several years for the editorial team to expand with columnists, e.g. Michał Radgowski, Dariusz Fikus, Daniel Passent, Józef Śmietański, Marian Turski,

Jerzy Kleer, Tadeusz Pasierbiński, Barbara Olszewska, Ryszard Kapuściński, Tadeusz Drewnowski, Jerzy Urban, Maciej Iłowiecki, Henryk Zdanowski, Hanna Krall, Wanda Falkowska, and Teresa Torañska. Their often polemic articles attracted mainly members of the Polish intelligentsia. Both "Polityka" and Rakowski benefited from circumstances created by political decisions made by the communist party and the government. In September 1957, the "Po prostu" (Simply) weekly was closed, a weekly which was considered symbolic for the thaw and changes of October 1956. The Politburo of the Polish United Workers Party offered the following justification: "[...] the weekly was highly aggressive and inflammatory. It questioned the policy of the party and the government. The political and economic situation of the country was presented in false and deceitful manner while promoting ideas that are strange to socialism" (Sołtysiak, 2021). Soon, journalists from "Sztandar Młodych" (Banner of Youth), who were also cumbersome for the government, shared the same fate. With the benefit for "Polityka," a magazine published as a press organ of the Union of Polish Youth was absorbed by the press organ of the Polish Socialist Youth Union. Rakowski commented that the editorial team of "Polityka" expanded with journalists from "Po prostu" and "Sztandar Młodych." He said: "We took over a number of good writers. It happened not because these people decided to dissociate from their recent views; they simply had to find jobs somewhere. Initially, the growth of the editorial team was spontaneous, and later it became more methodical." (Ordyński, Szlajfer, 2009).

The weekly was to support the Gomułka's policy line and defend it against revisionism and dogmatism. The magazine discussed domestic and international issues. Over time, the analysis of international affairs became symbolic for the quality of the weekly. "Polityka" reached the top of the press ranking in Poland, and several years into its existence, it was also highly respected abroad, mainly in Europe.

The position of a deputy to the editor-in-chief was for Mieczysław Rakowski an advancement. It opened a possibility to comment on the most important domestic and international events. In the period concerned, Rakowski had a continuous winning streak. In 1958, he became the editor-in-chief for "Polityka," and in autumn 1959 he was appointed the head of the Polish Journalists Association. The position of the editor-in-chief in "Polityka" and the presiding of the Polish Journalists Association provided Rakowski with access to the top management of the party and government in the Polish People's Republic, including the then Polish leader Władysław Gomułka. Distinctions and advancements resonated well with the ambitions of the young party activist. As historian Jerzy Eisler noted, Rakowski desired and envied high ranking positions (Eisler, 2014). From the early 1960s, Mieczysław Rakowski had been successful in building his position among country elites in the Polish People's Republic.

Rakowski was a unique person among the then party personalities. He was distinct among other communist activists with his education, manners, artistic interests and knowledge of foreign languages. Although the qualities might be sometimes detrimental to a political carrier in the Polish People's Republic, Rakowski knew how to use them aptly to build his position in the communist Establishment. While still being a journalist, he made a number of trips to the western world, most often accompanied by his wife and a distinguished violinist Wanda Wilkomirska. This opened a path for

him to public and political salons. He was interested in German affairs as expressed in his doctoral dissertation. He frequently visited the Federal Republic of German, Great Britain, Scandinavian countries, and the USA, where he had an unofficial conversation with President J. F. Kennedy and his wife. He was lucky in the development of his carrier in journalism. On different occasions he received help from his friends and acquaintances from the top political elites of the Polish People's Republic. He met those people while being the editor-in-chief of an increasingly popular weekly magazine. Not only did these informal relations determine Rakowski's position, but also helped him maintain the position of the editor-in-chief for "Polityka." When it was necessary to defend articles published in the weekly, he could count on the support of Artur Starewicz, the then head of the Propaganda Department and later the head of the Press Office of the Communist Party, as well as Zenon Kliszko, one of the closest collaborators of Władysław Gomułka.

Mieczysław Rakowski's output was appreciated by the government. After a period of building his influence in the Gomułka era, Mieczysław Rakowski strengthened his position during the tenure of Edward Gierek. He first became a deputy to the member of the Central Committee, and then a member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (1975). Both during the Gomułka and Gierek governments, he proved to be a journalist loyal to the government, who continued the political line drawn by the party and state. Throughout his entire journalist carrier, his journalism followed principles of the party. It changed with the rapid changes in politics promoted by the heads of the communist party. This is confirmed by an entry in his "Journal" of 28th April 1958, where he wrote "On the one hand, I am happy when I can write. On the other hand, my head is increasingly often clouded with dark thoughts. Can one be like 100% independent journalist? Sometimes I think it is impossible. You need to learn to rape your soul. I am of the impression is that for the government an ideal journalist is the one who writes whenever they request." (Rakowski, 1998). In the light of his consecutive articles in "Polityka" in reaction to events in Poland and abroad, we can see the confirmation of Rakowski's dedication to the party-drawn political lines.

The German question

After the end of the Second World War, the German question was a major international issue for the Polish People's Republic. In different periods of the Peoples' Republic, the functioning of the Federal Republic of Germany within borders of the Third Reich of 1937, activity of revisionists and German compatriots or compatriot groupings, militarisation of Western Germany within NATO, and the rebuilding of the country's imperial image in the European Communities attracted attention of politicians and journalists in the Peoples' Republic. Depending on the Cold War impact on the then international relations and volatile domestic situation in the Polish People's Republic, the German question was used by the government to mobilise the society and to combat the opposition in country, in particular in the 1980s.

When Władysław Gomułka was the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (1956–1970) and Mieczysław Rakowski became the

editor-in-chief in "Polityka," the international recognition of the border on the Oder and Neisse rivers was pivotal for the Polish People's Republic elites.

In the period concerned, complicated relations between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany were discussed by top scientific periodicals in the Polish People's Republic, including "Sprawy Międzynarodowe" (International Affairs) and "Przegląd Zachodni" (Western Review). They relations also attracted attention of the leading propaganda press of People's Poland, e.g. "Trybuna Ludu" (People's Tribune) daily and "Nowe Drogi" (New Roads) theoretical and political monthly of the Communist Party. The German issues were discussed by communities of journalists, scientists and politicians centred around "Polityka." The topic was an integral part of the Polish journalism since the beginning of the weekly magazine until the system transformation in 1989. It was commented by Eugeniusz Guz, Ryszard Wojna, Michał Hofman, Waclaw Piątkowski, and Mieczysław Rakowski.

Since the end of the 1950s, the editor-in-chief for "Polityka" lively commented on German affairs. He was primarily interested in the question of borders established on the Oder and Neisse rivers by Yalta and Potsdam agreements of 1945 (Rakowski, 1965d). He showed much admiration to the rapid development of Western Germany after the Second World War (Rakowski, 1958). He analysed and assessed West Germany's membership in NATO, and at the same time forewarned Bonn against excessive strengthening of their military powers. In his opinion, the remilitarisation of West Germany was the shortest path to the revival of West German nationalism (Rakowski, 1965b). In the weekly, he expressed his views on and argued about the reunification of Germany. At that time, he considered the unification of Germany in integrating Europe as the worst possible scenario to maintain peace and international security in Europe. In the Rakowski's opinion, such an alliance would go against the USSR and Eastern Bloc countries (Rakowski, 1978; Rakowski, 1979a). He forewarned against possible domination of the Federal Republic of Germany in the European Communities (Rakowski, 1979b).

In his articles, Rakowski referred to the presence of Americans in Western Europe and their European Recovery Programme, known as the Marshall Plan, as a factor that contributed to the Germany's rapid economic and political recovery. The Plan supported western European integration, and its further development could shortly lead to the German domination in the Communities. Mieczysław Rakowski linked the process with offensive plans West Germany had to gain influence in Central and Eastern Europe and then to revise Yalta and Potsdam agreements.

Rakowski wrote about the growing power of West Germany¹ in the European Communities already in 1958, shortly after the signing of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community and the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) (1957). At that time, he made a four-weeks trip to West Germany visiting West Berlin, Bochum, Munich, Bonn, and Frankfurt am Main. After his return to Poland, he published a trip report in a book entitled *NRF z bliska* (FRG in close up). He referred to the book in his articles published in the Polish press. During his trip to Germany, the "Polityka" journalist discussed current affairs of Western Germany with people representing various social groups. His interlocutors included a politician,

¹ The name had been used in Poland until the 1970s.

mechanic, blacksmith, and a priest. In his discussions, Rakowski referred to many controversial topics that included complicated relations between Poles and Germans, e.g. unregulated issue of the Polish western border, settlement of Nazi war crime, and the Germany's economic "miracle" and recovery. Based on numerous discussions, the editor-in-chief for "Polityka" concluded that the development of Germany would not be possible if it was not for the aid and engagement of the USA in West Germany and Western Europe. In his opinion, the progressing European integration also played an important role in the development of West Germany.

In a chapter of his book *Kapitaliści wyginęli* (Capitalists are Extinct), Rakowski drew up his vision of West Germany's domination in the European Communities. He quoted after the "Deutsche Woche" weekly's article of *Whom the German economy belongs to*. The article read that despite the request to dissolve many German corporations as imposed by the international community after World War II, the German industrial capacity had been restored. He noted that large corporations undertook necessary steps to rebuild their economic power and started to dominate in Western Europe. Rakowski gave an example of Mannseemann AG, capital of which was the largest among European corporations and amounted to DM 560 million. The company revived its business operation and, at that time, it enjoyed the strongest position on the single market in the coal and steel industries (Rakowski, 1958). In the Rakowski's opinion, western European integration expedited the rebuilding of West Germany and in the long run could contribute to the restoration of German imperialism.

After he was appointed the editor-in-chief for "Polityka," German issues started to occupy the primary role in Rakowski's narration. Although he announced to break up with the topic, he kept coming back to it.

In the period concerned, Mieczysław Rakowski observed the development of the situation beyond the Elbe River. He followed the imposing economic growth of West Germany and accused German courts of benign treatment of war criminals (Rakowski, 1965c). During that time, "Polityka" published "Eichmann's Confession," which was a series of interviews with the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. Publicised in "Polityka," interviews recorded by *SS-man* Wilhelm Sassen triggered interest in articles published in the weekly among readers and contributed to the increase in its circulation up to 100 thousand copies.

In 1965, the editor-in-chief published in "Polityka" an article entitled *W szesnastym roku po starcie* (In the sixteenth year after the start). As he admitted himself, he was not able to refrain from commenting on the German question. He suggested that being a Pole, he had the right and obligation to alarm/inform people about, for instance, excessively kind treatment of Nazi criminals by the West German judiciary. He also warned against the restoration of revisionism in West Germany, in particular among German compatriot organisations. On the one hand, he considered the armament of Germany to be particularly hazardous to maintain peace in Europe, whereas on the other, he praised Eastern Germany for getting rid of militarism and nationalism and for their recognition of borders with Poland on the Oder and Neisse rivers established in 1945. According to the then communist party political lines, Rakowski condemned proposals of Germany's unification. He also analysed the engagement of West Germany in the process of integration in Western Europe.

In the further part of the lengthy article, he once again underlined the invaluable contribution of the USA for West Germany, in particular the role of the Marshall Plan that provided billions of dollars to make the Germany's economic "miracle" feasible. In his opinion, the Marshall Plan made Western Europe reliant on the USA. Moreover, it also supported, as he described, an artificial process of European integration. Rakowski referred to it as a false process, since the integration applied to only western part of the continent. The other part of Europe (eastern, communist one), including Poland, was excluded from the process. In Rakowski's opinion, in the face of the ideological struggle and the suggested division of Europe into two parts, West Germany was used by the USA as a buffer against communism. He wrote:

"[...] Some believe that Germany will have to wear sackcloth and ashes and beg for mercy and a shred of trust from victorious nations for many years. Already in 1947, it was clear that western occupants intended to reduce that period. Two years later, the plans became the reality. On top of that, Bonn is appointed the leader of the Cold War. They started to celebrate Germany, and the country was given the role of a vanguard in the fight against communism. Due to the Cold War and anti-communist label which, in Rakowski's opinion, was imposed by Americans, West Germany 'bought peace of mind, recognition and honours, and economic and political position in the western alliance'" (Rakowski, 1965a).

...Behind the veil of European integration. Ideological war: communism vs capitalism

After World War II, in 1945, the world was divided into two distinct spheres of influence of two superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union. "Polityka" in general, and Mieczysław Rakowski in particular, commented on various forms of ideological struggle between the East and the West.

In 1960, the editor-in-chief of "Polityka" wrote an article *Niespełnione nadzieje. Zachód szuka ideologii* (Unfulfilled hopes. The West is looking for an ideology). It was a response to articles in "New York Times" and "New Herald Tribune." The articles discussed the fight between capitalism and communism for the future shape of the world. Rakowski's article included a pronouncement addressed to Americans, which warned them against communism. Authors of the pronouncement suggested that the American capitalism in its form would lose to communism. They appealed to Americans to close their ranks and counteract the bad ideology with their utmost power. The tough competition between the two ideologies was reflected in the press of the Polish People's Republic, including "Polityka."

In the said article, the editor-in-chief for "Polityka" mentioned that regarding the struggle between communists and capitalists, he focused solely on one aspect of the conflict: "on the current approach by political and ideological bourgeois leaders to communism, and the perception of communism as an ideology, or a set of ideas" (Rakowski, 1961). Rakowski remarked that capitalism might take various, also camouflaged forms of the fight against communism. These forms could be less rogue and non-aggressive, yet more sophisticated. In the opinion of Rakowski, who later became

the First Secretary of the Communist Party, these forms were hidden behind the veil of European integration. "In Western Europe, respectable circles did not return to the vulgar anti-communist ideology. We might even risk a statement that the experience of World War and the unquestioned authority of the USSR, quite early forced bourgeois ideologists of Western Europe to seek attractive slogans that could be used to resist communism. They looked for such slogans at the supranational level and tried to develop the European ideology" (Rakowski, 1961). In the opinion of Mieczysław Rakowski, the supranational cooperation between states could not be reconciled with the communist ideology since it restricted state sovereignty.

In his publication, the editor-in-chief of "Polityka" once again referred to the said ideological struggle between communism and capitalism in 1967. In his article *Zorganizowana ideologia* (Organised ideology), he pointed to the multifaceted ideological conflict between the socialist world and its capitalist counterpart. As he rightly noticed, it went beyond the national dimension and moved to a supranational level of international alliances in the fight against the communist world. "It supposed to be based on the attachment to the bourgeois ideology," and the goal was to "deepen the communist ideology and ideological ruling of the world" (Rakowski, 1967). Considering the above, Rakowski underlined that socialist societies needed to engage and counteract such trends. He wrote, "I am glad to notice any signs of apolitical approach and ideological indifference among young people in the camp of our opponents" (Rakowski, 1967). The ideological indifference of young people in the West prompted Rakowski to call others to mobilise the ideological front among young people in socialist countries against capitalism.

In the further part of the same article, he listed major organisations which put much attention to the ideological fight against communism. At the supranational level, he mentioned several European associations, for example, the World Union of Christian Democrats and the European Movement.

As emphasised by Rakowski, the Union was orderly and very well managed. They organised symposia and congresses designed to focus energy in the fight against communism. It used various forms to discuss how to defend private property, as well as create and maintain a state system competing with communism. The Union also had its youth division, which in Rakowski's opinion could have sufficient power to oppose the communist ideology.

According to Rakowski, yet another organisation dangerous towards the ideology of socialist countries, was the European Movement, in particular its Advisory Assembly. In his opinion, the "European team" could not initiate the integration of the whole Europe, since the organisation intended to integrate only the bourgeois part of the old continent (excluding socialist countries). Rakowski noted that the organisation included political parties from countries members of ECSC, EEC and Euratom. These were Christian-democratic, social-democratic and liberal parties. According to Rakowski, all these institutions, which reflected "trimmed" Europe, were to counterbalance values promoted by the USSR and other socialist peace loving countries. Rakowski was concerned about the activity of such supranational initiatives and warned against neglecting them. He emphasised that the organisations were well managed and had financial resources to organise conferences, seminars, and offer scholarships. They were

also involved in publishing. Thus, they were engaged in the fight for “human minds” (Rakowski, 1967).

EEC countries entered the 1960s with much hopes and the new period was to be a breakthrough for the European Communities. After the economic success, another goal for the orchestrators of European integration was political cooperation.

In “Polityka,” Mieczysław Rakowski published an interesting assessment of attempts to reach political integration of the Old Continent. In his article *Wkraczamy w rok 1972 z dużymi nadziejami* (We begin 1972 with much hope), published in the first issue of “Polityka” that year, he forewarned readers against economic and political integration of “small Europe.” It should not be underestimated as it was set against interests of socialist states. He wrote “any attempt to analyse and compare to the European reality cannot disregard an important component, namely the deepening and widening economic integration of Western Europe. Regardless contradictions and crises, it would be a stupidity to underestimate economic and political consequences of the process that has to have an impact on the whole of Europe, including the socialist community” (Rakowski, 1972). In the further part of the article, Rakowski foresaw consequences of the changes. He suggested that any such consequences would be more dangerous for socialist countries than economic integration, since political integration would have an anti-communist edge. He wrote, “We cannot forget that in Western Europe there are many politicians and ideologists who treat economic integration, which is to open a path for political one, as a more efficient instrument to fight against communism” (Rakowski, 1972). Considering the threats, Rakowski called for the preparation of socialist countries to such imminent changes and catching up with the delay, especially in the light of the global science and technology revolution. Otherwise, the socialist world could not stand a change for peaceful competition with capitalist countries.

In 1973, Rakowski discussed further threats to the communist ideology. Interestingly, he saw these threats primarily in the growing cooperation between China and the European Communities. In his article *W takiej chwili jawia się Pekin* (When Beijing comes into play), Rakowski forewarned against the China’s offensive movement in international relations, a movement which was clearly anti-Soviet and which was designed to hit socialist countries as well, Poland included. He referred to the conflict between Moscow and Beijing, which had continued since the end of the 1950s. It overlapped with the following issues: competition to lead the communist movement, imperial ambitions of China and industrialisation promoted by China since 1950s, a direction for the development of the state which was heavily criticised and rejected by the USSR. The tension between Moscow and Beijing increased after Mao Zedong launched the cultural revolution in 1966. Since that time both countries spared no criticism directed to one another at the international arena.

In his article, Rakowski highlighted that, in the new decade, the hostile China’s attitude towards the USSR instead of becoming subtle became more confrontational. The statement was confirmed by incidents in the early 1970s. The China’s hostility was preceded by events of 1971–1972. In 1972, the US President Richard Nixon and other top politicians from Europe and in the world visited Beijing. A year earlier, the People’s Republic of China became a member of the UN and a permanent member of

the UN Security Council. These facts confirmed China's international activity. China needed an international success to strengthen their position in the Beijing–Moscow rivalry. According to Rakowski, Mao wanted to use European integration to distance themselves from the USSR. As Rakowski noticed, for a long time, Beijing intended to disturb peaceful coexistence between the USSR and the US initiated in the early 1970s and to that end they wanted to use European integration. In Rakowski's opinion, China encouraged European Communities and hoped that the process of European integration would go beyond the economy to include politics and defence (Rakowski, 1973). Rakowski interpreted the China's attitude as follows: "While supporting the Single Market, Beijing wanted to strengthen those Western European politicians who considered turning the EEC into the third superpower. The concept aimed against the USSR and their allies" (Rakowski, 1973).

Reaction to the enlargement of the European Communities

From the signing of the Treaties of Rome (1957) until the end of the Polish People's Republic (1989), the people's government in Poland observed European integration and EC enlargements with much interest. The accession of Great Britain, Denmark, and Ireland (1973), and then Greece (1981), and Spain and Portugal (1986) to the EEC was followed by specific department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Party and state leaders received technical information regarding the versatile process of European integration from the press, in particular from "Polityka" and Mieczysław Rakowski, the editor-in-chief for the weekly magazine. At the end of 1950s, the Polish People's Republic showed a growing interest in collaborating with Scandinavian countries.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Polish authorities presented ambiguous views on political and economic integration of Nordic countries. The majority of Polish political and economic elites believed that European integration, including the regional integration of Nordic countries, bore the mark of imperialism. Over time, the pretty schematic and emotional arguments gave way to expected benefits, especially economic ones, derived from the cooperation between Poland and countries within the Baltic Sea Region. For this reason, the Polish press started publishing articles considering such cooperation (Albinowski, 1968; Nowicki, 1968).

Still in the 1950s, the topic was also discussed by Mieczysław Rakowski, who in 1959 published an article on *Polityka zagraniczna i handel* (Foreign policy and trade). The article discussed cooperation between Scandinavian countries in military and economic spheres. Already in the introduction to the article, Rakowski mentioned that Scandinavia had never been integrated, and for this reason it was difficult for them to build a uniform body (political or economic). It was partially the result of foreign policy supported by their governments, a policy which was determined by various factors. Therefore, in the sphere of military cooperation, Denmark and Norway were NATO members, whereas Sweden and Finland stayed away from military cooperation and enjoyed the status of neutral states. This, however, did not mean that countries in the north of Europe had not tried various forms of integration offered by the Old Continent or initiated such cooperation themselves.

As regards economic cooperation, Rakowski highlighted the growing significance of European integration within the EEC, which for Scandinavians was quite a challenge. He also noted that the establishing of the common market by the six states was not received enthusiastically and even disapproved by Scandinavian countries. According to Rakowski, the common market limited economic cooperation for countries in the north of Europe. He noted: "Due to the reduction of tariffs on the single market, trade with the outer seven states, such as England, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, and Portugal) suffered" (Rakowski, 1959). Rakowski's statement anticipated other developments in Western Europe. A heated discussion on the cooperation of small European states and the rest of OEEC members, including Scandinavian states, dragged for long and finally led to the establishing of the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) in 1960. In Rakowski's opinion, EFTA could not be compared to the EEC, since the economic potential of the latter was much larger. Leadership in the two groupings was also similar. Although Great Britain was economically the strongest among EFTA countries, Sweden, in Rakowski's opinion, wanted to lead Scandinavian countries and represent their interests in EFTA. However, the power of Stockholm could not match that of Paris or Bonn – the two driving forces of the single market.

In the further part of the article, Rakowski underlined that Scandinavian countries were still seeking a formula for their economic cooperation and for quite some time considered the establishing of the Nordic Economic Union (Barabasz, 2018). While concluding the article, Rakowski expressed his hope that the cooperation between Scandinavian countries within EFTA or the EEC would not prevent them from the implementation of their priority foreign policy goals, namely the cooperation with countries in the Baltic Sea Region, including Poland. Mieczysław Rakowski remained convinced to the above for several years. In 1966, during his two-weeks trip to Nordic countries, he said: "I leave Scandinavia convinced that we can still do much to deepen the cooperation between Poland and Scandinavia" (Rakowski, 1966).

Consequences of Great Britain's accession to the EEC was yet another topic commented by Mieczysław Rakowski in "Polityka." Readers showed interest in the topic much earlier. "Polityka" assessed the path taken by the Islanders to the European Communities (Bukowski, 1973; Arski, 1963; Fikus, 1967; Bukowski, 1969).

In 1974, Mieczysław Rakowski wrote about negative consequences of British accession to the EEC which led to the early parliamentary election in the country. He commented that two years into the membership in the organisation, the British society was dissatisfied with the Single Market. The British frustration stemmed from economic problems in "small" European countries. One of the issues was the Common Agricultural Policy that led to food price hikes in Great Britain, hikes which were disproportionately higher than in other EEC countries. According to Mieczysław Rakowski, this and other economic problems in the EEC solidified the division of the British society into the rich and the poor. The polarisation of the society brought workers and miners to streets of British cities to protest against the poor policy of the government.

Failure of the Conservative party in economic policy and strikes which followed led to the victory of the Labour Party in the early election in February 1974. Since the Labour party held a tiny majority it was necessary to set another election in October the same year, an election that the Labour Party also won.

Still before the February election in Great Britain, the editor-in-chief for "Polityka" listened carefully to the debate between Conservative and Labour representatives, since it could be decisive for the future of Brits in the EC. He emphasised that Harold Wilson, the Labour Party leader, emphasised that after their winning election they would negotiate the agreement with the EEC. The then agreement provided for an excessive British contribution to the EEC budget. In Wilson's opinion, benefits were too small for the British people. Another argument Wilson raised against the EEC membership was the loss of sovereignty and the imperial image of Great Britain on the international arena after the country had joined the EEC. Arguments raised by labourists led Rakowski to the conclusion that if EEC accession voting had taken place in 1975, supporters of European integration in the Islands would suffer a devastating loss (Rakowski, 1974a).

In 1980, in his article *Na prawicowym kursie* (On the right-wing course), Rakowski wrote again about eurosceptics in Great Britain. He pointed to a characteristic evolution of their position towards western European integration. According to M. F. Rakowski, the attitude of British people evolved from the initial approval for the EEC accession in the early 1970s to the denial of their membership in the European Communities in the early 1980s. Such issues as the implementation of the EEC common agricultural policy, contribution of member states to the Community budget, and the growing importance of supranational institutions in the community of nine member states had a major impact on the change of opinions among the sons of Albion on their country's functioning on the single market. These facts, in Rakowski's opinion, frustrated Great Britain, trimmed the sovereignty of London, and boosted nationalistic trends in the society. The situation also deteriorated the imperial image of the United Kingdom, something that a part of the British society missed. In Rakowski's opinion, Margaret Thatcher was expected to fight and reverse unfavourable decisions to please her electorate. According to the "Polityka" editor-in-chief, the British Premier "was the guardian of English economic interests on the Single Market. She aptly played on national feelings of the Islanders. Although 'Great Britain Above All' was not an official slogan, it could be sensed far and wide" (Rakowski, 1980).

In the middle of 1970s, prospects of Spanish membership in the Communities attracted the attention of Mieczysław Rakowski and the "Polityka" community. At that time, General F. Franco's dictatorship came to an end. While at the edge of his strength and life, he had desired a rapprochement with the EEC since the end of the 1950s. Although the *caudillo* was not an EEC enthusiast, he was aware that keeping his country away from international cooperation with western Europe would isolate Spain on the international arena. For this reason, Franco made a number of changes, both personal and institutional. He grouped financiers, entrepreneurs, and economists to guarantee a liberal economic development in Spain.

Mieczysław Rakowski noted the fact in his article *Hiszpania jest inna* (Spain is different). In his opinion, Franco's smart political trick was entirely proper. In the eyes of the EC Commission, Spain presented itself as a country to be supported, since it entered the right path of economic development. This development line was to be guaranteed by a group of young technocrats from Opus Dei, who "dreamed about Spain in the forefront of the most developed countries in Western Europe. They also wanted

to have a more advantageous negotiation position on the single market” (Rakowski, 1974b).

According to Rakowski, all changes introduced in Spain by Franco aimed at winning prestige on the international arena and high position in the world. However, Rakowski forewarned Spanish people against excessive optimism. The inflow of foreign capital, chiefly American, had numerous consequences. He noted that the country was torn by problems typical for the entire capitalist world. American capital generated exorbitant profits in Spain, and the domestic private industry could not secure a favourable position and compete with much stronger foreign businesses. The government was not able to guarantee effective changes for the country. The idea to freeze salaries in the face of growing prices could result in social conflicts, or even bloodshed between workers and capitalists. The maintenance of industrial production was hampered by the energy crisis of the first half of the 1980s. Thus, in Rakowski’s opinion, the miracle of 1959, i.e. moving out of the international isolation and the transformation of the Spanish economic policy, did not provide a rose-tinted perspective for Spain.

Issue 23 of “Polityka” of 1975, included another Rakowski’s article on prospects of cooperation between Spain and the EEC. The article *Hiszpania polityczna* (Political Spain) pointed to the direction of changes in Spain expected after the imminent death of the *Caudillo*. In his opinion, Spain would continue the path of openness in various social spheres. First and foremost, it was a process of “liberating Spain from Francoism and moving along the policy lines defined by *Opus dei* liberals who focused on a close collaboration with the EEC” (Rakowski, 1975).

From the Deputy Prime Minister to the First Secretary of the Communist Party (1981–1989)

In February 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski appointed Mieczysław Rakowski the deputy prime minister. He was responsible for contacts with NSZZ “Solidarity” Trade Union leaders. Therefore, after several months, he ceased to be the editor-in-chief for “Polityka” and accepted the nomination in a period that was particularly difficult for the country. It was shortly before the government declared the martial law in the country in the same year.

In July 1983, the government of the Polish People’s Republic waved the martial law. In further years, Rakowski’s ambitions sky-rocketed. Being a mature politician, he wanted to assume a position in the Politburo of the Polish United Workers’ Party as a member or the deputy member and co-decide about the future of the country. However, Wojciech Jaruzelski did not agree (Rakowski, 2009). When the “General” established the government headed by Zbigniew Messner (1985–1988), and the former editor-in-chief for “Polityka” hoped to be a part of it, Jaruzelski told Rakowski that he did not fit into the Cabinet as he did not get on well with the prime minister (Eisler, 2014). Since there was no vacancy in the executive branch, from November 1985 to June 1988, Mieczysław Rakowski was the deputy speaker of the Sejm. During that time, a part of party and state elites, including Rakowski himself, realised that the country would not be let out of economic stagnation and social crisis without the

cooperation with the West. It was increasingly obvious that cooperation with western European states, including the EEC, while maintaining relations with the USSR and socialist countries, was the order of the day. In early 1987, Rakowski, who was considered by the West to be the advocate of market reforms in Poland, said “[...] Poland must develop relations with the Single Market and its institutions. Poland must abandon the dogma of political blocs” (Rakowski, 2005).

Rakowski was appointed a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party at the end of December 1987. In his opinion, several factors were decisive, including a sizable report he developed earlier that year, which contained a thorough analysis of the situation in the country he wrote. In the confidential document, Rakowski opted for changes in the socialist structure of the Polish People’s Republic. He also discussed at length the development of western European integration and expressed his views on such initiatives. The document was to be discussed by the Politburo as late as February 1989. However, it was first read by Wojciech Jaruzelski. In the opinion of the former editor-in-chief for “Polityka” the document was prophetic (Rakowski 2005). The document entitled *Comments on selected aspects of political and economic situation in the Polish People’s Republic in the second half of the 1980s* was divided into six themes corresponding to political, economic and social issues faced by the Polish People’s Republic. Part I was the most important from the point of view of Mieczysław Rakowski’s interest in western European integration, as it focused on relations between the Comecon and the EEC.

In the first part of the confidential document, Rakowski stated that previous methods of developing the economic order and social relations in socialist countries had failed. He considered the methods to be antiquated and inefficient. In the further part of the same document, he noted that the then measures failed to shorten the distance between Poland and the rapidly developing western world. Moreover, they deepened the frustration of the society: “In particular the young generation who associated progress with the technological advancement as demonstrated by highly developed states. It is not a sign of subservience, as all signs of the material civilisation, such as radar, nylon, stylon, video, television set, VCR, jeans, hot-dogs and many more were actually the invention of the West. So far, our bloc introduced to the international glossary two characteristic terms: sputnik and kazachok” (Wolicki, 1988).

The pessimistic overview of the Polish economic situation included a comparison between the Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, CMEA) and the European Economic Communities (EEC). The then speaker of the Sejm also recognised a slow and superficial development of economic relations in the community of socialist countries. In his opinion, the relations had not been determined by articulated needs of particular member states but political and administrative decisions. The CMEA, as understood by Rakowski, was an artificial organisation. He concluded that relations between particular socialist countries were weak and inadequate. This supposed to be the result of backwardness of some countries in the bloc, shortage of capitalist tradition in this part of Europe, and structural barriers separating states in the socialist community. The latter included customs duties, tight borders, etc. According to Rakowski, disproportionate development of the USSR, the leader of the CMEA, and other socialist countries also played its role in this context. In the further part of

the document, the then Speaker of the Sejm described weaknesses of the CMEA in comparison to the rapidly growing EEC: "The aggregation of economic potentials of socialist states is only feasible when, for instance, borders between them become permeable. As long as we have tight customs restrictions, special measures (e.g. between Polish People's Republic and FRG), as long as a young Pole cannot get on a train from Warsaw to Moscow or Warsaw to Prague without an invitation from Moscow or Prague to visit his/her friend, any solemn resolutions and less official pronouncements will remain mere wishful thinking. So far, nothing has shown that socialist countries intend to give up their tightly secured borders or bureaucratic structures that control all and any exchange between our countries [...]. Our party should be in the forefront [...] and instigate a serious discussion on the topic with other parties, members of the CMEA [...]" (Wolicki, 1988). At the end of Part I of the document, Mieczysław Rakowski referred to initiatives planned by the twelve member states in the 1990s: "As regards the challenges, it is worth remembering that in 1992, five years from now, EEC countries intend to abandon borders completely. There will no longer be customs chambers, passports, etc. Western Europe will enter a new phase of its development. I am curious whether our staff members responsible for devising our foreign policy have thought about consequences of such changes for the coexistence of our twelve nations" (Wolicki, 1988). The confidential document was discussed at the Politburo meeting of February 1989 but it failed to attract much interest among persons present as expected by the then Speaker of the Sejm. Surprisingly, it was examined thoroughly by foreign embassies to Poland.

From September 1988 to June 1989, Rakowski was the Premier of the Polish People's Republic. The main task of his cabinet was to implement economic reforms in the country. His government initiated a number of changes, including elimination of meat coupons, deregulation of retail prices, opening of currency exchanges, and the permission to Polish citizens to hold passports at home (Eisler, 2014). While being aware of the difficult economic situation, the Polish Prime Minister made series of foreign trips, both official state visits and private ones, chiefly to western European countries, primarily to West Germany and France. During his meetings he tried to use his contacts made over a number of years in the past to win support for changes that had taken place in Poland. During his visits, he met German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, German President Richard von Weizsäcker, former German Chancellor Willy Brandt, French President François Mitterrand, and the former president of France Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. He kindly asked his interlocutors to support Poland's finance and debt restructuring requests to the Paris Club and looked for a comprehensive solution for the Polish debt reduction (Rakowski, 1991). During his tenure as the Polish Prime Minister, from February until April 1989, Rakowski participated in the "Round Table" negotiation talks involving the government of the Polish People's Republic, the opposition, and Catholic Church and Protestant-Augsburg Church. The talks resulted in the contract parliamentary elections of 4th June 1989. The elections brought resounding victory of the opposition and supporters of socialism, including Mieczysław Rakowski, suffered a defeat. From that moment on, changes of the Polish political and social system accelerated towards democratisation of political, social and economic spheres.

After the 4th June elections, the most urgent issue for the Polish political sphere was to elect the speaker of the Sejm, speaker of the Senate, and the president of the Polish People's Republic. After numerous consultations and the pressure from abroad, on 8th July 1989, Wojciech Jaruzelski was appointed the president of the country. He resigned from his position of the First Secretary of the Communist Party to be replaced by Mieczysław Rakowski.

When it seemed that Rakowski's ambitions culminated, the position of the Polish Communist Party rapidly deteriorated. The party suffered an outflow of members and the decline of public trust.

On 27th January 1990, the final XI Congress of the Communist Party was held in the Congress Hall in Warsaw. According to a traditional decades-old agenda, Mieczysław Rakowski, the First Secretary of the Central Committee, made a speech on behalf of the Politburo. During his lengthy performance, which in fact ended a certain era, while being faithful to socialist values, the former Prime Minister of the Polish People's Republic referred to the nature of changes in the Polish social and economic spheres. He desired the revitalisation of socialism, rather than a radical break from the ideology, an ideology which had prevailed in Poland since 1945. He said, "The shift from the socialist economy, with all its drawbacks, to the private and capitalist one is in fact to be based on rules of the predatory capitalism of the 19th c. The widespread pauperisation of the workers class, millions of unemployed people, elimination of small farms, sales of national industrial assets to domestic and foreign capital seems to be the blueprint for Poland of the last decade of the 20th century. The neoliberal economic policy model foresees the elimination of the majority of socialist arrangements and the expansion of the poverty around the centre of wealth, wealth which is going to be shared by a few. It is the goal of the founders of the "Solidarity"?" (Rakowski, 2000). The speech ended the last 11th Congress of the Polish Communist Party. Several months later, the Communist Party changed its name to the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland and Mieczysław Rakowski became its member.

Meanwhile, in September 1989, a new government was appointed headed by Tadeusz Mazowiecki. The government signed the EEC-Poland agreement on trade and commercial and economic cooperation and a Protocol between Poland and the ECSC. The agreement provided a framework for cooperation between Poland and EEC and foreseen a change of perception in the Polish foreign policy. The change of values led Poland to the accession to the European Union in 2004. As Mieczysław Rakowski noted, "leaders of socialist states were not capable of facing new shocks and challenges" (Rakowski, 1991).

From 1958 to 1990, Mieczysław Rakowski's position towards the west European integration after World War II evolved from a complete rejection, as expressed in his publications since the end of 1950s when he started his carrier in journalism in "Polityka" and later when he became the editor-in-chief for the weekly magazine, to the approval at the end of 1980s when he was a deputy prime minister and then the prime minister and the First Secretary of the Communist Party.

Initially, arguments Rakowski raised against western European integration initiatives were in line with the principles set by the Polish communist party and its political leadership. The long-term editor-in-chief of "Polityka" had seen these concepts as

a threat, as they might have revived German militarism and revenge in West Germany. These could possibly lead to the revision of Polish western borders set in Yalta and Potsdam after World War II. He condemned American imperialism and remilitarisation of West Germany. He believed that, after the Second World War, the USA and their Marshall Plan contributed to the rapid development of West Germany, Western Europe and as such supported the integration of the Old Continent. He also warned against attempts to establish the European Community as the third global power after USSR and the USA. It was especially true when after 1957 other countries of western Europe wanted to join the EEC, including Great Britain. As noted by Mieczysław Rakowski, the scale and range of proposed integration enabled to assume that following the economic success, the “six” states would shortly proceed with political integration.

In the period concerned, Mieczysław Rakowski showed various reactions to processes in western Europe on the Old Continent. Initially, he perceived them as a threat to the status quo in Europe after World War II. Over time, the worsening of the socio-economic situation due to heavy indebtedness of the country forced the Polish government, Mieczysław Rakowski including, to western states, to a large degree members of the EEC, for financial, economic and technological aid. With the growing western European integration in the 1980s and the worsening of the socio-economic situation in Poland, the interest of the last Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the last communist prime minister was growing in developing economic relations with Brussels. At the same time, until the end of the Polish People's Republic, Rakowski remained faithful to socialist ideals, alliance with the USSR, and the cooperation with socialist countries. He wanted to reform the system of government in Poland, but he did not want to give in completely. As he was aware of the weakness of the Communist Party elite, he opted for the revitalisation of the party at the end of 1989. After elections of 4th June 1989, the long-term editor-in-chief for “Polityka” hooped for a broad support of the Polish society for the desired path of economic and social reforms. As it turned out, such reforms became actually possible in cooperation with the EEC.

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Summary

The main aim of the article was to present the views of Mieczysław F. Rakowski on the multifaceted process of European integration in the years 1958–1990. Attention was focused on the “German problem”, the ideological war: capitalism – communism, the enlargement of the European Communities to new countries in the 1970s and 1980s.

Key words: European integration, People’s Poland, Comecon, German problem, EEC

**Między negacją a zaangażowaniem. Integracja europejska w publicystyce
oraz działaniach politycznych Mieczysława F. Rakowskiego 1958–1990**

Streszczenie

Zasadniczym celem artykułu było przedstawienie poglądów Mieczysława F. Rakowskiego na wieloaspektowy proces integracji europejskiej w latach 1958–1990. Uwagę skoncentrowano na „problemie niemieckim”, wojnie ideologicznej: kapitalizm – komunizm, rozszerzeniu Wspólnot Europejskich o kolejne kraje w latach siedemdziesiątych i osiemdziesiątych XX wieku.

Słowa kluczowe: integracja europejska, Polska Ludowa, RWPG, problem niemiecki, EWG