

ALLIANCE OF CLERKS AND PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

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Bureaucracy is the part of the social organism that provides its stability. The bureaucracy remains in constant opposition to innovation since its mission is to ensure that the system functions in line with the rules that are already fixed. The very essence of the competitive advantage enjoyed by a bureaucrat in the social world is his greater familiarity with established standards and laws, and hence greater efficacy in making use of restrictions and bans. In other words he exploits the established order instead of creating a new one.

Bureaucrats are geared to preserving the status-quo or, at best, bringing very slow change – at a pace of their own adjustment to the change ('career'). Therefore any move toward innovation is assiduously filtered by the bureaucratic machine. No more than two

out of every ten innovative ideas finally get through those bureaucratic filters and produce true innovations. And even these end up significantly watered down – if not gelded outright. **Yet it is exactly this feature that keeps society steady!** If all the ideas and innovations proposed by social visionaries were brought to pass then the social organism would go haywire. After all, many suggestions aimed at reforming an existing system ('signals') often contradict each other, since they reflect particular interests of different, sometimes antagonistic, social groups. The bureaucratic machine processes these proposals and projects leaving only what is essentially a compromise and thus ensuring rather slow but steady development. This is of course if the filters aren't too tight ('closed-ended'), at which point everything comes to standstill.

The so-called 'bureaucratic mentality' is almost invariably attacked by liberals and social modernizers. Liberalism by definition is geared to lift bans and restrictions and to minimize the role of social filters, which in turn propels reforms – sometimes rather radical ones. The modernizing (innovative) minority pins its hopes and interests on constant change. And the sharper the change, the greater the part of the population, and more specifically the bureaucrats ('old apparatchiks'), that cannot keep pace with it. As a result the only winners are those engendering and promoting the innovations themselves. Although nothing but change ensures development, only this **delicate pitch** towards the new (which stands for being an innovator) inherent in a minority makes it possible to renew and develop anything.

Efficient state (social) management should be provided by two types of executives. One type is

bureaucrats – that is those officials built into the state apparatus, who ensure the functioning of the system and its stability, and who filter out everything redundant, extraneous and potentially dangerous. **The other type is innovators: 'project managers', 'people's commissars'**, who are responsible for keeping track of a new, development-related tasking, carrying out new social projects and introducing innovations.

Unfortunately our public service is short on innovating executives geared to reform and innovative development, relying on their own creativity and popular social initiative rather than on the resources provided by the budget or state apparatus (that is bureaucrats like themselves). This type of management is much less common and not as easily mastered as the one embodied in a bureaucratic official.

It would be unfair to say that we lack innovating executives altogether. But unfortunately they are poorly represented in the public space and are not considered to be role models. Yet this country badly needs such heroes and it is hard to overstate today the importance of this 'cultural type' – an official who is social-minded.

Reminiscing about 'levies of 25,000' from Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* or the 'red directors' – the so called 'plain-clothed generals' – I'm trying to envision a kind of management 'special ops' that would come to rescue some dying one-factory town today. I'm trying to envision how they would come up with some sort of bail-out plan, reorganize life, raise civic awareness, get the economy working, and then ... yield control to the bureaucrats – those who would not let what they had achieved be misappropriated.

Oh, those sweet dreams! ■

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