

“Problemy Rad Narodowych. Studia i materiały” [Problems of the People’s Councils], Instytut Nauk Prawnych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa 1964, 144 pages.

During the twenty years since the Polish People’s Republic came into existence the people’s councils (local authorities) have strengthened their position. There are many indications of this fact. The people’s councils, which together with the Sejm (Polish Parliament), constitute the uniform system of representative bodies in Poland, have consolidated their position as the basic form by which the working masses participate in the governing of the country. Between 270 and 300 thousand citizens take a direct part in local government as members of the representative bodies and their commissions. The people’s councils deal with the most basic spheres of public life, and their budgets account for more than a quarter of the State budget. The people’s councils have been given the important task of controlling and co-ordinating in their own area the various bodies, enterprises, and works belonging to the central authorities. For this reason the functioning of the people’s councils is a matter of interest to economists, sociologists, and in particular to lawyers. Research programmes in all these disciplines include studies on the people’s councils. In the Law Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences a separate section is working on this field. Results are published in “Problemy Rad Narodowych”

[Problems of the People's Councils], a new publication the first issue of which appeared in July 1964.

There are three interesting articles in this issue. In "Aim and methods of research on the people's councils," professor S. Zawadzki draws attention to the need for more research on the people's councils in order to see how the legal regulations concerning the people's councils work in practice. The writer stresses the importance of empirical research, which up till now has lagged behind theoretical studies. To begin with, the Law Institute team that was formed to do research on the people's councils, and which was headed by professor Zawadzki, concentrated on investigating the legislative activities of the people's councils and their presidia, and on the work of the permanent commissions set up by the people's councils. It is worth noting that a study was made of the orders passed in 1962 by 20 voivodship people's councils, 250 district people's councils, and 300 village communities people's councils. For the sake of comparison, a simultaneous study was made of the orders passed by a certain number of people's councils in 1955. These studies brought out interesting facts about the following problems: the number and kind of orders passed by the people's councils, the effect of public opinion on the passing of legislation, consistency between the people's councils' orders and the law, supervision of the execution of orders. Five university departments took part in the research on the legislative activities of the people's councils. The Prosecutor Generals' office, and its staff throughout the country, co-operated. Professor Zawadzki then sketches the outline of future research. The following problems will be studied: the influence of local communities on the work of the local authorities, the question of direct elections to the various rungs of the people's councils, the division into authoritative bodies and administrative bodies, and the legal position of the presidium of the people's council.

In the same volume professor Z. Rybicki has a paper on "The Administrative work of the people's councils." The author points out that in the case of the people's councils three subjects are interlocked—the State and the law, constitutional law, and administrative law. In the author's opinion particular attention should be paid to two basic questions: the position of the people's councils as the mouthpieces of State authority, and their position as mass working class organizations. Various bodies forming part of the people's council system are responsible for carrying out the people's councils' duties with regard to state administration. Coming down to details, these duties fall upon the heads of the specialized departments which are supervised by the presidium of the people's council, chosen by the people's council, and which act as executive bodies. Yet, the author points out, the administrative activities of the people's councils are not their only function.

Professor Z. Izdebski is the author of a paper "Citizens groups in the administration, as an expression of the constitutional principle that the working masses should take part in the government of the country." Professor Izdebski discusses Polish experience in this sphere. He defines the concept of the "citizens' teams," describes the different kinds of such teams and the functions they fulfil, examines the relationship between the "citizens' teams" and official bodies consisting of full-time paid workers, and compares the "citizens' teams" with the administrative *collegia*. The author quotes research carried out in the city of Łódź, which has 722 800 inhabitants. In the last elections in Łódź, which took place in 1961, 110 councillors were elected to the Łódź City Council, and 400 councillors to the five urban district councils. The Łódź City Council set up 12 permanent commissions. Twenty-two administrative departments were established (e.g. to deal with finance,

building, industry, trade, transport, health, and social welfare). Sixty-six permanent *collegia* were attached to those departments. The author's conclusions are of two kinds. On the one hand, he describes and classifies, while on the other hand, he has put forward suggestions, resulting from his practical experience, concerning the structure and functioning of the people's councils in the future. The book contains summaries in Russian, English and French.

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