

# HOW TO RAISE AN EFFICIENT BUREAUCRAT

Yakov Shustov

Book review: Vladimir Andrianov. *Bureaucracy, corruption, and state management efficiency: history and modern days.* (Moscow, Wolters Kluwer, 2009)

REVIEW

In the context of modernization, bureaucracy is traditionally associated with negative forces that forestall change. Ever since Mayakovsky's poem, 'Prozasedavshiesya' (The Oversession), all political movements have been accompanied with criticism of the bureaucracy. Such is the image of the Soviet bureaucrat, a fairy-tale creature fused together with his chair and desk. While the real power of both party and state bureaucracy was once infinite, today, bureaucracy is traditionally considered as either an inefficient anti-democratic control system, or the only positive force able to establish order in the chaos of a market economy. However, even these wide spread ideas about bureaucracy are extremely vague. Professor Andrianov's book helps to explain what bureaucracy is, as well as its essence, history, and future prospects.

**The paradox of the history of bureaucracy is that, notwithstanding all the criticism, it has continued to grow in number.** In 1910, there were 575,000 officials per 150 million people. In 1922, when Mayakovsky's poem was written, there were 700,000 bureaucrats at different levels per 133 million people. According to a 2006 survey, the total number of state power local government bodies in the Russian Federation is currently 1.577 million members for a population of 141 million.

Bureaucracy has its own apologists. Max Weber believed that, 'The bureaucratic kind of the administrative organization is technically able to achieve the utmost degree of efficiency and excels more than any other kind in its accuracy, stability, discipline, and reliability.' But the key principle for the construction of bureaucracy produces a rather



'dysfunctional' effect, as it invades the market field: hierarchy suppresses initiative; regulations kill flexibility in decision-making; impersonal attitudes result in heartlessness and bungling; and focused specialization limits competence.

Both in state governance theory and in political economy, bureaucracy is opposed to the market and is positioned as a non-market organization. Nonetheless, **lately it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify state bureaucracy from its corporate counterpart.** Their mutual penetration and merging create a serious problem – corruption.

Andrianov examines this phenomenon in detail through examples drawn from both the domestic and foreign experience, and his conclusions are rather optimistic. He believes that an anti-corruption consensus is forming around the world, writing, 'Fighting this evil, the anti-corruption consensus aspires to build bridges between the left and the right, between the liberals and

the conservatives, between the globalists and anti-globalists.'

The last third of the book discusses the practical mechanisms needed to establish these anti-corruption measures: for example, Russia signing the Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention on Corruption and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Nevertheless, despite these actions, Russia has not yet adjusted its own law in accordance with international standards; so, in reality, Russia has not signed the Council of Europe's Civil Law Convention on Corruption at all.

In Andrianov's opinion, the efficiency and quality of government control and the management of social-economic processes will be promoted with the help of development and introduction of new methods on the basis of self-regulation market economy theory.

Moreover, the author believes that the political power structure needs to be withdrawn from the political field. There is a need to change the political paradigm towards the social-oriented market economy and to create a stable self-regulating economy.

**The stability of any system is defined by the presence of self-regulating mechanisms.** It is in the author's view that within economic systems, self-regulating bodies should act as such a mechanism on the micro-economic level, and that functional economic systems should act as such on the macro-economic level. The key principle of bureaucracy, or hierarchy, is supplemented with the principle of network control and this, in the long run, can lead to changes in the existing structure of state governance, and thereafter create a 'corruption-resistant' bureaucracy of a new kind. ■

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