

**Michal Kubát:**

*Vývoj a proměny státního zřízení Polska ve 20. století.*

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Reviewed by Marek Migalski

We should welcome with pleasure the latest book on the subject of Poland by Michal Kubat. The author has proved many times to be an expert on the political and party system in our country. His previous scientific output devoted to this subject is very impressive, both in a qualitative and in a quantitative way. Kubat has been dealing with complex Polish politics with great skill and knowledge of the matter. It should be especially noted that the author is a foreigner with no real contact with our political life. Taking this into consideration, M. Kubat's scientific activity ought to be regarded as unusually expert and impressive.

His latest book, *Vývoj a proměny státního zřízení Polska ve 20. století*, follows this trend of inquisitive reflection on Polish politics. This time the author focuses on its institutional dimension, which proves his intuition since the legal framework is one of the most important determinants of our politics. The

author analyses constitutional and legal factors of the past century. He does this with consummate knowledge and again proves to be one of the best foreign observers of Polish political life. It makes no sense to describe his efforts in detail. Suffice it to say that every reviewer of this book should recommend it without hesitation as a basic and brilliantly written handbook on political systems of Central Europe.

However, several minor drawbacks of the book ought to be noticed so as not to overpraise it. One of them is that the book deals too little with Polish parliamentarism before 20th century. The author writes only 20 pages about it (it is not enough if we take into consideration the fact that Polish constitutionalism is several hundred years old and one of the oldest in Europe.) While it is true that the aim of M. Kubat is to analyse the phenomenon of Polish political system in 20th century (which he declares in the ti-

tle of the book), the lack of deep thought on the history of Polish parliamentarism before the past century is somewhat of an oversight (only one paragraph is devoted to the Constitution of May 3rd, i.e., the first in Europe and the second one in the world.)

Another weakness of this book is the equal treatment of political systems of the People's Republic of Poland and the Third Republic of Poland. Both systems are analysed with similar discernment and detail (their analysis takes up almost the same amount of text.) I consider it to be a mistake, as the system in the years 1945–1989 was an authoritarian regime and it is not necessary to analyse it with as much detail and inquisitiveness as the period following 1989. The former system depended on a valid constitution only to a little degree, and the political system was dependant on decisions of the Communist Party (anyway, the author writes about it and notices this fact.) Therefore, equal treatment of an actually fictional system and a democratic one should be regarded as redundant. It would be perhaps better to deal in more

detail with the changes after 1989 and the fight for the system of the 3rd Republic of Poland.

The last critical remark is that the author overlooked the literature created in the Wrocław Academic Centre. The works of A. Antoszewski or R. Herbut are fundamental for the analysis of the Polish political and party system. It seems to be an oversight that the book lacks them and at the same time it frequently makes use of books by scientists who are also active party politicians, e.g., such as J. J. Wiatr or T. Nałęcz.

The above critical remarks do not change the overall very positive opinion about this book. It should receive one of the rudimentary positions in the library of those who want to be interested in the problems of Central Europe, especially the Polish political system. Czech readers ought to hope that foreign scientists will write about their country with as much knowledge as does M. Kubat about my country.