

REVIEW ESSAYS

Editor's Preface

The age of the sociology of law, like that of any other intellectual tradition, is uncertain. When was it born—with Montesquieu, Marx, or Maine? With the jurisprudential revolt against formalism in the United States and Europe after the First World War? Or with the burst of empirical research beginning after the Second World War and expanding at a constantly accelerating pace ever since? Whatever our view, sociology of law has clearly achieved sufficient maturity to be allowed the luxury of reflection. The books reviewed below are some of the first attempts to do so: summarizing, criticizing, and advocating theoretical ideas. They are:

Lawrence M. Friedman, *The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective* (New York: Russell Sage, 1975).

Donald Black, *The Behavior of Law* (New York: Academic Press, 1976).

Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *Law in Modern Society: Toward a Criticism of Social Theory* (New York: Free Press, 1976).

Adam Podgórecki, *Law and Society* (Boston and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).

Adam Podgórecki differs from the others in that this is not his first theoretical synthesis, though it is his first in English. But because he has written mostly in Polish, his other works are not widely known outside his country; the essay by Klaus Ziegert therefore seeks to summarize critically the entire corpus of his writings.

The authors of these books, and their reviewers, are a very diverse group, drawn from the disciplines of law, sociology, and philosophy, and from Brazil, Germany, Poland, and the United States. They represent extremely divergent points of view. I hope their disagreements will be productive of the kind of scholarly debate that is so essential to the development and refinement of theory. (Other recent theoretical works may be reviewed in subsequent issues of this journal.)