

Stanisław Ehrlich, *Grupy nacisku w strukturze politycznej kapitalizmu* [Pressure Groups in the Political Structure of Capitalism], Warszawa 1962, PWN, 382 pages.

The pressure groups, which first came into the limelight as the lobbies of the American political system, have in the course of the years been the subject of many studies by the sociologists of political relations in the capitalist countries. Although this subject is an essential element in understanding how the modern capitalist system works, it has attracted only sporadic mention in the socialist countries. This book by professor Stanisław Ehrlich is the first comprehensive picture we have of the pressure groups. It is based on a wealth of material drawn not only from monographs, but mostly from articles diligently culled from the literature of the western countries.

In his introduction, the author rightly points out that it would be fallacious to treat all organizations that influence politics as pressure groups. He places outside the pressure group category both the political parties and associations, formed for

purposes other than the specific one of exerting political pressure, which only from time to time bring their influence to bear on the State apparatus. According to this definition, the pressure groups are confined to organizations deliberately formed to further the interests of certain sectional groups, whose actions are aimed at bringing about political decisions advantageous to their members.

Adopting this definition of the pressure group, the author demonstrates that such groups were formed either to protect and further the interests of capitalist groups, or to fight for the interests of working class groups, or to represent non-material interest. In my opinion, it is highly doubtful if it is right to include the last category among the pressure groups.¹

To draw the line correctly between the pressure groups and the political parties, we must analyse the relationship between those institutions. Various aspects of this relationship are discussed in Chapter III, while in the following chapter the author examines this problem in America in greater detail. The next two chapters again, which deal with the role of the pressure groups in representing regional interests, and in the elections, are based mainly on American material. Pressure groups in America likewise constitute most of the material for a chapter on the mechanism whereby the pressure groups exert an influence on the representative bodies. The reason for this emphasis on American material is the development of the "lobby" system in the U.S.A., and the large number of studies on this problem. This is not to say, however, that the author has confined himself to America. He also deals with the problem of pressure groups in Britain and in France, and observes the differences in the way organized interests act, depending on the form of parliamentary life in the respective countries.

Another large part of the book is devoted to the relationship between the pressure group and the administrative-governmental apparatus. In this sphere Britain provides much food for thought, although the author does not neglect to discuss the position in other countries as well, including America.

After the analytical chapters, professor Ehrlich goes on to generalizations. One of the questions to which he attaches much importance is that of the tactics of the pressure group—the difference between American and European tactics in this field, and the reasons for the same. Other problems studied include, first of all, the role of the pressure groups in political integration, then the reciprocal effect of the political structure and the pressure group on each other, and finally in capitalist countries the unequal effectiveness and extent of the pressure exerted on the State by organizations representing the capitalists and those representing the workers.

One of the great merits of the book is the skill with which the author has linked the analytical parts of the book (in which he provides the reader with a mass of information) with a synthesis in which he introduces the problem and sums up the arguments. Although some minor problems could be regarded as open to discussion, and although a few complaints might be made that some detail had been neglected, the book not only supplies a wealth of information, but it does a great deal more—it provides the foundation for penetrating and thoughtful judgements and generalizations which give the reader a much fuller understanding of the modern mechanism of class rule by the bourgeoisie and the channels by which the economically dominant interests try to weaken the constitutional role of the "classical" representative system.

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¹ This question is discussed by the reviewer in a review of professor Ehrlich's book in "Państwo i Prawo," No. 3, 1963, p. 536—542.