

BIBLIOGRAPHIE * BIBLIOGRAPHY

DROIT POLONAIS
CONTEMPORAIN
№ 6, 1966

NOTES CRITIQUES * NOTES

Zygmunt Rybicki, *Działalność i organizacja rad narodowych* [The Work and Organization of the People's Councils]. Warszawa 1965, Książka i Wiedza, 342 pages.

The author is Professor of Administrative Law and Vice-Rector of Warsaw University. He helped to found the courses on administrative law run by the universities etc., to improve the qualifications of people employed in State and local administration. In another field he is a member of the Warsaw People's Council, and an active supporter of public participation in local government. This multifariousness of the author's interests is clearly reflected in his book. It is a work which combines a concise theoretical description of the People's Councils with a penetrating analysis of their significance in the socio-economic conditions of today. It leads the reader through the labyrinth of complicated legislation and indicates the practical results of legislation which the author frequently criticizes and suggests might be improved in certain ways. Professor Rybicki gives an account of the experience which has been culled in this field, and outlines the prospects for development in the future.

In the first chapter the author discusses the functions and the development of the People's Councils in Poland. He stresses here the double character of these Councils, which are not only local agencies of uniform State authority, but also public organizations which enable the citizens continually to take part in the process of government.

The second chapter, headed "The tasks. of the People's Councils", describes how the country is divided into administrative units for which the particular People's Councils are responsible. He outlines the limits within which the People's Councils of various levels exercise direct powers, and describes the People's Councils' powers to control and co-ordinate various units in their area which are not directly subject to the People's Councils. Against this background the author discusses the decentralization which has been taking place within the system of People's Councils, reports on what has been done so far, and expresses his views as to future prospects. He explains the new role recently assigned to the People's Councils, which have been given wide powers to co-ordinate the whole of the economy in their area.

Chapter III, entitled "The agencies of the People's Councils and their role in maiss.-organizational activity" is particularly characteristic of the author's approach. He gives a very terse account of the legal regulations on the various links in the system of the People's Councils, concentrating on those elements which he regards as the most important or as calling for some amendment, or those about which other views have been expressed in law journals — views which the author wishes to challenge. He devotes a considerable amount of space, however, to the practical activities of various bodies belonging to the People's Councils, especially where they have been given new powers. For example, the commissions have recently been given wider powers to enable them to exert a decisive influence on the administrative apparatus. To take another example, the combines have been given a new position as units through which the présidia of the People's Councils engage in economic activities. The growing participation of the public in the exercise of local administration, and also the new methods of administrative action, are subjects that are of particular interest to the author.

This subject is discussed at greater length in the last chapter, which describes the organizational forms whereby political and social influence is brought to bear on the work of the People's Councils. The author points out that the effectiveness of the People's Councils depends on the skill with which the local public is induced to take part in their work. Thus this last chapter is a kind of recapitulation of the main idea running through the whole work.

Stanislaw Gebert